

## INTIMACY, SEX & RELATIONSHIP

# A Time Of Ending, And A Time Of Awakening



---

---

### DR. SANDRA SCANTLING

**E** **DITOR'S NOTE:** The Intimacy, Sex & Relationship column ends today. Dr. Sandra Scantling has written this informative column for four years for The Courant. Budget limitations have led to the decision to end this weekly feature. Dr. Scantling is a licensed clinical psychologist and certified sex therapist in Farmington. You can e-mail her at [AskDrScantling@aol.com](mailto:AskDrScantling@aol.com); her website is [www.drsandy.com](http://www.drsandy.com).

In Tolstoy's "The Death of Ivan Ilych," as the main character suffers with a painful terminal illness, he awakens to an important life lesson he has neglected ... to love and to share compassionately with those around him. Not unlike the transformational awakening of Ebenezer Scrooge in Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," he is shaken into a new persona that is good, kind and warm as he is given a glimpse of his cold, lonely grave.

Awakening is an ancient theme. The Buddha awakened to the fact that there is an undying happiness in each of us that we can achieve through human effort.

Similarly, the Jewish people have just experienced an "awakening" as they enter into a New Year called Rosh Hashana. During this holy time, a wind instrument called the "shofar" is sounded, calling the Jews to turn their souls to reflection and repentance, to "awaken from slumber" and take action, to make amends to those we have injured not through word, but through deed.

Who among us doesn't long for human connection? But instead of taking that first step and picking up the phone, we wait for the other person to make the first move, immobilized by our principled stubbornness. I know countless people who have cut off relationships with their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, children and friends over trivial matters. Some people can't even remember what the rift was about.

As the years pass, how are your choices working to enrich your life? Perhaps you think tomorrow will be better, without any effort on your part. As we struggle to recover from a faltering economy, we squander riches that are irreplaceable: a missed hug, kiss, or expression of endearment.

Its unfortunate that it sometimes takes a brush with death or a serious illness to appreciate who or what is truly important. When Douglas, a 38-year-old competitive race car driver, survived a near-fatal crash, he described feeling "reborn" and filled with gratitude for being given "another day." As he narrowly escaped from his car, he turned to see it engulfed by flames. Although he and his wife, Kim, had filed for divorce, he rushed into her arms as she watched in horror from the stands. "There was nowhere else I wanted to be," he told me at one of our sessions. "It made me recognize how much I love her." Doug and Kim are still together today, working hard on keeping their love strong.

Getting a glimpse of what life holds for you isn't easy when we're consumed with our day-to-day existence. It involves a conscious decision to stop the action, step back, and question our choices.

Awakening to the power of now, the possibilities of the next moment, the fulfillment of our longings, and so years from now you will not look back in regret.

*"... Human beings are not born once and for all on the day their mothers give birth to them, but ... life obliges them over and over again to give birth to themselves."*

— **Gabriel García Márquez**

And so, all things must come to an end. After almost four years, this is my last Intimacy, Sex, and Relationship column in the Hartford Courant.

I thank my editors, the staff, and you — my loyal readers — for all of the many e-mails and personal stories you have shared with me.

I will miss "talking" to you in this way, but invite you to write me any time at [AskDrScantling@aol.com](mailto:AskDrScantling@aol.com). And please make sure to check my website for news and information at [www.drsandy.com](http://www.drsandy.com).

Wishing you love ... Dr. Sandy