When Trust Is Betrayed

How to Heal from an Affair

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INTRODUCTION

To the Faithful

You're unbelievably hurt and angry. Your world is shattered. Everything you once thought was infallible and true is now called into question. The one person you thought you could trust is now someone you don't even know at all.

You're the victim of infidelity. And your life will never be the same.

How you cope with these feelings and find your way through the maelstrom will be a pivotal journey not just for your marriage or committed relationship, but also for you as a person. Hope and light, however, can be found at the end of the tunnel, and this short report will direct your footsteps along the treacherous way.

To the Unfaithful

As the guilty party, you are the cause for the disastrous state your relationship has come to, but that does not mean you are powerless to make things better. How much better depends a great deal on the strength of your previous bond as a couple and the strength of character of both parties, especially you.

Within these pages, you will find encouragement, hope, and practical suggestions for healing and rebuilding a stronger and happier relationship.

To the Couple

Have you always believed that infidelity would be a deal-breaker for your committed relationship? Perhaps you never addressed the subject carefully
enough to define the personal consequences of infidelity in your mind and heart. Either way, you will find these pages of great comfort, guidance, and even inspiration during the chaotic aftermath of infidelity and into the different sort of life that awaits both parties in the near and distant future.

Gathered below are the recommendations of expert counselors for those who must traverse the stormy waters of infidelity and wish to come out on the other side with as few scars as possible, and maybe even a sturdier vessel.

The goal is not simply a healing for the brokenhearted. The goal is the healing for the relationship as a unit, and the eventual restoration of the unity and synergistic strength which both individuals once found in their coming together. That strength came about for a reason and, with the proper care and treatment, can blossom anew.

While the relationship will be forever changed by infidelity, there are well-established methods to pick up the pieces and rebuild a new relationship. It will frequently be more mature, better defined, and more understanding, a new relationship in which each partner is seen and accepted as the imperfect human they are. And that—say all the experts—is a very good thing.
PART I – FOR THE WOUNDED SPOUSE

Now that You Know

You may have been suspicious of infidelity for a long time. Possibly you acted on your suspicions and caught your partner red-handed. Possibly someone else alerted you to the truth. In America, about 20,000 partners are discovered in an affair every single day. Those with wayward partners who divulged the affair voluntarily are slightly better-off; at least they’ll be able, in the future, to give points for coming clean on their own.

Taking care of yourself

The period immediately following the devastating discovery that your partner has betrayed you is fraught with danger for you, the betrayed. Marriage counselors see the same kinds of deleterious responses over and over again, and warn those who are going through this stage to be aware of them.

Finding help

Support can come in the most unlikely forms. It is, in fact, all around us, but when we are experiencing an encompassing darkness, it can be hard to even open our eyes and look for the light. Several ideas that may help inspire you in such a time of need are given in the box below.

Now is not the time to be shy. Find someone you trust and pour your heart out to them. A professional counselor is usually the most helpful choice, but if you feel that’s not right for you, the confidant may be a friend, a priest, a family member, an online forum, a support group, or any combination of the above.
The qualities of a good counselor or confidant include:

- Someone who is a good listener, and who does not interrupt.
- Someone who is compassionate, kind, and patient.
- Someone who offers suggestions without trying to fix things.
- One who can offer asylum, whether it be psychic or physical.
- One who is comfortable with periods of silence.
- One who can keep a secret.

Gathering your Information

Talking the deception talk

During times of tribulation such as those moments, days, and sleepless nights after an affair has come to light, it’s utterly tempting for both partners to do nothing but feel the pain that envelops them. There’s a time for that, of course. And it’s possible that you, as the betrayed party, may adopt an attitude of, “You broke it, you fix it” toward the partner who deceived you.

This is, however, not helpful, and if the couple in trouble due to deception does not somehow confront the problem and talk about it in a healthy manner, there is great danger that the relationship will never again be one which is truly authentic.

Depending on the inner strength of both parties, the deception talk may be short, long, or prolonged. It may take many such honest confrontations for both parties to feel they can try to move on and renew the loving relationship they once enjoyed. Professional guidance during this
time, in the form of couples’ therapy, is highly recommended, to see you through the naturally occurring pitfalls and obstacles along the way.

**Compounding Threats to your Psyche, Spirit and Relationship after Discovery**

While there is, as you now realize, nothing in the world that can help you prepare for the depth and breadth of damage an affair can cause, experts advocate that the betrayed party remain on the lookout for these signs of fraying around the edges:

- **Feelings of despair, hopelessness, or chronic fatigue**— These sensations are profoundly telling and also extremely common. They can represent a deep depression, which may be seen as anger turned in upon yourself. When we can’t or won’t confront or handle such an epic situation, we sometimes give up and sink into the subtle comfort of helplessness. The universal recommendation at this point is for the sufferer to see a professional psychologist, psychiatrist, or medical doctor immediately. These responses, while they may seem quite natural, all point to a risk of suicide, and can be dealt with by experts who do so with their patients on a regular basis.

- **Uncontrolled outbursts of anger**— The most normal reaction in the world is to hurt back when we’ve been hurt. While anger and aggression on the part of the wounded spouse may also seem very understandable, they can easily escalate into physical acts or destructive emotional attacks you can never take back. Unchecked hostility can actually cause more lasting damage to your relationship than the affair, which brought it on, creating a never-ending circle of resentments and lashing out on both sides. Get help from a neutral professional or confidant.

If it’s not feasible to work with a professional at this time, exercise, hobbies, and attentive self-care in the form of eating and sleeping right can provide enough

help to get you back on an even keel, from which position you will be better able to handle the problems that must be addressed. Avoid self-medicating with chemicals, liquor, and other temporary fixes.

**Your heart of hearts**

While no one made your partner decide to have an affair and put your relationship in danger, there are usually mitigating circumstances that lead up to such a drastic step. Take time to have the talk with yourself, too, about whether you may have contributed reasons for your partner to draw away from you and your marriage or committed relationship.

*WARNING:* It’s important at this juncture, say the experts, not to use these mitigating reasons as an excuse to release your betrayer from the responsibility that comes with the act of betrayal. As we have seen, while an attitude of withdrawal is easier, it is not helpful and can seriously erode an emotional partnership. Just so, the tendency to do the easy thing by precipitously releasing the partner from repentance and restitution is an approach that will do nothing for the healthy resuscitation of your broken relationship, and made indeed do it much harm in the years to come.

**Walking the Rebuilding Walk**

In taking the first halting steps toward rebuilding a shattered relationship, you are encouraged to go slowly and carefully. The most important tool in your rebuilding arsenal will be trust. You, as the injured party who was deceived, will eventually have to find a way to trust your partner again, and it’s up to the wayward partner to somehow show you they can be trusted. But if, while you are both walking through this harrowing process, you can provide an environment of safety for your partner, it will make it easier for them to stay honest with you. Your ability to turn from your baser instincts of retribution will be of immense import at this point.
Making up your Mind to Rebuild

No professional marriage counselor will tell you that it’s either right or wrong to stay in a broken marriage or leave it. You must decide for yourself, as with all of life’s landmark decisions. And there are never any guarantees, in life or in a relationship.

It’s best to make this important decision after a short period of time has passed and you are feeling at least somewhat balanced. One very good rule is “When in doubt… don’t.” This single, easy-to-remember admonition has saved countless relationships. Wait to make life-changing decisions until there is no doubt in your mind or heart, and use the time wisely while you wait.

Identify the Pros and Cons

1. Make a list. To help clarify, write out two lists with all the negative and positive aspects of your relationship on it. Consider both the long- and the short-term advantages and drawbacks. Include pros and cons regarding yourself, your health, your family, your finances, your career, and your heart. Really think about these things and take sufficient time with this list to be very thorough, possibly creating it over a few days.

2. Assign values to each item on your list in the following way:

   ✓ Every item that has its foundation in love gets ten points.
   ✓ Every item that has its foundation in fear gets five points.

It is wise and reasonable that your loving motives receive more weight than your fearful ones. Any relationship built on fear is a weak one and will not weather future storms well. An example of a love-inspired item on your list of pros and cons might be, “I believe everyone deserves a second chance.” And an example of a fear-inspired item might be, “I’ll never be able to trust him again.”
Reconciliation, Forgiveness, and Moving On

Once you’ve talked it out with your partner and decided that, for whatever reasons, you both want to try to pick up the pieces and rebuild a relationship, whether you’re working with a professional counselor or not, there are certain attitudes both you and your partner can embrace that will make the process worthwhile and, possibly, enlightening:

- Both parties can take an active, positive approach toward rejuvenating the love you once had through the cultivation of honesty and trust. A passive manner only prolongs the pain, delays the possible renewal of the relationship, or sets the scene for an irreparably inauthentic relationship not based on the truth, but based on fear.
- An attitude of mutual respect will go far to avoid the usual pitfalls of retribution, gamey behavior, and unproductive regret.
- Both members in the relationship should remember that there can be no guaranteed positive outcome, just as there was no guarantee when you first tied the knot.

Guidelines for Redeeming a Relationship Threatened by Infidelity

Even though the onus falls on the partner who betrayed to stop the affair completely, make amends, and go the extra mile to show the wounded partner they can be trusted, your relationship will be much easier to rebuild if you both follow the guidelines below.
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- Be honest about your feelings
- Try not to lash out in your pain
- Avoid withdrawal
- Be as objective as possible
- Be fearless, but not brutal
- Be realistic, but not hurtful
- Don’t rush the process
- Don’t run and hide from the process

As you can see, each stage along the way is liable to take a while, depending on the extent of the damage. And, just as there are no guarantees that your newly burgeoning relationship will work, there are also no guarantees that turning your back on it entirely will have a better outcome. Forgiveness and renewed trust are the ultimate goals, and they are achievable, when both partners are willing to make the journey, feeling the pain along the way, and helping each other over the hard places and obstacles along the path.

Where are you in the stages of rebuilding your life after it was shattered? Can you look through the list of stages below and then, somehow, look forward to a brighter day?

Marriages fail for a myriad of reasons. Those couples who succeed in facing dire relationship problems such as infidelity inevitably look back in wonder and surprise, one day in the future, and notice how much stronger the experience made them, both as individuals and as a unit.

Maturity comes through the tempering of a willing spirit. There is no other way. Could this be another phase of your life journey that you can use to bring yourself to a new level of maturity and so realize the potential of your mind and spirit? If both partners can embrace this way of thinking, they have an excellent chance of helping each other find their ways back home.
The Stages of your Progress

The universally accepted stages of recovery after infidelity breaks your heart and your relationship are:

1. Exploring the reasons behind the affair
2. Grief and/or denial
3. Halting steps on the journey back
4. Arriving at a threshold of breaking down and breaking through
5. Acceptance of the other
6. Forgiveness
7. Renewed trust

PART II – FOR THE WAYWARD SPOUSE

The Disclosure

Handle with care

Most wayward spouses wonder at some point, perhaps often, whether to tell or not to tell. All the experts agree that those unfaithful partners who bite the bullet and voluntarily tell their spouses about the affair are much more likely to come out of the experience with their present marriage or committed relationship intact. This is not because the wounded party is less likely to be heartbroken by the news of the affair, but because it will be easier to trust the betrayer, eventually, if they volunteered the information.
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Those who discover the unthinkable truth about infidelity through the whispers of gossip, the well-meaning divulgences of a friend, or in some accidental fashion will inevitably remain hurt longer than those who were told outright by their errant partners. In the future, it will also be easier for the wounded party to trust the betrayer if the truth about the affair came out voluntarily.

After all, when the painful truth comes to light without the betrayer, the wounded one may rightfully wonder whether the unfaithful one would ever have been honest... or ever will be honest again. So to avoid the incalculable damage that will ensue when trust is shattered by some other means than your own disclosure to your spouse, honesty is truly the only the only choice.

Do’s and don’ts

Think it out in advance. Whatever you do, you do not want to make things worse by the way you handle the disclosure. Be prepared to be assaulted by any number of reactions, from a cold, indifferent withdrawal to a berserk, prolonged outburst. Your spouse is entitled to a reaction, though it is, of course, your responsibility to protect yourself from violence, should that appear possible.

Experts say that the most successful disclosures of infidelity—the ones that have the happiest endings—have several things in common, all revolving around the attitude of the betrayer. A self-effacing approach is universally considered the best. Admit your wrongdoing wholeheartedly, in simple, sincere terms. Show your heartbroken partner that you are truly sorry by being vulnerable and without defenses. Lashing out with retaliatory responses to their understandable hostility will not protect you, and will not help your partner perceive you as worthy of trust in the future.

Make the promise to completely cut off the affair, and then follow through. Be a better watchdog over yourself and your foibles than your spouse could ever
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be. There will never be a healing for you or your committed relationship if you don’t take this most important step and honor it with your whole being and intent.

Avoid the blame game

No matter what reasons or excuses your tortured brain may come up with for betraying the person to whom you originally committed yourself and your love, marriage counselors agree that the initial disclosure of the infidelity is not the time to address them.

Likewise, evasive answers and threats to leave the marriage are not helpful, and are more than likely to compound the problem, possibly to the point of no return. Even if you believe the marriage is over and you are irredeemably in love with the “other” person, it is better by far to deal with the disclosure of infidelity without presenting the possibility of divorce at the same time.

When all is said and done, love is an ephemeral thing, as subject to the whims of time and change as the lives of the humans who find themselves caught up in its often transient wonder.

It’s not your turn

This is not the time to burden your spouse with your chaotic feelings. Most affairs occur as a result of an attraction that is not only physical, but emotional as well. This can be interpreted as love, and when the unfaithful one decides to cut off the affair, it can be extremely painful for them. Experts council caution at this point, though. It may be tempting to turn to your spouse as one who might be
able to comfort you in this dark hour, but it’s not your place, as the guilty party, to expect such relief.

Put off your own healing for a more appropriate time. Gather your integrity, tenderness, concern, and courage to help heal your wounded partner and your marriage instead.

**What if I’m Found Out?**

When your infidelity comes to light without your voluntary disclosure, a constellation of difficult problems is created. Perhaps your spouse was told by a family member or friend, or actually saw you with your illicit lover. This is a pivotal moment in time for your relationship with your spouse and for you both as individuals. What you do in this moment may, in a single act, change the course of your life, your spouse’s life, your lover’s life, and the life of your relationship.

Counselors say that those who indicate a sincere and profound remorse when they are confronted with such a discovery are much more likely to weather the inevitable storm to come better than those who take a defensive position. Here are some courses of action you may want to commit to memory, in case you’re still in the midst of an affair, and haven’t told your spouse the truth yet:

**The honorable way to act if your infidelity is discovered:**

1. *Tell the truth.* If you think you might want to save your marriage, you will stop lying at the moment your betrayal is discovered, and refrain from any dissembling or evasive tactics in the future. It would be wise to take this opportunity to tell *yourself* the truth as well, about the amount of pain you are inflicting on your spouse and family, and the enormous damage it will probably cause.
2. *Show your partner your sincere remorse.* Now is the moment of discovery you’ve been trying so hard to avoid. Rather than attempting to dance around it, confront it with your spouse in a clean, transparent fashion. The wounded party may very well be unresponsive to such humility at the moment of discovery, but it will count for something later, after the smoke clears and the hard work of rebuilding trust has begun.

3. *No accusations, no excuses.* There may be reasons you consider legitimate for having an extramarital affair. Don’t bring them up now, or even in the near future. Later, perhaps in the office of a good marriage counselor, you may carefully broach the subject. But if you have any inclination toward saving your marriage or committed relationship, now is not the time.

4. *Accept the blame.* Accusing your illicit lover of things like “making” you do it is simply laughable, though nobody will be laughing at this point. Even if you felt cornered, you still had the choice. Likewise, citing loneliness or ill-treatment from your spouse as your reason for having an affair is also unacceptable, since there are other ways to address those problems.

5. *Drop all pretense and manipulations.* This suggestion is aimed specifically at gamey behavior people often drag into play when they feel threatened. The usual ploys couples often find helpful during day-to-day living, such as gift-giving or seductive behavior, will only be met with more horror from the one betrayed, and increase their distrust long into the future.

6. *Don’t bring up divorce… unless you’re willing to go there.* Whether you have children or not, divorce is never a walk in the park. For most committed couples, the experience is exactly the same, psychologically, as going through the death of the loved one. If you are not completely positive that you want a divorce, the best policy is to wait until you’ve talked the possibility through with a professional counselor, in order to get help in
making the best decision you can. REMEMBER: When in doubt, leave it out.

7. *Say goodbye to your secret lover—once.* The best way to approach this painful but ever-so-necessary step is with the full knowledge of your spouse. A meeting—whether above-board or secret—is obviously not allowed. Get your spouse’s permission to call and do the deed in the presence of your spouse. If your affair partner insists on trying to contact you, arrange your life so that you are not the one who deals personally with this problem.

8. *Promise it’s over, and mean it.* If you want to try to heal your marriage after this devastating obstacle, you must stop seeing your lover and break off communications entirely, once you’ve broken the news. This means no calls, no emails, no texts, and no covert messages through third parties or otherwise. No more. This is the rule, tried and true, and it applies to colleagues and friends turned lovers alike. The fallout from such a circumstance might include changing your job, changing your phone number, changing your children’s schools, changing your church, not attending family gatherings, or even moving. If you want your marriage back, you’ll do whatever it takes to totally separate yourself from your affair partner and give all your energy, attention, and caring back to your committed relationship.

**How to Say Goodbye to an Affair Partner**

Get your mind set first. Decide that the affair is truly over, and then relay that information to your heart, before you ever make the farewell call. Include the following items in your call:

- Tell the affair partner you’ve decided to stop, and that the affair is now over
- Tell the affair partner you love your spouse
- Admit that what you did with the affair partner was hurtful and wrong
• Ask the affair partner not to contact you in any way again

Taking the High Road

In any successful reconstruction of a relationship torn apart by infidelity, the obligation for showing good will and kindness always falls on the betrayer. This does not mean, however, that the unfaithful party must lose themselves in self-flagellation and shame. That kind of obsequious acting out is almost always fraught with more dysfunction and creates more problems than it solves.

What it does mean is that the betrayer sets aside most of his or her own needs and goals in favor of the greater good of the marriage and family unit. Listening and talking to your spouse with respect is essential, for example, even if they lash out in verbal anger at times, out of pain and confusion.

Boundaries in reconstruction

Accepting the culpability for your damaged relationship can be tricky. You’re hurting too, after all, and your world is now upside-down, just like your partner’s. Giving yourself over to the rebuilding process is, of course, of paramount importance, at least until the danger of the total destruction of your marriage has past. But clinical experts warn against giving too much of yourself away in a misplaced effort to fix everything and atone for sins, real or imagined.

Betrayers frequently feel that they must divulge every thought and emotion they have, in order to regain the trust of the partner they betrayed. This is a codependent mechanism that can actually cause deep damage, during the rebuilding of the relationship, and later on.

Simply put, counselors say that, although the betrayer is obligated to be the “Good Guy,” the tendency to let go of all psychic boundaries and be completely vulnerable puts more pressure, not less, on the wounded party. In extreme cases, they end up taking care of the betrayer, in the form of giving them the attention
they require to be absolved. Dealing with their own pain becomes sidetracked, and the betrayer becomes the center of attention, once again.

A gracious balance of self-respect for all parties and an understanding of the reasons for the affair are more helpful, in the short and long run, than misplaced vulnerability or submission.

**Make up your Mind… and Surrender**

For the marriage to recover, your commitment to it must be whole-hearted. In the beginning, especially if your infidelity was accidentally discovered rather than disclosed by you voluntarily, you, the unfaithful one, may still feel bonded in passion and caring for your affair partner. This will gradually dissipate, as you consciously direct your attention toward healing your marriage and helping the one you wounded to find his or her path out of the maze of chaotic feelings and pain.

Once you’ve worked your way through your own fog to the decision that you do, indeed, want to recommit to your marriage, prepare yourself for the possibility of a long period of perdition. Experts say that the length of the reconstruction period typically lasts at least six months, and often lasts more than one year.

One of the best ways to look at the process of rebuilding is to think of it as good practice in becoming a better person. As human beings, we all tend to wander through the world in habitual ways of acting and reacting that are more or less unconscious. When a betrayer sincerely wants to heal a broken relationship and comfort a broken-hearted spouse, an attitude of wakeful awareness is the most helpful for everyone.
involved. Conscious people make conscious choices, which are inevitably better all around.

The real balancing act

Maybe your relationship had been the kind where one party leaned heavily on the other during the course of their walk through life. Maybe both partners tended to lean against the other, a precarious balancing act indeed. Or possibly, you had been going down the road without even holding hands, like friendly roommates, or even acquaintances who just happened to find themselves on the same journey. It’s more than likely that one of these couples’ stances accurately describes your relationship before the affair. It’s unlikely that the affair would have happened otherwise.

The best possible way for a couple to walk down life’s road together is holding hands, standing straight, and not leaning on the other. That way, when one of the partners trips, the other won’t fall, but will instead be instantly available to help them regain their balance. Their help will come without thinking, intuitively correcting the balance, not only of the one who falters, but also of the couple, simultaneously.

When we surrender control over the other person in a committed relationship, we have a chance—a good one—of learning to travel through the maze of life side-by-side in this balanced, healthy way.

We can only control or change ourselves, not the other person. And it’s the realization of this that allows us to learn respect and acceptance for another and, eventually, come to a place of deep trust that will help keep both parties balanced in times of trouble for the rest of their lives together.
How to Help Your Wounded Partner and Rebuild a Broken Relationship

Experts on your present journey advocate these tips to keep in mind throughout the process:

- Observe your emotions, rather than acting on them
- Observe the emotions of the partner you betrayed, rather than reacting to them
- Be conscious of your knee-jerk reactions and decide whether they are helpful or not
- Be generous with your kindness
- Take time each morning and evening to evaluate your progress
- Reaffirm your intentions to heal the relationship with your spouse frequently
- Open the way to honest communications, without pressing
- Take care of yourself, as well as your wounded partner
- Allow your partner the space he or she needs to heal
- Consider working with a professional marriage counselor during the rebuilding experience

This is true balance, true wisdom, and true authenticity, manifested in the synergistic entity of an awakened, mature, loving couple.

✓ Have you just discovered the betrayal of your partner?
✓ Are you wondering if the pain would ever go away?
✓ Are you worried you may never be able to trust your partner again?
✓ Are you struggling to forgive your partner?
✓ Are you suffering from repeated flashbacks and memories of the affair?
✓ Are you looking to rebuild your relationship after the devastation?
As tough as it may seem right now, there is HOPE.

Contrary to popular belief, experts say that many couples survive infidelity. They not only survive, but also thrive after the betrayal because often these couples tend to make their marriage a priority, making a conscious effort to work on their relationship in an effort.

In fact, infidelity may be the best thing to have happened to your relationship and you can bounce back from betrayal to make your relationship better, stronger and more fulfilling. Just take a few minutes to watch the video below.

Click Here To Watch the Free Video Presentation