It's tragic, but true, that the first baby often sinks a marriage. You would think that it would be the other way around, that a baby would draw a husband and wife closer together. However, there are very good reasons why children in general, and babies in particular, tend to make marriages worse, not better particularly as it is so challenging to cope with the dramatic change of lifestyle. What is really going to change? in one word: everything! The changes begin as soon as you either decide you are ready to have children or find out that you are pregnant. Your communication skills will be put to the test in this stage and will prove essential in your adjustment and continued feelings of closeness and satisfaction. Not only will you have brand-new things to discuss, but you will also have more conflicts to resolve. Working together to openly discuss changing needs, emotional reactions, and newly identified expectations will help reduce the conflicts 'that will likely arise if these things are not discussed. Once the baby arrives, you may ask, "Whatever happened to sleeping in, spontaneity, late-night movies, and holding hands?" The baby happened. No matter how much you each wanted this new little bundle of joy, you need to be prepared for rough waters ahead. The changes that occur at the birth of your first child are immeasurable, and 2t some point you will realise that life will never he the same again. This stage includes an emotional roller coaster such as you could never have imagined. You go from the joy of seeing your new creation for the first time to the fear of being inadequate as a parent from the pride of- watching your child develop and learn each new skill to the loneliness of feeling disconnected from your spouse. There can be post- natal depression and roller coaster goes on and on. Tin's new stage of your relationship requires that you change certain, expectations of how much energy you wRS have at the end of the day for conversation or housework. How you define closeness and intimacy may need to be changed as well.