

VERBATIM

FREE SPEECH

*POST asks four Rochesterians
to discuss a single topic: Intimacy*



I like to think about how social media has affected our notion of intimacy. Distance and lifestyle choices have always been major barriers to intimacy, until social media sought to create an ongoing sense of closeness despite those barriers. We started out with the intention of supplementing dwindling intimacy by maintaining friendships en masse. As a result, we have the privilege of projecting a groomed version of daily life through our online profiles. Maybe it's only posing as intimacy, or maybe we've mistakenly labeled it as such, but it definitely adds a new dimension to the concept for those of us on the grid.

—Najia Zayed, creative director,
Canto Magazine



What is intimacy if not the sharing of a secret? And what an intimate experience, to witness in real time, the musical disclosure of a soul—the deepest secret of all—or from the perspective of a performer, the baring of a vulnerable spirit of creation; to be accepted and encouraged by a roomful of glowing peers who actually care that you're making and sharing your art...The conditions of intimacy seem to me to be a certain openness of spirit; a trust; a spark...Intimacy is about closeness. It's not necessarily physical closeness, but the way that we can blend into one another without even touching.

—Laura Jones, artist, musician,
and poet



Think about how many times you have desired to express something to someone verbally and/or physically and held back? Why? Trust may be a barrier. When the fear of the unknown or rejection starts to creep in, these become barriers. I refer to this as “feeding the monster.” An intimate relationship relies on mutual trust in knowing the other person has your best interest at heart. Are you clear about what is in your interest? This is why I stress the importance of knowing your own wants, needs, and preferences in order to feel more confident in communicating. This will also help you to feel more secure and give you the ability to truly express yourself. Open the lines of communication by establishing frequent “check-ins.” In doing this, you are leaving no room to feed the monster.

—Dr. Jessica Germano-Fokin,
licensed mental health counselor
and owner of *Sexual Health Discoveries*



Once a foundation of mutual trust and respect has been made with another person, either on a basis of extended periods of interaction or from relying on a more immediate instinctual connection or gut feeling, I am comfortable being emotionally intimate with them. Being vulnerable in an open and honest way, without seeking any pity, sympathy, or validation, is a wonderful and freeing experience... Sexual intimacy needs that same foundation of trust and respect.

—Benton Sillick, Musician
and Cook