

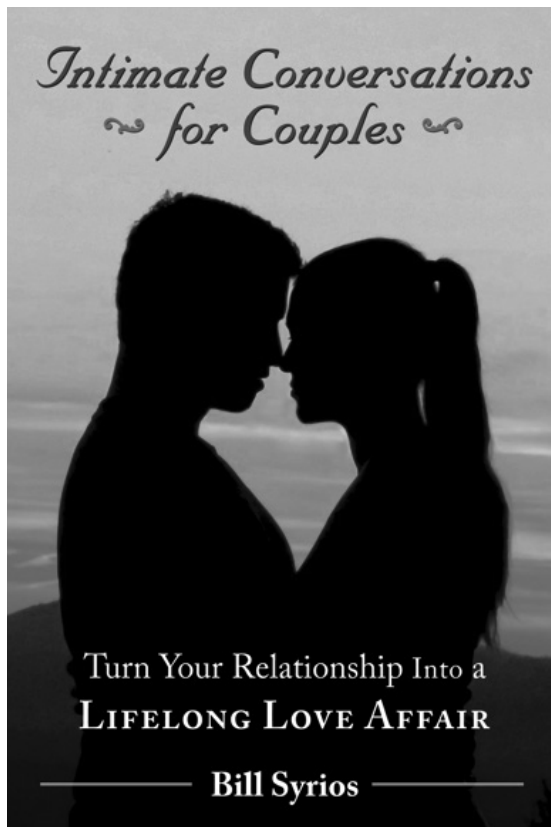
Erotic Heart

NEW BOOK EXAMINES INTIMACY IN RELATIONSHIPS BY TED SYRIOS

Local author and real estate investor Bill Syrios has written a new book about relationships that might make his four grown sons blush. "This book may contain more about good old Dad than you wanted to know!" he writes in the dedication to *Intimate Conversations for Couples: Turning Your Relationship into a Lifelong Love Affair*, published by Crossover Press in Eugene and available in print this Valentine's Day.

Syrios was a Presbyterian minister for 15 years and counseled many couples in difficult times, and he says his own marriage had challenges. One big problem in relationships, he says, is that men and women often have different ideas about love, commitment, intimacy and even pornography. If both partners can better understand and operate within each other's "love frames," it is possible to build a deeper, more supportive — and more passionate — lifelong love affair.

This book recycles a lot of concepts put forward by popular authors such as M. Scott Peck, John Gray and Barbara De Angelis, and Syrios quotes them and others freely. But Syrios is packaging this information in a format and style intended to be more accessible. The core of the book is a fictional conversation between Matt and Sarah, a married couple who leave their young kids with a babysitter and retreat to a cabin by a lake to spend a weekend talking about their relationship.



Syrios is no Woody Allen when it comes to writing dialogue, but the conversation is easygoing and genuine enough to work. Matt and Sarah talk frankly about their thoughts and emotions regarding just about every aspect of sex and intimacy and what it means to be in a committed, sharing relationship over time. The book does not explore "non-conventional" sex or relationships.

The differences between male and female perspectives on these many topics are stark. A man will stroke and tickle a woman's so-called erogenous zones, but her most erogenous zone is actually her heart. In men's pornography, men see women as sex objects; in women's pornography (including romance novels), women see men as "success objects."

"None of us naturally knows how intimacy and passion works for the opposite sex," Syrios writes. "We have to get

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into their gender world to see their perspective. ... Since we are all a mixture of feminine and masculine traits, relating to each other is both frustrating and fascinating."

The dialogue throughout the book is supplemented by the author's recaps of the main points of the conversation in each chapter. He also includes a collection of intimacy exercises that couples can complete. ♥

The book is available as an audio CD with actors speaking the roles of Matt and Sarah, and a series of videos of Syrios talking about his book can be found at wkly.ws/1oq.



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