



STEFFEN
COUNSELING SERVICES

Understanding the Wheel of Consent

A Quick Reference for More Intentional Connection

The Wheel of Consent®, developed by Betty Martin, helps us understand *who is doing the action, who it is for, and whether everyone has willingly agreed*. It encourages clearer communication, mutual respect, and more satisfying experiences in relationships.

The Four Experiences

Experience	What It Means	Example
Serving	I touch you for your benefit , because you've asked for it.	"Would you like me to rub your shoulders?"
Receiving	I ask to receive touch that I want .	"Would you stroke my hair for three minutes?"
Taking	I touch you for my enjoyment , with your permission.	"May I run my fingers through your hair because I enjoy it?"
Allowing	I agree to let you touch me for your enjoyment .	"Yes, you may stroke my hair for three minutes."

Before You Begin

Pause and ask yourself:

- ☐ What do I genuinely want right now?
- ☐ What am I comfortable saying yes to?
- ☐ Is there anything I'd rather decline today?
- ☐ Can I change my mind if something doesn't feel right?

Remember:

Consent is ongoing. You can pause, adjust, or stop at any time.

Helpful Questions to Ask

Instead of guessing, try asking:

- "What would feel good for you today?"
 - "Would you enjoy this?"
 - "May I...?"
 - "How does this feel?"
 - "Would you like more, less, or something different?"
 - "Would you like to stop?"
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Common Misunderstandings

Myth: Saying "no" hurts the relationship.

Reality: Honest boundaries build trust.

Myth: Good partners should know what the other wants.

Reality: Healthy intimacy grows through communication, not mind reading.

Myth: If I agreed once, I have to keep agreeing.

Reality: Consent can be withdrawn at any time.

Notice What Comes Up

After practicing, reflect on questions like:

- Was it easier to ask or to give?
- Did I clearly know what I wanted?

- Was it difficult to hear or say "no"?
 - Did I feel relaxed, nervous, excited, or uncertain?
 - What helped me feel safe and connected?
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Gentle Reminders

- ✓ There is no "right" way to practice.
 - ✓ Curiosity is more valuable than perfection.
 - ✓ Small conversations build deeper trust over time.
 - ✓ Clear requests and honest boundaries create greater intimacy.
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Keep Practicing

The more you practice expressing what you want, listening to your partner, and honoring each other's boundaries, the more natural these conversations become. Every respectful interaction is an opportunity to strengthen trust, connection, and intimacy.