

A photograph of four people (two women and two men) seen from behind, embracing each other in a line. They are standing on a grassy hill, looking out at a bright sunset or sunrise over a body of water. The warm, golden light of the sun is the central focus, creating a soft, hazy atmosphere. The people are dressed in casual summer attire like t-shirts, a denim jacket, and shorts. The overall mood is one of connection, support, and shared joy.

FINALLY CONNECTED

DEEP, REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS
IN YOUR SECOND HALF

BY LLOYD REEB

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
CHAPTER 1 Discovering the need for intimacy	6
CHAPTER 2 How did intimacy get squeezed out in our first half?	8
CHAPTER 3 Simple steps toward intimacy	9
CHAPTER 4 Turning ideas into action	15
CHAPTER 5 Romance: a bonus of pursuing intimacy	18
SUMMARY	23
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	24

PURPOSE

To inspire and equip successful, results-oriented leaders to build more intimate relationships – with God, their spouse, kids, grandkids, and friends.

INTRODUCTION

There is compelling evidence that deep, intimate relationships not only bring more meaning and joy into our second half of life but also pave the road to lasting impact in this world. Yet many successful people reach mid-life and discover that much of this intimacy has been squeezed out of their marriage, family and friendships. They have lots of acquaintances, some buddies, but few—if any—deep, lasting relationships. If that's you, I can relate.

The 90-Minute Goal: My goal is that, in 90 minutes of reading this eBook you will better understand what real intimacy looks like and why it is key to a fulfilling life. I will also help you craft a roadmap to take the most important next steps.

In my role at the **Halftime Institute**, I have had the privilege of talking at length with successful people who are at an inflection point in mid-life. They have achieved some measure of success and are now beginning to think about what would give their life more meaning, joy and balance.

This season of life, sometimes called “halftime”, is a pause in mid-life: To look back and reflect on what's gone well and not so well. To look ahead, get clear on your calling, and chart a course in your second half with those you love.

People's first thoughts are often around what they will do with their time. “If I sell my company or cut back on the time I spend at work, how can I use my expertise, wisdom and influence to make a meaningful impact?” It's a noble and important question. After all, they could just retire and golf, sail or travel. But many intuitively sense the emptiness of mindless leisure or chasing the next thrill. Often, the heart is longing for more – something that will outlast this lifetime.

My role is to be a guide, inspiring them with stories of what others are doing in their second half, to help expand their vision and lift their sights. With this new vision they will need a process to sort out the many aspects of their unique contribution, delineating the best opportunities from among the many good ones. It turns out that good questions are more helpful than smart answers. So I have become a student of good questions.

INTRODUCTION (CONT'D)

I don't have answers about what they should do next—that is a process of self-discovery. But I do know what the most common mistakes are. One is to view the mid-life transition solely as a time to change what they do – their work. It's natural at an inflection point to focus on discovering what will be fulfilling but less stressful, and I am committed to helping them sort this out. But, if that's all they resolve they will likely miss the richest opportunity for their second half. I have watched many people inadvertently overlook relationships in this quest for “significance.”

This eBook is dedicated to helping hard-charging leaders build deep, intimate relationships as they reinvent themselves for their second half. Intimacy with their spouse, kids, grandkids, friends and, most importantly for those who are coming from a faith perspective, with God.

Intimacy is a skill we are seldom taught or compensated for in our first half, however, it's essential to a rich and meaningful second half. Out of intimacy comes trust, understanding, and romance.

A few years ago, my wife Linda and I were leading a weekend gathering of CEOs, around the topic of “making your second half the best season of your life.” Having achieved success in their careers, they reached a point where achieving more success was losing its meaning and they were now looking for more significance. In one man's words, “I am long on cash and short on vision.” **They wanted to transition from making a living to making a life.**

At the end of the first day, an intense man at the far end of the dinner table leaned forward just as Linda started eating, and asked, “Linda, you spend a lot of time with women like my spouse who are married to a hard-charging type, so I have a question...I've busted my butt for 30 years making a boatload of cash for our family. My wife has lived like a princess...when you interact with women like my wife, do you ever sense any kind of gratitude for the lifestyle we've provided them?”

Ouch! What a complex and deeply-rooted question. But I was impressed by Linda's response. Filled with poise, composure and even compassion, she leaned forward and said, “Yes, I do often hear gratitude, but more often I hear that they inadvertently settled for material things and a lifestyle instead of the intimacy that they really wanted.”

The room went silent. The truth is powerful if presented humbly.

It's common for people like this CEO to focus on providing security and a comfortable lifestyle to those they love, but to inadvertently leave their family and friends with a lack of deep connection.

Keith is an engineer. He is kind, loyal and good company. I asked him what makes intimacy a struggle for him.

“What makes this connectedness or intimacy difficult from the outset is trying to get a mental image of it. It's hard to conceptualize. Anna and I both had parents who were happily married, but the depth of their relationship never set examples of intimacy. Secondly, my business has been a distraction, it's been the priority...I'm tired by the time I get home. Anna and the family get the leftover energy, so even when I am home, I opt out of doing things that

INTRODUCTION (CONT'D)

take more emotional energy.

Anna has expressed frustration with me, 'Do you care? Why don't you make time? You don't speak up and tell me what you're feeling.' Yesterday she commented about someone I mentor, 'You take notes on this guy and meet him on a regular basis...why can't you do that for me or show that level of interest in me?'

Looking at it from an engineer's perspective, it is like an undefinable problem. I'm not really sure what the solution should look like. It's not like mowing the lawn. When you are done, it looks good and you wait a week until it's time to do it again. Intimacy is like a never-ending project. Where do I start? And how do I know I am making progress in this area I know so little about?

Lastly, there are easier things on my to do list that are in my wheelhouse, have a definable timeline and provide more satisfaction. Compared to any intimacy initiatives, I am able to feel a greater sense of accomplishment with these than working on less-definable relational opportunities.

So Anna gets upset with me sometimes, saying, 'We don't have any depth in our relationship', but in the end, she always forgives. I continue to promise myself I will try to understand intimacy better, but habits are hard to break."

Another client, JD, was the CEO and owner of an environmental engineering firm. When he and his partners decided to sell, he joined a Halftime Roundtable to prepare for what was next.

"As I became more aware of my lack of significant relationships, I initially viewed the cause as some defect in me that other people didn't like, a sense of rejection, a lack of approval from others. That transitioned into an awareness of a deep desire to be known, and God placing that desire for relationships in my heart as a representation of His desire for a relationship with me. While my desire will only be fully satisfied in heaven, God's command in scripture is to love others as Christ did and His desire now is that I should pursue relationships with others in a way that Christ would, i.e., move toward them no matter the cost to myself. Anything short of that grieves God's heart."

When your heart begins to explore how to give back, you are naturally challenged by questions like, "How can I be more loving right here at home? What are the needs of my spouse and family, before I charge off to rescue some poor section of my city or work to solve world poverty?"

After more than 15,000 hours of coaching successful people at mid-life, I assess how well someone is doing in their second half, not by focusing on all the cool things they are accomplishing, but by asking about their closest relationships. Are those around them flourishing? Have they begun to put their spouse's and family's interests ahead of their own?

DISCOVERING THE NEED FOR INTIMACY

CHAPTER 01

For many successful people, real connections have been the casualty of stress, business travel and self-absorption. Halftime is a season of life when you can change that. Along this journey you will likely discover that mid-life renewal is less about doing and more about being. In this process, less of your identity will be wrapped up in your career or accomplishments, and more joy will come from relationships...beginning with your relationship with God, your spouse, your kids, and some deepening friendships.

Ironically, I have observed that out of the strength of this inner transformation comes real lasting impact in the world—the significance we were looking for all along. In fact, real, lasting impact in this world *begins* with intimacy with God. John 15 says it so clearly: “I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you’re joined with me and I with you, and that relationship is intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can’t produce a thing.” (*The Message*)

Or as the Apostle Paul wrote, “...pray that our God will make you fit for what He’s called you to be, pray that He’ll fill your good ideas and acts of faith with His own energy **so that it all amounts to something.**” (2 Thes 1:11, *The Message*)

God has always existed in deep, intimate community between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He intended for us to live in intimacy with Him and with each other. He’s invited us into the dance with them. However, sin and fear have created barriers for us in all directions. As babies, we communicated with our family through coos that expressed the deepest trust. Soon, we learned to be wary. Then we began to protect ourselves, hiding our most vulnerable thoughts and feelings from the disapproving eye of other kids, bullies or even parents. Missing the mark of God’s standards created distance between us and Him. We built social skills to smooth over this lack of heart connection with small talk, laughter or even intellectual conversations. But eventually, we began to sense there was something missing.

Some of us were so caught up in the pursuit of goals that we had little time to understand the value of intimacy or to learn to dismantle the barriers that stand in its way. Our culture sometimes confuses intimacy with sex. Sex can be part of intimacy, but intimacy is much more than sex.

Halftime Institute alumni often end up providing leadership to organizations or causes that are truly changing the world, but my observation is that as they mature, pursuing more accomplishment is no longer their primary focus. Relationships take center stage.

DISCOVERING THE NEED FOR INTIMACY (CONT'D)

Most men arrive at mid-life with few, if any, close friendships. Women tend to have more than men. Over the past twenty years I have explored why this is by asking each new person that I coach to tell me about their friendships. As I listen, I find that most men have lots of acquaintances, but few close friends with whom they share their deepest thoughts and feelings. When they let off the gas in their careers, they begin to realize relationships are not optional—they are essential. A new focus becomes the journey from isolation to intimacy. Sometimes it's easier to see what is missing than to know what to do about it.

In my own journey, I remember observing these kinds of relationships in others' lives and even in movies, but it was difficult to know how to begin to move in that direction. In addition, I was somewhat afraid of the awkwardness it might entail. You too may have begun to sense that rich and meaningful relationships would contribute to your joy, but not know exactly how to cultivate them. If you're like me, fear may be your primary obstacle.

Some fear the journey toward greater intimacy because it feels weak and unproductive. Others, because they feel that if a few close friends, or even God, really saw who they were on the inside they'd walk the other way. As we fight being exposed, we miss out on what God has in mind for living out significant second-half lives. When you reflect on what's timeless, you may conclude that the two things in life that last are the truth of God and relationships. Most of the legacy we are going to leave will occur through drawing close to God and people.

HOW DID INTIMACY GET SQUEEZED OUT IN OUR FIRST HALF?

CHAPTER 02

The four most common reasons that intimacy got squeezed out are:

1. Our focus on accomplishment turned our attention to the outer world of results and accumulation, putting a lower value on our inner world.
2. Our busy lifestyle left little time for the cultivation of intimacy or the emotional energy needed to develop these relational skills.
3. We learned to live largely in the future and not the present. Intimacy happens in the present.
4. When conflict arose in our relationships, the time pressures of work and family made it easier to just move ahead with silence and distance, rather than working hard and developing the skills to resolve conflict.

In what ways have deep relationships been squeezed out of your life?

How would you like your relationships to be different going forward?

Tom had been the CEO of a large public company for thirteen years when we began regular conversations about what he could do in the next season. I asked him a challenging but important question at the start: "Tell me Tom, what has all your winning cost you?" After some careful thought he replied, "Pretty much everything. After 30 years together, I lost the most wonderful woman you could be married to. I lost my daughters' respect. I pushed my body too long and hard and the stress finally caught up with me. Here I am out on my ranch alone – I have thousands of acquaintances around the world but no close intimate friends. And I have a big pile of cash that means very little to me."

Listening to Tom, and others like him, has deeply impacted my heart and is the primary motivator for me to help others develop more intimate relationships.

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY

CHAPTER

03

Imagine a spectrum of people. On one end, you have those who naturally focus on goals, results and accomplishments. On the other end of the spectrum are those who gravitate towards relationships. In my early years, I was at the goal-oriented end, where people were simply an essential ingredient for me to get things done. My wife, Linda, on the other hand, has always been more focused on relationships.

These complementary strengths worked well when we were young. I was a driven real estate developer and life was packed with young kids and hectic schedules. But, over time, I began to pay a price. Not only did Linda want more connection with me, but I started to sense the shallowness in my other relationships. My mentor, Bob Buford, and my three closest friends—my personal board of directors—pointed out this gap to me and encouraged me to make an effort to change. More importantly, they showed me how to change and walked with me on the journey.

First, they encouraged me to use my goal-oriented focus by making one of my top goals learning to communicate more intimately with Linda. That was an interesting idea that had not crossed my mind. After a few months I mustered up the courage to share this with Linda. I began to read every book I could find on intimacy, watched movies that I normally would not be interested in, like “The Notebook”. These gave me a mental picture of what life would feel like if I learned how to be more connected.

I found a “heart coach” and met with him every month. He gave me assignments to begin to open my heart. One month his assignment was to get in the habit of replacing the phrase “I think” with “I feel”. Over time, this process helped me get in touch with feelings rather than only focusing on ideas.

Additionally, I had dinner with one of the leading authors/experts on this topic to get his tips. These all helped me to understand what this richer way of doing life could look like, but none gave me the simple step-by-step plan that I needed to get started.

When I reached into my “toolbox for life”, I found some big wrenches, hammers and screw drivers that made me effective in business but very few tools that might help me in this new area. I needed some new tools, a few simple instructions and lots of practice. I wish someone had taught me to use the following structure of who, when, what and how to develop intimacy.

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY (CONT'D)

You can adapt these to where you are in this skill development process. There are four dimensions that I'll explore with you to give you a practical pathway to deeper, more intimate relationships. They are:

1. **WHO** – Who do you want to develop a deep rich relationship with? Sometimes we don't get down to the business of loving a few people extravagantly simply because we don't decide who those people are. Ultimately, it always boils down to names. We don't have time or energy to love everyone deeply or to pursue intimacy with lots of people, but we can with a few. **Who are the three to five people you would most like to connect with (in addition to your spouse and kids) – take a minute to jot their names down so you can keep them in your wallet or in your phone.** If you're coming from a faith perspective, then God probably needs to be at the top of this list.

If you need to develop new friendships rather than deepen existing ones, start by thinking about the kind of people you have most enjoyed or admired and the characteristics of people you would like to surround yourself with going forward. *Who would you likely call if you had something wonderful or tragic happen? Who energizes you? Where might you find them?* This clarity will help you recognize a potential great new friend when your paths cross.

Dr. Randy Williams was the anesthesiologist when our 8 year-old daughter Caroline had surgery. Caroline was afraid, but Randy came toward us through the doors, smiled at her, and picked her up in his arms. "Hi Caroline, I'm Dr. Williams, and I am going to take good care of you and bring you back to your mommy...you're going to be just fine." And then, he carried her into the operating room himself. Despite doing 20+ procedures a day in the surgical center, Randy took the time to do everything he could to make Caroline feel protected. After bumping into him at church, Linda said to me, "You need to get to know that guy." She was right. We've had a deep and growing friendship now for 20+ years.

Some people aren't safe. What you share with them is not kept confidential. They may be volatile or undependable. As I think about relationships now, I look for character first, then chemistry. Alignment of values and beliefs, yet diversity of perspective, personality and interests that bring so much richness to life.

In the next section we will refine this further into a small "dream team" of people you want to love, support and do life with.

2. **WHEN** – Relationships take time. When could you be with or connect with the people on your list? If you're serious, these people will begin to show up regularly on your calendar. We put time into what we really value. A date night with your spouse, weekly call with your adult kids, time to work out at the gym with your closest friend, or an annual weekend with your siblings. I was amazed to learn that on average, parents

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY (CONT'D)

spend about a half hour of real conversation with their teenage child each week. I have found that intentionally blocking off time for people moves my relationships from a wish to reality. Each morning, I have a standing appointment with God from 7:30-8am. It's the time that I sit quietly at home, surrounded by beauty, to quietly read the Bible (God's love letter to us), talk to Him in prayer, and sit and reflect on what He is saying to me. Three times a year I block off a silent solo retreat day – just to spend time with God hoping to hear from Him and share my deepest dreams, fears and challenges.

One of the most precious people in my life is our daughter Caroline. She is a missionary in France. If she is really among my top priorities, there should be ample evidence of that in my calendar. When she left for France we agreed to a weekly FaceTime call each Sunday so we could see each other face to face. And we have coffee together once a month on FaceTime – we both go to our favorite coffee shop and have a coffee date just like we did when she was growing up.

Recently, I was thinking about what kinds of gifts would be most meaningful to my close friends and siblings. Turns out they really don't need things. What they value most is if I take time regularly to encourage and support their young adult sons. I jotted down their names, and lo and behold there were ten. I wondered what on earth could I practically do for them, knowing they ranged in age from 14 to 34 years old. How much time could I give to this effort? I decided I could invest 90 minutes every other month.

I put a 90-minute recurring appointment on my calendar titled "My Friends' Sons". The appointment has their names listed and how they prefer to communicate: text, Facebook, email, phone, in-person, etc. Every time this appointment comes up on my calendar, I sit down and devote 90 minutes to reaching out to each of the ten young men. I may send a quick note of encouragement, or buy them a book, or send them a blog or a podcast I think might be helpful to them.

I wish I could share with you the string of texts and email interactions with these ten amazing guys. I have already seen God use this small investment of time to bless them and me. It deepens my friendships with their parents, as well.

For each person on your list, jot down some ideas for when you will connect with them. Be specific and remember that the time of day matters too. Some things are best early when you are fresh, others in the evening sitting by the fire together.

Some of my best conversations with friends have been during a long bike ride. But some of the most memorable conversations only take a few minutes.

3. WHAT – Intimacy is about knowing what's going on inside each other's hearts and minds. As Rick Warren said in *The Purpose Driven Life*, "vulnerability is the pathway

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY (CONT'D)

to intimacy.” You can spell intimacy as ‘into-me-see’. It means sharing not only life experiences, but also the fears and longings that go with them. It’s about vulnerability and exposure to each other’s deepest feelings, dreams and challenges, all met with loving acceptance.

Your first simple step is to find out what your friends and family want to know about your inside world that you don’t normally share. When you are aware of what they want to know, you can work on ways to share that with them in small doses, until it becomes a habit. Maybe start by asking your spouse what they want to know about your inner world.

As an example, here is a list of the top things Linda wants to know about my inner world.

She wants to know:

- My biggest dreams
- My fears and worries
- Disappointments in my life
- Special traits about her that I love most
- Frustrations I am experiencing
- Passions and interests (e.g. what I love about gardening and why)
- Our relationship (e.g. what is growing and deepening in our relationship)
- My spiritual life (e.g. what is God teaching me or saying to me now)
- Our kids (e.g. their personal development and ideas for time together with them.)
- Memories I most cherish

The second step is asking what you most want to know about their inner world. **How can you ask, listen and explore what is happening underneath the surface in their life?** Their longings, greatest joys and disappointments, fears and dreams. The best way to begin is to come up with a few open-ended questions. For example, “Tell me more about your growing up years.” Or, “What are you most excited about for this coming year?”

Back to my closest friends’ sons. I had coffee with one of them recently. Michael is headed to college in a few weeks on a golf scholarship. I am so proud of who he has become. He and I have met regularly for several years.

I know about his college, his national golf ranking and how his grades turned out. But before he leaves for college, I want to know what he is most afraid of and what he thinks his biggest risk might be in his freshman year. So, I asked him. “Michael, I am so proud of you. You know that already. But as you head off in a few weeks what I want to know is what are you most afraid of as you start college?” I listened and affirmed and made sure he knew I am available as a resource. Then I asked him what he felt his biggest risk might be. I was amazed by his self-awareness. As we parted,

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY (CONT'D)

our relationship was at an even deeper level than before we met. And from this, my friendship with his dad grows even deeper.

That experience happened because Michael is on my list of young men I am committed to. I took the time to set up coffee. And I developed the skill of asking good questions. Listening deeply is a gift of love and care. It's a skill each of us can cultivate and it's rooted in the belief that what this person feels or thinks is important to me.

That said, knowing what a friend thinks, believes or feels is really just the start of intimacy. What I find most connects me with the people I love is knowing how they think and why they believe what they believe. Over time, you can sort of anticipate what they will think or feel about a circumstance – this level of discovery and acceptance really knits your hearts together. This is the joy of knowing and being known.

This kind of communication often happens best as you do things together. **What kinds of activities could you plan to provide the time and setting for your relationship to grow? What activities would be most meaningful to them?** My closest friends like different things. One loves wine, cars and weight lifting, another likes long walks and having coffee together and another enjoys golf and have lunch on the balcony of the club overlooking the 18th hole. I like all of these as long as I can do it with them. They each know that what I value is quality time together.

4. **HOW** – How can you communicate these inner thoughts and feelings in a way that is meaningful to them and less awkward for you? **What are the easiest ways you can communicate your inner feelings with those you love?:**

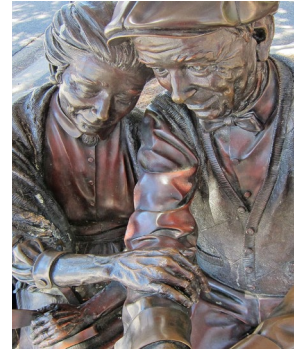
Is it a written card or email, a text or voice message, a picture or painting that conveys the message, gifts with special meaning, public praise, face to face and out loud (often the most difficult), or something else?

Our youngest daughter, Jennie, recently got married to a smart, funny, caring and faith-filled young man whom I think the world of – Chris. They asked me to officiate their wedding. It was a great opportunity for me to say out loud to Chris, with his whole family and best friends listening, that I admire and respect him. When you think of group settings like this (e.g. birthdays, holidays, funerals, baptisms), you may be surprised by how many opportunities you have to say something deeply meaningful to and about someone you love.

Much of what Linda wants to know about my inner world is difficult for me to verbalize. For lots of reasons. Some I still don't understand. It's easier for me to write them down in a card, email or text, or leave them on a voicemail. Sometimes, it's easier for me to post a compliment about Linda on social media alongside a photo I just took of her.

SIMPLE STEPS TOWARD INTIMACY (CONT'D)

Some creative ways of communicating can help – for example, a picture or a poem. One of the best ways I communicated my deep feelings to Linda was when I ran across this life-size sculpture of an old couple sitting on a bench. I was struck by the way their cheeks were touching as they were gazing off into the distance with a look in their eyes that said, “we did life well together.” Their legs were entwined, embracing, cane in-hand. That sculpture captured what I really want in my marriage, but was not able to put into words. When I came home with a photo of that sculpture and shared it with Linda, it communicated something that words might not have.



In his book, *The Seven Levels of Intimacy*, Matthew Kelly says, “Imagine taking a blind person to an art gallery and trying to describe each work of art. You couldn’t just say, ‘This one is a Picasso’ – that wouldn’t convey anything of its appearance. You’d have to describe the height, the width. Is the piece a painting, a sculpture, a print, a photo? Rough or smooth? You must describe the art in ways a blind person can understand. In the same way, we need to describe our inner world to the people with whom we are in a relationship. Don’t assume that they understand what you are talking about. When it comes to each other’s inner worlds, most of us are like the blind person you just took to the art gallery.”

These four steps will likely seem obvious to those of you who have always been good at intimacy. For those of us who have not, these steps may be intimidating and scary, but exactly what we need to get started. It’s like golf. When I started this journey toward intimacy, Linda said (with a smile) that it was like watching a really bad golfer. It was tempting for her, I’m sure, to tell me to set the clubs down and try another sport. Instead, what I needed was a few key pointers and lots of practice. Linda gave me the freedom to just try. So, I encourage you to follow these steps and take lots of swings.

One last thing before we build a plan – be patient. You really can’t rush the process of building deep connections. It goes at the pace of trust, and each person will react differently to your desire for a deeper relationship. I was so fortunate that three of my closest friends were already good at this and, for whatever reason, wanted a deeper friendship with me. My business partner was much more reserved, perhaps because he is from a different culture, and tends to be a little slower to warm emotionally. However, now after 30 years of being business partners we have a deep lasting friendship that is unlikely to be shaken by whatever lies ahead. Sometimes a friendship built slowly is even more comforting because you know it will stand the test of time.

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION

CHAPTER 04

You may already have some intimate relationships. This exercise is designed to help you think through ***what is***, ***what could be*** and then ***what will be*** (who you would like deeper relationships with and how you will go about it).

1. WHAT IS?

Use the assessment below to reflect on your current relationships. Score yourself 1-10 on these types of relationships in your life (1 means they are distant or nonexistent, and 10 means they are loving, intimate and life-giving). Write your score in the blanks below.

- Your inner circle: God, spouse ____, kids and grandkids ____, parents ____.
- Your surrounding relationships: siblings ____, closest friends ____, mentor ____.

What stands out to you from this assessment and what are the implications?

Insight #1

Insight #2

What areas are you most motivated to work on and why?

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION (CONT'D)

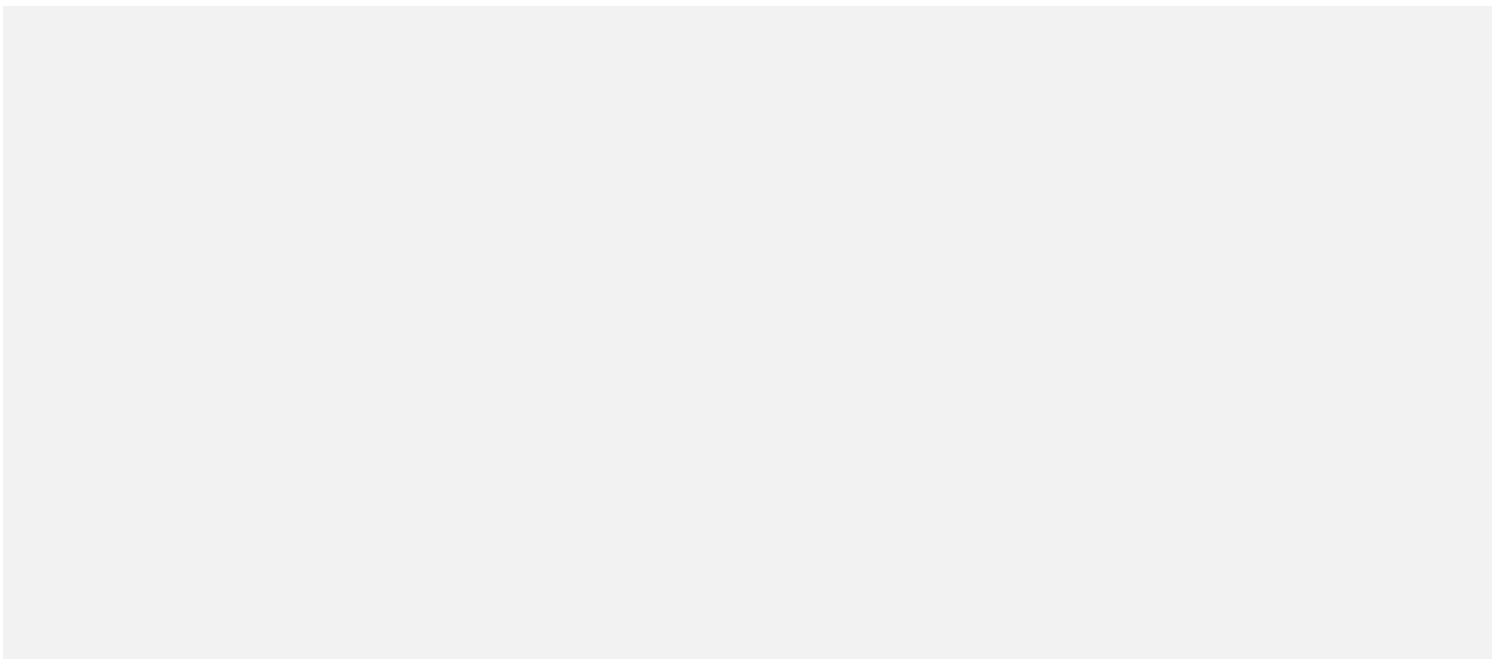
2. WHAT COULD BE?

You could spend the rest of your life surrounded by deep relationships. The famous business thinker and strategist, Peter Drucker, once said, “the people you surround yourself with and the books you read will shape who you become. What would it be like for you to be surrounded by people you love, admire and are deeply connected with as you go into this next season of life? I think of these people as my “Dream Team”.

Drawing can be a helpful tool when you are exploring something new. It helps us access other creative parts of our brain. Use the box below to draw a diagram of the most important kinds of relationships that you feel you need to flourish in your second half. My drawing includes God, my wife, my mentor, my kids, extended family, and my closest friends.

In your drawing insert names as best you can. Trying to go deep with too many people will likely become unsustainable.

Draw your own “Dream Team”



3. “WHAT WILL BE?” YOUR ROADMAP TO GREATER INTIMACY

Peter Drucker also said, “Some of the unhappiest people I know are planners.” He was not against planning, after all he is known as the “father of modern day management theory.” He went on to explain that while planning helps us gain clarity and set out initial steps and metrics, plans seldom play out exactly as we first put them down on paper. People who hold too tightly to a plan, and don’t adapt it along the way, will likely be disappointed.

Few of us launch into a new business without a plan or strategy. The following roadmap will bring some clarity and next steps, but you will need to adapt it along the way. For now, I suggest you print this roadmap and take an hour, fill in the blanks as best you can, then go over it with someone you trust for their input and improvements.

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION (CONT'D)

Your Roadmap to Deeper Connections

<i>Who</i>	<i>When (time/setting)</i>	<i>What (do/communicate together)</i>
God		
Spouse		
Kids & their spouses		
Extended family		
Friends		
Mentor		

30-Day Action Steps – What are the most important steps you will take?

-
-
-

ROMANCE: A BONUS OF PURSUING INTIMACY

CHAPTER

05

I believe there's compelling evidence that halftimers have a more romantic life, including an enhanced sexual relationship. Let me explain.

Twenty years ago, when I first began coaching people on this journey, this idea never even crossed my mind. Today, after listening to their stories, I believe the second half has the potential to not only be about more meaning, joy and balance, but better sex, as well.

In mid-life you begin to lose things—perhaps your looks, energy, resilience, or sex drive. Your spouse may begin to look older to you, gain weight, or begin to let their health slip and you're worried about what that will mean in the years ahead. Many of the men I have coached over the past few decades have told me that there is less intimacy and romance in their marriage than they had hoped for. They have become good at running the household with their spouse, but somehow the excitement and romance got left behind in the busyness and stress of family life.

I want to encourage and challenge you at the same time – **your best sex life may still be ahead of you.** Those who choose to stop at mid-life and think through who they are and what they care about, who get clear on their calling and become more others-focused find that those things enhance their marriage. As they declutter their lives, stress subsides. The by-product of learning intimacy skills is better sex.

There is compelling evidence that you will enjoy improved sex in your second half if you allow God to reinvent you by discovering your calling and beginning to give your time and talent away in alignment with that. Here are a few of the reasons. Test this hypothesis for yourself.

1. HAVING MARGIN AND STABILITY REDUCES YOUR STRESS LEVEL

Stress and responsibility are sex killers, particularly for women. A healthy mid-life renewal involves refining what you want for the long view and, as a result, decluttering your life so you can pursue those things. This decluttering process brings margin into your calendar and stability to your financial life.

Good things are often the enemy of the best things. Our first half is often filled to overflowing with good activities and commitments, perhaps at the expense of the best. It's hard to have a firm "no" if you don't have a solid "yes." Knowing your unique calling will give you a solid "yes."

ROMANCE: A BONUS OF PURSUING INTIMACY (CONT'D)

What are the low-value activities you allow into your schedule that are robbing you of the time you need to relax, unwind and refocus on your spouse so that you have the soulfulness for a great sex life? **Are there low-value activities that you could eliminate to create margin?** Make a “stop doing” list. Block that extra time on your calendar for your spouse. As psychologist Esther Peral said in her popular TED Talk about intimacy, “People who are good at long-term intimate marriages have learned to create a space where they leave “Management Inc.” and stop being responsible citizens and taking care of things. Responsibility and desire just butt heads. They don’t really do well together.”

Perhaps our homes, the complexity of our lives and the things we own preoccupy a good chunk of our subconscious mental capacity. Simplifying life helps. Living with significant financial margin and a clear long-term financial plan will provide you with peace of mind.

What elements are missing in your financial plan so that money is not a dark shadow hanging over your head robbing you of the peace to really enjoy the moments today? What will you do to reduce stress?

2. YOUR SPOUSE FEELS PURSUED AND LOVED

To move from success to significance is about giving yourself away. Often people who find themselves at halftime are focused initially on making a difference in the world. Leaving a legacy. But before long, the joy of serving others and living selflessly seeps into family and friendships. It becomes a way of life.

Jesus said it’s better to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). That applies in every area of life, but I am surprised by how long this has taken me to learn. We have all experienced what happens when we give financially, and we are surprised by how much joy it brings us when we see the healing and renewal it brings into other’s lives. As we give of our time to meet someone else’s deepest needs, the joy we experience surpasses using that time for simply our own pleasure.

This new orientation soon plays itself out at home. When I put Linda’s interests ahead of my own during the day, when I think of her as I plan our schedule for next year or our financial future, it develops a pattern of her feeling cherished. This, in turn, develops her respect and love for me.

3. MATURITY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE GROW INTIMACY

It takes years to really understand your spouse. The richest sex happens within the safety of a loving permanent relationship.

But it takes more than that – it takes the nuanced maturity of knowing the rhythm of your

ROMANCE: A BONUS OF PURSUING INTIMACY (CONT'D)

spouse's feelings, the other things happening in their world, what things distract their mind or worry them and what sets them free to be fully present with you.

What you lose as you age in terms of energy and looks, you gain multiple times over in maturity and emotional intelligence.

4. YOU BECOME MORE ATTRACTIVE TO YOUR SPOUSE

There is truth in the generalization that men want to be respected and women want to be cherished. When someone has a thoughtful halftime transition, God works on reshaping their heart toward loving and serving those around them and beyond. As your spouse sees you becoming more servant-hearted, focusing on the needs at home, your kids, aging parents, or making an impact in the lives of those who are suffering in this world – their respect for you grows. They may not say it, but soon you will know at a deep level that you have become more attractive to your spouse.

DeWayne is a talented, risk-taker who made tons of money in the oil and gas business. Recently, a storm destroyed major parts of the island where they have a home – and DeWayne went to work using his leadership skills to bring the island back. With many of the trees gone, he noticed more homes and shacks that he had driven past for years. He noticed people living in poverty on the very same island where he lives in luxury. In the middle of this crisis he discovered his purpose for his next season. We both laughed when he told me that his wife said, “This is the sexiest thing you have ever done in the 40+ years of our marriage.”

That's what happens.

This is the upward spiral of deeper intimacy that God intended all along, rather than the downward spiral toward isolation that often accompanies our first half journey to success. You serve those around you, they respond in love and respect and out of that you grow closer and serve them with more joy.

Having sex with a spouse who admires and desires you is a whole lot more enjoyable than when they think you are selfish and merely tolerate you.

5. BETTER HEALTH PROVIDES ENERGY FOR BETTER SEX

One of the first exercises on the journey from success to significance is to stop and assess your life's foundation – those inner elements that need to be solid if you are going to build a second half that stands the test of time. Health is one of those. Many people early in the halftime journey score themselves low in terms of how well they are stewarding their health. Before long they have a system and structure to build better habits of nutrition, sleep, cardio exercise, strength training, flexibility and balance. These elements combine to make you

ROMANCE: A BONUS OF PURSUING INTIMACY (CONT'D)

not only more healthy and attractive to your spouse but also a better sexual partner and less likely to be exhausted when you fall into bed at night.

6. GREAT SEX BLOSSOMS OUT OF INTIMACY

In *The Seven Levels of Intimacy*, Matthew Kelly argues that “if you truly wish to experience the upper reaches of physical intimacy you must first explore and develop the depths of emotional, intellectual and spiritual intimacy.”

My mentor’s advice to me when I turned 40 was, “Lloyd, you are entering a season of life when some men wonder if they would be better off with a younger woman, a trophy wife. Let me give you my perspective now that I’m in my mid-sixties. If you want a real trophy wife, make up your mind to make your wife your trophy. Treat her like a trophy. From my perspective, I would rather have real but wrinkled than to always be looking over my shoulder wondering if she really loves me.”

Seventeen years later, that advice has proven more true than I ever could have dreamed.

I took my mentor’s advice and began to treat Linda like a trophy wife. I took time to understand her love language, her strengths, her interests and her dreams. We have set aside time and money to get behind her calling which emerged as Moms Mentoring (www.momsmentoring.com).

I took our kids out for coffee to intentionally recalibrate their thinking about who their mom is in our family. I told them, “this is not a country club and your mom is not your slave,” which they thought was pretty funny. Then, I took out a piece of paper and on the front I wrote “Mom’s dreams” and on the back I wrote “What will we do about Mom’s dreams.” They wrote out what they felt were Linda’s dreams and what they would do to get behind them.

I began to block off one workday each week that I call a “Linda Day.” It’s a day that we spend together doing a blend of fun stuff with the goal of connecting deeply. Some of these days are golden days, others are just good days. The golden days move the needle in our relationship in ways that are hard to put into words. The good days allow us to talk through or experience what makes the golden days possible. After nine years of investing one day of the week as a “Linda Day,” I can say it’s the most important day of my week. I know that not everyone can afford to set aside a full day each week to just hang out with their spouse, but it does take some regular time together beyond talking about kids, vacations or the mechanics of life to build intimacy.

The funny thing is that Linda looks better today than she ever has. This deep sense of permanency and being cherished has freed her up to blossom – she works hard to stay in shape and to dress well, but mostly you can see her sense of well-being coming from deep inside.

ROMANCE: A BONUS OF PURSUING INTIMACY (CONT'D)

This is about leadership. If you want your spouse to feel cherished, it will take leadership and effort. Here is timeless wisdom from the Bible:

“Dear friend, pay close attention to this, my wisdom; listen very closely to the way I see it. Then you’ll acquire a taste for good sense; what I tell you will keep you out of trouble. The lips of a seductive woman are oh so sweet, her soft words are oh so smooth. But it won’t be long before she’s gravel in your mouth, a pain in your gut, a wound in your heart... You don’t want to squander your wonderful life, to waste your precious life among the hardhearted... You don’t want to end your life full of regrets, nothing but skin and bones, saying, ‘Oh, why didn’t I do what they told me? Why did I reject a disciplined life? Why didn’t I listen to my mentors, or take my teachers seriously? My life is ruined! I haven’t one blessed thing to show for my life!’... Enjoy the wife you married as a young man! Lovely as an angel, beautiful as a rose - don’t ever quit taking delight in her body. Never take her love for granted!” (Prov. 5:1-20, *The Message*)

I hope this eBook has proved my first sentence true – there is compelling evidence that deep, intimate relationships not only bring more meaning and joy into our second half of life, but also pave the road to lasting impact in this world.

This is truly a work-in-progress, and I welcome your thoughts and learnings. Feel free to email me at Lloyd.Reeb@halftime.org.

Cheers to Connections!



SUMMARY

CHAPTER

06

We've talked about what real intimacy looks like and why it is important:.

1. God designed us to be in community with others – to know and be known.
2. It's the key to a rich and meaningful life.
3. It brings joy and contentment.
4. It allows us to have a better sexual relationship.

We discussed how to begin the journey to real intimacy:

1. Determine who, when, what and how.
 - Assess your connections – both present and future
 - Draw a diagram of your “Dream Team”
2. Build your roadmap.
3. Commit to practice. Make the commitment and fix your eyes on the long-term destination of being finally connected with deep, intimate relationships.

Your second half could be the best season of your life—not just filled with more meaning joy and balance, but also the most intimate.

If you're not clear on your calling, need help getting free to pursue your dream, or aren't sure how to get going, I encourage you to explore the Halftime Institute, www.halftime.org.

OTHER RESOURCES

One of the most important relationships people overlook as they think about their second half is their spouse. When kids leave home or if you change your work, its disruptive. There are some simple ways you can better understand these transitions and communicate together that will help you build a plan that enables you and your spouse to flourish. To explore this element of your second half, click and download ***“Halftime For Couples”***. www.halftime.org/couples

When asked what the elements of the perfect second half would be, most people say they want their family to thrive. But what can you do to build a “thriving family”? To explore this element of your second half, download ***“Building a Thriving Family in your Second Half.”***

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lloyd Reeb is a successful real estate developer and retirement housing owner who made a mid-life transition, looking for greater meaning, joy and impact in his second half. Now, he is helping leaders plan their second half. He helped launch the Halftime Institute, a global team that teach, coach and connect successful men and women in pursuit of significance, and has taken this message around the world.

He is the author of ***From Success to Significance: When the Pursuit of Success Isn't Enough***; ***The Second Half: Real stories, Real adventures, Real significance***; and along with his wife, wrote the latest book in the Halftime series titled ***Halftime for Couples***.

