# Thriving Couples Hierarchy*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roommates</th>
<th>Hierarchy</th>
<th>Husband and Wife</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| -Sexual affairs, porn and solo masturbation or swinging, etc.  
- low or no frequency of sex between them  
- sexuality does not feel meaningful or mutual for both spouses | **Intimacy and Sexuality** | - private couple sexual language  
- sexuality is dependable, mutual, meaningful  
- shared monogamous eroticism  
- no porn in bedroom (distraction from each other) |
| - Aunt Bertha Kisses or NO kisses  
- Separate beds or separate bedrooms  
- no cuddling if in same bed; child or dog in bed  
- Separate chairs in the living room or separate rooms altogether  
- I Love you; I’m not IN love with you | **Warmth and Affection** | - meaningful kisses  
- intimate cuddling in bed (1-2 times/day)  
- sensual without needing to be sexual  
- sleeping in same bed and same time  
- teasing and flirting with each other |
| - separate interests  
- more time with friends or hobbies than spouse  
- shared excitement with others (not spouse)  
- no effort at compromise on interests  
- if couple dates they do so only when kids, friends or relatives are along | **Fun and Friendship** | - each has own interests, but the couple develops mutual couple interests  
- shared excitement and camaraderie  
- regular dates alone  
- regular overnight getaways with just the two of them |
| - keep issues bottled up or fight about them or both  
- periodic explosions  
- efforts to solve problems leads to more fights, hurt or shutting down  
- can’t seem to overcome problems to improve the relationship | **Communication and Problem Solving** | - each can say what they need to say  
- both feel heard  
- meet regularly to discuss problems and concerns  
- can work through most problems  
- relationship improves over time  
- disagreements don’t lead to hurt |
| - lots of unaccountable time and relationships  
- little shared feelings  
- accusations of being a bitch or control freak  
- accusations of secrecy | **Trust and Accountability** | - what each says matches what each does  
- both voluntarily let the other know what’s going on  
- both want the other in their lives  
- both work at keeping the relationship exclusive  
- no affair talk or jokes |
| - living together, not married  
- separate bank accounts  
- little discussion of money, hurt around money  
- veiled and overt threats to divorce or separate  
- relationship feels unfair | **Marriage and Commitment** | - a specific wedding day and promise  
- shared bank accounts and regular money talks  
- no divorce talk, threats or jokes  
- each secure only death will separate  
- both sacrificial in spirit |

*Copyright 2011 By Dr. Bing Wall, Heart to Heart Communication, LC; www.thrivingcouples.com