



CREATING AN

# Intimate Covenant MARRIAGE

How our temple covenants are the perfect formula to help us create emotionally, spiritually, and physically intimate relationships.

WITH CERTIFIED  
SEX & MARRIAGE COACH

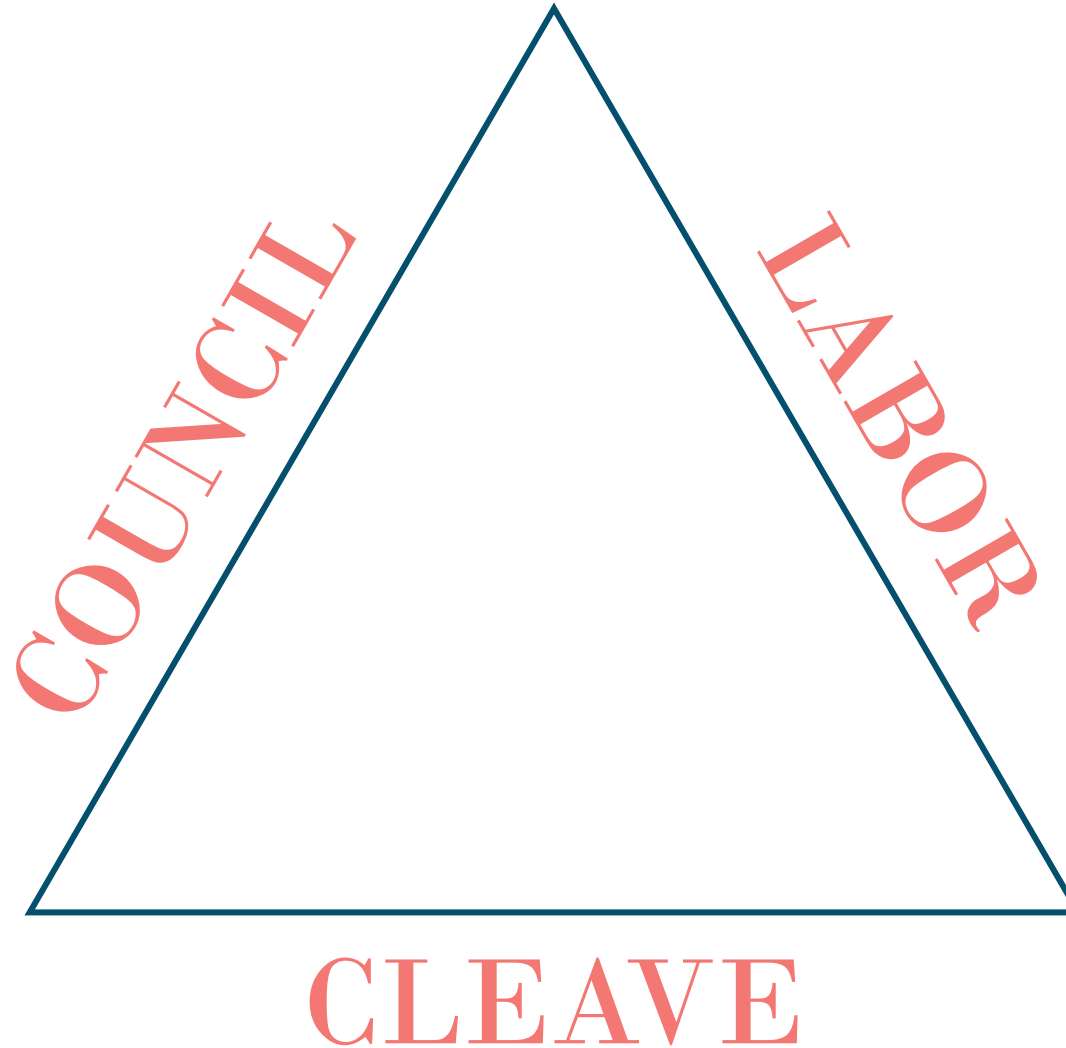
Amanda Louder

*We will focus on the doctrinal ideal of marriage. My hope is that a review of our eternal possibilities and a reminder about who we are and why we are here in mortality will provide direction, comfort, and sustaining hope for us all, regardless of our marital status or personal present circumstances. The disparity between the doctrinal ideal of marriage and the reality of daily life may seem at times to be quite large, but you gradually are doing and becoming much better than you probably recognize.*

*- Elder David A Bednar -*

# Temple Covenants

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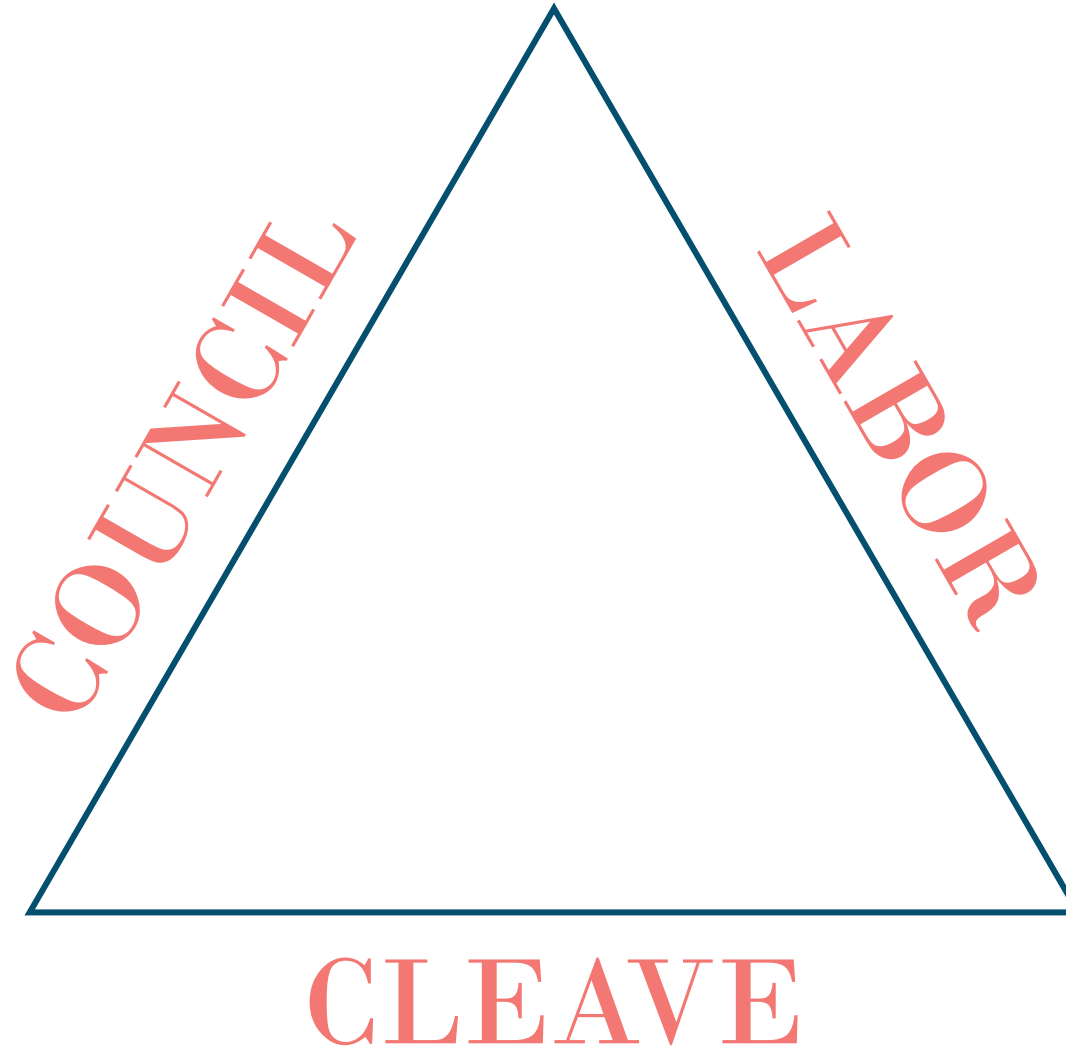
# WHAT IS INTIMACY?

Intimacy is closeness between people in personal relationships. It's what builds over time as you connect with someone, grow to care about each other, and feel more and more comfortable during your time together. It is being fully known by your partner and knowing them fully.

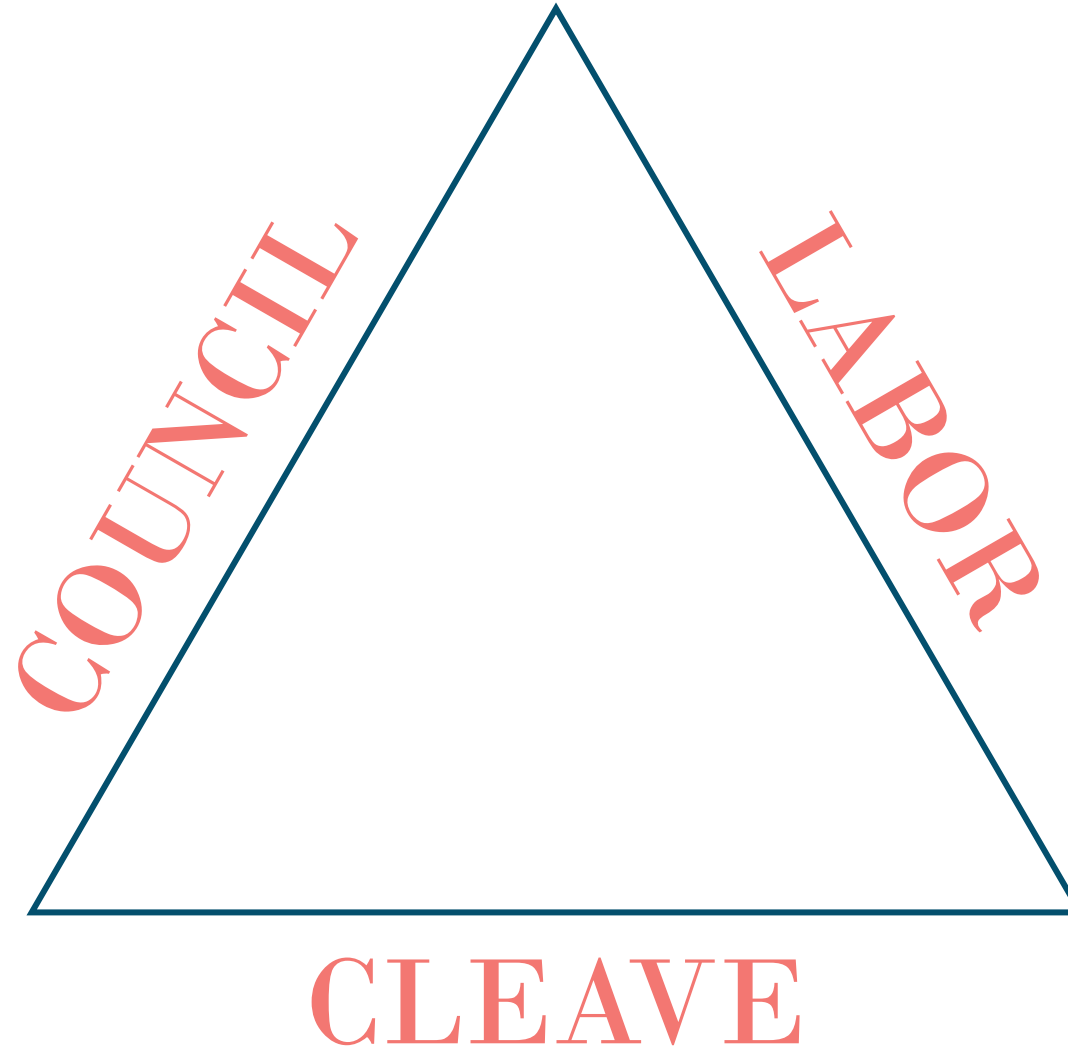
You can have emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical intimacy.

# Temple Covenants

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# Intimate Marriage Framework





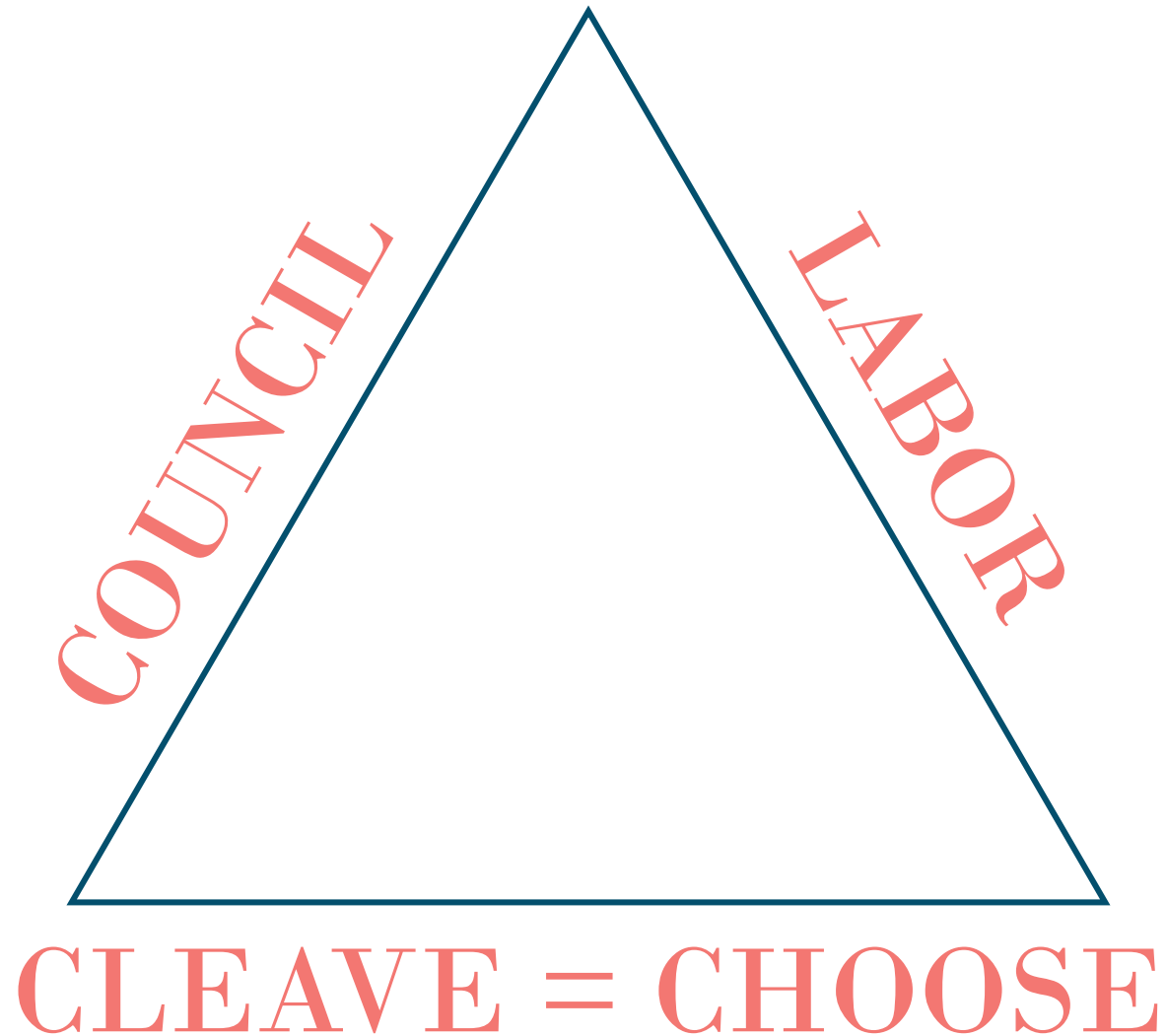
# CLEAVE

- To adhere closely, to stick
- To split, to separate

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

- Genesis 2:24 -

# Intimate Marriage Framework







# CHOOSE

- To select freely and after consideration
- Choosing them in your thoughts, feelings, and actions
- Choosing them even when it's hard
- Choosing them and your covenants, even if they aren't choosing you



# Choosing Your Spouse

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. Consistently spending time and energy with them over others (work, kids, family, friends, church)
2. Intentionally thinking good thoughts about them.
3. Don't think about others in the same way
4. Think relationally
5. Choose to admire, love, and respect them and the marriage even when it is hard

“Making room for our spouse’s differences and strengths will expand our ability to truly love. To love another is to let them prosper, even if their strengths don’t necessarily reinforce us.”

- Dr. Jennifer Finlayson-Fife –

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)



# When Choices Don't Validate

## SHAME/JUDGEMENT ACTIVATED

1. Towards > People Pleasing
2. Away > Hide
3. Against > Attack, aggressive



# Shame Resilience

1. Compassion
2. Courage
3. Connection



# Choosing Your Spouse

## WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN

1. You are resigned to being in a marriage you don't want to be in or are only staying out of obligation
2. You play a victim to your spouse
3. The marriage is transactional
4. You are biding your time until you are done
5. You choose someone else to share yourself with

# FOUR TYPES OF MARRIAGES

BY ALEXANDRA STOCKWELL, MD

1. TOXIC
2. TERMINATION
3. TOLERATION
4. INTIMATE



# What Gets In The Way?

1. Ego

2. Victimhood

3. Shame & Guilt

4. Fear

5. Beliefs

6. Past Experiences

7. Culture

8. No good examples



# What else to watch out for

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- Feeling Stuck or Trapped
- “Shoulds” & Expectations
- The stories you are telling yourself about your spouse

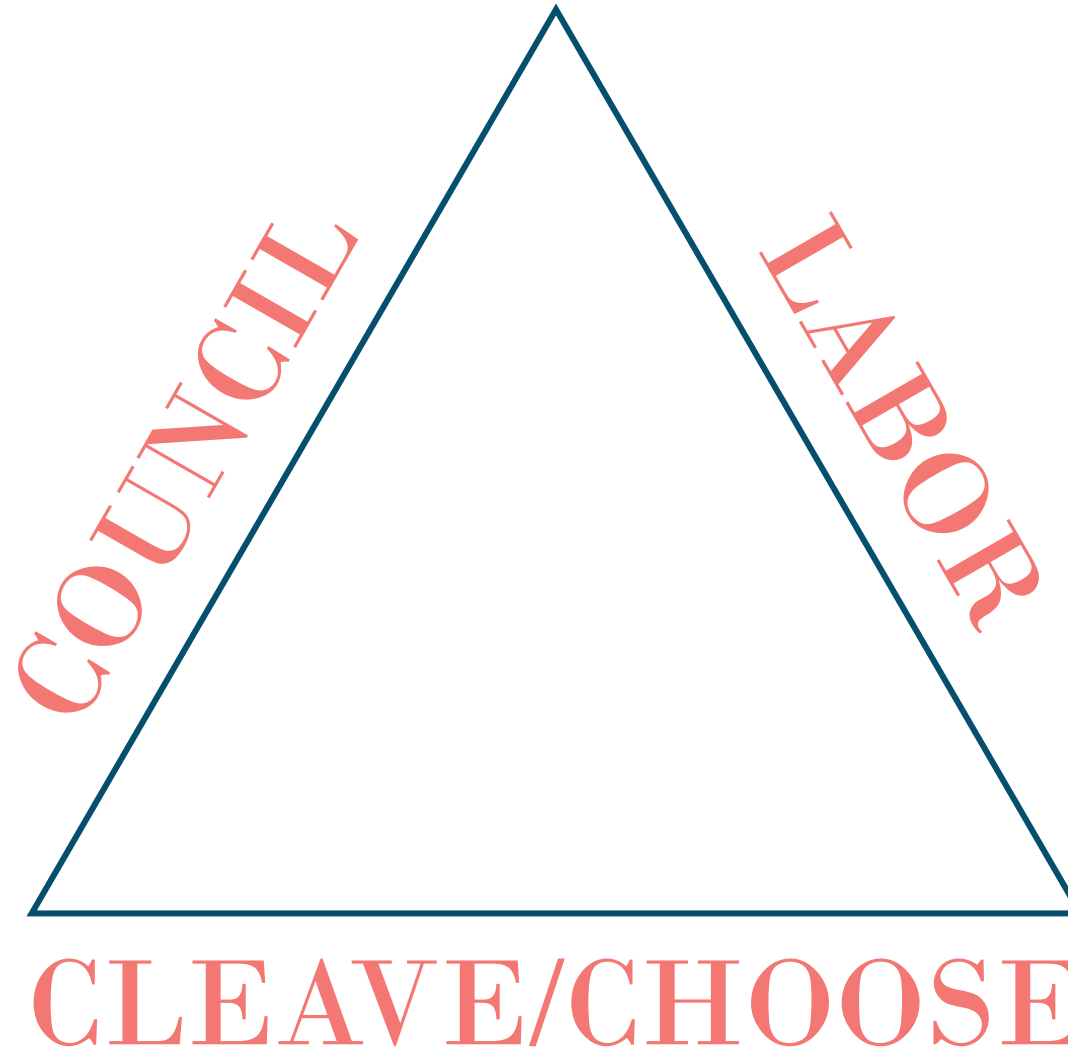
# Cleave = Intimacy

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When you can be yourself, be fully known, and still feel chosen,  
it creates intimacy.

When your spouse can be themselves, be fully known, and still  
feel chosen, it creates intimacy.

# Intimate Marriage Framework



In order to realize the potential of being together beyond this life, we must create a strong marriage relationship in this life. How do you create a strong marriage and prioritize it above other endeavors? By creating a shared vision— a clear picture of the future of your relationship.

- Dr. Julie Hanks -

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)



# COUNCIL

- To make decisions together in the spirit of unity
- To create a shared vision
- To co-create your life together

# COUNCIL ABOUT?

- Shared vision or meaning your family
- Money, Traditions, Parenting, Sex
- Chores/Division of Labor
- Spirituality
- Who leads in what?
- Careers, Schooling, Goals

# PATTERN OF COUNSELING TOGETHER

1. Pray, ponder, and counsel
2. Seek unity

A relationship is out of balance when structured as a hierarchy. A partnership marriage exists when both people's opinions, feelings, needs, desires, and dreams are respected and considered, and decisions are made together. Partnership doesn't mean sharing every duty or responsibility equally. It means both partners are empowered to express and shape the vision of their relationship.

- Dr. Julie Hanks -

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)



“Unity is essential to the divine work we are privileged and called to do, but it doesn’t just happen. It takes effort and time to really counsel together—to listen to one another, understand others’ viewpoints, and share experiences—but the process results in more inspired decisions.”

– President Jean Bingham –

“United in Accomplishing God’s Work”

“In the Church there is a distinct line of authority. We serve where called by those who preside over us. In the home it is a partnership with husband and wife equally yoked together, sharing in decisions, always working together.”

– Elder Boyd K. Packer –

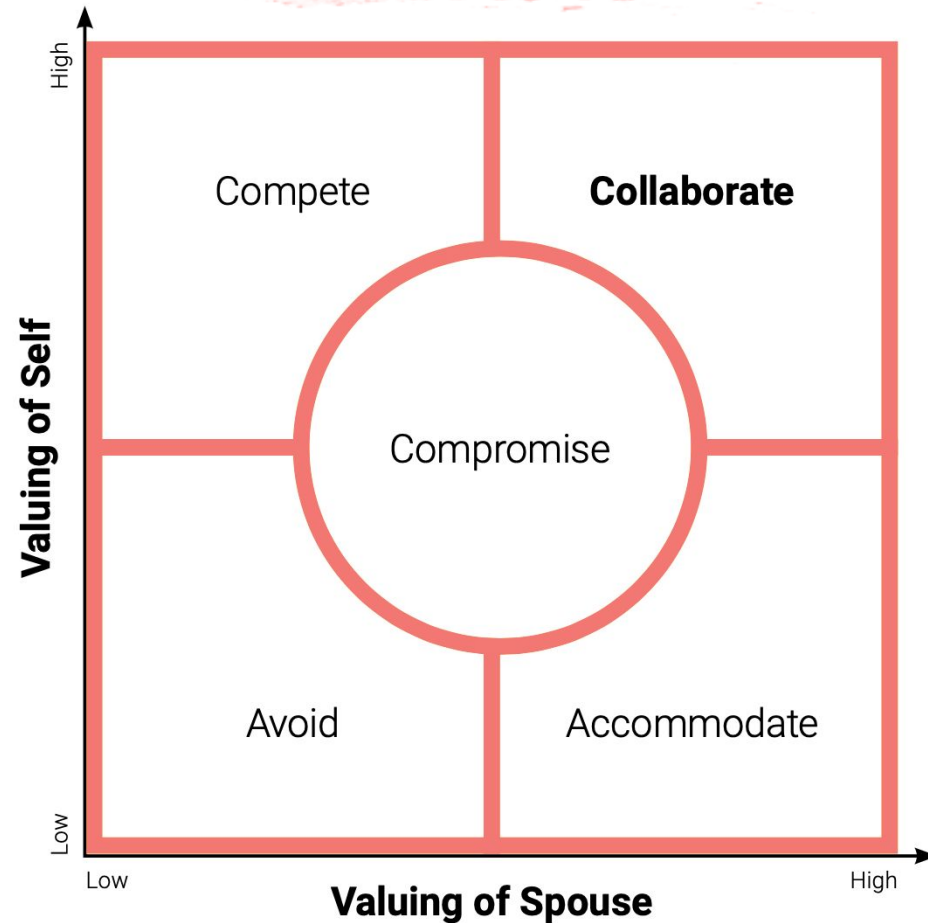
(“The Relief Society,” *Ensign*, May 1998, 73.)

“Certainly, one of the most important of all Church councils must be the family council, presided over by the husband and the wife. In this council, parents should stand equally yoked together, just as they are meant to share equally in every priesthood blessing that accrues to their family circle.”

– Elder Robert L. Simpson –

(“A Lasting Marriage,” April 1982 General Conference)

# HOW DO WE FIND UNITY?



# PATTERN OF COUNSELING TOGETHER

1. Pray, ponder, and counsel
2. Seek unity (collaboration)
3. Evaluate yourself

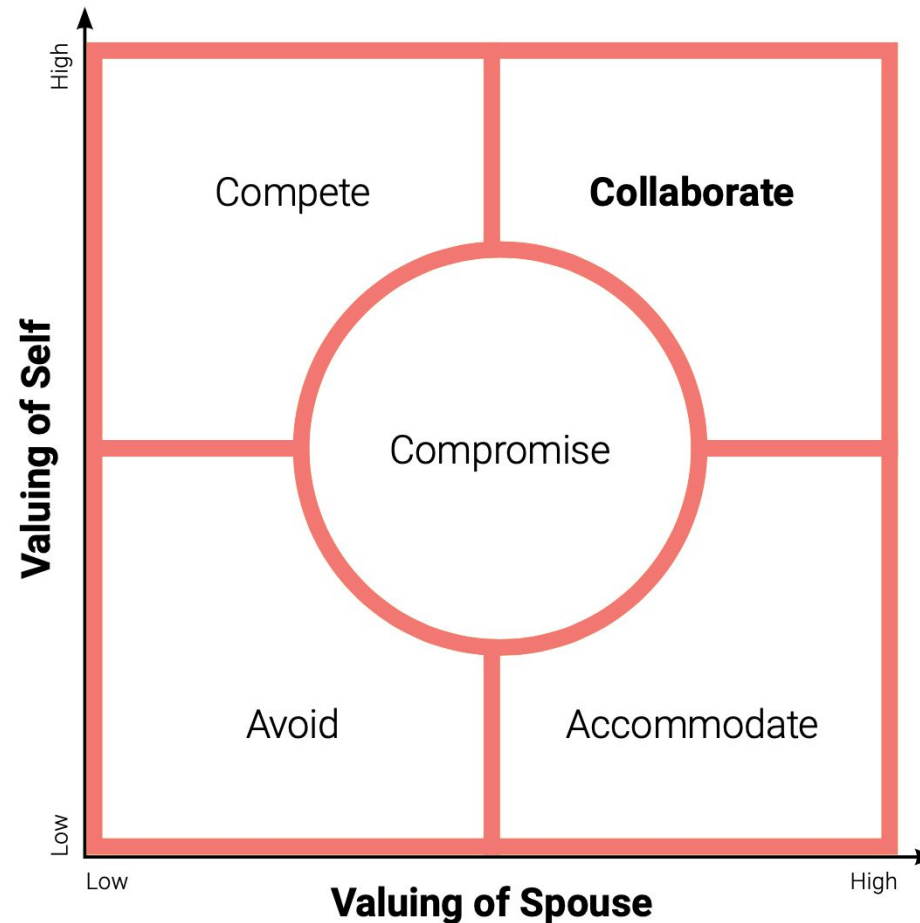
You have the power to change only one person: yourself. You may be tempted to use a family council to present a list of criticisms of your spouse. Instead, approach these councils with a desire to improve yourself. Ask your spouse if there is anything problematic or worrisome he or she has noticed in your words or behavior. Make goals for personal improvement and ask for your spouse's support as you strive to change. Support your spouse in any personal goals he or she wishes to make.

- Nichole Eck -

(Counsel Together Oft: Family Councils for Couples, January 2015 Ensign)

# Counseling With Your Spouse

WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN





# Why is it a problem if you don't?

1. Division

2. Lonely

3. Exhausting

4. Power dynamic

- Parent/Child dynamic
- Over/under functioning

5. Resentment



# Questions to ask yourself

1. Do you tell your partner the truth, even if you know it's hard for them to hear?
2. If you do this, is it coming from the best in you and because you want to be knowable? Or are you telling them to hurt them?
3. Do you want to hear your partner's truth, even if it's hard to hear?
4. Do you only want to know enough to keep you comfortable?



# What else to watch out for

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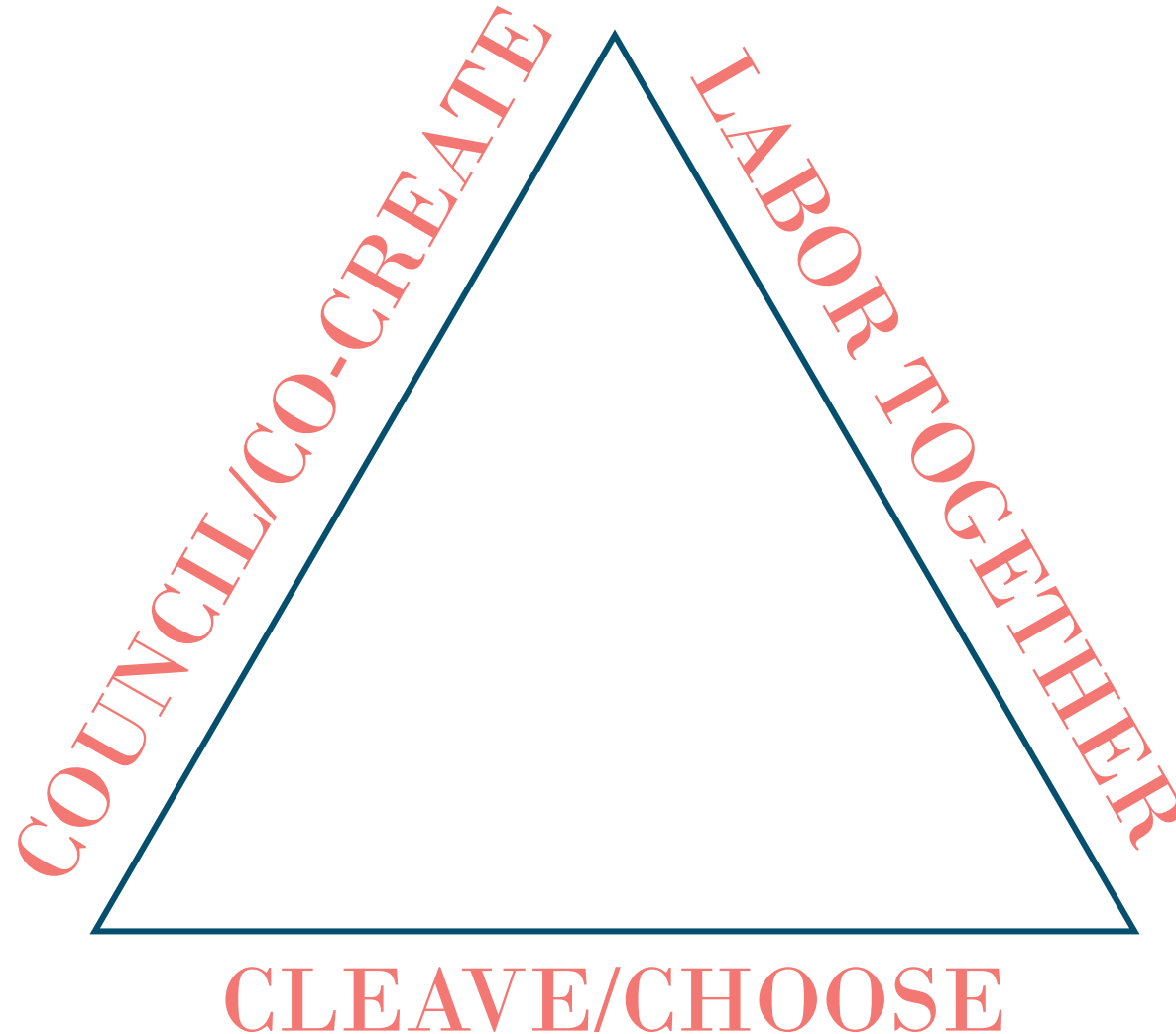
- Feeling disconnected, not seen or heard
- Opinions/wants/desires don't matter
- We don't want the same things
- Always, never, shoulds

# Council = Intimacy

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Where both parties feel seen, heard, and known by being able to express themselves, their wants, and desires and work together to find a mutually fulfilling and satisfying solution.

# Intimate Marriage Framework





# LABOR

- Strategically work together to improve themselves, the partnership, the home, and the family
- To advance common interests and the shared vision
- To nurture and provide for each other and the family together

When you think of the words “nurture and provide,” do you automatically separate and assign these respective responsibilities to women and men? Most of us keep them separate based on inherited traditions. Thankfully, since they are similar in purpose and scope, the overlap invites couples to work toward a more divine pattern of partnership.

We can rejoice in the counsel from *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* that says, “In these sacred responsibilities, fathers and mothers are obligated to help one another as equal partners.”

- Geoff Steurer, LMFT & Jody Steurer –

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)



# Labor Together

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

1. Physical labor (jobs, taking care of the home/yard, possessions)
2. Emotional/mental labor (worries of partners, kids, schedules, planning, calendaring)
3. Spiritual labor (callings, service, scripture study, family prayer, etc.)
4. Parenting
5. Sickness
6. Misc Efforts, Energy
7. Growth (mine, theirs, ours)



# Labor Together

## WHAT IT DOESN'T MEAN

1. Over/under functioning
2. Denial
3. People Pleasing
4. Parallel
5. Avoiding



# Why is it a problem if you don't?

1. Division
2. Lonely
3. Exhausting
4. Power dynamics & hierarchies
5. Resentment & anger





# What Gets In The Way?

1. Ego/Pride
2. Traditional gender roles

One large study showed that men's participation in child care is associated with more satisfying sexual relationships and higher quality relationships. Furthermore, egalitarian child care arrangements have positive consequences for both men and women by creating higher quality and more intimate relationships than gender traditional arrangements.

- Daniel Carlson, Sarah Hanson, Andrea Fitzroy, "The Division of Child Care, Sexual Intimacy, and Relationship Quality in Couples," *Gender & Society*, 30(3), June 2016 -



# What Gets In The Way?

1. Ego/Pride
2. Traditional gender roles
3. Over scheduling/working (self/family/kids)
4. Valuing one type of labor over another

In a divine marriage, the contributions of each partner are equally valued. In Western culture, contributions or “work” are narrowly defined as paid work and most often associated with men. Unpaid work, like care work or volunteer work, is most often associated with women. Unfortunately, paid work is often more valued than unpaid work.

Throughout His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ performed caregiving work as He ministered to the afflicted, taught His disciples and followers, healed the sick, and fed the hungry. Do we view His acts as less valuable than those of Joseph, His mortal father, whose job as a carpenter provided money for their family?

Many couples aren't aware of the sometimes subtle differences in value placed on different types of contributions and how this impacts the way they view themselves and interact with each other.

- Dr. Julie Hanks -

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)



# GROWTH

In an intimate marriage, both partners are invested in the growth of themselves, their partner, and the couple

“If we truly believe we are meant to be like our Heavenly Parents then all of us need some serious soul development. Families need to invest time, money, and resources into BOTH husbands and wives development... considering the return on investment being eternal rather than simply monetary.”

– McArthur Krishna & Bethany Brady Spalding –  
(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)

# HOW DO WE GROW?

1. Learn to self-confront
2. Learn to self-soothe
3. Learn to self-validate using our integrity

“Temple marriage covenants do not magically bring equality to a partnership. Those covenants commit us to a developmental process of learning and growing together – by practice. ... But equal partnerships are not made in heaven – they are made on earth, one choice at a time, one conversation at a time, one threshold crossing at a time.”

– Elder Bruce C. & Marie K. Hafen –

(In the Image of our Heavenly Parents; A Couples Guide To Creating a More Divine Marriage)

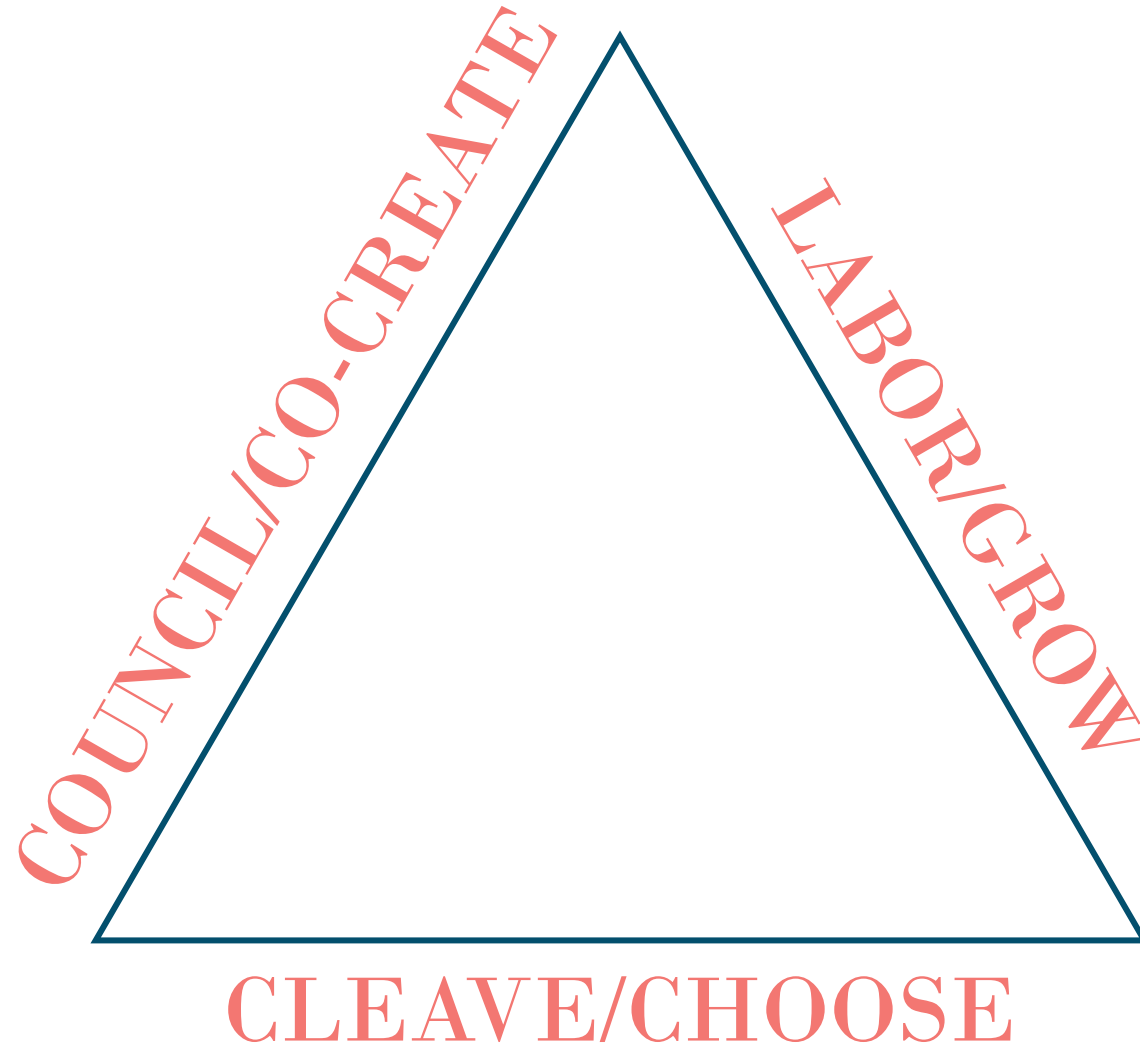


# Growth = Intimacy

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Both partners working to become the best versions of themselves so that they can choose, counsel, and labor together.

# A Covenant Intimate Marriage



# Get The Slides

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*Amanda Louder*

COACHING