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I Don't Want a Divorce

Four-step solution to the clam/crowbar predicament:

1. Have three thirty-minute couple talk times each week. The man is responsible for scheduling these times and putting them on the calendar. Create a place in your home that is private, quiet, and comfortable with no distractions to talk—virtually all of your intimacy will occur during this time.
2. The woman shares one-way and the man reflects what he hears.
 - o Men struggle with female communication for two reasons: they feel that women talk so much that they get lost, and they feel that women expect an instant response.
 - o Women: try to talk about one topic at a time, don't expect him to respond, and categorize what you say into two buckets:
 - Maybe-he'll-respond category. These are topics that interest you and that your man may or may not find interesting enough to give a response.
 - I-need-him-to-respond-topics. Always flag vital topics so your man knows that giving you a response is critical. Say something like, "Honey, this means a lot to me, and when you're ready, I need your response."
 - o Men meanwhile need to respond with reflective listening. This lets your wife know that you actually understand what she is saying.
3. The man processes and responds. Identify the topics that you find interesting and plan to respond to. Keep a pad of paper handy and write down what you plan to respond to at the next couples talk time.
4. Talk about a topic three times. Between couple talk times come up with new reactions, new perspectives, and new emotions about the topic. Talking about one topic in one sitting will never get you intimacy. Talking about one topic in three sessions, with both of you doing further processing in between sittings, will get you intimacy.

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