



Betrayals in Marriage

*Extramarital Affairs
and How To Stop Them
from Ruining Your
Relationship*

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The information in this e-book is for educational purposes only and does not create or constitute a therapeutic relationship between the reader and the author.

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Introduction

Getting married is a great milestone in any person's life, and is a commitment that requires strength and unconditional love. It is a lifelong partnership, and is a blessing that allows you to wake up next to someone you love, every day for the rest of your lives. For the lucky ones, marriage ends up growing and maturing into a beautiful, lifelong relationship.

However, in some unfortunate cases, the marriage ends up in shambles after betrayals, lies, and sneaking around comes into the picture. Trust is a major foundation of a great marriage. In fact, it is a major foundation for any relationship. When your spouse has an affair, it flies in the face of your relationship and the life that you built together.

An affair has devastating effects on a marriage, and leaves a lot of pain in its wake. It leaves each person questioning the time they've spent together, the life

they've built together, and whether the love they share is real. Seventeen percent of divorces are caused by affairs.

Is there a way to stop it from happening? Is it possible to stop it in its tracks? Can people actually fall in love again with the person they married after having an affair with someone else? Though it is different for each couple and each individual, we'll be discussing some things that may help you save your relationship, if you choose to do so.

There are times when it is possible to save a partnership despite the hurt that comes with the discovery of an extra-marital affair. This ebook is a tool to help you achieve that if you so desire.

If your spouse had an affair or continues to have one, it is understandable to feel incredibly down and devastated. It is normal to question the life that you've known, and to question whether you truly know the person you are with.

This ebook – and couples counseling -- will help you deal with those feelings, and to possibly move on from them. From these resources you can find possible solutions that will help you cope and deal with the emotional torment you may be feeling at the moment. It's a hard journey, but remember that it isn't a hopeless one. Hold on to hope and love, and with persistence, you will get through these trying times.

Given that the situation is greatly different for the faithful spouse than it is for the other spouse with the third party, we'll address each separately.

Part 1: The Faithful Spouse

I never saw it coming

This is so often the case in marriages that fall apart due to extramarital affairs. Faithful spouses may not have any clue what's going on when their backs are turned, and the one having the affair has managed to keep it going without their spouse knowing.

If you are the type who feels up to giving your marriage a second chance, even after infidelity, then there are some signs that may help you figure out whether your partner is having an affair.

Take note that this is different from simply “snooping around”. There are at least 14 signs that you want to be aware of to detect the affair early and to be able to discuss it with your partner.

While these are signs that your partner *may* be having an affair, they are not definite and don't immediately mean that your partner is being unfaithful.

Nonetheless, they may be signs that there are other problems present in your relationship that you should definitely work out.

1. Emotional Disengagement

This is an obvious sign that could mean your partner is being unfaithful. Most often, someone who is having an extramarital affair becomes disengaged emotionally from their spouse.

It's harder to balance two relationships than people think. We all have a set of emotional resources that can be depleted, and we often don't have enough of these resources to be capable of emotionally investing in two relationships at the same time.

It is inevitable that one of these two will suffer, and in the case of extramarital and marital relationships, it's often the one with the spouse that falls to the wayside.

This sign is pretty straight-forward. The partner who may be having an affair detaches from his or her partner. It may feel like the partner is simply acting out what he or she feels should be done, rather than doing what he or she wants to do. Emotional absence may manifest itself in different ways, but the overall impact is to make the one spouse alienated and isolated from the other.

2. Physical Disengagement

This often comes in partnership with emotional disengagement. Partners who experience physical distance often have something else going on. If your spouse consciously avoids physical contact with you, he or she may already be intimate with someone else. Again, this isn't a surefire sign that your partner is having an affair, but all the same, it's a sign that something isn't right between the two of you.

This avoidance of physical intimacy may manifest itself in different ways, and not just in the bedroom. It may be as simple as your partner not wanting to kiss you, not wanting to hold you, or not wanting to spend long periods of time with you in the same vicinity. The partner who is emotionally and physically disengaged will

isolate into “their own world”. This is a world where you feel like strangers, and where you may feel that your physical and emotional connections are lost.

3. Disappearance of “Couple Gestures”

Couple gestures simply refers to the usual activities that you used to do together. Whether these would be planning trips together, watching movies together, eating together, discussing future plans and the like, the disappearance of these in your married life is worrisome.

If you suggest doing these activities and your partner negates them actively, or shows no interest in having time alone with you, then this may be a sign that your partner would rather be doing these things with someone else. This is an important sign that you should take note of, and try to discover more about.

4. The Lack of Anger

Ironically, the disappearance of anger during conflicts is a sign that your partner may be a sign of being more disengaged than you think. Anger, despite being a negative behavior, is still a form of being emotionally involved and invested in a relationship, even during times of conflict.

Simply put, anger from your spouse during conflicts may be a good sign that your partner still cares enough about your relationship to be angry with you and with the situation at hand. Though this isn't certain, it may be a good thing, despite being unpleasant.

5. Extremely Sudden Changes in Appearance

If your partner suddenly goes through unusual or extreme changes in behavior for no apparent reason, this may not always be a good sign.

Often, when spouses change their physical appearances without saying a word to you or mentioning any plans for change to you, they may be doing it for a different person and a different reason than just wanting to look good. While this may seem like a bit of a stretch, it can be a sign that the changes may be because of someone else.

6. Extremely Sudden Changes in Behavior & Attitude

Sudden changes in mood and behavior towards you in particular are even more alarming than changes in appearance. It is undeniable that all of us get frustrated and irritable when we're being pulled in two opposite directions at the same time.

Whether this may be trying to juggle work priorities, goals, and the like, it causes a lot of emotional tension that may manifest in bad behaviors towards others.

This same pull is undoubtedly felt by those having extramarital relationships. Just like trying to juggle priorities, people who are being unfaithful are trying to juggle two relationships at the same time, as well as making sure that their partners are unaware of each other.

Concrete examples of these changes might include:

- the sudden appearance of new habits and patterns
- increase in frequency of expressions of contempt
- unkind remarks about how you look
- criticism on how you think
- put downs about how intellectual you are
- ridicule for how you've gained weight
- disapproving comments on how you dress
- picking fights for extremely small reasons

Criticizing and focusing on the negative things about a spouse may be a form of rationalization that having a relationship on the side is justified, and even right. It is a way to fend off guilt and self-loathing.

While these may be attributed to stressors outside of your marriage, sudden changes like these are dangerous for your relationship. It may also be a sign that s/he is feeling trapped, and would prefer to be with someone else.

In either case, it's a sign that something is amiss and needs to be fixed. Having an extramarital relationship creates a lot of strain, and chances are he or she will take this out on his spouse.

7. Guilty Gestures and Behaviors

We all have ways of approaching our partners after big fights in order to make up for what happened. There are different ways of making up, ranging from taking you on romantic dates to rekindle the flame, or presenting you with expensive gifts. While excessive affection may feel nice and may be a good thing once and a while, sudden changes in the frequency of these behaviors for no apparent reason may make extra affection a cause for concern.

If your partner suddenly keeps doing things that he or she usually does after a big fight for no obvious reason, don't just take this with a grain of salt. It is almost unavoidable that your partner will feel guilt if he or she is balancing another

person with you in secret. These dramatic behavioral changes may be a way to make up for infidelity, without actually letting you know what's really going on.

Of course, this is not to say that all random affectionate gestures are a sign that your partner is cheating. All the same, be aware of these changes and reflect on these newfound habits. You may also just ask them up front as to why they're being extra sweet in a casual way that isn't confrontational.

A physical red flag that may come up when your partner is being unfaithful is when you ask them casually about the reasons behind these bursts of sudden affection. Often, spouses who are hiding something will avoid your gaze and will avoid looking at you.

Remember, it's always harder to lie straight to someone's face, and during these times, the person covering something up will try to diffuse his or her tension by fidgeting, turning away, or being overly stiff in trying to convince his or her partner that nothing else is going on.

8. Sudden Increase in Secretive and Unusual Behavior

This is always a sure-fire sign that something is going on with your spouse. Again, it doesn't immediately mean that your partner is cheating on you. It may be because he got fired from work, has gotten into trouble, feels differently about things that used to matter in your relationship, and the like.

However, excessive secretiveness is never a good thing. While it may not immediately mean that he or she is involved with someone else in secret, it doesn't mean that they are not, either.

Unusual behavior combined with shady and avoidant behavior is even more alarming. These unusual behaviors manifest themselves in different ways, such as:

- being vague about where he or she is going and doing
- avoiding the opportunity for you to ask questions
- having hushed calls with people you don't know
- changes in body language
- emotional disengagement
- physical disengagement
- reluctance to go out with you

In short, general behavior that seems suspicious may be a sign that there are things going on that are worth worrying about.

9. “The Number You Have Called is Unavailable At The Moment...”

Has your spouse suddenly stopped taking your calls? Has he or she stopped answering your messages without any apparent reason? When you ask why, has he or she given you vague or suspicious answers? Do you no longer have any idea where your spouse goes when he leaves the house at night, or during days that you’re supposed to spend together?

Usually, people who are having affairs naturally lessen chances that their spouses will find out about where they are or what they’re doing when they’re actually with their other girlfriends or boyfriends.

The first instinct is to close off the channels where you can connect with him or her, lessening the burden of trying to lie to you while they’re with the 3rd party. This also gives unfaithful partners a chance to come up with a plausible excuse to hand off to you when they finally get home, leaving you to figure out on your own whether what you’re being fed is actually the truth.

It may be true that they were busy at the time you called, but people with nothing to hide often make the effort to get back to you, or at the very least, won’t be completely unavailable. It is unlikely that the moment they go out, they will shut their phones for no apparent reason.

If this is a regular occurrence, then it may be a sign that something else is going on, and it isn’t his relationship with you.

10. I got married? To who?

Does your spouse never have time for you anymore? If you hardly see him or her anymore without any good (and *plausible*) reason, this is definitely something to worry about. The tricky part is that he really may be busy at work and with other things, but he may also be busy in an affair with a 3rd party.

The only way to know is to discuss with them the reasons behind why you don’t see them much anymore, and hope for an honest answer. While this may sound like something useless, it’s still a start.

The question is, how do you separate the truth from the lies? In the same way that you should be aware of the other signs, try to take note of how your spouse answers your questions and inquiries. If he immediately reacts with hostility and tries to shut you down with accusations of you not trusting him or her enough, most likely, there is something else going on.

Most faithful partners who are just busy with work and other things will tell you straight up, and will actually be more understanding and try to work something out with you.

Immediate and unusual hostility is a sign that they may be trying to use their shocking behavior as a deterrent, leading you off a path that may get them exposed in the end.

11. Trust Your Instincts

No matter what tips professionals give you, you are the one in the best position to figure out the changes your spouse is going through. Only you will be able to observe his or her changes in attitude towards you, and whether these are usual behaviors or suspicious behaviors.

Trust your instincts. Though it may not always be because of affairs, your instincts are often good indicators that something is rocking the boat. Trust them, but act on them rationally.

Try to think about the possible reasons you may be feeling troubled, and discuss them calmly with your partner. Remember, it may also be stress and natural life changes that are getting you jumpy. Don't immediately pounce on conclusions and take them as fact, but also don't dismiss the possibilities.

12. Changes In The Bedroom

Sudden and unexplained changes in your sex life may be welcome, but they are not always a good sign. Either a dramatic increase in sexual interest or a sudden decrease in sexual interest may signify that your partner is being unfaithful. If he or she distances themselves from you, it may mean that your partner has developed intimacy issues with you and that he or she may be getting sexual fulfillment from someone else on the side.

Remember, however, that it is natural to have a gradual decline in sexual activity over time. But, sudden decreases in sexual interest coupled with emotional alienation is a sure fire sign that something negative is going on, and this may include the possibility that your spouse is having an affair.

Sudden increases that may be overwhelming without any apparent reason are also something to pay attention to. Scientifically, it's been found that having an affair naturally increases in libido and hormone levels, including testosterone. If your partner is unusually hungry for more sex, it may be a sign that someone else is responsible for revving them up and making them ready to go, all the time.

13. Constant Jabbering About A New “Friend”

While it may sound, well, stupid, that someone would actually talk to their spouse about their girlfriends or boyfriends to their spouse, it is surprisingly common. After a while, the affair becomes an uncontrollable habit and the affair becomes like a drug. Sneaking around is most often addictive to the unfaithful spouse, and it eventually grows into something he or she can no longer control.

Like a drug addiction, it's difficult to keep it from seeping into other aspects of life. A way of coping with the excitement and the inescapable pull of their lover on the side is to talk about him or her in what they think is a casual, normal way. But to the spouse, the talk may seem obsessive and immediately unusual.

Remember the tip about trusting your instincts? There is a 99% chance that all your alarm systems will go off when your partner does this. While you can attribute this to just being overly jealous, you will definitely know when your partner can no longer help talking about their human addiction, and unfortunately, there is a great chance that this unusual behavior points to something more than just a friendly relationship.

14. Excessive Defensiveness

When you ask your faithful partner about their day or where they've been, their reaction isn't usually defensiveness. When you aren't hiding anything, these questions come to you normally. Giving answers isn't hard, particularly if they're true. You may even want to tell your partner about all the great things that happened to you, or the bad things that happened to you.

When your spouse is being unfaithful, it is often difficult for them to recount a cover story that never happened. The details of the story may be inconsistent, and often may be excessively detailed or extremely vague.

The 14 Red Flag Signs of Infidelity Recapped

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Emotional disengagement2. Physical disengagement3. Disappearance of couple gestures4. Lack of anger5. Changes in appearance6. Sudden changes in behavior and attitude7. Guilty gestures and behaviors | <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increase in secretive, unusual behaviors2. Unavailability to communicate3. No time for you4. Triggered instincts5. Changes in bedroom6. Jabbering about “new friend”7. Excessive defensiveness |
|--|---|

These 14 signs may seem like a lot to take in, but in the end, it really is up to you. You are the best person to tell whether something is amiss in your relationship, and whether this change is for the better or whether it is for the worse.

Remember that you know your spouse, and the time you've spent together has given you an accurate idea about how he or she behaves in daily life. Your instincts will often lead you to pay attention to these changes, and will lead you to the truths which may be hard to hear. Opening a conversation like this with your partner is perhaps one of the most difficult things to do.

However, it is without a doubt the right thing to do. You cannot continue to live in doubt every time your spouse walks out that door. It's not healthy for you or your relationship. Talking to your spouse about these things honestly will help you find out whether your fears are grounded or not, and will put you on the path to either moving on or trying to save your marriage.

It's Okay Not to Be Okay

Knowing and detecting signs is the easy part. Trying to separate the truth from jealousy and irrational suspicion is another thing.

If you see many of these signs in your marriage and have not confronted your partner about them, you may be experiencing certain emotions that will deter you from wanting to find out the truth. You may also be questioning whether you have the right to know, or whether you should even know in the first place.

The first thing to do before anything else is to focus on the self, and your need to know the truth.

Dr. Robert Huizenga, known as the *Infidelity Coach*, focuses on a few questions and answers that may help you through the difficult transition phase of deciding whether there is something more you should be looking into rather than just dismissing your suspicions as nonsense.

First and foremost, Huizenga clarifies that feeling bombarded and overwhelmed with your suspicions is a normal thing, particularly for those whose partners have explicitly shown disengagement from the relationship. If you feel like your spouse is straying, there are basic questions and thoughts that will continue to bother you:

- What is he/she doing right now? Is he/she with another partner?
- Can I trust my instincts, particularly when they say something is going on?

- Is this just my paranoia talking?
- I feel disgusted with myself for checking phone records, voice mail, etc.; all because I feel like my partner is being unfaithful.
- I can't help constantly thinking about the fact that my partner might be cheating on me? How can I get this out of my head?
- If I confront him/her and he/she denies it, what am I going to do then? Am I supposed to believe it? How do I know if he/she is telling the truth?

Although many people are faced with signs that their partner is being dishonest and unfaithful, many still let their relationships deteriorate out of shame. They feel shame that they don't trust their partner, shame that may or have resorted to snooping around, and shame that they haven't been able to keep their spouses interested in the marriage. These dilemmas are very real, and very difficult to tackle.

Huazinga emphasizes a very first step: tell yourself that it's okay.

It's okay that you want to know what happens when your relationship seems to be falling apart, when your partner seems excessively distant.

It's okay to want to know whether your partner is having an affair. These are rational feelings to be having, and are nothing to be ashamed of. But, you must also learn to "normalize" how you feel so that you can handle the situation appropriately.

The need to know about the existence of an affair or the details regarding any extramarital tryst is strong and can get out of hand. While it is normal to have these feelings, be careful not to let them consume you completely. Just know that having these feelings is a common occurrence among people who have been involved with a cheating spouse.

Some individuals have taken measures that they thought they would never take in trying to find out whether their spouse is still faithful. While things like spying, sifting through phone records, and the like may sound ridiculous, there are actually common motivators that make the need to know so strong.

Here are some of the reasons that many couples say motivate the need to find out the truth, no matter how grim their findings are.

- ***Validation***

This is particularly strong for people who are highly intuitive. Individuals with strong intuition are pulled to finding out the truth behind the musings of their instincts.

For example, if during a particular time the spouse felt that something was going wrong, finding out that his or her spouse was having an affair during that period would validate their intuition and what it was saying at the time. If you have begun to be suspicious, finding out the truth will help you validate that what happened wasn't just you "going crazy", or that your suspicions weren't just "all in your head".

- ***Questions of Adequacy***

To question your adequacy as a partner when your spouse is cheating on you is quite common. You may find yourself wondering why you weren't "good enough", or what the outside partner has that you don't have.

Part of you will always want to come out the best in a way, since you may feel that you have to compete with another for your spouse's affections. This is one of the main reasons why the need to find out what and who is involved is so strong.

- ***The Need To Compare***

When you find out your spouse is cheating on you, you will feel the need to compare yourself to your spouse's partner. There may be a need for you to want to determine what he or she did for your spouse, whether he or she was better in bed, what he or she gives your spouse that you haven't, and more. These comparisons may even come down to physical appearance, and other minor details that won't help you in the end.

While this may sound counter-productive, some individuals employ this behavior as a way of coping with the truth, and may have it as a reason for their need to know details of the affair.

- ***How Far Did It Go?***

This, of course, is a natural question. You will want to know how deeply invested your spouse is with the other party, and how you play into the entire situation. People often ask how far the affair has gone, what intimacies have they shared, how much did they do together, how does the partner truly feel about the outside party, and the like.

This is actually an important factor, and plays an essential role in motivating the spouse to find out the truth about the affair. Knowing these details will help the person determine whether he or she wants to continue the relationship, or whether he or she simply feels that too many boundaries have been violated.

- ***Sexual Arousal***

While this may sound a bit odd, some couples who have experienced a drought in terms of physical and emotional intimacy find that finally sharing explicit details about an affair may spark intense physical and sexual arousal, leading to a great discharge of sexual energy. In some of these cases, having the knowledge of what happened with the other party intimately can be extremely sensual and arousing, and may be an avenue for sexual reconnection.

This is not to say, however, that this is a completely healthy reason. This is one explanation that has been offered by various couples as to why they wanted to find out more about the affair during a certain period of time.

- ***Connection***

Like the previous reason, some couples may feel that talking about the other person is a form of connecting with each other. Many couples that fall to infidelity first experience a phase of slowly disengaging from each other. Some say that though it is like pouring salt over an open wound, it is still a form of connection; something which is sorely lacking in the relationship.

- ***Caring For The Self***

A more healthy reason that often fuels the need to know about the other party and details about the affair is that the information shared helps the spouse protect himself or herself.

For example, the spouse may be concerned that the other party may have a sexually transmitted disease or a condition that may be transmitted via sexual intercourse. It is important to know these details in order to be able to protect oneself healthwise, since contracting a physical illness unknowingly from your unfaithful spouse is the last thing you would want to happen after discovering infidelity.

These are just a few common reasons that people have shared as things that motivate them to find out the truth. If you've been worried about feeling any of these things, you aren't alone. You have to accept that these feelings are bound to surface, and you have to learn how to handle these feelings appropriately.

If you've decided to confront your partner, you also have to accept the fact that if there is indeed something happening, there is a great chance he or she won't tell you the truth. That too is quite normal, albeit because he or she is afraid, or that he or she simply doesn't want the affair to end. Either way, you must be prepared to hear something that you don't want to, or something that you may not believe at the time.

What the Truth Can Tell You

You're seeing all the signs and you've heard your instincts scream at you to dig for the truth on your own. However, being the rational person that you are, you've decided to dismiss the suspicious behavior until your spouse fesses up.

When he or she doesn't, you decide to confront them. Things don't go as planned, and your spouse simply denies everything and gives you vague sweeping answers when you try to pry for details. To you, the existence of the affair may be clear as day, and you wonder why your partner won't tell you the truth that is staring both of you in the face.

There are some cases as well where the partner confesses, and tells you the reason why they continued on with the relationship for so long. These reasons are also important to look into, as the reasons often reflect how the person values you and your marriage.

The reasons as to why your partner is unable to admit the relationship to you might vary, and can influence the urgency that he or she feels to come clean about the affair.

Aside from simply knowing the truth, a more important reason for you to decipher why your spouse continuing an affair in secret is that what is said and how he or she acts will greatly reflect how he or she values you and your marriage. Moreover, these will give you a little more peace in terms of determining whether your marriage is worth saving or whether you should simply move on for your own health and well-being.

These reasons will help you learn more about your partner, and will help you figure out the things you may have not seen early on in your marriage.

- ***"I just don't want it to end."***

When this is the reason for your partner's continued dishonesty despite evidence of infidelity, then it is often because he or she is too absorbed in fulfilling his or her own needs -- not yours or anyone else's.

The relationship will not end simply because they just don't want it to, regardless of how any other parties feel about the situation. The desperation and desire to have his or her own needs met is stronger than anything, making marital commitment fall to the wayside.

In cases like these, while you may feel like you are not important, you can choose to wait it out. Most affairs last between 6 and 15 months. It's not possible to sustain the fantasy. Eventually, the excitement wears off and the reality that another person cannot mask inner needs will surface.

- ***"I can't end it / I can't say no"***

This reason is different from the previous explanation, since this implies a certain loss of control by saying he or she "can't" end it rather than won't.

Your spouse may find it difficult to respond to you and tell you the truth about the affair, since he or she may feel deeply involved with the other. Interestingly enough, people who are involved in an affair where they can't seem to break it off experience more shame and guilt as compared to those who simply want to continue being unfaithful. They often struggle and sometimes succeed in ending the relationship, but may break the promise later on. They are more likely to feel that the affair is something to be ashamed of and feel more guilt about it, making it difficult for them to come clean.

- ***"I just wanted to get back at you."***

Believe it or not, some people involve themselves in affairs to get revenge on their spouse. While this may not always be a conscious decision, getting involved in an affair driven by spite is not uncommon.

Your spouse may have experienced resentment and anger towards you, and may have expressed it by getting involved with someone else. Being dishonest about the affair despite its transparency also plays into the revenge aspect, and may have been part of the satisfaction of "watching you squirm" and go blue in the face as you attempt to find out the truth.

- ***"I wanted to feel wanted."***

This reason reflects the need of the spouse to feel validated and wanted in a way that he or she may not have been getting in the marriage. Again, this is not to say that everyone who gets neglected will jump into an affair, but the need to feel wanted is not an uncommon reason for some people to stray.

Interestingly enough, it has been found that in individuals who have experienced sexual abuse or for those who have been raped, the need to feel wanted is much stronger. The individual may not view it exactly as an affair, and may not even remember the details of the infidelity.

Rather, a traumatized individual may view the affair as a way to normalize feelings that have grown out of the trauma over time. These cases tend to be a different situation altogether, and the infidelity may then be just the surface of deeper hurts that exist outside of the marriage.

- ***“I didn’t want to hurt you.”***

Oddly enough, this may actually be one of the reasons why your spouse may not have come clean in the first place. Often, the infidelity in these situations reflects the spouse’s issues with dependency. If your marriage went through a downward phase, an extremely dependent spouse would define himself or herself completely by your partnership. If they then encounter another person who makes them feel good, they will begin to define themselves and pour all of themselves into that relationship.

However, for overly dependent people, it will then be a great struggle between you, the spouse, and the other party. Who are they without one or the other? They will wrap their lives around you, and they will wrap their lives around the other party. They strayed, yes, but you are still too important for them to lose. This is when the “I don’t want to hurt you” reason comes into play, making it difficult for them to tell you the truth for fear that they will lose you and a great part of themselves.

As you can see, there really isn’t a hard and fast rule as to why and when people have affairs. However, it really is better for you to know why your spouse is straying in order for you to better evaluate the situation you’re in and to find a resolution to it, rather than just flying blind.

A problem only gets solved once you know what it is, and this is true for dealing with infidelity. The reasons that your spouse may give will also give you insight into how they justified their choices. It may shed light on different insecurities and pains your partner may have that didn’t surface in the past. It may also bring up complaints that you were not able to hear or address in the past.

Where Do I Go From Here?

Now that you’ve seen the signs and (possibly) heard the truth, you have to figure out where to go in terms of your relationship -- whether to recover it or to let it go. Something to keep in mind is that 80% of people who divorce because of an affair later regret it. It will always be hard to forgive and even think about solving

things with someone who cheated on you, but at the end of the day, it's a choice you'll have to make. The worst thing you can do in this situation is to ignore it or sweep it under the rug.

The first thing to do is to first take some time away from your spouse. Take some time off and let your emotions level out. You'll have to learn how to come to terms with it without breaking into a rage or other destructive behavior.

If you're able to get a grip on how you're feeling and if you feel that you're up to talking with your spouse, designate some time to begin talking.

Now, a word of caution -- this conversation may be very unpleasant and you may hear some things about how your partner feels towards you that previously were unknown to you. They may have reasons that you may not agree with, but try to listen with an open heart. There may have been problems brewing within your marriage before the affair began, and it is something that you'll have to address in order to move forward.

However, you'll also have to learn to take care of yourself first before worrying about your spouse (if you ever recover enough to get to that point, that is). If the reasons presented to you are vague and obviously skewed, remind yourself that there's a line that you have to draw and boundaries you have to keep.

Individuals that engage in affairs despite having stable marriages may try to bully you and make you believe that you are the reason for them straying, and that you aren't adequate as a partner, or even as a person. Remember that in these cases, chances are the defects don't lie with you at all. It's an issue that your unfaithful partner has and something that he or she has to solve on their own.

Now, though an affair isn't the way to solve marital problems, there are cases where you have responsibility to your contribution to the problem. For example, if you are abusive towards your spouse (emotionally or physically), you aren't innocent. More often, betrayed partners recognize they were unable to communicate clearly, or be emotionally available to address ongoing issues. Partners tend to pursue change, trying all their tricks and eventually feel hopeless. This makes the relationship more vulnerable to an affair.

Remember that it isn't always so clear-cut, but it's helpful to be humble enough to admit your faults as well. Just because your partner was unfaithful doesn't immediately mean you are completely innocent in the situation. Your spouse may have been the victim of your abusive behavior long before you became the victim of the affair.

At this stage, many people ask whether they can recover at all from the devastation that they feel. The answer, however, is clear.

Yes, you can recover and live a better life.

The affair is something that can destroy a marriage, but you should not let it destroy *you*.

You may be in a lot of pain, understandably, but you have to learn your own self-worth and hang on to it. Your personhood is not dependent on your marriage, so try to regain your independence by not letting yourself be controlled by the anger or the betrayal that you feel. There is always a way, you just have to find the courage to follow it.

More concrete steps along the path towards recovery will be discussed in later sections to help you with your own situation.

Part 2: The Spouse & The Other Party

Where Do I Even Begin?

If you're reading this section and are guilty of being unfaithful, realize that perhaps this is your first, tiny step in trying to fix what you've done.

Being unfaithful is just what the word implies -- it is an act that breaks the faith and the trust that your partner has in you. Though there may be many reasons for you engaging in an affair, the best thing for you to do would be to first end your affair and come clean. Tell your spouse the truth in order to be able to move on and possibly fix your marriage.

At this point, you may or may not have had "the talk" with your spouse yet, and you may be continuing on with your partner despite the guilt you may be feeling. If you're having misgivings about telling your partner the truth and ending the affair, consider working with a professional counselor after reading below.

1. There Can't Be Another Beginning Without the Truth

This is pretty self-explanatory. The reality is, if you think that there's another way to solve the issue of your affair, there isn't. Relocating your partner or your spouse, being more discreet, romancing your spouse, and other "cover-up fixes" will do no good. In fact, these will only compound the problem. There is no way

around telling the truth. If you are serious about fixing your marriage, this is the only way to start. Unless of course, you prefer to be found out first.

2. Think about Who You're Hurting

Though this may sound a bit cliché, it's every bit as true as the other reasons on this list. One of the main things you have to consider is, even though they may not know yet, you're hurting your partner. Chances are you've already emotionally disengaged from them, and alienated them in the process.

3. The Affair Will Follow You

If you don't end the affair and simply come clean, that doesn't leave you with a clean slate. Telling the truth without ending the affair is simply a way to delay the inevitable breakdown of your marriage by deceiving your partner into thinking you are on the track to being faithful again. You're also fooling yourself.

Even if you run around trying every other solution in the book, your still active affair will continue to be with you no matter where you are. End it, or have mercy on your spouse and set him or her free to live their own lives without the pain of dealing with another woman or man.

4. Are You Really Better for It?

Often, when people have marital problems and then engage in an affair, they feel energized and renewed, as if another side of them has come alive. Though you may feel great about somebody being interested in you in a romantic or sexual way, the affair is simply a temporary fix to your misery.

In short, the affair doesn't make you better. It might make you *feel* better, but the deeper problems remain and will surface eventually, even if you find an endless amount of partners. Of the less than 10% of affairs that result in marriage, 75% of them result in divorce. The affair doesn't solve the initial unresolved issues within you.

If you're having an affair, try to think of how you feel and why you've decided to stray. You may find there are other issues you have to address, and these issues will not be solved by having or continuing an affair.

5. The Danger of Emotions

Think about who your spouse is and your story with him or her, and then think about how you met your other partner. When did you engage in the affair? Were you having marital problems? Were you emotionally distressed?

Although you think you are feeling a deep emotional connection with your 3rd party partner, you may be feeling this because of the state of your married life during the time you engaged in the affair. Often, affairs can be the fruit of raging negative emotions, and the need to seek something “positive” after being drenched in a negatively charged environment. Irrational emotional decisions can be made under stress, such as the choice to stray.

6. A Developmental Step Back

Marital experts have found that some people who engage in affairs choose partners who are somewhat less in some way than their spouse. Though at the time the person of choice may seem like the better individual, the characteristics of the 3rd party partner are often “inferior” as compared to that of the spouse.

While there is the initial excitement, rose colored glasses may keep you from evaluating the whole person and if this is a good fit for you.

7. The Bubble Effect

Heightened feelings and emotions in an affair are often mistaken for real and lasting love. In reality, this isn't really the case.

The secrecy, the longing to be with each other without anyone knowing, and long periods of time apart make reuniting with the other partner feel amazing. These feelings become overwhelming, and dangerously addictive.

Over time, the feeling becomes a crutch, and you enter a bubble. You crave for more, and it isn't uncommon for individuals who have engaged in extramarital affairs to have more than one partner. They need more of the same excitement, therefore they'll get more, no matter who it's with.

It becomes an obsession -- the late night phone calls, the carefully planned escapes, the elaborate excuses, and more. The bubble becomes so thick that the person separates himself or herself from reality, entering the world of the affair and leaving everything else behind.

If you're in an affair right now, question the way you feel. If you're hell bent on continuing, just consider whether you're ready to lose yourself and your self-control along the way.

8. True Love

In an affair, you will most likely only hear things that you want to hear about yourself. It's easy to "love" someone who constantly validates you without calling you out on your flaws. Physical intimacy is easy, because your ego is fed and you feel like you're on top of the world.

But is it real?

Real and true love comes from a place much deeper than just a one-night stand. Lasting love requires commitment -- a commitment to love someone on the good days, and most especially on the bad. You must "marry" your spouse every day by committing to love them through the tears, the yelling, and the hurt. Real love is choosing commitment especially when you don't like their behavior.

In marriage, this is something you can learn by staying true to your spouse despite everything that goes on in your relationship. This type of commitment builds character, integrity, and moral fiber.

Chances are, you won't learn any of this in your affair. In fact, you probably won't grow much at all in that partnership. If ever you do leave your marriage and go with your affair partner, there's a good chance the same baggage will follow you.

9. The Next Morning

No matter how great the night before was for your affair, there will always be the next morning where you'll have to get up and go back to your spouse. No matter how long you spend together with your other partner, there will always be that "next morning" where you'll have to go through a reality check.

It's rare that people that engage in affairs are totally at peace with themselves. Quite the contrary, actually. Many individuals experience shame, self-loathing, and guilt, and in copious amounts.

Are you sure you really want to feel this way and to hurt others just for a quick fix? Try being honest with your spouse and addressing problems directly. If you think you've tried everything, then seek support from a pro-marriage counselor who likely has more tools to offer.

10. Empty Won't Run on Empty

If you're feeling empty, don't think that the affair you're having will make you feel more fulfilled. It won't. It might help you a little at first, but the emptiness that you

feel inside you won't be driven out by having an empty relationship in the form of an affair.

Remember, you are your own person regardless of whether you are in a relationship. Don't look to other people to complete you, because it just won't happen. If you feel this is the reason why you're in an affair, chances are you'll end up feeling even emptier.

11. Get Real

This may sound harsh, but you have to ask yourself whether you really know the person you're having an affair with. Or, do you know your fantasy of the person you have created?

It's one thing to be on your best behavior, and it's another thing to be with someone on a regular basis.

Therefore, you should question you really know the person you're having an affair with, and question whether this person is really someone to have a relationship with.

12. Confused?

If you're feeling excessively confused and doing stuff that you don't want to do, then that's a sign that you're losing yourself and your control, and that's never a good thing. It means that your addictive affair is taking over your reality, and you need to step back and control the situation by first ending the affair or letting your spouse go out of respect and integrity.

The point is, you shouldn't carry on with two relationships at the same time for a host of reasons you probably have already been thinking about for a long time coming. Clear your head. Only then can you solve the confusion you're feeling.

13. Set Yourself Free

That's pretty much self-explanatory. There is little doubt that you're probably feeling bad about engaging in an affair, and you're probably not totally at peace with yourself.

Tell the truth, and end the affair, or let your partner go. Aside from setting your spouse free from the torment of dealing with another party, you'll be setting yourself free from a path that will most likely end in destruction.

14. *You're Hurting the People You Love*

No matter what the reasons, you'll be hurting a lot of people in your life, not just your spouse.

Even if you think that your spouse deserves it, remember that your decision to have an affair not only changes the course of your own life, but the course of your spouse's life. Both the betrayed partner and people who have had an affair report having difficulty with trust even 10 years later.

15. *Do You Really Want to Be that Person?*

Do you really want to be the person defined by being unfaithful? At the end of the day, no matter the reasons, having an affair will make it more difficult to take a good look in the mirror.

If you feel that your marriage is destructive, then pluck up the courage to get out of it first without staining the integrity that you have. Take the better road and be honest, faithful, and act with both a balance of head and heart. Free yourself from destructive behavior completely by sticking to what you know is right, and not stooping to behavior that hurts you and your spouse.

The 15 Good Reasons to End It ~ Recapped

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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Can't be another beginning without the truth2. Think about who you're hurting3. The affair will follow you4. Are you really better for it?5. The danger of emotions6. A developmental step back7. The bubble effect8. True love | <ol style="list-style-type: none">9. The next morning10. Empty won't run on empty11. Get real12. Confused?13. Set yourself free14. You're hurting the people you love15. Do you really want to be that person |
|---|---|

At the end of the day, you know the right thing to do is to end the affair. If you feel that this truly and genuinely is not the right thing to do, then be honest with your spouse and let him or her move on with their lives by being honest with them and letting them go. Either way, stop juggling between two relationships.

Unfortunately, the only way to end it is to do just that; end it. You have to sit yourself down, gather your courage, and sort out what you want to happen to the rest of your life and whether you feel like you can continue on with your married life. Consider both sides of the situation, and all the people involved, not just yourself.

If you feel like your marriage is not something you can be committed to, then you have the choice to leave. You can also end both relationships if you know that they're both not right, and feel that both aren't going help you become better as a person. Remember, 80% of those who divorced report regretting it. Professional counselors can help you through affair recovery. In a recent survey, half of the couples reported their relationship being even more satisfying after recovery from the affair.

Part 3: Making A Recovery

Picking Up The Pieces

After telling the truth about an affair or learning about an affair, it's quite normal for devastation to be the aftermath. Though there may be a lot of pain, hurt, and suffering, there is a way to recover from the betrayal on both sides.

First of all, make sure that the truth has been told completely. There is no way to solve the problem without knowing all sides of the story. If everything has been revealed, then a solution can be worked on by both individuals.

The best thing to do after finding out about the affair is to take some time apart for a period. Naturally, there will be a lot of anger and a lot of pain after the dust settles. Being together and forcing to be with each other during this time will not help the situation. It will create unnecessary additional tension that will hinder the healing process.

Relax and spend some time away from each other in order to let your emotions level out.

After you've spent some time calming down, you have to talk with your spouse, no matter how much you don't want to at the time. Avoiding the situation is probably the worst thing that you can do at this point. There is no way to figure out a solution that will be good for both parties without a conversation.

During this conversation, it's better that there are specific points to discuss. For the faithful spouse, determine what you want from the conversation and what

questions you want answered. At this point, the spouse who engaged in an affair should put himself or herself in position of a listener.

Before entering the conversation, it is helpful for both partners to prepare some “I statements”. Though this may sound difficult, having points of discussion to bring up will help avoid flooding, and a lot of unnecessary arguments.

This isn't to say that you won't argue; you probably will. This precaution is just to help ease some of that burden without adding to the conflict unnecessarily.

For the faithful spouse

- Express your feelings about the affair and the hurt that you feel at the moment.
- Talk about what hit you the hardest, and why it did so.
- Ask the questions you need to ask.
- Let your partner know what you are going through.

But, though you are probably justified at this point, you have a responsibility to not add to the destruction. This is more for you than for anything else. You've been hurt enough, so try not to hurt yourself even more by pushing the knife in deeper, so to speak.

Carefully consider questions that are bound to be disastrous. Examples of this include comparing yourself to the other party, asking about their physical appearance, their adequacy in bed, etc.

For the spouse who engaged in the affair

- Try to answer your spouse to the best of your ability.
- Do not, under any circumstances, give empty answers that don't have any thought in them.
- If your spouse is making an effort to talk to you, reciprocate the same.
- If your partner seem closed off, continue to answer each question and criticisms with the truth.
- If there were marital problems that you feel were part of your choice to engage in an affair, say so with “I statements”.
- Focus on the problems themselves, and don't target your spouse by saying that he or she was the reason you engaged in an affair. Remember, it was your *choice*.

As for the faithful spouse, even though the reasons of your partner may seem unbelievable to you, try as much as possible to listen with an open mind. The different reasons are how they justified their behavior and may provide insight in to unresolved issues in your marriage.

Even though you may think that you are immediately put in the right side in this situation, there may have been some marital issues that involved both of you that contributed to the choice of your spouse to engage in an affair. Therefore, you still should listen, no matter how difficult.

After the initial conversation

Don't try to come to a solution immediately. It's important that the first conversation just be finding out the angles of the situation, and to identify the problems that are still solvable and problems that aren't.

Don't be worried if you haven't been able to cover all the bases in one conversation. You can have one, two, or more; just make sure that you're able to find out all aspects of the situation before you come to any final decisions.

Take another period of time away from each other. As much as possible, give yourselves time to digest all the details that you've learned about, and give yourselves time to recover and lick your wounds.

Again, it's important not to force the issue. It's imperative that you avoid any additional and unnecessary complications by staying healthy: go to the gym, rent a hotel room with a soaking tub, camp in the woods. There will still be anger and pain, those are unavoidable. Your job is to process them safely.

Figure it out together

When you've pinpointed the problems that exist in your marriage, it's time to figure out solutions together. This is an important phase. Either of you may feel at a dead end without ideas of how to solve problems. You can begin with written resources, marriage retreats, or asking elders.

The problem-solving phase is particularly sensitive. The idea is to try something you haven't before. Don't be afraid to ask for professional help, since these professionals will have more insight to give to you based on their work with couples and the range of different marital problems the counselor has worked with.

If you've committed to work with each other, here are some things you can do together that will aid in saving your marriage.

1. Go to a Counselor

A counselor will help you work out the tension and can be a mediator between the two of you when you have conversations about how to recover your marriage. Having another person viewing the situation and giving you input will help you expand your possibilities, and the methods you use to approach the situation.

2. Give Your Old Relationship a Funeral

This may sound a bit weird, but it's helpful. If you're starting over, it's a good and creative idea to signify the start of a new relationship. "Bury" all the things that you don't like about your old relationship, including the affair.

Do this by listing things, or speak it out loud while you let go of the old things and lay them to rest. It may sound a bit macabre, but it'll work well to help you move on.

3. Remove the Triggers

Destroy everything that can remind you of the affair or the transgressions that took place before. This will help you avoid a lot of awkward moments, and will lessen the chance of you reviving the anger and the angst you feel inside.

You don't have to do this together, but let your spouse know that you're doing it yourself to show that you're willing to start anew and that you are committed to saving your relationship.

4. Try to Complement Each Other

Rebuild a foundation by reminding yourself and each other about what you like. This is a particularly important thing for the spouse who had an affair, since essentially the responsibility of asking for forgiveness and making up for the transgression is heavier on that side. Find the time to let your spouse know what you appreciate about him or her, and do it genuinely.

5. Go on a Trust-Building Activity

This may sound a bit silly, but a good way to build your trust again is to do something physical. An example of this would be going to a boot camp for different activities. A famous example would be simultaneous tight-rope walking,

where both of you would have to hold on to each other while on separate tight-ropes for balance. Other activities would be sky diving, bungee jumping, mountain climbing, and the like.

Facing something physically frightening and relying on each other for support will help you trust each other in the most basic sense, and some of this will translate into your marriage.

6. Go on a Spiritual Retreat

There's something about getting away from it all and being in nature or meditating. Having an opportunity to remove distractions and reconnect to your spiritual side will perhaps help you find the guidance and peace you are searching for. This will help you develop a deeper strength to face the rest of your trials with a steadier heart.

7. Go on a Trip

If you feel comfortable enough to spend time with each other, energize the positive by taking a trip together. This will help you relax and have fun again, and it's extremely important to break the streak of negativity and tension between the two of you, at least for a while. Consider designating time to process any strong emotion or triggers that comes up rather than allowing it to invade anytime.

8. Write in a Journal and Share with Each Other

Writing your feelings and experiences down may be a cathartic experience, and sharing a summary of these feelings and thoughts with each other may be an even deeper intimate experience.

It will be hard for you to communicate with each other while recovering from an affair and it's important that you find a way around this awkwardness and difficulty. It may be easier to express yourself on paper and share it with your spouse.

9. Apologize Consistently

This is an important factor, again for the person that was unfaithful. Don't apologize just once. Find ways to apologize creatively in different ways.

For the faithful spouse, if there were problems and issues brought up by your partner as reasons for engaging in an affair, there is room for apology too, in order to strengthen your marriage. Acknowledging the faults and flaws in your relationship will help greatly in healing after an affair.

10. Rekindle Your Physical Connection

Having a romantic night will help you rekindle your connection after the affair, and will ease some of the alienation you may both be feeling. You can start with safe gestures like hand holding or a foot or neck massage.

However, remember that you should both engage in sex until you are both comfortable with the idea of trying. Don't force the issue. If it doesn't feel right, then don't do it. Wait for the right moment, and spark will come back in your relationship. Consider support programs like GottSex to help guide you.

11. Go on a "First Date"

Since rekindling your relationship, go out on another "first date" with your spouse. Get to know each other in a newer sense, and take in all the new characteristics of your spouse as if it was your first time to be with each other. This will help you move on from the old relationship, and will help get the ball rolling in terms of starting your new life with each other.

12. Make Time to Eat Meals with Each Other

This may sound so simple, but it does a great deal. Having rituals to connect and talk about your day will give you opportunities for deeper understanding and trust building. You can ask a question of the day or ask how each person was affected by the happenings of the day.

Although in the beginning this may feel awkward and even a little bit too "normal", and will associate the time you spend with each other with good feelings.

13. Pray Together

Praying is something powerful. It can help you strengthen your own character, and can help you find a way to cope with the pain you feel.

Praying together is even more powerful. It's an intimate way of showing your vulnerability, and offering up the situation to a higher power. It will help you find out as well what the other person is feeling, and may help you forgive in a way that you realize the fragility of your spouse and his or her humanity in all its imperfections.

14. Spend Time with Your Families and Friends

It's important to strengthen your support systems during these trying times. It's extremely important to get support from your loved ones, and to have other people to fall back on. Don't forget that you aren't alone. There are people who love you and will support you, and it's extremely important to have support in the healing process.

Your friends and family can provide the care and the nurturing that may be lacking in the moment from your married life, and keep you going for quite a while. Draw strength from the one's you love, and don't try to take on everything on your own.

15. Write a "Constitution"

Compose a sort of constitution together that contains what you both want from your new beginning, and what you won't allow and what you will in your "new relationship". It's important that you set little milestones instead of trying to solve everything as a whole chunk at one time. Break down the big problem into small, solvable components.

The 15 Ways to Pick Up the Pieces ~ Recapped

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These are just some of the things that you can do to recover from the pain together. It's going to be a long journey, so prepare for the best and prepare for the worst. There are so many things that you can do and solutions that you can think of as a unit, and all of these may or may not work in the long run. It's about staying committed, and trying to remember why you married each other in the first place.

The key is to stick to your goals. If you want to stay focused on your spouse and work on getting him or her to trust you again, cut off all ties with the other party and don't invest time in people that don't really need your attention at the

moment. Focus your energy where it's due, and don't try to be in two places at once.

Take care of your spouse, and try to make up for what you've done. For the betrayed spouse, take time out and hear your spouse's reasons for straying. Work on the problems that you feel you may be involved in, and express what you feel in a tangible way so your spouse will know what he or she needs to work on. Seeking professional support can help you feel safe exploring your responsibilities without adding blame and guilt tripping, which only paralyze your process.

An important thing is also to process the anger that you may be feeling. This doesn't mean that you're letting him or her off the hook, but the anger that you feel is harmful to you as well. Remember that you also have to take care of yourself, and living in anger will eventually affect you in other aspects of your life, such as your health. Further, the anger that you feel is something that can take over you and is something that can push you to go to dark places.

Don't let it. Come out of it stronger, better, and greater than you've ever been before. It is possible.

For the transgressor in this situation, do not give up hope. Just like a drug addiction, having an affair is definitely hard to break. However, it isn't impossible. The more you identify what went on for you, you have the opportunity to address the underlying issues once and for all.

Surround yourself with people that you know will help you. Incorporate support for times that you may have the urge to contact the person you had the affair with. It is not unusual to miss the highs. Write yourself a letter to review the pain it has caused. Write out positive steps you have committed to for recovery for when you are feeling lost. For example, weekly counseling, date with friends, partner check ins, date night with your partner, etc.

What's Next?

Be prepared for failure and success in your marriage. It may end up that you eventually separate, but it's better that you tried to patch things up rather than regret not trying at all down the line.

The journey back from the betrayal of an extramarital affair is long and hard. But if you're currently trying to pick yourself up and move on with your life, then be assured in the fact that you're doing something beautiful and incredibly courageous.

The strength and character building you'll experience in working through this together – perhaps with the help of a couples counselor -- is something positive that you can take away from the process of recovering from an affair.

Finally, hold on to hope and love. You'll find that things may turn out better than you expected.

If you've tried the suggestions in this ebook and still feel like you need more help to keep love alive in your relationship, you may benefit from some couples counseling.

As a licensed mental health counselor in Washington, my passion is to help couples reconnect, redefine, and recommit. I offer weekly couples therapy, as well as 4-12 hour Couples Intensives. You can find free articles and more information on my website at <http://www.hearthealing.org>

About the Author

I work with all types of **couples** who are trying to find their way back to each other after an affair. Their struggles with feeling **misunderstood, lonely,** and **frustrated** about issues such as trust, repeated conflict, and communication breakdown are getting worked out with couples counseling.

No matter where you may be in your thinking about the betrayals or reasons for infidelity, before taking steps to end your relationship in hurt and anger, it can be worth it to seek neutral, intentional guidance.

My work with family reconciliation prepares me to help you shift chronic, long-term relationship problems in a short period of time. I am available for daytime or evening hours to begin identifying specific marriage saving goals and objectives, strategies to **move beyond ineffective and harmful ways of reacting** to your spouse, and strengthen your ability to be trustworthy, vulnerable, clear, assertive, and present.

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