

How to Break Free From The Affair!

19 Live Infidelity Coaching Sessions

With Dr. Robert Huizenga – The Infidelity Coach

How can I compete with a 29 year-old blond bombshell?

Workbook portion of audio tape with Fiona

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

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Part 1: Summary of Fiona's Circumstances

I have been married to my best friend for 9 years (anniversary next week actually) and I recently found out he'd been having an affair with a woman he works with. I've known something was wrong for the last 6 months because he was treating me badly - unheard of for him.

For the last 2 years he has gone off sex in a big way but I put that down to pressures at work, then around October last year he started being dismissive of me, criticizing everything I did, allowing his mother to run me down and undermine my authority with our 4 year old daughter. Time and time again I begged him to tell me what was wrong - even going so far as to say "if you're attracted to someone just tell me and we can work through it together" but he swore there was no-one else and he was just "going through a rough patch".

Over Xmas he was so distant, not joining in with me and our child, not taking a single photo - unheard of for him as he's always snapping away with the camera. Then he disappeared for 10 minutes while shopping at the sales but had no explanation of where he'd been.

Then in mid January I looked on his mobile phone, telling myself that I was mad to imagine something was going on and this would prove it to me. I was wrong. There was her latest message, saying how much she would miss him over Xmas, how she wanted him to "get in touch when u can" and appreciating "how difficult it is" for him. My world stopped, I nearly threw up.

Then I confronted him and he denied all knowledge - "she's just a friend" and even "she's a lesbian going through a rough patch with her partner and I empathized and we've been texting each other as we're going through the same thing".

The next day I called her and told her that I knew all about their relationship and it had to stop because there was a small child involved, it wasn't just him and her. She was silent then said "but we're not having an affair". I told her to stay away from my family and hung up.

It took him 2 days of watching me cry and fall apart before he admitted he'd been meeting up with her, texting her, sending her cards saying how her man was so lucky to have her (having now dropped the lesbian theory), but he knew it was me he wanted and it wasn't an affair because they hadn't had sex. He called a therapist I'd

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found two weeks previously on the internet (thinking we could get help with the lack of sex issue) and we started counseling.

That was 3 months ago and I've now said I'm not going to counseling anymore because it's all about how I'm somehow to blame for this - in the therapist's words "if he was happy at home he wouldn't have gone looking". This is undermining the last scrap of confidence I have left and I can't dare go any lower or I'm afraid I'll disappear completely.

At first he was really cold about it and kept telling me things like "look, I've said it's over, you're not helping by starting every day crying, you have to get past it if we have any chance". Then a few weeks ago I decided I couldn't take it and asked him to leave. He changed completely, broke down crying and begged me to forgive him and give our marriage another try. He seems genuine but why did it take so long to show it?

How can I believe him when he looked me straight in the eye for months on end and said there was no-one else when all the time he's running off to meet her behind my back?

Every day is a struggle and everyone around me thinks I should have got over it by now but I just can't get past it. I'm attractive, mid thirties, slim, run my own business - to many I may look like a real catch, but I look at him and all I see in his eyes is this ugly old woman. His mistress was younger, blond, everyone at his work fancies her he tells me. I'm dying and cry every single day about this. If it wasn't for my daughter I'd have probably done something drastic to myself by now and being a Christian that upsets me enormously.

I desperately need some help to get past this - how can I ever put this behind me? Is my marriage worth going through all this when he could just do this to me all over again? I wouldn't get through this twice, I don't think I'm getting through it once. Please help, I don't mind if you use my real name.

Part 2: Dr. Huizenga's Review of the Coaching Session

1. Trust can be close to the issue of one's personal power.

A predominate question for Fiona is: "How will I know if he is telling the truth when I ask him if he is lying or cheating?" A common concern focusing on trust.

However, as you listen to the tape, the first question Fiona asks is, "How can I stop this from happening again?" And, of course, the answer is: You can't!

As the session proceeds it becomes apparent that Fiona is floundering with her perceived loss of personal power. He now controls. It seems he holds the power. Although passive, his passivity nonetheless creates a stranglehold on the relationship.

How can she trust him? Or, how can she elicit information from him to help her determine his motives, and then, what can she say or do to alter the course of his actions?

Fiona feels lost, helpless and at his mercy.

These are not comfortable or familiar feelings for her.

2. These feelings are exacerbated by another layer of painful feelings of inadequacy. He's hooked up with a blond bombshell.

Fiona feels vulnerable, thinking she will ALWAYS be competing with this sexy blond. (She thinks of dying her hair blond, but no decides against it.)

It's not that Fiona perceives herself as unattractive or undesirable. Quite the contrary. Her body image is more than adequate.

It's extremely disappointing to Fiona that she worked so hard trying to build a great marriage.

She was considerate of him. She attempted to meet his needs when maybe she didn't feel like it. She expended, focused and intentional energy building a marriage that she thought would last. And, she thought she did a darn good job.

But, was it all for naught?

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3. In the midst of her uncertainty, broken spirit and shattered self-esteem, Fiona rightfully struggled with confronting him with her thoughts and feelings. How could she best confront him? How could she work toward perhaps salvaging the marriage?

She had often taken the lead in the relationship. She was typically sure of herself. She would address problems with him and engage him to work toward solutions.

But, he was always one to shy away from confrontation. And, what would happen now if she confronted him with anything close to the power of her hurt and pain? Her guess: he would bolt. And she didn't want that.

Her dilemma was double: How could she approach him so he would not bolt. And, how could she jack up her self esteem to the point where she felt she could with power and effectiveness confront him in a way that would create new dialogue and hope?

4. She did not want an explosion.

She could not handle that. He probably couldn't handle that. The relationship might not survive.

Everything seems so fragile, so tenuous.

5. Coaching with Fiona moved to positive and hope generating ways to confront.

Fiona's present strategy was to ask questions, hoping to elicit the kind of information she needed to build her self esteem (please tell me you want me) and discover what he was thinking regarding the status of the marriage (can I trust that this will never happen again?)

Her questions resulted in stonewalling at best. He wanted it to go away and would not contribute significant responses to her questions.

Out of fear of an explosion if she would pursue, Fiona backed away, without her questions answered or needs met.

Seemed like a stalemate. And worse, it left him passively in control of the relationship. He was calling the shots in terms of the potential for growing intimacy. Fiona felt helpless and lost.

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6. The work of the coaching session was in the last few minutes whereby Fiona and I fashioned some verbal comments she could make to him.

These comments were designed to find a middle ground between the stonewalling and the potential for explosion.

These statements (not questions) were statements that held extreme power and at the same time invited participation. There was little he could find threatening in these statements.

These statements were grounded in affair #7: [I Want to be Close to Someone...but can't stand intimacy](#) and utilized Fiona's strengths.

Just by fashioning these questions Fiona began to get back her feeling of personal power. Her feeling of hope skyrocketed. There was a possibility for her to reclaim her good feelings and perhaps, over time, redesign a new marriage.

Part 3: Comments from Peers – If Fiona's situation is/was similar to yours, list 2 things you said or did that were helpful.

- ▶ First I quit worrying about how he sees me. He has to except me for me and that I'm not the other person. Also started reading a book suggested by a very good friend "Love & Respect" by: Dr.Emerson Eggerichs.
- ▶ I depersonalised my requests - for example, I sometimes used other people's relationships to introduce topics around intimacy, and then moved it on to us.
- ▶ Realized it was his problem, not a reflection of me. But I am still in a place of not knowing how to handle the situation.
- ▶ Her situation is practically identical to mine and she sounds a lot like me the only thing that is helping me a little bit is time, and keeping busy with my own interests and my own work
- ▶ To put the responsibility of the affair on the spouse. 2. To stop blaming oneself for another person's selfishness.
- ▶ Fiona, love, I've been in your shoes many times over and yes, everyone is different when it comes to their own feelings, but the one thing that drove me crazy was "He lied so easily to me, how do I know he won't do it again?" The probability of him doing it again is just as likely as he won't, the real question is, can you live with that? The second is, don't go back to the counselor, it sounds really backwards to me, marriage is a 2 way street and he needs to shoulder half the responsibility, I thought I was being a good wife, in his view, it was different.
- ▶ Powerful empowering statements which elicit answers: 1)This is what I want in a relationship/marriage - are you in or out? 2) This is what I'm really thinking.. - what are you thinking of?
- ▶ That I will not accept the situation as it is and he must make a choice whether he wants to be with me or her. Tried to back off from wanting explanations about why he started the affair because I was blaming myself and to accept that I was not to blame.
- ▶ I found out about my husband's affair 11 months after it began; he denied it first for three months. It was helpful for me to

continue asking questions when I wanted answers; the only problem was I lost trust and could not believe him. Also, after 6 months of knowing, I finally said he had to leave our home if he couldn't end it, and he did. That was almost 6 months ago.

- ▶ My situation is not similar in that I confronted my husband with irrefutable evidence of his affair. Nothing I did or have done has been helpful. Even filing for divorce has not brought about any change. As far as my husband believes he can do what he wants and I do not have a choice but to stay in it until he decides. But I will suggest that if he is willing to talk she could perhaps suggest a period of reflection and then discussing what they want going forward.
- ▶ Fiona's situation is exactly like mine, almost to every word. We were best friends for 16 years, he met someone at work, I found out via a text message because I started to get suspicious due to way he treated me- with indifference and callousness. The difference, and I think would be helpful for her, is that I told my husband to leave and I put the ball in his court to make a decision on what he wanted and at the same time it would give me space to determine what I wanted. I took the kids and went to Lake Tahoe for a week (a vacation that we had already booked for the family) and I left him to do whatever. During that time he decided that he does value me, our relationship and he wanted another chance. I am grappling with the same questions as Fiona, and I encourage her to be honest with him and tell him what fears her most.
- ▶ I'm still struggling just like her.
- ▶ Very similar 1. Asked him if he knew what he want in life and if it was her 2 If so leave and don't come back because I loved him enough to see that he was happy.
- ▶ Whoah~ My situaion happened to be almost identical... the years of involvement of the three (Fiona, partner and "mistress") matched my situation and also the ages of everyone involved matched my scenario... the statements were the same when it came to "no sexual element" as an excuse to wipe away my partner's affair and even personality of ours lines up with Fiona & her hubbie- I can unbelievably relate to this experience probably more than any other I've come across thus far... SO actual helpful input when I was in this situation was to

acknowledge to my partner that his being infatuated with "fresh" options along with escapes from my stronger personality and the "boredom" (especially while I had a focus on children as a mother) was completely understandable for someone that doesn't like to feel stress of any sort. I really took into account how he fears confrontation and yet still let him know that I was incredibly upset over the cover-up and want to trust that he could just admit he was looking for more excitement since I understood the temptation to escape what was not fresh. This strangely made him feel like I was still part of a team. I also knew he feared intimacy- so, as Fiona emphasized, I did not get into any direct questioning because I sensed he would misread it and react to what he feared most - intimate exposure. Instead, I told him that all I could do is acknowledge that we had been so close before and had built so much together that it made us close and he seemed to want to re-honor this sense of being best friends. This understanding and low-key supportive attitude seemed to let my partner feel forgiven and have a choice to be himself. I must admit that this approach may have been too low-key since eventually this partner cheated again based on wanting to join the new excitement offered by his jealous daughters' party circle (this involved a bunch of young bombshells in the Lindsey Lohan type circle that were connected to my partner's suddenly grown-up wild and gorgeous jet-set "kids" from his first marriage) I have still had a tough time reconciling the mess and games that had happened after I opened up once more to trust a man that did the same as Fiona's husband and seemed so sincere. I'm not sure that I did enough and still am scarred and feeling low-self-esteem over being a fool to try again...

- ▶ Cheating and lying go hand to hand. He also lied when I confronted him.
- ▶ I started focusing on myself and demonstrating that I would be fine on my own. Realizing that I was not at fault is important so you don't spend all your energy on him and the situation he created - we are important too and I needed to be strong for my new baby (he started his affair whilst I was pregnant and it went on for almost a year). I was prepared to leave the marriage because my son and I deserve better than we were receiving. I don't expect to have "competition" where my husband is concerned (you cannot compare "dating" to marriage). He was

actually surprised that it wasn't necessarily his choice when he "never planned on leaving us"...

- ▶ I told him that even if the affair was not physical that it was an emotional involvement and a betrayal. I tried to get him to realize how emotional involvement is very important in a woman's eyes - just as a physical involvement and betrayal would be hard for a husband to take.
- ▶ I did have more power than I gave myself credit for Assume a position of power in the relationship.
- ▶ I told my husband his new "relationship" was based on lies. both he and the other woman were seeing each behind the back of wife and boyfriend so how could he expect it to go anywhere. months later he told me that really opened his eyes, which led to a good heart to heart between the 2 of us to discuss parts of what happened 2. began concentrating on myself and my own happiness.
- ▶ Not to place blame on oneself, it may have been inappropriate for him to go outside of marriage for an affair, but because he could not for some reason be intimate and converse his problems.... he did so, it doesn't make what he did right. It's wrong, but we need to find out WHY he couldn't talk or converse his feelings.
- ▶ My situation was similar. I started my life with being humiliated by my husband's infidelity and was devastated at the age of 43 to discover that he was cheating on me several times after crying and begging for pardon after the first infidelity was discovered. He was always afraid to lose me and his child whom he always adored. I don't remember what I said that helped me, most probably the threat that our marriage was over. Did things went well afterwards? They did. The marriage lasted for another 30 years. Did I stop crying? I didn't and I don't, though he is now so much different and seems to love me very much, however, I'll never forget the depression I suffered, the lies behind my back in the past, the truth that I'll never know till the end of my days, the wrenching gut feeling of other lies, the mere thought that I was one woman from a harem drives me crazy. But the family is very strong and happy, so people think. I am proud of myself for reforming my husband, though sometimes I doubt if it was worth the price.

- Confront him about the affair. 2. Told him to break if off if he want anything to do with me.

Part 4: Comments from Peers - From your personal experience and what you have learned about infidelity, what 2 suggestions would you give to Fiona?

- ▶ That it's never your fault when this happens. You can survive and that if it happens again you will survive I did. My 14 yr old daughter read a disgusting text she still has anger issues trying to deal with this. It has been exactly one year since my husband had an affair and told the other woman he loved her wanted to marry her (note this was 7days after our 13 anniversary). 4 months after that one I found out it happened again. First time I was weak, 2nd stood my ground. PRAY PRAY PRAY and move in the direction that God, inner being, conscious tells you. It is your life. My husband now knows I don't need him which was a controlling factor for him. He no longer controls me. It still hurts. I think about it every day. I still have anger and this happened in aug 06(the affair went on for 11/2 years the 2nd time feb07, for 3months. He does try now. Leaves cell phone out tells what he is doing you just have to trust but there is always that doubt. Just hang on like me. Same as you Fiona, the lady was a bombshell (5'3" 113lbs. extremely fit) me 5'6" 135 2 kids one almost 16 son 14 don't drag children in it. My son has no idea what his dad has done and I want tell him and Ashlee won't tell either. He looks up to him. Go by your feelings you will not make a mistake. You can use my name or email for Fiona.
- ▶ You have more power than you think - and in your husband's eyes too. Your husband will probably repeat this pattern (or may have repeated this pattern) with other partners. This is an opportunity for him to break the pattern with you.
- ▶ To take care of herself and understand she has a right to be loved the right way.
- ▶ She should stop seeing the counselor who sounds worse than useless she needs to recognize that her husband is a very flawed individual who will never be the sort of person she once imagined him to be. Rather than the love of her life, she has to think of him more like the eccentric uncle who is still fun to have over to dinner.
- ▶ Stop blaming herself. 2. Focus on her own needs first, then others.

- ▶ Children, no matter how you try to teach them, will eventually, get hurt at one time or another, falling down, touching a hot stove, whatever. If you look at your marriage with optimism, that's when it will feel differently to you. My husband refused to talk or answer anything, but after prodding, he couldn't really tell me what was missing. It's not you, it most definitely is him, he makes his own happiness. Do not take everything into yourself, try to find different settings and hobbies to make yourself happy and healed, right now, it doesn't feel like anything remotely happy, but you can't spend all of your time wondering, it keeps a dark cloud over you and you aren't the one that cheated.
- ▶ Build your relationship by working on your self esteem - (ie it is NOT entirely your fault the affair happened - as others would have you believed -it takes 2 to clap!). 2) Don't base your self worth on the affair (that you need to compete with a 29 years old blonde) but on who you ARE as a person - that as a christian you have great worth in God's eye as HIS precious child and God loves you dearly. Keep going!
- ▶ He doesn't have boundaries that will keep him from doing it again, because he said it was not an affair. Go with your own intuition because women do know those things. Don't ask for others opinions, as the saying goes, opinions are like assholes, everybody has one. God gave U a brain use it like U R doing. UR Mama didn't raise no fool, and U R right. That has been proven. Does he deserve U???
- ▶ Ditch the counselor who is so dismissive and disrespectful of her. You are not the cause of the affair. To back away from emotional responses which he runs from because of his fear of intimacy.
- ▶ Take back her power and make her own decisions about what she wants to do about the relationship.
- ▶ Be patient and give her husband time. He is at least willing to do something to fix what is wrong. The fact that he is willing is in my opinion a great deal on his part. She should embrace that in him. She needs to read as widely as she can to gain the knowledge to ensure she does everything she possible can to get a good outcome.

- ▶ Firstly, I would suggestion finding another counselor. We have been to many bad ones in the past and if we had a good one, might not be in this boat so this time, we interviewed a lot of them and asked for referrals. Secondly, give him time alone to feel what it is like not having you and your daughter to be there for him. Allow him to talk to your daughter as much as he wants, but he will miss you and by doing that, he will see what a mistake he made. If he doesn't, then you know where he stands and that is better than being in a relationship that is completely fake.
- ▶ I really her sense of lack of control or power, even though I'm a successful business man and make tough decisions all day long. I'm still working on it myself for my personal life.
- ▶ We are never sure about anything in life so try hard if you want your marriage and good luck. Do not chance be yourself.
- ▶ I think I'd have been better off if I had also pulled in more friendships to buffer myself so not to be devastated if a betrayal occurred again (as it did in my case). I also would suggest that she learn more (if possible) about his overall past pattern in youth and prior to her knowing her partner to get a true sense of his capability to grow... she may just be playing mama to a boy that needs a strong woman to get what he wants at home but loves to go out and play and never truly cares to grow -just plays the sincerity card to make sure he doesn't lose his strong caretaker female... In other words, Fiona may be so busy being in charge of the lifestyle happenings that her husband wants handled around the home front that she has no clue while she thinks there actually is a team -fact is that she's the only one really running the bases to come home! ...and he only latches onto the concession stand for the goodies connected to the game plus loves to take breaks during seventh inning stretches similar to a seven-year itch affair. If she sees a pattern of avoidance is related to his affair and his fear of intimacy within his overall past then she can know if he is a team player or a little-boy type that she was unaware of just needs her for the sake of handling responsibilities so he can avoid growing pains. This way she can have her guard up while seeing if he comes through and grows up or (as in my partner) he simply feels safe finding a comfortably strong female just so he can relax and get what he wants while pretending he is a loyal team player and will jump

ship to go play again if a better game pops up. 'Hopefully, Fiona's husband is a real best friend and loyal and sincere about being trustworthy. I wish her the best.

- ▶ To take extra care of herself at this time, physically, mentally and spiritually To really think about what she is willing to tolerate in this relationship.
- ▶ Don't love your partner unconditionally, it will end the relationship. Challenge each other.
- ▶ Realize that you do have power and you don't have to settle. You and your husband can have a better relationship than you ever dreamed.
- ▶ Stay true to your values for yourself and your family and don't sell yourself short. You are desirable and a strong INDIVIDUAL first and foremost. Expect to need a lot of time to Trust him again - trust is earned and it's a sign of respect. When something like an affair happens, they must realize they are starting from below zero to earn it again... it takes time. It's been almost a year since my husband's affair ended and I still occasionally check cell phone and e-mail and I don't feel guilty if that's what I need to get that back.
- ▶ Don't let your self esteem suffer. It was their problem and something within them that caused it. Exercise- it makes you look at things differently.
- ▶ Because she is a Christian, take full advantage of the power of God to heal her brokenness Allow herself to be angry and to let it show in a healthy way. Rather than crying, put the pain back on the betrayer.
- ▶ Concentrate on herself and HER happiness during his ambivalence 2. let him SEE your happiness that you've found WITHOUT him, just like in dr. bob's book.
- ▶ Take care of yourself. Find some friends to have a sounding board to talk with in times of troubles. One may need to distance from friends that go against the grain, and not be supportive of your wishes during the months of reconciliation. Because they can make the situation difficult at best for you if they are trying to talk you "out of the relationship."

- ▶ You are still very young. I feel for you so strongly, I am crying with you. You can work things out and you can keep your family intact, though it will never be the same. As for the trust, look at me, can men be trusted. I thought I would go nuts when he was crying again. After all how many times can you feel remorseful, if you consider yourself a normal human being and not a sex addict. I was a darn fool to believe my man when I was 25 and quite suicidal with pain. How can you not believe when you are so pure and naive? What I regret the most? Of course being so trustful, believing that a man can't hurt you so much again. If you are ready to trust like I did, go ahead, keep your man. If you want to live your life being always on a vigil, go on. You should never ever be afraid of any bombshell on your horizon; your life will be hell on earth. What makes a woman happy? Being loved the way she is, being convinced she is not compared to anyone. Weigh things up, Fiona, What if you deserve a better lot.
- ▶ It happened to send a message of the other person that the other person cannot say out loud to the other. That the other person cannot see that he was wrong or that it is an affair.

Part 5: Comments from Peers - List a couple benefits you received from listening to this tape.

- ▶ Move on . Don't let the affair control you. I feel like I'm in the right direction.
- ▶ This really DID sound like my own partner and his behavior, and confirmed my thoughts that his affair was a Type 7. He seems to have a need to have secret hiding places within himself that are kept from me.
- ▶ Just realizing that it is very possible for a man to lie to your face and seem sincere. And that I also feel a lack of power in my relationship and I need to somehow recapture that power again for my own well being.
- ▶ Comforting to feel less alone through hearing a story so similar to mine you are spot on in identifying this as an issue of power. The best way to bring down a confident, competent woman is to stab her in the heart by cheating on her - an underhanded method by which the adulterer achieves dominance.
- ▶ I learned that it is important to put ourselves first, then others. This is the weakness the husband sees in us, that we will always look after their needs, at the expense of our needs. 2. I learned that it is important to be able to see that words which are not accompanied by real action to repair the relationship are just words. I learned that it is important to strongly solicit from the husband what his actions will be to demonstrate his sincerity to rebuild the trust. If this does not happen, then in all probability, the husband "will do it again" and we should find the strength in ourselves to move away from the selfish abuse. Thank you.
- ▶ Eerily similar to my own experience, but I would like to know, what makes a man want one thing, then decide it's not enough? Why would he want more and risk everything?
- ▶ I feel disempowered by the affair but I learn that there are positive ways to regain control of myself and the situation using the right approach (ie using powerful empowering statements to convey my feelings which elicit responses and do not sound threatening and which prevent stonewalling). 2) I'm not alone in this - (ie my feelings of hopelessness, lost, confusion and disempowerment are shared so many others going through the

same situation I'm going through - that I'm not making this up - that my feelings are validated) and that there is hope at the end of the tunnel. 3) There are strategies and ways out of this once seemingly hopeless situation. Thank you for offering me hope once again.

- ▶ To ask him the question: "This is what I want and need in a marriage...are you in or out?" Being reminded of "how many times he has done this."
- ▶ To take back my power so that I don't feel so hopeless
Identification of which affair I am dealing with. I have long thought my husband has intimacy issues but also likes "being in love" and having being affirmed that he is desirable by someone who is telling him how wonderful he is.
- ▶ Realizing I am not alone.
- ▶ That I should make statements about not only what I want in the marriage, but also what I want for my life. To know that I am on the right track in terms of regaining power in the relationship and where decisions about my life are concerned. There is no hope for us - my husband absolutely refuses to do anything to fix the relationship - but he does not want it to end. I have made the decision to end it and taken steps to do so. When I hear how some men are taking steps - even though they may be very small- to fix their marriage, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I am doing the right thing.
- ▶ It so mirrored my situation, it made me feel better. It made me think that I am not alone, I knew that already but this could be my story. I also liked the advice that I heard from the Dr.
- ▶ I like the question that she should ask him "This is what I want in a marriage..." I would like to hear more stories from men who have had women cheat on them. It seems they react different...tougher to get over.
- ▶ Just to understand this happens to more than me.
- ▶ The tape was wonderful in that it shows how Fiona can tap into her own feelings and sort out what she wants to re-empower herself rather than react or stay stuck in fear or blame of the betraying husband. It also was great to her how you both

brainstorm together to refine the approach of repairing the relationship so that it was most conducive to their relationship rather than throwing some "fix-it" rule at the guy that is already in a touchy situation. Your open and supportive style of counseling is so soothing and flexible and applicable to everyone that it really helped me still process some of the bad stuff that I still have happening because of betrayal scars. Thanks again for being such a cool and wise therapist that empowers rather than instructs!!!

- ▶ Insights into what affairs might really be about reinforcement of my right to personal empowerment no matter how challenging the situation--holding onto my power.
- ▶ You got to know what type of affair is your partner having. You got to know what road to take that will move you forward.
- ▶ Recognizing that you can't stop someone from doing it again--all you can do is work on yourself and hope for the best.
- ▶ Hearing how she felt the need to compete with a younger model - I felt the same way (she was 10 years my junior)... but I don't anymore, so I realized I've moved beyond that. Taking a firm stance about what you expect from the marriage and communicating that. I realize that my husband has finally got that message and that is when things started to improve - but we have a long way to go and I'll have to continue in my firmness and no-nonsense probably forever. Will we ever lift our guards again?
- ▶ I liked the discussion about fear of conflict and how it is linked to intimacy.
- ▶ Being on the outside was a new revelation for me. Of course when your best friend and confidant is confiding in someone else, there is betrayal regardless if a sexual union is happening. They may claim that it's not an affair but the betrayal is quite real.
- ▶ Loved the part about stating what you want from your marriage and asking "are you in or out?" analyzing which affair. I'm still not sure which one was my husband's, I think he fell out of love and just love being in love I can relate to the "emotional affair" part because he swears it had not become sexual . . .yet. not

sure if I believe that I can relate to the younger, beautiful woman part. Although I have never seen her but he told me her age and that she was beautiful. Like I wanted to really know that!

- ▶ I liked the teamwork philosophy. Also, the ability to talk and it not be blaming during the counseling session. It appeared to really be looking for options to help Fiona.
- ▶ The main benefit was understanding that I am not alone, there are many more like me. I don't know Fiona personally but I have this strong feeling to be near her and hug her. When I was in her position I needed compassion from people who had the same experience, the others would feel with you, but would never understand the pain you suffer. I don't know if I am a pathological case, I feel this pain till this very day and shed tears even today. I would compare it to being robbed, as if you are looking for something very dear to you that has been stolen from you by some other woman and you know you will never find it, only she and your very loved man know the truth and will always have the secret that only they share.
- ▶ That an affair doesn't have to be physical. It a traingle between three people. That I still have power even though I don't feel powerful.