



Initial Barriers to a Marriage Makeover after Infidelity or Marital Crisis

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<http://www.infidelity-help.com>
<http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com>

Efforts to "makeover" your relationship demand a fair degree of feeling safe with one another.

Often this is not the case.

Barriers to safety need attention before any "makeover," resolution or joint decision making can occur. Often you are not aware of the specifics of the barriers. Or, you have a difficult time addressing them.

The barriers or walls sit in the background casting their debilitating shadows.

Your intentions may be pure. But, once you face each other, the barriers quickly squelch the hope for any positive outcome. In reality you think, "Here we go again. The same-o-same-o." You feel defeated.

Below, I've listed 11 common barriers.

- 1. I want to talk, he/she doesn't.**
- 2. I'm afraid of finger-pointing, judgment. I will become the "bad person."**
- 3. The conversation will eventually turn to "what I did wrong" or "how I caused this problem."**
- 4. I'm fearful I will back down, give in, and then pretend that things are fine.**
- 5. I don't want to hurt his/her feelings.**
- 6. I don't know how to put into words what I want to say.**
- 7. I'm afraid "it" won't work. Then what? I'd rather not face that.**
- 8. I don't want to talk about the past, but think I will have to.**
- 9. We can't (really don't want to) find a time to get together.**
- 10. I don't feel safe. He/she might use what I say against me at some point.**
- 11. I feel guilty, awful. I can't get past that.**

In my e-mail I asked for your help. I asked you to respond to this question first:

Think back to 3-4 times in which you hit the barrier, or the wall went up when the two of you attempted to address an important issue. You may list them here:

Here are some of the responses (uncensored, for the most part):

Asking for time to communicate about possibility of reconciling

Asking for clarification of spouse's expectations and/or areas of dissatisfaction with relationship

Communicated feelings of hurt and anger over continued affair

Discussion of children's feelings about separation

He does not want to talk or is afraid to say what he is feeling.

I am afraid pushing will make things worse.

Maintaining contact seems better than potentially pushing him away.

He's already had a really stressful day at work so I do not want to add to his stress level.

We got angry with each other. His defensiveness brings out his anger and his avoidance of issues triggers my anger.

I am limited to what I can talk about with him. I can't ask anything about his work because that's where his OP works for him. He is very secretive about anything dealing with the office, as he says I "have an agenda."

We don't look forward to getting together because of the blow-ups, but since we never argued before I began confronting him about this affair, we need to learn how to disagree, probably.

He would say he "can't decide whether to get into or get out of the marriage" and has been this way for a long time.

We still have an issue with talking. Bill will dance around issues. I try not to press or grow impatient. Although he's not ready to move back home, he has done things around the house more, allowed me to continue to use joint credit cards for things around the house or gasoline, and as a family, he's taking my son and I to dinners when he isn't working. He has also started attending our son's soccer games when he isn't on duty. His actions are demonstrating a desire to reconnect but his words are having trouble catching up.

We both realize we are in this mess because neither one of us wanted to talk about difficult issues or areas of concern because we were going to hurt each other's feelings or touch on a topic of sensitivity (for example, retirement or financial planning in general).

We know our communication skills need work but I can't get my husband to join me in marital counseling or attend a Retroville Weekend in our area.

He feels we'll get back together and if it doesn't work out, he'll have lost two, three or ten years towards his retirement or financial planning in general. His greatest worry, as you can see, is finances in the future.

My thoughts are, do we really need to do this? We've rehashed many areas and discussed them to death. I want to look forward, I feel Bill does too, but maybe his concern is that I'll regress and want to stay in the past.

Many times we've been at a place of good solid progress only to be interrupted and one of us has to be pulled away and go. We know we are about to get somewhere and the interruption comes, we lose our focus of our conversation and we're done.

Wants me to just let it go

Never the right time to talk

No eye contact or response to a question

The only time a barrier comes up is if I want to talk about his affair but he will not talk about it, he is under the impression that if we do not talk about it then the problem will just go away. We have no problems talking about anything else as long as it is not connected to the affair.

My husband does not want to be questioned about what he has done, where he's been, etc.

He seems to shut down when questioned because he get defensive.

When I talk about how I feel he says I'm laying on the guilt.

He does not like me to repeat the same things, he must decide between me or her, etc.

HE'S SO INTENSE I FEEL IM BEING ATTACKED

My husband has moved out of our bedroom 3 months ago at the time when he has a problem with the woman. The woman has now left him (according to what he told me) but he still living in the spare bedroom in the same house with me. I have asked a few times when he is coming back to our bedroom but he refuses to talk.

With the same topic as before, I am now reluctant to talk to him on the topic as at one time he told me I should not make myself unhappy as he does not know when he is going to move back.

I really want to ask him if the woman is coming back, would he going back to her

I really want to ask him if he is ever planning to have sex with me again

I am the one always desperate want to talk and my husband always refuse to talk.

Every time when I find out he is close to another woman in same way and I asked him about it, he always just told me "it is just a ordinary friend, nothing important. "

Last year in May, I found out he met a woman at golf game and started SMS with her over 20-30 times a day for 3-4 months. I asked about her and got the same above answer. I asked him to stop and he agreed but lied about it. By July when the whole went on vacation, he called her the second day everyday. I saw an MSN message from her "Glad to hear your voice. I miss you." I strongly protested and I think he did stop after Aug. He never told me what happened although I asked many times.

In July this year again during the family vacation, I found out from a internet chat with his staff that he has called two women during our vacation. He is chasing after two women at the same time, taking it as a game. This is totally a disgrace for me. During my questioning, suddenly he admitted that he has affair with two other women in past year but last very short. These were the few words he told me after many times of questioning what happened. He refused to talk about what happened and just said sorry. I am totally frustrated and told him not to come home. This is where we are now. I read your book 'Break Free from Affair.'" He is very similar to the Type 3 "Don't want to say no" His character is very similar to what you described. I am stuck at this point now. He is working in China 80% of the time.

When I try to understand the past events which include the fact that he kept lurid emails and printed them and I saw them, he gets furious and screams at me "NO NO NO " and the dialogue is then destroyed. It is as if I have to be superhumanly tolerant and well behaved.

Questions about his intentions... how he sees a future are met with silence or at least : I didnt plan any of this"

He left me and is not in the family home, and I now seek some resolution to unspoken matters. He doesnt want to say anything meaningful.

Tyring to get somewhere with new financial arrangements is impossible

Slippery watermelon seed". Avoids eye contact, changes subject

Won't just set aside uninterrupted time. Always some distraction

Very difficult to keep him on track with the immediate issue at hand

The walls go up rapidly when instead of sharing her feelings and thoughts, she asks questions and then criticizes virtually everything I say, or keeps turning conversations to talking about the past.

Walls go up when she's angry about my drinking, which triggers additional drinking. (know the solution, and I'm doing better at moderating/ abstaining from alcohol. I got impatient with her, and felt manipulated, so I re-contacted an internet friend (we've never met) and when I did that, the old walls went up, but then she seemed to want me back, and I can't let her go if she'll have me.

The biggest barrier has been his refusal to try to explain why he done what he done. Not talking about it (head in the sand) is his way to don't think about the pain he caused and hope all pain will just go away (time heals kind of thing).

She went out with people I didn't approve of.

She didn't carry her share of the work around the house.

She was reaching outside of our relationship for support.

Our daughters wedding was difficult, we could not discuss it as I got upset at the thought of her making vows that I made, and look what happened to me.

My husband will not talk except about everyday things, work the weather, sport, anything but emotions and feelings

There are still things I do not know and feel I need to, he will not talk.

When I asked for information on his first 2 affairs (flings/trysts is what he calls them)

Any time I question his answers or reasons for why/what he did

Our anniversary

My wife (of 16 years) was /is having an affair which resulted in our separation (5 months ago), which will led to our divorce. If I even begin to bring up how hurt & angry this infidelity makes me feel. She tells me that I am just playing the "Victim" role. This dismissiveness makes me angry. So she gets angry that I got angry.

We argue and nothing gets accomplished

90% of the time we get along better then any two people you've ever seen. 10% of the time it is viscous horrible mess of a relationship filled with acrimony and resentment - Lack of trust, betrayal and yelling & screaming, sparked by.....it could be anything. Sometimes it seems like the walls and barriers go up simply because they haven't gone up for a week or two.

When my wife say: "we need to talk". It's always bad news for me - and then he walls go up.

Needing to let go of the OP

Needing to spend more one on one time together

what the other persons most important needs are

My problem is that my husband has been seeing or trying to seduce woman he meets on the internet. I have found evidence on his computer of this and history of chats. He also posted a personal with another name and age. He said he is through with this but occasionally I find notes with yahoo id's and e-mails which I think are of woman he is asking to get in touch with. When I do profile searches I find they are of women. He has said he is not doing it anymore and has asked me to try and work on our marriage. I do love him, but I feel like he is just playing with me and it is hard for me to trust him as he has locked me out of his e-mails and also has put a lock on his cell phone. He and I are living separate now and I don't know for sure if he is still at it, or seeing other women he meets on the internet. He gives me mixed messages, calls me and tells me he is working on getting his e-mail and that he's stopped chatting. But, then when we get together it is only for that day or a few days we are okay, then the fighting arguing, breakdown. When I try and confront him about finding things, he pushes me away and will ignore me. That is where the breakdown is.

I have seen he still goes in a page where people post their profile. I Went in through history, it tells you the date he was last in there. I See the date and he does go there like once a week. I am scared to approach him on this because he accuses me of spying on him and cuts off communication.

I don't want to talk to him or confront him because I feel like I will Breakdown, get emotional and this will make him step back. I am an emotional wreck.

Here is the second part of my request:

List 3-4 barriers or walls that got in the way of you moving toward a productive conversation or resolution of that important issue. List them here:

And the responses:

'Stonewalling' a refusal to talk or get together

Blame and accusation

Spouse's continued relationship with the op

Time constraints.

Privacy (kids)

Other stresses.

He didn't want to talk, but I did. When he did want to talk, it was as if he was the "professor with 50 questions" (Ex: How do you define your life?) that involved intimidation and fear and avoided talking about the affair he is still having.

I don't feel safe. He might use what I say against me in the future. I don't always have the right words to say so that I don't anger him. I am frustrated because he can't seem to have empathy for my feelings and I am put down because I do have hurt feelings.

He won't answer this email, but I think he is feeling guilty, but won't acknowledge that.

I am worried if "it" won't work, but a little less so, now than months ago.

Doesn't take my feelings into consideration or what I have to say seriously.

Responds to me with a sarcastic remark that he knows will push my buttons

Always has something else that needs to be done besides talk to me

There is only one topic that we cannot talk about and that is anything to do with his affair. I want to talk and he refuses to talk. We can talk about anything else without any problems

Emotions including guilt, denial, and being judgmental.

I DONT FEEL SECURE...ENOUGH TO TALK...WHAT I SAY WILL GET THROWN IN MY FACE.

In the past several years, I felt that my husband is not very happy. I told to him and wrote to him many times telling him nicely that "I love him and the children love him very much. The children are very good. His family is all very supportive of him. He is not very rich, but we have enough money to live easily. Tell me what we can all do to make you happy." I got the same answer for many years, "Don't worry about me. I am just an unhappy person. It will be fine as long as we are happy." But then he still gradually isolated himself more and more from the family and his family side. He can only talk about this less than 5 minutes and stopped me.

Several times I asked my husband gently to talk about "what are his needs that I cannot meet his". He also did not like to talk about it.

Every time I talked to him about the problems about our relationship, he either has his eyes looking away, or continues to use his computer. Last few month, he even started to yell at me that I am too suspicious.

Silence

diverting the subject with small talk

tears...from both of us.

his clear statement that we cant go back.. that trust is impossible to rebuild(He just doesn't want to be a married family man anymore... and doesn't want to or cant sever the ties to his long term paramour

In this case- fear of giving something up (on his part)

Argumentative approach puts both of us on the defensive

Lack of respect for my opinion

Grilling style of questioning

Constant criticism

My drinking

My low self-esteem and need to be admired.

My inability to totally confront her with the issue.

My not wanting to argue and take a stand.

I never wanted to tell her what to do.

I talk, my husband does not, he is of the opinion that if you don't talk about it, I didn't happen.

I don't trust him. Not that I think he would do it again, but I don't trust him to tell me the truth about anything anymore.

My great disappointment in my husband of 30 years. I never thought he would have an affair. Not because I was such a wonderful wife, but because of the kind of man I always thought he was. Honest, moralistic, and truthful.

My wife (estranged and heading toward divorce) accuses me of playing the victim if I express how I feel regarding our current situation. This triggers an angry response from me, which, in turn, cause's her to get angry, and then all of the resentment and bitterness from the past flares up and in record time we are going at each other. It is the sound of a circus setting up in hell.

My wife can not process the possibility that sometimes she might be wrong or mistaken - about anything - ever.

My wife is not interested in resolution. Her idea of a Productive Conversation with me, concerning the disintegration of our marriage, is for her to tell me, in detail, how she feels - what she wants - how things will go - and for me to just fall in line with all of her demands without question or input. She is a Bully.

gets personal

Can't be honest

end up getting hysterical

As this is written, I'm in the process of creating innovative resources that enable a couple to acknowledge their barriers, get past them so the skills and communication they need for making over the relationship have more than a better chance of working.

Please visit <http://www.infidelity-help.com> or <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com> to receive the material as it's published.

Dr Huizenga, the Infidelity Coach, offers infidelity help and relationship advice for coping with extramarital affairs and marital infidelity at: [Break-free-from-the-affair.com](http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com) and [infidelity-help.com](http://www.infidelity-help.com). Get articles and free downloads on [emotional infidelity](#), [coping with infidelity](#), [the cheating spouse](#), [signs of an affair](#), [surviving infidelity](#) and more.

