



**By Dr. Robert Huizenga, LMFT, CSW**  
**The Infidelity Coach**

# Introduction

Dr. Huizenga, the Infidelity Coach, here...

I've literally worked with thousands of couples and individuals struggling with painful issues since 1981 in my private practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist and online since 2002.

I've walked with them in their agony, pain, confusion, and anger and listened to their pleas, questions and fears.

My conclusion: **there is only one event in the life of a marriage that may cause more pain and that is the death of a child.**

But, hands down, the discovery of infidelity rocks a person and marriage to their very core.

I want to share my experience with you. I want to share my research and study on infidelity. I want to thank all those who shared their pain, struggle and eventual growth with me, for it is from them that I learned.

I also learned to honor and marvel at the **potential for healing and change.**

You are entitled to your feelings of hopelessness right now and I don't want you to flee past them. However, please know that **this too shall pass.**

As you read this book, as you pay attention to what is stirring in you, as you drink in the stories of others facing infidelity, you will heal. More than heal you will redesign your life and relationships.

This is your opportunity. The greater your pain, the greater your desire for something different.

And, because you are here, you are more than half way there.

In being blessed with thousands sharing their pain of infidelity with me, I've learned there are crucial steps that most go through in breaking free from the affair, saving the marriage or moving on with life with hope, joy and welcoming new possibilities.

The first stage is dealing with what I call Basketcaseitist. You want to stop reacting, stop flailing and stop doing that which is guaranteed to shoot you in your foot.

You want to regain your inner equilibrium, you want to regain your confidence, you want to find a way to minimize the images and thoughts and you want to face your cheating partner calmly so that s/he knows in his/her core that it truly IS his/her problem.

This ebook helps you move along in that healing. Much healing comes from understanding the true dynamics of infidelity and breaking through the garbage that has been instilled in you through our culture.

Once you have more of a capacity to charge neutral (a vital skill I teach in facing infidelity) you are ready to diagnose the type of affair, and plan a specific strategy that stands the best chance of changing the flow of the affair.

My other ebook, [Break Free From the Affair](#) is devoted to, in detail, analyzing the 7 types of affairs and giving specific strategies for each that help you address the cheating partner.

I sincerely wish you the best in your healing journey and with great confidence know that you have within you everything you need to calm your spirit and move ahead intentionally with power and grace.

Dr. Bob Huizenga, the Infidelity Coach

<http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/coach.htm>

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Chapter 1: The Origins of Basketcaseitis and How it Fades.....	5
Chapter 2: Watch Yourself.....	16
Chapter 3: Do For You What No One Else Will Do .....	20
Chapter 4: Know Why and When Your Marriage is Vulnerable.....	24
Chapter 5: Think Small.....	31
Chapter 6: Decisions, Decisions: Relax .....	34
Chapter 7: Knowledge Leads to Power.....	40
Chapter 8: It's NOT Your Fault.....	44
Chapter 9: Stop the Affair – Not What You Think .....	48
Chapter 10: Avoid the Killer Mistakes .....	52
Chapter 11: Jumping in (8 Different Places) the Healing Stream .....	58
Chapter 12: Examine the Questions You Commonly Ask.....	69
Chapter 13: Examine the Questions You SHOULD Ask.....	89
Chapter 14: You are Not Alone! You Can Do It! .....	108

# Chapter I: The Origins of Basketcaseitis and How it Fades



I want to outline very clearly the steps many go through in successfully surviving infidelity.

First there are the Basketcase days. Those days are normal and to be expected upon infidelity Discovery and I will tell you why.

But, you cannot EFFECTIVELY counter infidelity being a Basketcase. You will only make the situation worse.

You MUST get a hold of yourself before you take constructive action that will honor you and change the flow of the infidelity. In working with thousands impacted by infidelity I've identified some keys to moving out of the Basketcase mode into productive ways of thinking and acting.

I will show you what you can do to make that happen...sooner than you might think possible right now.

Want something that will rock your world?

Try finding out that your spouse is cheating!

Well, I don't want you to discover the pain of infidelity, but if you have, it is normal for you to initially, at least, be a raving basket case.

Unfortunately, being a basketcase will get you not very far in resolving the infidelity or moving toward constructive resolution.

However, being a basketcase is normal, as attested to by the fact that hundreds have come to me with their pain, confusion, rage and numbness upon discovery of that cheating spouse.

Being a basketcase has nothing to do with your intelligence or competence. You may have always seen yourself as a “can do” and talented individual. Infidelity causes you to question everything about yourself including these beliefs.

Being a basketcase is normal. Here are a few reasons why it is almost impossible (at least at first) to avoid Basketcaseitis.

1. Upon the discovery of infidelity most question: "What did I do wrong? I probably was not good enough sexually! What IS wrong with me that my partner has to look elsewhere? Where didn't I meet his/her needs? I must be defective. S/he found someone else to love and I must be unlovable now.



Such thoughts are common, since our culture has a distorted view of love. It is subtly embedded within us as we watch television, romantic comedies or read the tabloids moving through the grocery checkout, that "being in love" is the ultimate - whether it is with your spouse or someone else.

"Being in love" is the goal in relationships. And if someone must go somewhere else to find that "loving feeling" the relationship or other person in that relationship must be tainted or incapable of maintaining that love.

2. Infidelity is like being raped. Something sacred, something vitally important has been violated. Boundaries of loyalty, trust and promises of fidelity, care and concern are mocked without seemingly much regard.

The wounded spouse is stunned that such insensitivity could occur, especially by someone whom s/he thought s/he trusted.

3. It seems as if one is about to lose his/her world. And by world, I mean all of it. At risk is losing one's spouse, losing financial security, losing one's home, losing one's extended family, losing closeness to children, losing one's dreams and hopes and losing any sense of normalcy and predictability about life.

One may withdraw in fear. One may lash out in fear. One may fight out of fear. One may plead and beg out of fear. One may resort to unthinkable behaviors because s/he is terrified - and I mean terrified.

The world feels like it is crumbling and crashing down. And, there is no vision of what might be left.



4. One feels terribly powerless. It is s/he, the cheating spouse, who seems to be calling the shots, who is doing whatever s/he chooses to do and there is very little the wounded spouse can seemingly do to stop the nightmarish behavior of the cheating spouse.



The cheating spouse is giving all the power and attention to the other person and is oblivious to the pleas, concerns and requests of the spouse.

After first discovery, the wounded spouse may attempt to exert control or power upon the situation, but soon finds that the efforts are fruitless.

5. The wounded spouse is often blindsided. S/he did not see it coming. Life was rolling along (yes, things seemed a little off... but what marriages DON'T experience that?) and all of a sudden one is sucker punched.



S/he thought there was an agreement that, even though times might get tough, neither one would resort to infidelity. But here it is. Unexpected. Unwanted. Without time to prepare for the intensity of the feelings and the thoughts that just won't go away.

6. The personal neediness of the wounded spouse is exposed. Now, none of us want to be known as "needy." But when infidelity raises its ugly head one's neediness is front and center: the need for a hug, the need for affirmation, the need for attention, the need to feel loved, the need to be safe and the need for predictability.

All these needs are magnified and their intensity level soars. And, the wounded spouse may resort to unthinkable behaviors to get those needs met or at least know there is a possibility of them being met... sometime.

In this Basketcase Mode the wounded spouse often resorts to behaviors, in an attempt to "win back" the cheating spouse, stop the affair, or have married life return to some sort of normalcy that plain and simple just don't work.

They seem intuitive correct. They seem like they are the things to do in this situation.

But, they are not. Many knee-jerk, Basketcase Mode behaviors only serve the purpose of creating distance, pushing the cheating spouse further into the arms of his/her lover.

Very simply, here are some of the common mistakes that most make to prolong the affair and their misery:

1. Saying "I love you"
2. Suggesting Counseling
3. Involving family and friends
4. Using the Bible or Dr. Laura

5. Saying you've changed
6. Suggesting you work on the marriage

There are compelling reasons why each one of these strategies, when under the influence of the Basketcase Mode, will lead to disaster. I cover these underlying reasons and the impact they have on the cheating spouse in my free E-course, "[Killer Mistakes.](#)"

To receive this e-course, sign up on my web site at <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com>

There are positive strategies you can employ and I outline those in my e-book: [Break Free From the Affair.](#)

However, please keep this in the front of your mind: These positive strategies work best AFTER you leave the Basketcase Mode. Using these strategies while in the Basketcase Mode will be interpreted, most likely, by your cheating spouse as manipulation. S/he will more likely feel pity, rage and/or resentment toward you rather than positive feelings if your neediness blasts front and center.

So, the ultimate question: How do you extricate yourself from the Basketcase Mode?

I will show you how that happens. And, it can happen faster than you think possible. Those who've poured over parts of my material email within a couple hours uttering profound thanks for the new peace and relief they feel. It does happen.

To move from the Basketcase Mode, I've discovered 4 shifts that must take place.

- I. First, you must forget all you have ever learned about infidelity. Now, you probably haven't formally had training on the dynamics of infidelity (not much exists) but informally, through television, romantic novels, tabloids, gossip and movies, you picked up on powerful assumptions about

infidelity and affairs. And 90% of these assumptions are dead wrong. Not only are they dead wrong, they are deadly.



You will learn more about the myths of infidelity as you read ahead.

2. You must come to the conclusion that the infidelity or affair is his/her problem. YOU don't have the problem. Your cheating spouse does. Very very very very few affair relationships ever become healthy. Your cheating spouse's life is going down the tubes. And, there are very specific reasons why it's not your life, but his/hers that is gravely at risk.
3. You must be able to stand back and see the motives and reasons for his/her temporary insanity. And, there are reasons. Affairs just don't happen and emerge out of thin air. Lifelong patterns, in some cases, almost guarantee an affair, an affair that had its seeds long before s/he met you.
4. You must move out of the victim role and assume your personal power. This is not as difficult as it may seem. Once the top three conditions are met you will feel your power. You will know your power.



I want for you to hold your head high and be able to confront in a powerful manner (using charging neutral, a skill I teach) your cheating spouse, look him/her square in the eye, so that s/he is the first one to blink.

Here's a basic outline of general steps I've seen thousands take over the past years as they face and recover from the affair.

Briefly, here's a skeleton, my beginning point, for the 7 steps to affair recovery.

1. You discover the affair and you are in shock. Enough said.
2. As you move through the shock and become more alive, you begin to make two huge mental shifts.

First, you learn about infidelity and that it truly is an act of temporary insanity which has little to do with you.

Second, from that first awareness, you begin to firmly believe and feel that you are not at fault. You are not defective!

As a side note from one of my readers:

(Dr. Bob – when I went to see my physician for some medication to help me cope, he offered that I needed to go home and figure out what my husband was getting from the other woman that I wasn't giving him. He also recommended Dr. Laura's book on Care and Feeding of Husbands. My hunch, given this physician is in a second marriage to a much younger woman, that he cheated on his first wife. You may want to warn your readers that others might try and convince you it is your fault. I was able to go back and confront my physician about how inappropriate this had been (on the advice of my marriage counselor – she said she wouldn't practice medicine if he didn't practice marital therapy!)).

3. The second step frees you from your personal neediness and fears (which make you awfully unattractive) and you face squarely the question: "Do I REALLY want to be married to him/her?"



4. Once at peace with your answer, you begin devising strategies that will intervene in the affair. You experiment to see if your actions can elicit a different response, perhaps end the affair or create some breakthrough (dependent on the kind of affair facing you.)
5. Your strategies and interventions, over time, give you the information you need to decide whether the relationship is a go or no-go. Do I stay or leave? You decide.
6. The two of you commit to rebuilding your relationship and lives.
7. You begin to create and build your life apart from him/her.

Yes, it is an interesting journey. And, it takes time. I say, without help and support, anywhere from 2-4 years. With guidance and a desire to learn about infidelity you can cut back on that time frame considerably.

Read what others, perhaps like you, describe as their healing journey:

The first 4 weeks were awful, cannot describe the emotional torture, just getting by was hurting. But somewhere inside of all us is the need to rise up in spite of what's happened. Friends became a key factor. Walking became a stressbuster. I did not want any down time to think or to feel. Although its important to face your feelings, the first few weeks are about getting up and get moving. Walking constantly was all I could do. I would walk and cry at the same time. Eventually the crying stops but walking continues. Play your walkman. Listen to upbeat music only - no sad songs. Talk to your friends. Family is good to, but too close to the situation. Keep active and productive. It's amazing what it can do. I did not think so at first, but I needed something to do, somewhere to go. Exercising/walking was it as well as friends. I drove them nuts talking to them. I also searched for answers as to why. That's how I came upon Dr Huizenga's web site. The need to understand. It does not change the hurt but it gave me an insight into infidelity and I was not alone. People referred me to the phoenix rising and I did just that. It took alot but I survived. You can too.

The pain was so intense after 37 years of marriage discover my husband was having an affair with a friend was so totally devastating that I remember crying for months, but the one bit of advice that helped me was something I read that said, "Infidelity is like a death and the advice not to make life changing decision for a year unless you have not other options apply to infidelity as well. You can get a divorce anytime so don't rush to that decision." That helped me be able to put one foot in front of the other the first few weeks/months and realize that the divorce decision could be made later when I was saner. It has been almost 2 years and we are still together.

I wanted information. I wanted both experiential and clinical information. All was validating--that my desire to know, my behaviors and feelings were all normal. I learned about well meaning counselors causing more damage than harm. I learned that there are recovery "maps" available which allow me a time frame so as not to feel that recovery is taking forever. I did learn that, in order to heal the couple must move from blame to understanding.

Yes, surviving infidelity is possible. It's more than possible; it offers an opportunity to redesign your life and possibly relationship.

## Chapter 2: Watch Yourself



Surviving the infidelity or affair in your marriage throws your world into chaos and pain.

If you want to survive the affair; if you want to save the marriage and/or your sanity it is vital that you adjust, make changes and begin the process of addressing the affair or infidelity.

A key to surviving infidelity is to use the infidelity as an opportunity to stand back, look at you and take some time to get to know yourself better.

OK. What good is this going to do?

It will help you in a couple ways.

First, standing back and observing is always good when in crisis and the pain is pouring from every cell in your body.

Standing back removes you, albeit temporarily, from the pain. It offers a little relief and release.

Take 5 seconds right now, yes... right now... to ask yourself, "How would I describe myself?"

OK... notice the shift in your feelings as you ask that question?

Second, standing back enables you to identify your major coping pattern(s.) This is vitally important in that your major pattern probably intersected with the major pattern of your spouse. They locked into each other.

Your spouse knows your patterns and is predicating the affair upon the fact that you will continue to act as you always have with him/her.

As well, in outlining the different strategies for the different types of affairs, the strategies often involve the "wounded spouse" making changes in his/her patterns to illicit different responses and change the flow of the affair.

For example, the spouse of an "I Don't Want to Say No," is asked to get into his/her face in an aggressive manner. This often runs counter to the pattern of the wounded spouse.

The spouse of "I Want to Be Close to Someone... but can't stand intimacy" is asked to "leap" his/her spouse. Such "leap forward"

takes the wounded spouse out of his comfort zone or familiar pattern.

See where I am going?

So, knowing your pattern(s) is vital in choosing a strategy that will save your sanity, perhaps your marriage, and lead you in a direction that has the best odds of generating health.

What is a coping pattern?

Rather than give you the psychological terms, here are some practical examples.

1. You are a thinker. You internalize. You like ideas. You think your way through problems. You want to analyze the problem. You want to know why. (This is tricky because sometimes the "why" question is an angry question.) Confrontation is difficult.
2. You are a dreamer. Sometimes you like to live in another world, a world created by your fantasies. You always hope for the best and expect the best from others. You sometimes find yourself staring off into space...and you rather enjoy that.
3. You are a people person. You long to be with others. You enjoy their company. You think of ways to please and accommodate them. You enjoy being with the crowd.
4. You are a helper. You like to help others, especially those who are receptive and appreciative of your help. You enjoy giving of yourself.
5. You are a problem solver. You are a fixer. What's the problem? Let's take care of it. Let's talk about options and ways to take care of it. You check the problems off your list.
6. You are a curious learner. You want to learn. You wonder why. You look at the different parts of the puzzle and wonder how they go together. You like to read. You want to thoroughly study a problem before taking action.

7. You are a person of faith. You are guided by your instruction or belief that a "higher power" moves. You look beyond what is to what might be.
8. You are an actor. Sitting still leaves you frustrated. You want to do things. You want to take action (on a problem.) No talk. No discussion. Let's get on with it.

Of course, this is just a beginning list. You may be a combination of the above types.

But, take some time to reflect, to stand back and observe you in action.

This will give you clues as to what you do next (which may be uncomfortable) that will help you survive the infidelity, but more than that, give you the best chance to make this crisis a stepping stone to a redesigned life and relationship.

## Chapter 3:

# Do For You What No One Else Will Do

Be Extraordinarily Kind to Yourself... because no one else will.

Perhaps this last phrase is a little strong.

But the reality in our Western culture often subtly conveys that the wounded spouse has somehow failed.

The cheating spouse has "fallen in love" (and "being in love" is the basis for a strong relationship... right?) with someone else and obviously the marriage was not meeting his/her needs.

Some directly make this statement. Often (and I'm a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with 28 years of experience) infidelity "counseling" by reputable therapists often try to ascertain, "what went wrong in the marriage." And, that means YOU. What's wrong with you that s/he bolted?

Kinda crazy, once you understand the dynamics of infidelity, I know.

Family and friends are tongue tied and don't know what to say or they offer the simplistic advice: "Kick him/her out! I would!"

But, they don't understand that you know, at one level, the emptiness and personal neediness of your cheating spouse, for which s/he thought the affair to be the solution.



Or, you are labeled the victim. Poor you! You have it so bad. Again, not a very flattering description. You certainly are NOT helpless. You have not lost your personal power, although it may feel like it.

Some outsiders will avoid you, afraid that they may “catch” the “infidelity disease”.

And, finally, from an outsider’s point of view (and sometimes your point of view) your cheating spouse has all the power. S/he is calling the shots. You have lost or are about to lose EVERYTHING and there is nothing you can do about it.

The result of this negative onslaught: You form powerfully negative and seemingly destructive thoughts and images, about yourself and them, that consume every waking moment.

What do you do then to counteract or cope with this bombardment of negativity?

Allow me to offer a few suggestions:

1. Think of your internal self as parts.

The confusion, rage, pain and hopelessness occur when internally you experience no distinctions, no separation, no awareness that you DO have different parts. You experience an internal raging and churning mess.

2. Be aware of your internal dialogue (how you “talk to yourself” in your mind.)

Are you upset with “yourself” for being in this position? Well, that means that one part of you who doesn't want the pain is upset with another part which feels the pain.

See where I'm going? Even now, as you consider this possibility, do you internally feel a measure of relief?



Once you begin to identify the parts, you take back your personal power, feel better and can engage more productively in effective action.

### 3. Intentionally be aware of, and utilize, 3 parts of you.

There is the part that feels awful, perhaps worthless, devalued, raging, etc.

Another part of you wants to attack that part, wants it to go away. It might be exceedingly critical of your pain, which is perceived as "weakness." So when you rail in pain or anger, you rail at that part of you that is in pain or feels helpless.

There is another part of you that can stand back and be objective. This is the part of you that is now reading this article. This part of you can think. This is the part of you that will study and learn about infidelity. It will see patterns. It will identify the motives of your cheating spouse. It is that part that will strategize and employ tactics to stop the affair and perhaps save the marriage.

This is the part of you that becomes the kind parent and comforter to the part that feels in pain and helpless. This is the part of you that will teach the angry critical part that its criticism and anger is an attempt to protect and care for you as well.

The more awareness you have of these different parts, the more you are freed to cope and move ahead.

Your work, your power, your hope lies within. And, this is very doable.

Yes, you will slide into the internal criticism and the pain, but a part of you with compassion will call you out of that pain and into something more constructive, time and time again.

## Chapter 4: Know Why and When Your Marriage is Vulnerable



Infidelity doesn't just happen. Infidelity and extramarital affairs are more likely to occur at particular phases or points in time in the development and evolution of the marriage. There are tendencies and patterns or crunch points in the marriage that leave a marriage most susceptible to incubating a cheating husband or cheating wife.

In more than 25 years as a Marriage and Family Therapist, specializing in marital infidelity, I've observed distinct moments in time whereby a spouse wanders. These points in a marriage converge with a number of other personal factors, mostly related to the intensity and character of one's personal need system,

perception of self and one's history and coping patterns related to psychosexual development. These factors enable me to predict the possibility of infidelity or an extramarital affair.

Awareness of these points in time in a marriage may help a couple address the underlying issues and short-circuit the act of infidelity or recover from it more quickly.

#### I. "I Don't Want to (Don't Know How) to Grow Up."

Soon after a couple marries (I'm referring to a younger couple, first marriage) the issue of personal freedom emerges.

The romantic feelings fade along with the excitement of creating a new household.

The sense of responsibility and challenges of "adulthood" take on reality.

Some enjoy the challenge and opportunity.

Others, (my experience tells me it's mainly men) begin to feel constrained and "trapped." They report a loss of freedom. They find it difficult to put their desires on hold and negotiate with another for their needs. They balk at assuming responsibility for the new tasks demanded in managing a new lifestyle.

Underneath their disquiet is a reluctance to leave their perceived personal freedom of the single life and to embrace the adult world.





Closely related to this time period for many young couples is the birth of the first child. This usually is a joyful time, but soon after the birth, the reality of caring for a new life and the natural change in the family dynamics (3 in the family is MUCH different than 2) become problematic.

The husband frequently resents the loss of attention and affection and may withdraw (into an affair.) Or, the wife may feel overwhelmed or terribly uncomfortable with the "mothering role" and withdraw as well.

2. The oldest child reaches early adolescence.

This is a particularly difficult time for the family.

The dynamics in the family are significantly altered.

The early adolescent son begins to push mother away and wants battle with father. It is crucial that mother and father be aware of the resulting tension and the two, needing to be aligned, find ways to deal with the tension and parent the burgeoning young man.

The adolescent daughter will begin to distance from father and will look to mother for guidance and modeling. Father may feel displaced, unneeded or unwanted.

There are two factors at this time in the marriage that make the marriage ripe for infidelity.

First, one may attempt to solve the issue of growing **distance** or tension with the spouse by triangling in a third party (another person.)

Or, the emerging psychosexual development of their early adolescent child will serve a trigger, reminding a parent of his/her psychosexual development.

If there is "unfinished business" for the parent, or that part of his/her life was traumatic or undeveloped, the parent may attempt to cope with the internal tension by having an affair.

### 3. Mid life Crisis

Here's my take on a mid life crisis.

In our 20s and early 30s we think we have the answers. We **KNOW** what it's going to take to be successful, however we define that. And, we continue to use the coping patterns we think serve us well.

If we were an achiever, we focus on achievement.

If we knew how to get our needs met from people, we focus on others as our source for success.



If we seemed to find comfort and solace in creativity and our imagination, we major in that part of us.

As well, we have preconceived ideas of what it will feel like and be like, once we reach that success. We have a dream.

For 15-20 years we give it our all.

And, we wake up one day and discover we are not there. Our dreams seem a long way away. We thought achievement would do it, but we seem to fall short. We thought we could "work" people to get what we want but others fail to be cooperative. We valued imagination and creativity but it becomes our prison.

We then, look for something else or try to find something else to replace our disappointment and emptiness - an affair perhaps.

#### 4. The empty nest.

Raising children demands time, energy and effort. Parents frequently focus on the raising of children to the exclusion of their marriage.

One day, the children are gone and husband and wife stare at each other across the breakfast table, wondering, "Who are you?"

The thought of moving closer or developing a greater intimacy seems frightening, almost terrifying. An affair at the point may provide the pseudo-intimacy and serve as a buffer from developing the next stage of intimacy in the marriage.



## 5. Moments of mortality.

We age and in our 50s it's not uncommon to suddenly be faced with our mortality. We will die! It seems a much closer reality.

A wave of sadness bordering on panic envelops as we focus more intently on our virility and our sagging attractiveness. This is our LAST chance to have it, get it, and find it... that which we think we missed along the way.

To escape the inevitability of our physical and mental demise and to ferret out what then is left, we throw ourselves into another relationship, hopefully closing the door on our fears and dread.

## 6. The Tarnished Years.

It's supposed to be the "Golden Years," correct? The time when we retire, the time when we can play, volunteer, give and enjoy the years we have left.

For many, it's the tarnished years rather than the golden years.

Retirement means an end, an end to roles and structure that kept life together, that kept one functioning, providing, and contributing.



With the external roles and functions removed, a vacuum emerges. And, in this vacuum may emerge new values, standard, goals and dreams. Or, one out of fear or dread of the vacuum may choose an affair or infidelity.

This last phase may seem a little farfetched, but my practice over the past 5 years has encountered those in their early retirement years struggling with infidelity.

Awareness of these crucial times in a marriage and attention to the potential crisis in each can help a couple manage the phase much better and hopefully lessen the chances of marital infidelity.

As well, an awareness of the different points of time in a marriage will help a person encountering infidelity in the marriage "normalize" the event and assume less personal responsibility for it, therefore, accelerating the healing process.

## Chapter 5: Think Small



One of the keys to surviving infidelity with dignity and effectiveness is to focus smaller.

Allow me to explain.

Most, when they first encounter an unfaithful spouse, are thrown into an emotional pit of fear and intense pain. They want to extricate themselves from the pain - NOW! They want the affair or infidelity to end - NOW!

And so they focus on getting over the pain - NOW! And they focus on the affair ending - NOW!

When the pain doesn't go away as they would like or when the affair doesn't stop as they would like, a new layer of pain and fear is automatically added onto their existing pain and fear. The panic increases. The sense of victimization becomes more powerful. This becomes their emotional trap which continues to suck them into the mire of their pain.

The pain WILL NOT END NOW. And most affairs do not end NOW, or if they do it, takes months of intentional focus to rebuild the trust.

Reality: it takes 2-4 years (for those who don't seek help) to break free from the affair - much less for those who seek out new knowledge and affair strategies.

So, don't hurry. It will only exacerbate your plight.

Instead, think small. Focus small.

Here are some examples:

Rate your pain on a scale of 1-10 at different times of the day or in different situations. Note the changes in your feelings. Think about what made your feelings worse? What made them feel... a little...better?

Notice how much better you will feel when you do that - which begins adding a new layer of better feelings.

Notice the mental images that disturb you. Again, rate on a scale of 1-10 the level of disturbance you feel. Over the course of the week notice the small changes or shifts in the level of disturbance. Or, notice how frequently those images disturb you. Begin to notice when their frequency decreases (say... from almost every minute to 3-4 times per hour.)

Or, if you focus on your cheating spouse, what s/he is doing or not doing, begin to break down his/her behavior.

Do you notice a change in his/her body language? Do you notice a shift in the words s/he uses? Do you notice a change in frequency of when s/he talks to you, or the length of the conversation? Does s/he disclose more to you? How much more?

Pay close attention to the small details.

Here's what will happen that will help you survive this marital crisis better and bring closure in one form or another more quickly and effectively:

1. You will feel increasing measures for relief from your pain and fear.
2. You will feel more of your personal power. And you will need your personal power to influence the course of the affair and your own decision making process.
3. Closely followed to this - you will be much less reactive. Reactivity is not pretty. Reactivity is acting out of your sense of victimization and helplessness. Reactivity will push your spouse (and others) away. In addition, reactivity is not who you want to be and when you are not who you truly are, you suffer.
4. As you think small and become more observant you are much more likely to "charge neutral" (a powerful skill and attitude I teach that accelerates healing.)
5. You will be better able to plan new strategies, use those strategies and evaluate those strategies, depending on the type of affair facing you. This is your ultimate power in surviving infidelity.

Surviving infidelity is no easy task.

But, by focusing small and keeping your focus there, you get on the healing and recovery track and stay there.

## Chapter 6: Decisions, Decisions: Relax



Facing infidelity or an extramarital affair means facing decisions. Your world is thrown into chaos, confusion, fear and here you are... trying to decide what to do.

And, there are many decisions looming. Do I throw him/her out? Should I spy? Do we separate? Do I talk about the affair? Should I confront the other person? Should we have sex? Should s/he sleep in another bed? Etc.

Here's one of the problems: Facing infidelity or an extramarital affair is so disturbing that the process of making decisions is made exceedingly more difficult than usual. Your world is turned upside down. The way you make decisions likewise, is turned upside down.

Allow me to offer some guidelines for making decisions during this time of your life.

1. Don't be in a hurry to make decisions. Don't rush.

I say it normally takes 2-4 years to resolve the infidelity crisis if you wing it on your own. You can slice off a great deal of time if you research, get support and study infidelity, yet at that, it still takes months to work through the pain, rebuild faith and trust and put together in a healthy way your life and/or relationship.

Don't make knee-jerk decisions. Don't react immediately to your situation. Please don't listen to well meaning family and friends who have a difficult time experiencing your hurt and out of their discomfort (and concern for you) suggest impulsive moves, such as kicking him/her out, leaving, filing for divorce, etc.

Allow yourself to be with your pain for a while. It's ok. You have more internal strength than you can imagine... and you will discover that. You CAN handle it. This too shall pass!

Take your time..... there is no hurry.

Exception to the rule: If there is a strong possibility of physical or severe emotional abuse and if your children are in physical or emotional danger, get the heck out. Now! Find a safe place!

2. Get your affair feet under you.

You are entering a new world, a world you probably thought you would never enter and so you are not prepared. You are clueless about what faces you and what might transpire. As well you have been taught myths and half-truths about infidelity that will get in your way of progressing in a healthy sane manner.

Learn about infidelity. Learn about the different types of affairs.

Get [Break Free From the Affair](#) and other information about infidelity and affairs. Study the Killer Mistakes that prolong the affair and your agony. Drink it all in.

You, like thousands of others who never thought they would be in this situation, will discover strength and power that will one day truly amaze you.

You will learn that you have value and worth, you are not defective. The affair is NOT your fault. You are not to blame. It was his/her temporary break with reality that put him/her at risk. You will be the winner. S/he is headed down the slippery slope.

Get support. [Join my online infidelity support group.](#) [Get coaching if it fits you.](#) You will discover the power of healing in being with others who truly understand and will guide and encourage you on your infidelity journey.

These mini-decisions along the way will give you a base, strength from which to operate and make the tough decisions that await you. With this base, your future decisions will come from a well thought out, caring and informed center within. This is good!

3. Reflect on how you typically make decisions.

When considering a decision, it is important for you to talk it through? Does the path become clear as you hear yourself talk with an empathetic other?

Is writing helpful? Do you jot down ideas, pros and cons? Do you doodle your way through to a conclusion?

Do you think your way through a problem? Do you go off by yourself to a quiet place and sit with your glass of wine or cup of tea and let the thoughts and images emerge? And, an action becomes apparent as the route to follow?

Embrace the use your personal decision making process.

4. You will know when you know.

Timing is everything. You can't force a decision. Well, I suppose you can, but, I believe, you have a greater risk of making a poorly informed decision.

You will know when you reach a decision point. It seems more obvious. The wavering is over. The ambivalence is tipped. An inner voice says, "It's time to do it."

And, you can usually trust that inner voice, all things considered. It is highly accurate. Spend some time listening to it. It will guide you in reliably, persistently and consistently. This is especially true if you have mastered your personal need system, or I should say, as you have eliminated your personal needs and live more according to your values, standards and integrity.

5. Don't be afraid to ask the hard questions when making a decision.

In reality, if you want to trust the decision and that internal voice, make sure you DO ask the hard questions. The hard question will give clarity, confidence and direction.

In my e-book, Break Free From the Affair, I strongly encourage my readers, before they make ANY decision or react in any way to consider the question: "Do I REALLY want to be married to him/her?" And, I offer sub questions that help flush out truly whether you want to be married to that person or are merely driven at the moment by your personal fears and needs.

Once the hard questions are asked and answered, the path always takes on a exciting life of its own.

6. Decision making can be done in "baby steps."

Break the looming decision down into manageable steps. I often help people with this in coaching.

So, the question is whether to separate?

Well, what boundaries do you want to set up now so that you are not globing onto each other and killing the potential for reconciliation? List 2-3 actions you can take now to create "distance" for the welfare of the relationship and decide to act on

one of them. (I.e. I refuse to ask him/her a question when s/he walks through the door.)

Most major decisions are a combination of minor or smaller series of choices to act.

Lead up to a huge decision. Don't jump on top of it.

Know that you most likely will second guess yourself.

7. The action path that you choose in the face of infidelity is usually not a path of 100% conviction and certainty.

Are those, for example, who choose to remain married to the cheating spouse always 100% convinced that their decision is correct? Very very seldom.

80% of the time they think the decision was correct. But 20% of the time the big doubts and questions settle in again.

Or maybe it's 60% of the time that it seems like the appropriate path. Or, perhaps you have more certainty and 90% of the time the decision feels very good and you are happy you made that choice.

Life is not perfect. Decisions are not perfect.

Live with it. Learn from it.

O.K. Let's get to work. Let's be practical.

What are the decisions you commonly face when infidelity bears down on you?

Here is a partial list that ran through my mind:

1. Should I kick him/her out?
2. Should we separate?

3. Should I file for divorce?
4. Should I/we tell the children, friends, family?
5. Should I confront the other person?
6. Should I spy or continue spying?
7. Should we have sex?
8. Should I pursue or back off and withhold?
9. Should I see other men/women (date)?
10. Should I try to rebuild the trust and respect?

Can you think of another decision that looms large before you? Give it some thought. If so, I want you to add it to the list. Go to my survey and list the decision facing you if it's not on this list. We will make a master list to share with everyone.

Or, have you successfully worked through a decision related to infidelity and feel like the waters have been navigated pretty well? What comes to your mind as I raise this question? What were you faced with? How did you face it? What helped in the decision making process? When did you decide? How did you know that it was the best decision? What tipped the scales in making this decision? Do you remember the day, the time, and the events surrounding that decision?

## Chapter 7: Knowledge Leads to Power



Coping with infidelity begins the day that a person discovers his/her spouse is having an affair. For most, the pain, confusion, numbness and anger of the revelation is compounded by myths and half-truths about infidelity that make coping with infidelity that much more difficult and emotionally draining.

Coping with infidelity initially demands confronting one's taught beliefs about infidelity and extramarital affairs.

What are they?

For one, most believe that someone who has an affair "fell out of love" with his/her spouse and "fell in love" with someone else. It's almost as if "love" is some magical powerful force to which we fall prey and cannot influence. Coping with infidelity for the wounded spouse may mean dealing with the seeming fact that s/he is no longer "loved" and in reality that "love," which was so sacred, is given to someone else. Or that you are no longer "special" to your husband.

And, what feels more devastating than NOT to be loved?

Another common misconception is that someone jumped into the arms of someone else because the marriage was awful. This may, and often does mean, that the sex was terrible or nonexistent. And so, the cupboard of marriage was bare of sex and/or intimacy and the cheating spouse just "had" to get his/her needs met... somewhere else, of course.

The remaining spouse in his/her attempts to cope with the infidelity thus is confronted with his/her sexual (in)adequacy, his/her limitations in being able to meet the needs of his/her spouse. In addition, often without significant conversations, the wounded spouse finds him/herself abandoned, alone and extremely jealous of the OP (other person) who now is getting all the goodies.

The 7-year itch. Ever heard of it? It may be an excuse to wonder and wander. To cope with infidelity the wounded spouse is often blind-sided by the impulsivity of his/her spouse and is left home, coping with infidelity by trying to hold his/her world together in the midst of the chaos.



And, last but not least, there is the rationalization of (in) compatibility. The married couple just was not compatible. Or, the cheating spouse in a moment of insight came to the conclusion of incompatibility and needed to find his/her "soul mate" or someone with whom s/he felt compatible.

The wounded spouse is left lamenting the arguments and the points of differences with his/her spouse as if those differences tainted the marriage or relationship.

Coping with infidelity and moving toward healing and recovery is enhanced by breaking down these myths and half-truths and learning about the complexity, patterns and themes of infidelity and extramarital affairs.

Knowledge about infidelity becomes power. Knowledge about infidelity brings relief, sometimes almost instantaneously. Knowledge about infidelity gives options to act, feel and think differently, which gives one a tremendous feeling of personal power.

The "wounded spouse" moves out of the victim role, now knows the affair is not his/her fault. S/he is not defective. S/he can do something about confronting him/her with having an educated guess as to the outcome of that confrontation.

Here are areas of knowledge, which once studied, generate tremendous relief and hope.

1. There are many types of affairs. My research came up with 7 types of affairs. (My Marriage Made Me Do It, I Can't Say No, I Don't Want to Say No, I Fell Out of Love...and just love being in love, I Want to Get Back at Him/Her, I Need to Prove my Desirability and I Want to be Close to Someone...but can't stand intimacy.)

Each affair is unique. Each type of affair serves a different purpose of the cheating husband or cheating wife.

2. The motives for the different types of affairs are different. One may be motivated by compulsion, another by strong personal needs for excitement, another for revenge, another to maintain distance in all relationships another to project blame onto someone or something else.
3. These motives derive not from the marital relationship or the wounded spouse, but from the personal coping patterns of the cheating spouse. As well, these motives, patterns and characteristics were well set before the marital couple met. The cheating spouse, at some level, needed to "play out" these patterns. Of course, most, if not all of this acting out, or the motives for acting out, are well beyond the awareness of the cheating husband or cheating wife.

Once the wounded spouse learns of these patterns, the complexity of the affair and the hidden agenda and motives for the cheating spouse - and other person as well - a flood of relief flows. The more one can make distinctions in a situation, the more refined those distinctions become, the less power that situation has to control the feelings and behavior of a person.

Knowledge is power because it now gives options.

The wounded spouse is not frozen in time. The wounded spouse is NOT helpless. The wounded spouse is not less than his/her cheating spouse or the other person. The wounded spouse can now stand back and at some level even appreciate the pain and disjointed striving, and inner hidden ambivalence of his/her spouse.

And the wounded spouse can now cope with infidelity in powerful ways, charting words and actions that disrupt this powerfully destructive pattern and give hope for resolution.

## Chapter 8: It's NOT Your Fault



The chances for infidelity healing and the possibilities for stopping the affair and overcoming infidelity are greatly enhanced once it sinks into your heart and soul that you are not at fault for the affair. You are not defective. You did not cause him/her to jump into the arms of another person. You are not to be blamed for the infidelity.

Overcoming Infidelity means coming to this awareness and strong belief that you are not at fault or to blame for his/her actions. This infidelity healing liberates you from the debilitating feelings and thoughts and sets you on a new course of action and healing. As well, the capacity for you to intervene in the life of the affair in a highly effective manner is magnified.

So, the question becomes, "How do you truly reach this point in overcoming infidelity?" Most, when confronted by the infidelity are grabbed, held and immobilized by this sense of defectiveness and personal responsibility for his/her actions.

Here are 4 ways of shifting your thinking that will accelerate the infidelity healing and bring relief from the sense of blame and fault.

1. O.K. Accept the fact that in your relationships you made mistakes. Yes, you did. Some of them were maybe fairly large. But, who in a relationship of investment doesn't make mistakes; some of them silly, some of them large? Could you have done something differently? Of course! We all could have. Coulda, woulda, shoulda.

"Mistakes" in a marriage are often fertile grounds for learning and growing. Did s/he use your mistakes as a springboard for learning and change? Did s/he come to you and say, "Hey, I don't like this. Things need to change. Let's work it out?"

And even if you made NO mistakes, how boring and predictable would that be? Yawn.....

2. Come to the realization that the decision to enter into an affair is his/her personal decision. A rather poor decision, but his/her decision nonetheless.

You see, affairs have nothing to do with love (although you probably believe or s/he says s/he fell out of love with you and loves someone else) but more with three different factors.

Affairs may arise out of deep unmet personal needs (such as the affair type, "I Fell out of Love.. and just love being in love.") One becomes attached to another seeking to fill that emptiness or deep chasm. (Little does s/he realize that another person cannot make me "complete" - sorry Tom Cruise.)

Someone may choose an affair as a result of a character disorder ("I Don't Want to Say NO').

Or, s/he chooses an affair as an attempt to deal with a dysfunction life-long coping pattern ("I Can't Say No").

Infidelity is a blind attempt to manage one's inner ghosts.

3. In conjunction with the realization of his/her personal ghosts is the relief you experience once you dig into learning about the characteristics of someone who would enter a specific kind of affair.

I outline 7 distinct types of affairs in my ebook, *Break Free From the Affair*. A person is likely to choose or act out a particular kind of affair depending on his/her personal characteristics. I list in detail the characteristics of a person likely to choose that type of affair.

I've received hundreds of emails from the wounded spouse exclaiming his/her relief once reading over the lists. Such comments as, "This is him/her to a 'T.'" Wow! This is right on! Now, they have a handle, a different handle on what they are facing. It makes sense. There is a pattern. Their sense of personal chaos is diminished.

4. Another significant shift in the "fault" game occurs when you discover that the OP (other person) is not "better" than you.

You may realize someday that you truly are worthy and have value as a person, and you need not compare yourself to the other person. Or as you begin to understand the dynamics of infidelity you discover that health and sanity is on your side.

My theory (hatched in over 25 years of clinical practice, research and my conclusions about the nature of humanity) tells me that eventually those who benefit MOST from infidelity are the wounded spouses. Why? They typically become the ones



who in their pain, confront themselves, learn, make shifts in their thinking and feelings and redesign themselves in ways that are more harmonious with whom they truly are.

The cheating spouse? Well, s/he misguidedly throws him/herself more and more into his/her personal neediness, character disorder or coping pattern dysfunction. His/her emotions, values and behavior go down the tubes, although s/he at that moment of infidelity and attachment to the other person may deny so.

These things will happen if the cheating spouse chooses to do nothing about their infidelity such as confront themselves regarding why they cheated, learn and make shifts.

That's why the divorce and unhappiness stats for those who have an affair, divorce and marry another are exceedingly high. No learning, no personal evolution has emerged. At some point s/he may discover that s/he has taken him/her self with him/her... and that is the problem.

These shifts in your thinking are indispensable in getting on the path of health, well-being and as that happens welcome your new found personal power to shape your life, perhaps the path of the infidelity and perhaps the path and direction of your marriage or relationship.

## Chapter 9: Stop the Affair – Not What You Think



It is often the case that you cannot directly stop the affair. In reality, the harder you try directly to get your cheating husband or cheating wife to stop the affair, the more unlikely that the affair will indeed cease.

Specifically for the affair type: "I fell out of love...and just love being in love" a direct assault most often results in the affair couple intensifying their contact or emotional involvement.

But, you do stand a chance, and sometimes a very good chance of influencing the cessation of the affair if you are smart! Being smart means taking some time to stand back, assess the type of affair and then plan a course of action that might get you the results you want. Or, at least you will feel better about yourself, feel more empowered, by taking some calculated action.

Now standing back for most is very difficult.

The intensity of the pain and agony compels one usually to revert to old patterns that sometimes (most often probably) worked in certain situations to alleviate the pain (supposedly) and/or gain a measure of control.

For example, when feeling the fear of being displaced or losing something vitally important, a person may lash out, become aggressive. Watch out! S/he externalizes the pent up feelings and energy. S/he rants and raves. S/he threatens (to kick him out...even though that is not what s/he truly wants), s/he pushes, prods, asks questions unendingly and begs, pleads, cries... all to no avail. The reactions trigger in the cheating spouse a desire to flee.

Or, the wounded spouse may use the tactic of internalizing and withdrawing. S/he carries her pain within, may become depressed and assume a victim role. Others are concerned about his/her mental and emotional health and what s/he might do. The loud message is: "care for me." Out of guilt, the cheating spouse may move close but there will be smoldering anger that will eventually destroy the marriage or relationship.

Please realize that these responses are automatic. No true thought is given to "why am I doing this? Where does this come from?" Under the pain of the discovery of infidelity many go back to the default pattern of emotionally not caring for one's self.

And rest assured, these patterns will only generate more distance.

Part of what I teach those impacted by infidelity is to step back and see the patterns.

Difficult? Not really.

Most of us do not realize there are different patterns. Once this awareness sinks in... and it doesn't take very long... a person feels empowered. "Hmmm, I DO have choices? Wow! What a relief." (I receive emails almost daily from those who read my 7 types of affairs and different strategies for each, commenting on the

dramatic change of their feelings after digesting the 7 types of affairs.)

At that point one stops reacting (by externalizing, pushing and being aggressive or... by internalizing and playing the victim role), stands back, evaluates the situation and begins a quest to find that which WILL work in changing the flow of him/her self and ultimately influencing the nature of the affair.

Let me give you a few examples of how this works.

Affair # 6 is "I Need to Prove My Desirability." There is an underlying belief of one's relational and sexual inadequacy that goes back in time. Often the person encountered some form of sexual abuse of extreme sexual confusion as a child/teenager.

When the wounded spouse discovers the affair s/he may aggressively approach the cheating spouse. There may be name calling. S/he may verbally assault him/her. There may be demands to stop the affair. The cheating spouse retreats into his/her feelings of inadequacy and the affair or sexual acting out may continue.

The best chance for the wounded spouse to stop the affair is to listen. Yes, that's right. Open the door so the cheating spouse can talk. Get at and affirm his/her sense of inadequacy. Easy? No. But, often well worth it.

Or, Affair #4 "I Fell out of Love... and just love being in love." This is the typical emotional affair. And, of course, the wounded spouse may feel terribly inadequate as a person, lover and spouse and may continually and consistently seek out assurance and affirmation from the cheating spouse. This often repulses the cheating spouse and s/he jumps into the arms of his/her lover. (And, they have juicy conversations about the "crazy" behavior of the spouse at home - now I understand why you want an affair!)

Once the wounded spouse stands back and learns, s/he realizes that the best strategy may be to back off. After all, this type of affair is based on an attempt to redo a stifled adolescent love life.

And like an adolescent, the "in love" feelings have a shelf life, sometimes not very long.

In affair #2 "I Don't Want to Say No" the wounded spouse is often used to deferring to his/her spouse. S/he may tolerate a large degree of emotional distance in the marriage and may also put up with a great deal of acting out behavior on the part of his/her spouse, including an affair, or series of affairs. The wounded spouse "swallows" her distress and internalizes.

The wounded spouse may have influence if s/he begins to employ behavioral consequences, to the point in which the cheating spouse is in grave danger of losing a great deal. The wounded spouse acts, as s/he has never before.

As you can see, infidelity is exceedingly complex. And the act of infidelity stirs powerful feelings.

Rather than being lost in knee-jerk feelings and reactions, it pays handsomely to stand back, evaluate the type of affair and with power and new-found confidence try on some new behaviors that might significantly stop the affair.

## Chapter 10: Avoid the Killer Mistakes



The first few days surviving an affair opens a new world, albeit, not a pleasant world. Surviving an affair becomes a thought that occupies the front of most of life for those few days.

You begin surviving an affair by first realizing that what you have been doing probably IS not working and will not work.

The first few days of surviving an affair you go into default mode. To survive infidelity you rely first upon your instincts.

Instinct tells you to "work on the marriage." That becomes a surviving an affair strategy.

Instinct tells you to change and prove to your spouse that you have changed (have become what s/he always seemingly wanted.)

Your surviving an affair inner manual tells you to suggest counseling and so you do.

Your instinct tells you enlist the help of others, like family and friends, and so you perhaps reach out.

Surviving an affair for you may mean reading books and sharing with your spouse "words of wisdom" from the Bible, Dr. Phil or the latest pop psychology guru.

You feverishly engage in these behaviors as the how to survive infidelity rules.

But, guess what?

All your instinctual, seemingly logical strategies fall flat on their face.

Now, don't kick yourself for trying those strategies. Surviving an affair experts sometimes tell you to do those very things.

And, you are not alone. A huge percentage of those facing infidelity start with all those "Killer Mistakes."

I've written an ecourse that goes into detail explaining the futility of those "Killer Mistakes."

And when you stop, dead in your tracks, sometimes, and cease those behaviors, good and unexpected things begin to happen.

Here are some reported results from those who stopped engaging in the "Killer Mistakes:"

"More fully accept the idea that I did not make or allow my wife to have an affair, she could have talked to me, gotten angry, had a good fight, cried about her unhappiness or a number of other

things. I felt a great responsibility initially for her choosing to have an affair."

"I have surely stopped taking effort in trying to change my husband's thoughts, beliefs and values. I simply am trying to concentrate on myself. I am trying not to get hurt by his actions. Though I have found lots of changes in him, I still don't trust him to a great extent. I want to become confident so that he cannot hurt me anymore."

"It has made me realize I need some counseling to help me make a decision as to whether if my husband "woke Up as to whether I would want him back."

"It has helped me gain confidence in myself, not blaming myself for it. I have also learnt I have to focus and put more energy on me other than trying to work on the

relationship. I feel much better now."

"More confidence - it is not necessarily about me, the reason for it happening, and has made the feeling of rejection easier to bear in a way. Have also discovered that he is suffering a midlife crisis -all the classic symptoms, down to the "speech" - sad part is that he may never come out of it (has been 2 years) and has burnt many bridges. Yet, I can have compassion -in a way he is not able to help himself. And I do not have to suffer under it. Also, that first responsibility is now towards me - if I am strong, I am better to handle it."

"I Realized that I was trying to do everything that my husband of 22 years wanted done after I learned of the affair, but it was not working and after reading your courses

I realized that I was only competing with the other woman and he was still sneaking around. It had been 6 weeks of heart-ache and depression for me since I made him move out."

"It has given me a wealth of knowledge, hope and tools to use in order to effectively deal with this crisis in a healthy productive way. It turned the affair around so I can make decisions and limits to protect myself from further pain. My wife and I are focused on the marriage and are healing."

"I have read and heard so many things about my wife's affair over the past 5 months I am overwhelmed by them all - from how I should leave her from everyone including my mother-in-law to how deal breakers are involved from Dr. Phil, they all make it seem so simple. Your

advice on how not to listen to them is the one thing that has seemed the best so far."

"It has helped me to realize that there is very little chance of reconciling my marriage as a result of this affair (type I) and that I need to move on."

As you read these stories themes and patterns jump out. Shifting the focal point away from your cheating spouse to your self is crucial.

You gain a sense of empowerment. You are altering some futile behaviors and that feels good. Hey, I can do this. It's not the end of the world. What else can I do?

And, you are able to stand back, take a deep breath, and with a new appreciation for your strength, make decisions that need to be made.

## Chapter 11: Jumping in (8 Different Places) the Healing Stream



What does a person get when he works with thousands trying to cope with infidelity?

Well, a little tired, I suppose. :)

And, one hears some wild stories.

Some say to me, "I bet you've never heard this one before?"

They tell me what they've experienced.

I smile inwardly and think, "OOOhhhhh yessss, I have...or something very close."

You see, in the midst of seeming chaos, pain, upheaval and seemingly utter destructions there are patterns - and there is movement - usually forward.

And, this movement forward is predictable.

I've had the good fortune to witness untold stories of courage and healing as people triumph over marital and relational infidelity and betrayal.

If you've loved your spouse and family, aimed your hopes and dreams in the direction of building on that for the rest of your life, and suddenly find yourself in the black-hole of marital infidelity, you know how extremely difficult it often is to extricate yourself from the pit.

How do you heal from marital infidelity? How do you save the relationship from this curse?

When you face the numbing power of marital infidelity, how do you make it from one week to the next, from one day to the next, from one hour to the next?

You make it gradually through marital infidelity.

You make it through marital infidelity step by step.

You may feel as if you are in a dark pit and see no light, see no way up and out. And, that feeling is to be honored and accepted.

However, as dark as it may seem, as I say, "This too shall pass."

There will be movement. There is movement - you may not see it, you may not know it, you may not know how to measure it - but it is there.

There are steps or stages you will move through. They are predictable. I've seen it over and over again.

People in my chat room report the changes, the movement, the healing, and the extrication from the pit time and time again.

After working as an infidelity coach with hundreds of couples and thousands of individuals, I've come to identify the changes and shifts most go through as they navigate the turbulent waters of marital infidelity.

First, it's helpful to put labels on these paths. Labels give comfort. Labels put words to feelings, and that is GOOD!

In working clinically with thousands, getting their feedback and researching infidelity I've identified 8 steps most take as they not merely survive the infidelity but move to recovery, hope and a redesigned life and perhaps marriage.

Do you see the progression? As you move from surviving infidelity to recovery you will begin to identify where you are and the shifts you make from one path to the next.

Please know that these stages are often not distinct. There often is overlap. One hour you feel immobilized. The next hour you think of your "mistakes" and what you could or should have done to somehow prevent this. The next hour your mind is cascading with scenarios of revenge. And then, you go back to that terrorizing fear and sense of victimization.

It is truly difficult, at times, to measure and determine where you are at that moment.

However, most find that when they are able to stand back mentally from their pain and angst, and when they receive constructive feedback and input from an objective person, they begin to see the trail of their healing and transformation. This does happen.

Sometimes, when we stand next to the tree, we cannot see the forest.

From my experience, training and the trust others impart to me with their stories, I've identified progressive paths of personal change and healing as one encounters this terrible crisis.

Depending on personal history, extenuating circumstances, age and a number of other factors, one may not enter the first level.

However, in Western Culture, infidelity triggers one's most basic fears and inadequacies and one usually finds him/herself at the level of depression, victimization and immobilization for a period of time.

After a period of reorganization and healing the person moves to the second level, and then to the third and so on.

Here are the 8 progressive levels or paths one traverses:



How can this help you? How can you use this?

First, pay close attention to the stages. Just notice them. Let them sink into your mind. Take them with you.

Then, as you move through the day with your fears, pain, anger, etc. a part of you will develop that will stand back and say, "Oh, this is where I'm at now. Last week it was a little different."

This discipline in and of itself will offer a measure of relief.

It's helpful to understand these points about these paths:

1. Once marital infidelity hits you between the eyes, or, for some, sneaks up on you until you can no longer ignore it - once it's before you - you are thrown onto one of the above 8 paths.

Now, it's certain you will not be thrown into one of the last three - acceptance, hopeful and happy. Far from it!

You probably will experience at least a smattering of the other five.

Do you feel frozen, terrified and focus on blaming yourself or at least throwing over and over in your mind, "What did I do? What's wrong with me?"

Well, if you are there, you are not alone. The majority of those who visit my websites and read my material start pretty darn near the bottom. Other crisis seemed to be handled with more strength and resolve than infidelity.

Why?

Well, infidelity hits us where we are most vulnerable - our sense of self worth - our sexual identity - everything we hope and dream for in terms of family and relationships.

If you are depressed, frozen, can't think, and feel terribly victimized, you are not alone. And, you will move beyond that.

2. You cannot skip steps or paths - if you want to fully experience healing and restoration.

Well, you can try to skip one, but it's not recommended.

For example, if you try to run past the rage/revenge step - feeling terribly uneasy with your anger, etc. - the rage/anger will probably come back to bite you. And, when it bites you later, it probably

will be worse than acknowledging and facing the anger/resentment when it's there the first time.

Ok, you ask, "You say in your e-course that you may want to "fake it" or "act happy" when you discover the infidelity."

Yes, I did say that. And here's why. When many first discover infidelity they revert to a default mode of feeling and thinking that is terribly negative, critical (of self and others) and destructive. You don't want to go there or at least try NOT to go there.

You will say and do things that you later will regret. So, bite the bullet, if you can, and in the midst of your numbness and fear act the opposite of how you really want to act.

Not only will you "respect yourself in the morning" or when you wake up from the infidelity nightmare, you will most likely shake up your spouse. S/he will expect your default mode, and acting differently, will raise some eyebrows and will keep him/her guessing. And, that is good!

Once you've weathered the initial storm, allow yourself to go back and "work through" that step.

3. Identifying your step or stage is powerful because it enhances your feeling of personal power.

And, during the infidelity crisis your personal power is crucial, with a capital C!

Reclaiming, finding and embracing your personal power is vital for your well being and for the well being of your children and family if you have them.

And, do you want to know a secret? If you really want to save your marriage or relationship you MUST experience your personal power if you expect to save and redesign your marriage. Your personal power gives you a much better chance of rebuilding your life and marriage in healthy ways.



Your personal power enables you to formulate new strategies, to stand back and not be tossed to and fro by the antics of your spouse, to hold yourself firmly, come what may.

Once you begin to identify your path, once you begin to know the complexity of infidelity, once you understand the different options, routes, words and actions available to you, lights go on, ideas emerge and you experience a breath of fresh air, seeing hope where before there was no hope.

You begin to live, knowing that your living CAN get better... AND you CAN MAKE IT BETTER!

Awareness of where you are on your journey in surviving infidelity often increases the speed, effectiveness and ease of that journey.

Here are some ways an increased awareness of these paths can help you survive infidelity and move beyond your marital crisis:

1. Awareness of these paths in surviving infidelity will help you realize that you are not alone. Others before you, many others before you, have traversed the same paths. There is a beginning point. There is movement. A good outcome is possible.

The knowledge that others have been in same boat enables you to step back at moments and see the larger picture.

That is good. That is a step toward surviving the affair and profound healing.

2. Pasting these steps on your mirror (or fridge, or somewhere where you are reminded) keeps you self oriented.

Self orientation is a major secret to surviving infidelity and also in saving your marriage, if you really want to do that.

A common trap - actually, I'm not sure how anyone can or does avoid this - is to spend your time, energy and effort focusing on your spouse and/or the OP (other person.)

You wonder where s/he is, what s/he is doing, what s/he is thinking and what this or that word or action means. You may spy, or you may ruminate about him and her together.

His/her life dominates your life.

You appear fragile, needy, out of control, flailing around and without direction and hope. You've lost yourself, your inner core from which to make decisions and charge neutral (an important skill I teach).

Not very attractive, and as well, often gives him/her a rationalization to continue the affair.

Self orientation - focusing on your path, your journey of healing and surviving - dramatically changes the picture.

You reclaim your personal power. You don't blink. S/he wonders what YOU are thinking.

You've turned the table.

3. Moving through the 8 steps become progressively easier.

Most enter feeling victimized and frozen. Once movement is made through that stage, moving through subsequent stages demands less concerted effort.

Getting over that initial powerful sense of being stuck is a key.

It's as if you need that first boost of confidence, that first boost of awareness to begin the forward movement.

4. Your movement may seem very slow but at a point experience a break through.

You may feel as if you take a step forward one day and the next you feel like you have regressed.

The negative feelings and thoughts may dominate. Nothing else seems able to slip into your thinking or feelings.

And, then, one day, you made it.

I have a tape with Sue who described her 3 week crying jag. Every day, tears. Every day, indescribable pain.



And one day it was gone. Totally gone. Internally she had somehow experience healing, some sort of resolution and she was able to move forward. She was done surviving the infidelity. She now was totally ready to live her life.

5. As you move through the paths or stages you increase your power to strategize and employ new tactics and skills that will work toward resolution of the infidelity crisis and most likely make his/her head turn.

I describe 16 different skills or tactics for the 7 kinds of affairs one can use to stop the affair or at least resolve the crisis.

However, a problem with using skills is you need the internal strength and confidence to use them effectively.

You may experiment with trying on a new skill or strategy but it falls flat on its face when you feel yourself falling apart. It's impossible to sustain your new behavior.

Once you move through the stages you become increasingly more able to do exactly what you must do - use new strategies and tactics - to break free from the affair.

6. There is overlap.

Categories, steps and stages help because they give a framework. They allow you to see the larger picture. That, often in itself, provides hope, courage and the strength to try something different.

However, we are people and we don't always fit neatly into categories.

There is frequently overlap. One moment you may feel frozen, numb and the next you may be spitting nails enraged. The next moment you may see a little light and feel a glimmer of hope. When looking at the paths, ask yourself, "Where am I most often lately?"

Become familiar with the 8 paths. Keep them in the back of your mind. When surviving infidelity seems most tough, refer to the steps and identify where you are.

When you experience change, identify your previous step and the movement you just made.

Please remember that levels/paths/stages are only a guide. In reality, a person may experience more than one level or path at a time.

Or someone may have a difficult time determining exactly when the movement takes place from one level to the next.

This framework, hopefully, gives a tool which inspires hope and leads to the knowledge that this crisis shall indeed pass.

More than just pass, a person may find him/herself a deeper, richer, wiser, more fulfilled and peace centered person once the journey nears its end.

## Chapter 12: Examine the Questions You Commonly Ask



Those confronting infidelity typically ask 10 common questions. Below are transcripts from my videos on the Top 10 Questions Most Ask When Confronting Infidelity.

I will also provide a link for each, enabling you to watch the video, if you so desire.

### I. How Long Will the Pain Last?

"How long will the pain last?" - a common question, an important question.

Are you ready? Here's the bad news. The pain can last a long, long, long time. I've had people call me 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 years after the discovery of the affair saying that they're still in pain. It's still there. They remember the agony of the affair. The agony of the discovery of the affair is embedded with them.

What I observe is that this pain lasts and it continues if certain conditions are met. For example, if you remain in your, what I call "default coping pattern," the pain probably will continue for a long, long time.

There are a couple default coping patterns that most people use that exacerbate the pain or enable it to last a long time. One of the default mechanisms is to remain and feel as if you are a helpless victim.

Some people when they discover that their partner is having an affair or is involved in infidelity cave in. They feel helpless, victimized, as if there's nothing in the world that they can do to prevent this. That's a default coping pattern that, if it continues, the pain will continue.

A second common default coping pattern is to rage or to continually react, to become aggressive, to spew forth, or to make demands, or in a very aggressive manner, try to get something from your spouse or the other person. And this raging and this reacting, also, is a default mechanism that's nothing but prolonged pain and the agony.

So that leaves the question, "Can you minimize the pain? Can you feel relief from the pain?" and the question to that is, "Yes, you can." My guess is that you will. I know that you will because you are here. You are listening. You want to learn about infidelity.

Knowledge brings relief. Knowledge about infidelity brings relief. If you're willing to learn, if you're willing to look at some patterns in your life, if you're willing to discover all there is about infidelity, you will find relief, I guarantee it.

I have a number of people who write emails after they read or go through some of my material and the light bulbs go on and they say "Wow, I feel so much better, the pain is gone, and there is relief!"

So yes, the pain doesn't have to last forever. Dig in. Learn more about infidelity. As you do, you will discover that the distance between you and your pain increases dramatically.

To access the video please go to: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=long+pain+last>

## 2. How Do I Get Rid of the Pain?

The first way to help minimize the pain is to not try to get rid of it, but to acknowledge it. Acknowledge your pain. Know that it's there. Know that it's going to be there. For example, you're in the process of losing your world, or a great portion of your world.

Your sexual identity is at stake here. You wonder about yourself as a person, as a sexual person. So, you're going to have pain. And as well, you feel ripped off. You feel like someone has invaded that which is sacred and that which is private. You feel like you've been raped. So, in every sense of the word your pain is normal. It's OK. It's there.

The second way to look at the pain is to know that your pain is telling you that you want something. Your pain is distress, which is saying to you, "Something is extremely, extremely important to me that I don't have, and I want it." So pain, in some ways, is an indicator of lack. Just pay attention to that, and ask yourself, "What is my pain telling me in terms of that which I want most desperately, most dearly?"

Another way to get rid of the pain is to learn about infidelity. Now, most people don't know much about infidelity at all, other than what you see on TV, or in romantic movies, or over the grocery counters in tabloids. So dig in, and learn a lot about infidelity.

I have people write me, email me, talk to me, call me constantly about how they felt relief. How they felt the pain kind of fade away once they read my eBook "Break Free From The Affair," and discover that there's seven kinds of affairs, and affairs are very complicated.

And in a certain kind of affair you can do certain things, and in other kinds of affairs you do other things. All of that was really, really helpful in opening a whole new world and minimizing the pain.

Another thing you can do is get support. I have a [chat room online](#). I have a support group online, and every so often people email me again to say, "the chat room has saved my life," or "the support group has really, really helped me because I no longer feel like I'm alone in this awful, terrible process." So, seek out support wherever that may be for you.

Another thing that I sometimes recommend in terms of dealing with the pain is to get a timer. A kitchen timer will do, any simple timer, and set it for two minutes. And when you feel the pain most intently, get out a piece of paper and pencil and write down everything you're thinking and everything you're feeling. When the two minutes is up, put it aside. Say to yourself, OK, I've paid attention to my pain. Now, I have to go and do something else.

And later on, 5, 10 minutes, two hours later, you start to feel that pain again. Get your timer and go through the same process. It will give you a sense of being in control of the pain, and acknowledging the pain and seeing the patterns of the pain at the same time.

The last thing you can do is if you're really, really scared, and if the pain seems overwhelming and you're fearful sometimes that you might kill yourself, or you have those thoughts and you're not sure that you can control those thoughts, get some professional help. See your doctor. See a psychiatrist. See a psychologist. See someone who can, perhaps, give you medication. There's nothing wrong with that for temporarily addressing the pain in your life.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=rid+of+pain>

### 3. Can I Stop the Affair?

And my response is very direct. You can't. You cannot stop the affair.

The affair was his or her decision in the first place. He or she chose to have an affair. And it must be his or her decision to stop the affair, not yours.

Let's take a look at this scenario. If you had the power to stop the affair, if you made him or her stop the affair, what would you have? You would have someone who would be with you because they had to be with you, not because they wanted to be with you. And of course, who wants that?



But you can influence the course and the progression of an affair. Let me explain that a little bit more. I would say about 80 percent of the people that I talk to who are having the affair - the cheating spouse, the cheating husband, the cheating wife - 80 percent of those know that the affair is not really what they want.

Most of them know that the affair is not going to work out in the long run. Most of them know that they are on the slippery slope of self-destruction, and they see it happening frequently. And most of them know that the affair relationship is temporary. It will only last for a certain length of time. This is especially true for the types of affairs, "I want to get back at him or her"; "I need to prove my desirability"; and the third kind, "I fell out of love and just love being in love."

Those affairs are temporary and the person involved in the affair typically knows that it is temporary. So 80 percent of the people out there having an affair, really, one part of them doesn't want to have it. So what you can do is you can employ very subtle, very indirect methods of influencing the course of the affair and the progression of the affair.

And I outline things that you can do in my e-book, "Break Free from the Affair"; I take each of the seven kinds of affairs that I outline, and provide strategies and tactics for each kind of affair. Once you employ these strategies and tactics, you can influence the direction of the affair, not directly but indirectly.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=stop+affair>

#### 4. How Do I Get Him/Her to Talk?

The question that I first think about is: What do you want him/her to talk about? And most people, when they discover that their partner is having an affair, need to talk to their cheating partner about the affair. They need to know.

There's a desire to know: How bad is it? What am I up against? They need to know about the relationship. What's this

relationship like? What is it about and what's happening in this relationship that hasn't happened with us?

Those are some typical underlying questions that a person wants to get at. Or when they say, "I can't get him or her to talk, " they want to pull from him or her some kind of assurance, some kind of affirmation, some kind of hope that the marriage, perhaps, is still intact - or that, at some level, there's still a desire for the cheating partner to, perhaps, look at rebuilding the marriage. So those are typically underneath the question: How do I get him or her to talk?

Let's look, briefly, at reasons why the cheating spouse clams up or finds it difficult to talk. First of all, the cheating spouse may be suffering from guilt or shame. One part of them may feel terribly badly about what's happening, and so they believe that if they start talking to you about it, they're going to be scolded or somehow made to feel awful about what they're doing.

Another reason a cheating spouse may clam up is that s/he is not a very good communicator. S/he is not very good at disclosing or engaging someone in effective communication.

And a person then says to me, "Well, they obviously have good communication going on in the affair relationship. Why can't he or she do it with me?"

And I typically reply by saying, "Affair relationships have very, very poor communication in reality."

And they say, "What?"

And I say, "In essence, communication in an affair relationship is based upon building up the illusions each have." So it's not really effective communication; it's communication that each wants to hear to build illusions of who he or she thinks he or she is.

Another reason that the cheating spouse may clam up is that you may be a better communicator. You may be verbally more precise or more sophisticated. Your partner may feel like he or she is one

down to you; and therefore, may feel inadequate in terms of engaging in communication with you, or may feel trapped communicating because there's a sense that you're one up.

Here are some tips of how you can open the lines of communication.

Briefly, I have three tips.

Number one is: Never ask a question. I'm not going to get into the reasons for that right now, but rule number one is: Never ask a question.

Instead of saying, "Will you pass me the potatoes?" say, "I want the potatoes." Now think about that and try to apply that to your situation.

Rule number two: Never use the word "you" when talking to your spouse.

This is extremely difficult to do, but it ties into rule number one. Never use the word "you". Instead, you want to make short, declarative statements, which get at the truth. That will be your most powerful communication, and then you wait and see what kind of response your spouse will give to your declarations.

And remember that if your partner was not a good communicator or talked much before, he or she probably is not going to talk a great deal now.

In that case, you might have to be aware of body language. Notice body language closely or the various types of non-verbal communication, which give cues and clues.

Getting him or her to talk is a very complex situation, but three rules, again. Never ask a question. Never use the word "you". And pay attention to body language if you can't get anything else.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=get+him%2Fher+to+talk%3F>



## 5. Do I Confront the Other Person?

I had over 300 people write me with their stories about confronting the other person, and to be honest, I was quite surprised by the results.

I thought that confronting the other person would be a disaster in most cases.

That's not what I found to be true. Many people found confronting the other person to be very, very helpful. Now maybe those that experienced it as a disaster didn't write or didn't respond to me, but I doubt that that's true.

So let's take a look: Should you confront the other person?

I found that when a person who's very nice, accommodating, a pleasant person to be around - first discovers infidelity, that person may feel a terrible sense of victimization and helplessness.

And instead of holding back, which may be typical for them, they confronted the other person. They let it fly, and let it fly in very powerful ways.

They didn't say very nice things. They didn't hold back what they were thinking. They didn't break the law and didn't hurt anybody, but they at least confronted the other person very strongly.

And most people reported that they walked away from that confrontation feeling empowered. Not much was accomplished, but they felt better about themselves. And they moved from this sense of being a victim to: "I have a little influence here, and it feels good."

There are those who typically are reactive, are blunt, are bold, and who want to get in there and confront the other person initially. If that's a personality trait or personality pattern - I suggest you hold back.

Be reluctant to use that pattern on the other person. What that may do - if you confront the other person with your directness and your power - is fuel the flames of the affair. You become the person that he and she talk about and move them closer together.

Here's another tip: Don't expect help from the other person. The other person is not probably going to be accommodating or be truthful. Because after all, an affair is based upon "mis-truth," so why should you expect the other person to be truthful or to be helpful? That probably is not going to happen.

The exception to that rule is in the kind of affair I call "I Don't Want to Say No." Now, if you confront the other person in that kind of affair, the other person maybe shocked and may start sharing stories of how your cheating spouse also conned or manipulated that person. And in some cases, the other person and the person that's been cheated upon become good friends over a period of time.

If there's an impasse, if the affair has been going on for a long time and there doesn't seem to be any movement, sometimes it's helpful to intervene by confronting the other person. The confrontation generates movement.

This is especially true for the Affair #4: "I Fell Out of Love and Just Love Being in Love." That kind of affair is based on a lot of juice, and secrets generate the juice that keeps that relationship sparked.

By confronting the other person in the "I Fell Out of Love and Just Love Being in Love" kind of affair, you may take away the juice. You take away the secret, and the power of that affair is diminished at that particular point in time.

So if you face that kind of affair that becomes an option for you. And often, it's a helpful option in terms of breaking up the secrecy and the power of that type of affair.

I highly recommend - with the "I Need to Prove My Desirability" kind of affair - that you be reluctant to confront the other person. I don't think it's that helpful in that kind of affair. As a matter of fact, it may be harmful, and there are reasons for that that I don't want to get into at this moment.

If you want to confront the other person, make it a plan.

Rehearse what you're going to say in your mind; maybe practice with someone else. Be prepared. Imagine the different scenarios that might emerge.

Go into the confrontation with an open mind, and be able to hold yourself by using "charge neutral." That probably will give you the best results.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=confront+the+other+person>

## 6. How Do I Get Rid of the Images?

Let me start by saying, "that which you resist, usually persists."

The more that you try to get rid of the images and thoughts, the more that you try to fight those disturbing thoughts and images, in essence, you give them more power.

They probably will increase in intensity or at least, continue to be highly disturbing to you.

Instead of trying to get rid of them or resist them, instead, begin to acknowledge the thoughts and images.

What you have here, is a part of you sending a message. Saying to you, in essence, "I am in need of healing."

These disturbing images and thoughts point to a part of you, a core of you that is struggling with something. It's vitally important to pay attention and learn from those thoughts and images.

And as you do that, the intensity and the frequency of these thoughts and images will dissipate over time.

When you have an image, or when you have a disturbing thought, and it persists, ask the question, "What is this image or what does this thought mean to me? What does it mean to me that I'm having this image, this specific image, this specific thought?"

You probably will discover, and most people discover, that it means that a part of you is feeling inadequate. A part of you says something's happening here that I can't do. When I imagine my spouse being with the other person, sexually or otherwise, I imagine them being together in a way that I can't be, or don't want



to be. Perhaps, that's an issue. Or I imagine them being together in a way that I would like to be together with someone and so I'm blocking something.

A particular sexual image may mean that I feel terribly inadequate sexually at that particular point in time. That's why I'm having that image. I'm having an image or a thought because I believe that something's wrong with me.

This image, this thought, brings up the thought that something's wrong with me. That I'm inadequate in some way, or that I'm stuck in some way. So, pay attention to these images and disturbing thoughts and you'll probably learn a great deal.

Another trick that I sometimes use with people is to measure the intensity of the images or the thoughts. Measure them on a scale of one to 10, 10 being as bad as it can get. Over a period of time you'll see the fluctuations in the intensity and frequency of the images.

One final note: I was trained in a process called EMDR, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, and it's a powerful tool. I found it to be a powerful tool to help people deal with images and thoughts that tend to traumatize them.

Seek out a therapist who is qualified, who's had two levels of training in EMDR to help you reprocess the disturbing images and related thoughts.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=thoughts+and+images>

## 7. Should We Have Sex?

When I pose that question in light of the fact that both people are aware of the affair and the affair is continuing.

It seems a dilemma especially for the wounded spouse: "Should I continue to have sex with my partner that I know or suspect deeply is still involved with another person?"

A person asks this question, because usually there is a very high level of sexual intensity between husband and wife.

The affair stirs up sexual intensity and sexual feelings. Often both have a strong desire to engage in sex, and some people say that sex is better now than it's ever been.

This is especially true for particular kinds of affairs such as the I-want-to-be-close-to-someone-but-can't-stand-intimacy affair in which all the pent up feelings are let loose and the result is more passion.

It's also true, I believe, for I-fell-out-of-love-and-just-love-being-in-love affair. Again, there is a strong sexual passion that seems to be released.

In the affair, I-want-to-get-back-at-him-or-her, there is a release from some of the resentment, and the affair seems to bring a heightened sexual tension between husband and wife.

If you enjoy sex, it's mutual and you're having a great time, then there's nothing wrong with sexual activity.

However, if you are the wounded spouse and you seek out sex from your partner who is reluctant, and you need or seemingly need sex for affirmation but your spouse who is having the affair is rather reluctant, then it is often best to back off.

Be aware of your own needs system at that level rather than trying to pursue your cheating spouse by asking for sex or asking for that affirmation regularly.



There's another kind of affair, I-need-to-prove-my-desirability, in which is often inadvisable to engage in sex. Sex in that case is often tied to a history of sexual abuse and sexual manipulation.

The cheating spouse is at some level trying to confront this history, so sex becomes very problematic.

Thirdly, if you feel like your integrity is being violated and if it seems your cheating spouse wants it out of a sense of hostility, manipulation or control, which sometimes are typical in I-can't-say-no or I-don't-want-to-say-no types of affairs, then set some boundaries. Be able to say no, and don't allow your integrity to be compromised.

Please make sure the issue of Sexually Transmitted Diseases is raised.

Here is what one reader said:

Dr. Bob – please, please mention Sexually Transmitted Diseases here. My husband reassured the OP that he didn't need a condom because he has had a vasectomy. He never gave a moment's thought to the fact he could be bringing me a "gift that keeps on giving" via an STD. I resent this deeply and made him use a condom until his tests came back negative. Yes, we were having sex during the time of the affair but I didn't know that he was having the affair. I'm glad I thought enough of myself once I knew that I insisted he wear one (he never hesitated to comply).

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=should+we+have+sex%3F>

## 8. How Do I Confront My Spouse?

This question occurs when either a person knows or has evidence that the spouse is having an affair but hasn't confronted him or her with it, or the affair is out in the open but you want to be stronger in your stance.



I'm going to answer this question in the perspective of the seven kinds of affairs that I outline.

Let's look first at the affair I call "I need to prove my desirability."

In this kind of affair there is usually a lot of shame and guilt so if you suspect your partner is having an affair and fits into this category, be cautious and express concern.

You want to provide an atmosphere in which he or she can feel free to confide in you because that's probably what he or she wants.

Often when someone confronts a person verbally who is involved in an "I don't want to say no" affair the conversation really doesn't go anywhere constructive. It gets turned back on you, you're blamed, you get angry...it's a hassle.

Instead of confronting verbally a person who is involved in an "I don't want to say no," take action. Take very, very strong action of some sort. Speak through your behaviors and not your words.

Here are three ways in which you can confront your spouse if you are involved in one of the other kinds of affairs.

Refer to behaviors or refer to specific things you see with your cheating spouse.

Say to him or her, "this is what I observe, this is what I see." Relate these behaviors to the fact that he or she might be involved in an affair.

Another way of confronting your spouse who may be involved in another kind of affair is to take a very, very firm stand and say, "I will not live with this, I will not tolerate this, I will not share you with someone else." Walk away. Take a very firm stand and utter that declaration.

A third way of handling or confronting someone involved in the other kinds of affairs is to drop comments periodically, such as, "You know you're headed down a pretty slippery slope here and I wonder if you realize that."

Or make some other comment that refers to the consequences of his or her behavior. You need not explain in detail. Making a short statement and turning around and walking away often has extreme power.

Keep knocking on the door and say "Hey what's going on here? I'm here and I'm not going to live with this."

Charging neutral is an important concept that I teach and you want to charge neutral which is easier said than done, especially in the beginning stages of the discovery of infidelity.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=confront+spouse>

## 9. Will I Ever Be Able to Trust Again?

One meaning behind this question is, Will I ever trust my cheating spouse again? Will it ever be the same as it was before?

And the answer to that is no.

It will not be the same as it was before. And there probably always will be a part of you that holds back to some degree, always remembers.

The trust has been tarnished.

But the trust can be reinstated, can be restored. However, it doesn't happen easily.

It takes anywhere from three to eighteen months with both working individually and together discussing, soul searching, examining what you want from each other, declaring yourselves, doing everything you need to feel ninety nine percent sure that his or her words and actions are predictable and trustworthy.

So, yes you can trust again, although it is a long path and it probably is a path that will be very difficult but well worth it.

You can move your relationship to new levels of intimacy and understanding even though the trauma lurks in the background.

Another dimension of this question, "Will I ever trust again?" is "Will I ever be able to enter into a loving relationship?"

The underlying concern: "Will you ever be able to trust yourself again?"

You see you have been burned. You have lost your bearings and in ways you have lost your ability to trust your intuition, your own instincts and you are saying can I ever use those again to enter into a loving relationship?

Can I trust myself? Will I know what the flags are? Will I know when I am going to get hurt again? These are very legitimate questions.

To address these questions, begin thinking about the standards you have for a loving relationship? What's extremely important for you in a loving relationship?

Begin to define those standards very clearly.

Second, look at boundaries. What are the boundaries you need in your life to protect you? And when you see a red flag and when you believe you are walking down that path where you might get hurt, how do you set those boundaries to protect you?

And then the third thing I want you to do is to reflect on the signs of a healthy relationship? What would it look like to be in a healthy relationship and what does it look like to be in a non healthy relationship?

Reconfigure you. Redesign you with your standards front and center. Knowing how to set boundaries and knowing what to look for in a healthy relationship will enable you to trust you and in trusting you, will be free to trust others.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=trust+again%3F>

#### 10. What If S/He Continues Seeing the Other Person?

The underlying struggle with this question often centers around ambivalence.

A part of you wants the marriage, wants the relationship, and fears losing a tremendous amount.

And yet there is another part that says, "I am tired of this. I don't want this. I don't like the pain. I don't want to be in a relationship where I am disregarded to this degree. Why not end it?"

It sometimes is helpful to confront your cheating spouse with your ambivalence.

"You know there is a part of me that really wants to be with you and hopes that we can have a family and can make it through this. And yet another part of me says I am not going to live this way."

And then you say, "At some point I am going to work through this and at some point I am going to draw a line. I am not sure when. I am not sure what it is going to be like but I know that I will not live like this forever."

Those statements often give a sense of power.

And, you are speaking the truth.

When s/he continues to see the other person begin to shift your focal point away from him or her.

The energy, the focal point, is trying to determine whether he or she is seeing the other person.

I suggest you shift your focal point.

Ask the question (I know this is a really, really difficult question,) "Do I truly, really in my heart want to be married to him or her?"

Spend a considerable amount of time asking that question and exploring that question from all angles.

Don't say, "Sure, I want to be with him or her because I love him." Don't use the word love, dig under that.

What are your true reasons for wanting to be married to him or her?

I have some guided questions that will help you in my ebook, *Break Free From the Affair*.

Do you really, truly want to be married to him or her?

That question will help clarify what is truly, truly important to you - what you value and what your standards and boundaries are for your relationship.

If possible, state to your cheating spouse what you are discovering in answering that question.

Video: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com/blog/?s=continues+seeing+op>

## Chapter 13: Examine the Questions You SHOULD Ask



These are the transcripts from my video series on the questions one SHOULD ask when confronted with infidelity. These questions form a baseline and beginning point for breaking free from the affair, saving your marriage or moving ahead and redesigning your life and relationships.

### 11. What Type of Affair Is It?

You can't fit a square peg into a round hole.

If you want to save your marriage, if you want to have a constructive relationship, if you want to say something or do something that somehow, in some way will influence the course of the affair, you must know what type of affair it is.

Otherwise, you're just like a leaf blowing in the wind. You're like a loose cannon rattling on the deck. And what you say or what you do will probably cause more harm than good.

One size does not fit all. You must know what type of affair you're facing.

Affairs are different. Affairs have different lengths of duration. Affairs begin because of different motives of your spouse.

The personality characteristics of your spouse will correlate directly with the type of affair s/he is having.

When people read my e-book, "Break Free From the Affair", and they go through the personality characteristics of the person in a particular kind of affair, often light bulbs go on and say, "Hey, this is him. This is her. This fits him. This fits her perfectly."

To influence the affair or to save your marriage, you must do or say something that fits the type of affair and fits the personality characteristics of your cheating spouse.

Let me give you a couple examples.

You respond to the affair, "I don't want to say no," much differently than to the affair, "I need to prove my desirability".

In "I don't want to say no," I encourage an aggressive get in his face or get in her face strategy. In the "I need to prove my desirability," a person is much more passive.

You listen. You try to understand.

As you can see the strategies for these types of affairs are tremendously different.

I also have an affair called "I want to be close to someone but can't stand intimacy."

For that type of affair, I suggest using the tactic called “leaping your partner.”

However, if you use that tactic (leaping your partner) in the "I want to get back at him or her" type of affair, your spouse will interpret your strategy as abandonment and you'll do more harm than good.

The resentment or the rage will just be intensified, and you don't want that.

You must know the type of affair.

By knowing the type of affair that you're facing, you can strategize and use appropriate tactics that will have the most impact for the results you want.

## 12. What Support Do I Need?

When you bump into infidelity, when you encounter a cheating spouse, you are flooded and overwhelmed by powerful and intense feelings.

Some prefer not to talk about the affair or talk about the situation.

You may find it extremely difficult to talk. You may be embarrassed.

Or, you may not want others to know for fear of embarrassment or for fear that if others find out; somehow your talking to another will get around to your cheating spouse and might make matters worse.

It's frequently difficult to talk to family and friends.

In some ways you're too close to family and friends. They discover that someone is having an affair close to them and they react. They're not sure how to respond.



Many people have myths and stereotypes about infidelity, so their response is often less than helpful.

Family or friends may say, “Kick him/her out. Why do you put up with this?”

But you know that it's not that simple.

So many people that you talk to won't understand and won't be able to guide you or give you the kind of support or the kind of help that you really, truly need.

Now this is also true in the case of professionals. I'm a licensed marriage and family therapist in the state of Michigan and a certified social worker for the past 27 years.

In my training in marriage and family therapy, the issue of infidelity was never brought up as a specific sub-category.

Professional therapists may try to extrapolate certain concepts onto the animal of infidelity. This does not often work.

If you do seek therapy, seek out a therapist who ideally is recommended by someone who has success with that therapist in the arena of infidelity, if possible.

The Internet, the web, has been a lifesaving place for many, many people suffering from the agony of infidelity.

I have a support group on Ning, which is I think now about 2,500 members and very active. Go to: <http://infidelity-support.ning.com/?xgi=gMHG8sg>

I also have a support group on Facebook that is less active but, again, serves a purpose. Go to Facebook and do a search on infidelity and you will find the support group.

I also have a chat room that is visited by a number of people consistently. Chatters say, "You know, the chat room has really been my savior. When I can't sleep at night, I go there and talk to people and I've made fast and true friends."

As a matter of fact, a few years ago I got an email from somebody who said that they were getting together locally with a group of people who were meeting in my chat room to support and encourage each other.

Here's the link for the chatroom: <http://www.infidelity-help.com/chatroom>

### 13. What Must I Do to Protect My Self?

I'm reminded of being on an airplane when the oxygen mask comes down. You place the oxygen mask on yourself first before the child or loved one sitting next to you. You need to take care of yourself first before you can help others.

Here are four scenarios in which you may consider the need to protect yourself.

The first scenario is for someone who is involved in an "I can't say no" type of affair.

In this type of affair the cheating spouse is most likely losing control of his or her life. You may observe him or her going down the tubes. More and more it appears that he or she is unable to control what's occurring around him or within him or her.

As the “addiction” progresses you may experience forms of abuse, even physical abuse.

You must be able to set boundaries to protect yourself, or if that doesn't work, have an exit plan.

An exit plan lets you know where you can go and who can help you if the abusive behavior intensifies.

The second scenario occurs in the “My Marriage Made Me Do It” type of affair.

Verbal abuse may be persistent. You're persistently blamed for his or her actions. He or she refuses to take responsibility and passively aggressively points his or her finger at you as the cause for what's going on.

I'm often reminded of the story of a frog that's placed in water on the stove, and the gas is turned on. The heat is turned up, and the frog is oblivious to the heating water. Eventually, the frog is boiled.

That sometimes is the case when we're involved in relationships where there's a longtime history of blame and subtle verbal abuse. You become boiled in a way, and you need to be aware if that is happening.

Thirdly, you may need to protect yourself in the "I fell out of love and just love being in love" kind of affair.

Impulsivity often reigns. You may need to check your bank account, check your finances or get an attorney. Make sure that your life is not disintegrating in those particular areas.

Fourth, consider the “I don't want to say no” affair in which there's a sense of entitlement.

You may need to protect yourself sexually. S/he involved in that type of affair is often oblivious to precautions. Consequences are not considered.

Your physical health may be at risk if there is sexual activity with him/her.

#### 14. What Gets Triggered in Me?

You may react strongly, powerful emotions may be triggered in you, when your cheating spouse says or does something.

You are angered. You defend yourself. You explain. You give reasons. You defy. You may shout, you may yell, you may scream. Or you may clam up, you may withdraw, you may freeze, you may withhold.

You may get depressed, you may move away, you may begin to think, "Poor me." You may begin to feel as if you are a victim.

All of these are reactive modes - reacting to what he or she is saying or doing.

Reactivity gets you nowhere.



It perpetuates cycles. Do you ever feel like you're going in circles? That you can almost predict what he or she is going to say and you can predict how you're going to respond, and you know how he or she is going to respond to your response, and so on and so forth? You know that cycle?

You find yourself being an unattractive person when you get in this consistent reactive mode.

What I want for you is to encourage you to act, and I want you to act with your power. I want you to act with your words, with what's valuable and important for you. I want you to act, rather than react.

And you say, "OK, yeah, sure." Easier said than done, isn't it?

But here's the beginning point, OK?

When he or she says something that tends to elicit a powerful response within you, don't react but ask yourself, "What does this trigger in me?"

Where in my body do I feel this trigger?"

Feelings are basically physiological, and when we begin reacting, we feel it in our bodies.

Shift the focal point from your reactivity to, "Where do I feel this uneasiness? Where do I feel this in my body, in my head? My chest? My stomach? Where do I feel it, and what does it feel like?"

Then rate it on a scale of one to ten, "OK this is a ten. This is as bad as it can get," or, "This is nine, it's been worse," or, "This is eight; it's getting a little bit better."

Rate it on a scale of one to ten, and then be aware of the negative thoughts that flow through your mind when you feel this awful feeling in your body .

Be aware of what you're thinking. Be aware of the negative thoughts.

Now this may sound kind of weird or kind of simple, but it's very, very powerful. And it's the beginning step, a basic beginning step for you to move from reactivity to your own power.

And when you have your power, good things are going to happen.

#### 15. What Do I Think about in My Worst Moments?

Now that question may seem rather strange, because most of us don't want to go there.

We don't want to go there because it probably is exceedingly painful, and we are naturally trying to get rid of this pain or we try to alleviate it.

We may medicate ourselves because we don't want to feel the pain. We may drink ourselves into oblivion because we don't want to feel the pain. We may shop till we drop because we don't want to feel the pain. We may try to escape to some island because we don't want to feel the pain. We will try to go somewhere so that we don't feel the pain.

It is very common to try to not feel the pain, not to think about our worst moments.

But I want you to think about your worst moment, and here's why.

What is pain? Pain is a belief that I want something, and I'm not getting it. I want something that's extremely important for me, and it's not happening.

Now let's relate this to infidelity.

Infidelity may trigger thoughts like... I've always dreamt of having a family -- of having a loving, warm, beautiful family -- and it's in

jeopardy right now. That's what I think about in one of my worst moments.

Or pain may mean I always thought that I was going to live with someone forever and that we would have a happy life. I never dreamt that I would get divorced, and now it's a possibility.

Pain may mean I've always wanted others to be proud of me, to be successful, and now with this I feel like a failure. I feel extremely sad that I've failed.

Or it may mean that I have always put hope on being a sexually desirable person. I wanted to be wanted, and now I'm cast aside. And, I'm sexually replaced by someone else.

So this is your pain. This may be part of your pain.

Enter into this pain. Face it.

And you ask yourself, "When I feel this pain in my worst moments, what are the thoughts? What is it that's really, really important to me?"

Your pain will lead you to that place in which you discover what is vitally important for you.

So follow your pain, and your pain will lead you to your dreams, your hopes, and your aspirations.

And if you have a difficult time facing the pain, ask yourself, "What does this mean that I feel this pain? What does it mean that I'm thinking this?"

Continue to ask yourself that question.

I'm in my pain. I must want something. What does it mean to me that I'm here? I use this statement with people sometimes who are in pain. I say, "Gold is refined through intense heat."

## 16. What is My Strategy?

After you calm and center yourself it's time to explore the different types of affairs.

Knowing the types of affairs enable you to become familiar with the dynamics of the relationship with your cheating husband or your cheating wife.

Different strategies exist for a particular kind of affair.

You may be looking at more than one type of affair, but choose the affair that seems most fitting for your particular relationship.

Choose a strategy and begin experimenting.

Take small steps. Don't throw out everything at once, but take very small steps and wait for the response.

When you get feedback, take another step.

For example, let's look at the affair, "I Want to Get Back at Him or Her."

This affair usually exhibits a simmering resentment and anger that sometimes moves to rage.

In that type of affair an often effective strategy is to make his or her anger right.

Now it may seem rather weird to make his or her resentment or anger right, but that strategy is important for that type of affair.

The strategy helps him or her move through the resentment and/or rage and influences the direction of the adultery or the affair.

Let's look at "My Marriage Made Me Do It."

In "My Marriage Made Me Do It" there's also anger, but it's a different type of anger.

Backing off is a recommended strategy.

In backing off you refuse to become the victim. You refuse to be the recipient of his or her blame.

And then you make comments -- or meta comments as I call them -- about the situation or about the relationship.

Break Free From the Affair gives examples of meta comments you can use. You can modify the statements to fit your style or create your own.

Let's look at another kind of affair, "I Want To Be Close To Someone, But Can't Stand Intimacy."

In a stagnant marriage or relationship, the cheating partner will triangle in a third party to balance the issue of distance and intimacy.

I recommend a strategy in this particular kind of affair is called "Leaping Your Partner," in which you break through the stagnation and the impasse between this distance and intimacy wall by personally and professionally taking your own leap of growth.

This often is highly disturbing to the cheating spouse and disturbs the relationship and offers hope for reconciliation and growth.

The key is experimentation. Choose and experiment with different kinds of strategies related to the kind of affair that faces you.

## 17. How Much Do I Tolerate and for How Long?

This question often is pondered when someone is thinking, "Should I stay, or should I go? Should I remain in this relationship, or should I exit?"

"What am I tolerating; what am I putting up with, and how long do I put up with that?" is also considered when one thinks about reconciling with a cheating husband or a cheating wife.

"If we get back together, if we have a workable relationship, what again am I going to tolerate or put up with? And for how long?"

These are very, very important questions.

Most of us tolerate way, way, way too much.

Most of us are fearful of taking a stand. Most of us are fearful of drawing a line, fearful of what might happen if we draw a line.

But when we do draw a line, or when we do take a stand, other people, in my experience, respect that and admire that, and wish they were like that.

So how much do we tolerate? How long do we tolerate it? And how can we move out of tolerating too much or putting up with too much?

Here's an exercise that will get you on the road to learning how to get rid of the tolerations in your life, live a freer life, and make you much, much more attractive.

Get a piece of paper and pencil.

Make a list of the top 10 things that you are tolerating at home, in your environment or at work.

Just write quickly, those things that you think about when you think about what you're putting up with in that environment.

Second, make a list of the top 10 things that you are tolerating or putting up with in terms of yourself: I'm too passive. I'm too angry. I'm too aggressive. I'm too depressed. I weigh too much. My hair isn't right.

Third, take another piece of paper and write down the top 10 things that you're tolerating in your relationship.

I'm tolerating a rollercoaster relationship. I'm tolerating a boring relationship. I'm tolerating an angry relationship. I'm tolerating and putting up with a relationship in which there's a lot of distance. I'm putting up with a relationship in which there's no sex.

Make a list of the top 10 things that you're tolerating or putting up with in your relationship.

Fourth, make a list of the top 10 things that you're putting up with or tolerating with him/her.

What does s/he say, or s/he do that I must tolerate?

List the top 10 things, and then begin working toward ridding those tolerations. Go back to the first list; it's probably easier there to begin eliminating some of those tolerations.

Once you eliminate the toleration, notice how you feel.

Notice what happens in your environment.

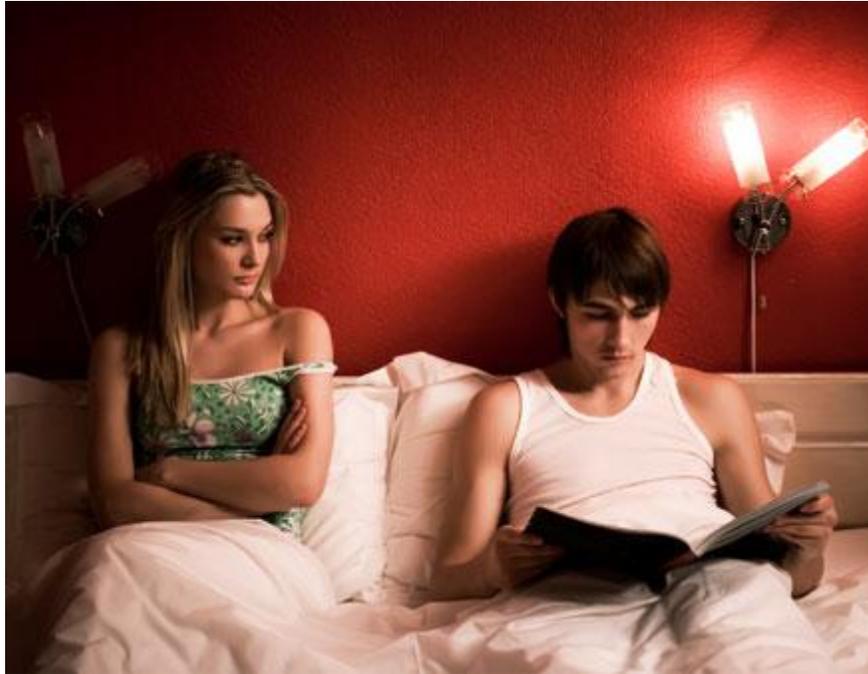
Begin at list one, go to list two, list three, and list four, and begin the process of putting up and tolerating less; taking a stand and making yourself more attractive.

Then see what happens in your relationships and see where your decision making process takes you.

## 18. Do I REALLY Want to be Married to Him/Her?

This is a question that you should and must ask.

As a matter of fact, it is the question that you should ask before you consider any kind of an intervention or employing a strategy.



If you don't ask this question, your interaction with the cheating spouse will be perceived as either manipulation, coercion, or extreme neediness. And that's very unattractive.

First, ask yourself, "Do I truly want to be married to him or her?"

Most people say, "Sure, I want to." But hold on, not so fast.

Let's look at some of the underlying issues that this question may bring up for you, that will stimulate your thinking, and help begin looking at vital issues in terms of managing you and the affair.

Let me pose these questions.

Do you really, truly want to be married to him or her, or are the feelings of hurt and pain so intense that you just want them to go away?

Do you really want to be married to him or her? Do you really, truly want to save the marriage, or do you long for how it used to be? Is that more important to you? Do you long for the memories that you have, and hope that those can be somehow restored?

Do you truly want to save the marriage; do you truly want to be married to him or her? Or do you feel like a failure, and are embarrassed, and by saving the marriage or being with him or her, you hope to reclaim your lost ego and pride?

Do you truly want to be married to him or her, or do you miss the old roles? Now the marriage is in chaos; there's confusion. Do you miss the stability and the old roles that seemed to fit very well?

Do you truly want to be married to him or her, or do you want vindication against the other person? Do you feel like you're competing, and must be married so you can prove to the other person that you're better than he or she?

And do you truly want to be married, or do you hope that this will just be over so that you can end the pain that you feel?

You must examine the underlying issues.

Then you will be ready to effectively, and with power, confront yourself and confront the relationship and work toward healing and reconciliation if that's truly what you want.

#### 19. What Am I Learning About My Self?

Stuff happens. Did you ever see the bumper sticker that says "Stuff happens?" It doesn't really say stuff happens, but you get the idea.

Infidelity happens. It happens and it feels like the end of the world, doesn't it? It can be devastating. The feelings are indescribably intense. The images and the negative thoughts consume a person for hours, for days, for weeks and sometimes for months.

The process takes two to four years for normal people to heal, to reconcile, to forgive and move on.

For those who research, read and study and approach the infidelity intentionally, a shorter period of time is the result.

There's a huge investment that's asked of us when we encounter this demon called infidelity or an affair.

So let's think about this a minute. Let's think about the fact that infidelity is given to you or happens to you.

Let's put this in a theoretical framework.

This framework for me, at least, says that life is not problem-free.

Life is filled periodically with times of transitions, times of change, times of trauma, times of death, times of crisis of various kinds.

We can't escape it. We try. We work hard not to go there, but I believe that life offers us and our relationships times of intense challenge, change, transition, trauma and crisis. A child dies. A person gets sick, perhaps cancer, or a heart attack or becomes disabled. Debilitating events pop up and emerge.

You can't escape. You can't get away from those kinds of events, and they always continue until the point of our death.

So where does that leave you with the infidelity in your life? This is a challenge to you.

I want you to see infidelity as a gift. That's right.

Infidelity can be an impetus for you to evolve and develop into the kind of person you are meant to be and that you truly want to become.

And as well, infidelity can help a relationship evolve and become fully what it's meant to be - a deeper, richer relationship.

Infidelity is a gift.

What are you learning about you?

What are you learning about relationships?

Give some thought to those questions.

## 20. What Patterns Can I Break Free From?

Infidelity is an opportunity for you to evolve and become the kind of person you really, truly want to be.

It's also an opportunity for the relationship to move to another level of depth and richness and intimacy and joy. And it really is, I believe. You may not believe it right now, but believe me, it is.

I've seen hundreds; perhaps thousands of people move to that level and use infidelity as an opportunity in a springboard for something better in their life.

So let's take a minute then to reflect upon how you can break free from certain patterns in your life.

Imagine yourself three months from now. Who do you want to be three months from now?

Imagine what that would feel like, for you to be who you truly want to be three months from now. What would you be saying? What would you be doing?

Take some time with those questions. Three months.

Now go a year.

Imagine yourself a year from now, being the person that you truly are, being the person that you truly want to become. What would that feel like? What would that look like? What would that be like?

Now let's ramp it up a notch, and go five years from now.

What do you see for yourself five years from now, being the kind of person that you truly want to be? Again, what would that feel like? What would that look like? Take some time with those questions.

Now go to your relationships.

What kind of a relationship would you like to have three months from now? What would it feel like? What would it be like? What would the interaction be like? Imagine that; live in that. What would you be doing in that?

Who would you be in that relationship three months from now? What would that feel like?

And again, go ahead a year from now.

What would your relationship like to look like a year from now? What would be the dynamics of that relationship? What would you be doing with each other; what would you be doing in that relationship? What would he or she be doing with you?

Then again, take that ahead five years from now.

What would it be like, being who you really want to be, the relationship being what it truly is meant to be? These are important questions to ask.

Again, what are the patterns that you would like to break free from so that you and your relationship can become truly who you want to be and truly what it's meant to be?

## Chapter 14: You are Not Alone! You Can Do It!



What follows are 122 descriptions and personal stories of those who survived infidelity. They are uncensored and uncut. Spelling and grammar are as submitted (if this is why the stories include spelling and grammar errors or things that don't make sense)

They tell you of the moments, the triggers, the significant thoughts, the life-changing events from which they gained the strength, courage and calmness to face infidelity, survive and in some cases thrive.

These stories are for you. Others share their stories because they want you to know that you can break free from infidelity. And, perhaps more importantly, you are not alone.

Forgiveness. I forgave my husband and loved him the same. I cried and cried by myself because I needed that release and if I cried in front of him it brought up more bad/sad feelings from him about hurting me all over again. I began to do things for me to make me feel like a beautiful person again. This was to help my self esteem which was crushed. Walking, exercise the demons out and losing weight...

I felt so stupid and still at times do and it has been a little over a year since I found out. In the beginning I just wanted death his or mine it didn't matter. The only thing that kept me going was my work as that is the only place I felt SAFE. My family also a HUGE help in supporting me and just letting me make my own decisions. I have NEVER felt so much pain or hatered in my life

I read a lot about saving my marriage and this really helped to look carefully at myself and gave me the courage to look after myself and gradually learn to let him go.

It has now been 6 months. After the dust settled I asked all the questions I need answers to. We decided we wanted to stay married & sought counseling right away. I made certain rules for him to abide by. He became totally transparent. I had access to everything I needed, computer, cell phone, ALL credit & bank statements. He stayed home, unless I knew exactly where he was. This started to restore the trust I had lost. We opened up more & talked more. This started the healing process. We began having "dates" & doing more together as a couple. If anything, this whole earth shattering experience has made us closer, we appreciate each other more than we have in years. The pain remains, but gets better every day. There is hope and a way to survive.

It was a week before I gave birth to our first child when I found out. It was extremely painful and having a new baby to take care of was the only thing that kept me grounded and able to function.

First, concentrate on yourself and your health. Yeah, I know everyone says that, but I say - take it very seriously. Join a gym, eat healthy (this was not a problem for me, the problem was forcing down any food), take a daily vitamin, buy a lot of new clothes and

pray. You must do these things for YOU not for your cheating spouse. You are not trying to get the person to come back or whatever, instead you are improving you. Focus on yourself and your children (if any.) Realize although you feel incredibly lonely, you are not at all alone. You need one maybe two good friends who will go to the end of the earth for you and ones that will tell no one. Talk and talk to them. You do not want to depress them, but someone who listens is invaluable. I think it helps not to always rip on your cheating spouse when confiding in someone. That brings back pain. Tell test thing that sets it off. I have learned to address it and talk it out with my husband. I hope some of this helps.

I felt my heart broken literally in many pieces. I screamed at him, beat him and yell all possible bad words in his address. But that did not help. Then I took some time alone and I found inside myself that I still need and love that person. I decided to give another chance and I gave him opportunity to come clean. After I imagined a box and put all that stuff in it and closed it. I told him that in order to forgive and construct new phase of the relationship I had to know everything in details. However my beloved did not say the whole truth at that time and hid something important. Of course I found out about it and changed my mind. I don't need such a liar, who cannot acknowledge his mistakes. Now I am breaking up with him. Whenever I talk about me leaving he becomes hysterical with suicidal notes. But that's the way the cookie crumbles. I gave a chance to tell me the truth. And every time I had to find out about cheating by myself. I have many wounds and every time its a new one because he does not say the truth. He is a coward! We are not married but stayed 6 years together. Thank you.

when I found out, I could not eat, hold in food, lost 15lbs in two weeks & cried for 4 hours straight & could not function at work, taking care of kids ect. I wanted to lay in bed all day, but my very supportive family forced me to go on. My parents took my kids for a few days, so I could get my house organized. My grandparents slept over for a few days so that they could help me keep a functional routine for my kids (homework, dinner ect). I was back to work within three days of finding out. Although I had to leave

early due to being "sick," this type of forceful functionality helped me move through a bulldozer type of incident that occurred to my life. My friends took me out & invited me to comedies, parties ect. Everyone that supported me wanted me to move through the pain. They accepted my depression & repetitious venting & believe it or not this made me feel good. The weight loss, a new hair style & new clothes helped me feel different & more attractive. I joined facebook & reconnected with many old male & female friends & I feel important again. There isn't a day that goes by that I don't have a flashback of what my husband did to me, but time, friendship & family definitely help the healing process. So stay in touch with friends, keep family close & dress up even when its not necessary, to boost your self esteem. This will help the process. It has been 11 months since the affair & I have a long way to go before the pain subsides, however, I gave my husband a chance & things do look better than they did prior to the affair. I look better than I have in a while & if things don't work out, I realize that once you have been through the heartbreak & heartache of an affair, you will be much more tolerable & stronger if the current or future relationships don't work out. You are worth it & don't ever let your cheater tell you different. Its there fault for weak character flaws not yours!

The day I found out was also the day I was induced to have my baby girl. I ended up going into shock, had convulsions and honestly don't remember much about her birth. The first few weeks I was terrified. How in the world was I going to raise 4 kids on my own? I begged, pleaded, even bargained to let my husband "keep the girlfriend", just don't leave me. I was desperate. The kind of desperation that is NOT healthy. But it was necessary at the time for me to exist, to live. I'm not sure how I got thru the next few months other than to concentrate on getting thru each hour of each day for my children. I listened and watched music videos, and wrote in a journal. I cried every single day I got my babies down for their nap and promised myself to pull it together by the time my older children got off the bus. I lived like this for 5 months. Then the sadness ended, and I snapped. I was enraged, an anger I've never felt before. I had tolerated too much. I filed for divorce and told my husband he could now leave, no more strings holding him back. Funny, we went to court a month later and my

husband asked to reconcile. I was very skeptical, but decided to try. Slowly I started trusting him but was emotionally slammed against the wall six months later. Although the other woman had moved many states away from us, they had never ended their affair. The scabs of my heart and soul were ripped open wide again. But my reaction this time around was different. No begging, no pleading, just an eerie quiet that my husband couldn't stand. 2 weeks prior to learning about his ongoing affair, I had signed papers to end the divorce proceedings. He now was terrified of losing me and the kids. He broke off the relationship with the other woman and is 100% focused on our family. We are still working on things and the road has been one filled with many potholes. The best advice I can offer someone is that you have to allow yourself to cry, to feel that pain. Don't focus on tomorrow, next week, a year from now. Just go hour to hour. Compliment yourself for getting thru each minute and hour. Those hours eventually turn into a full day. And if you slip, and fall, never berate yourself. I fell many times, crumbled to the floor and thought I would die from the pain. But only so many tears can fall. And when the crying stops, just try again. Never give up on yourself.

First and foremost is to understand that in no way was this your fault. With that accomplished you can move on to understanding the how and why forces of the infidelity, and while this takes a little time and honesty on both parts I feel it is what helped me get to a better place. I also entrusted one person with whom I could share my feelings with and gather their perspective. In just 3 meetings I had a sense I was where I needed to be. I also found that forgiving is a very powerful tool but you must honestly get to that point in your mind. With this all said she has come to know me with an all new respect. Life is good!!!!!!!

I felt absolutely numb for a few days and just couldn't believe that I still would like this man back in my life. I've surrounded myself with special family and friends (have told only a selected few) and am keeping busy doing things I enjoy.

I wanted information. I wanted both experiential and clinical information. All was validating--that my desire to know, my behaviors and feelings were all normal. I learned about well meaning counselors causing more damage than harm. I learned

that there are recovery "maps" available which allow me a time frame so as not to feel that recovery is taking forever. Particularly, I found articles in Journal of Marital and Family Therapy quite helpful, although academic. I did learn that, in order to heal the couple must move from blame to understanding.

I didn't know if our marriage would survive. I never will. I knew that at the onset. I stayed to see what was left of it. I am exploring what is left of it for us. I hated his guts at first. I hated to see him at all. I didn't want to look at the stranger in front of me. The shock was so severe when I looked at him I didn't even recognize who he was. I just couldn't seem to stop staring at this person in front of me. I realized at some point that I knew PART of him. And that I hated the part I didn't know. I still do. I love parts of him and I hate parts of him. I don't expect that will change. I have to live with the part of him I hate to live with the part of him that I once loved fully. I will never love him that way again. But, I can love him as much as is reasonable to the situation.

The first days, weeks and even months are much of a blur as I was in a state of total shock and disbelief over my husband's 4 year long affair and strip club addiction, both of which were discovered at the same time through different means. Probably the most helpful thing for me was to reach out trusted friends and family members for support, to immediately start weekly counseling, and to take things a day at a time, sometimes even an hour at a time. Even though my situation was horrific beyond belief, I kept telling myself day in and day out that "things could always be worse."

The first 4 weeks were awful, cannot not describe the emotional torture, just getting by was hurting. But somewhere inside of all us is the need to rise up in spite of what's happened. Friends became a key factor, walking became a stressbuster, I did not want any down time to think, to feel. Although it's important to face your feelings, the first few weeks are about getting up and get moving, walking constantly was all I could do, I would walk and cry at the same time, eventually the crying stops, walking continues. Play your walkman, listen to upbeat music only, no sad songs. Talking to your friends. Family is good to, but too close to the situation.

Keep active, productive, its amazing what it can do. I did not think so at first, but I needed something to do, somewhere to go, exercising/walking was it, plus friends, I drove them nuts talking to them. I also searched for answers as to why. thats how I came upon Dr Huenzigers web site, the need to understand, it does not change the hurt but it gave me an insight into infidelity and I was not alone. People referred me to the phoenix rising and I did just that. It took a lot but I survived, you can too. linda

When I found out that my husband had been having an affair for three years with a woman ten years younger than me, and I actually caught him with this person I was calm at first, he told me he didn't love me anymore and did I want him to leave, I said 'yes, will you live with her' to which she replied 'no he will not' so my senses tell me that he had lied to her about me. Anyway, I got very upset and I smacked him across the face and then I smacked her, which is out of character for me and I am ashamed that I did it. I filed for a divorce but he refused to sign the papers, he asked me to forgive him and as we had been married for thirty four years at the time and we had three lovely children and two lovely granddaughters I prayed about it and gave him a chance. It hasn't been easy, in fact it has been the hardest thing I have had to do, when you forgive someone then you must put in the past what they have done to hurt you. Four years on we are getting along just fine, I still feel pain every now and again when I think of him with the other person but I don't dwell on it, I push it out and get on with my life. My family helped me to survive this horrible time and also my will power, I am responsible for my own happiness and I do not depend on my husband to make me happy.

I kept going to work. It was the only escape I had. I had to get up each day and put on a smiling face and complete tasks at my job. It kept me alive.

Almost to the day my husband began cheating, I knew. Something wasn't right. I had no concrete proof, just a hunch and some vague (or so I thought) evidence. Then, at 3:30 in the morning, she called. Although I knew deep down he was cheating, I hadn't been able, up to that point, accept it as a real possibility. The word devastating does not even begin to describe the journey I was

about to embark on. It has been 6 1/2 months since I found out and I must admit that I think I was in actual shock for the first 2 to 3 weeks because I only remember bits and pieces of what happened during that time. I do know that I googled "how to survive an affair" and came across the wonderful work of Dr. Frank Gunsberg, whom has written a self-help book by that same title, which then led me to Dr. Huizenga's e-book. I read it and my husband, somewhat reluctantly, read most of it. I also must say, to my husband's credit that he has done all the "right things" since then and had even ended the affair before I found out. (That is why she called me, the whole jilted lover deal.) Nonetheless, trust has proven to be a difficult commodity to replace since that time and I still struggle with it. In the beginning, I would say the first 2 months, I felt as if I had no control over my feelings and this caused terrible fights and stress. My husband was in the mode of blaming me for what had happened, despite his good behavior on every other level. I read, and read and re-read anything I could get my hands on about the subject and after a solid 2 months of fighting and then off and on fighting for the next 2, realized that the way in which we were communicating was disasterous. I felt, and still do, the twinging pain of the affair every now and then and need to be reassured on numerous levels, including faithfulness now, intimacy and so on. What I discovered is that feelings, questions and the like need to be stated, without too much emotion and then left alone and not harped on. Anything else feels like an attack. This is when real communication can take place. I feel like I can say what I need and how I feel now using this tactic and he can respond in a kind and undefensive manner. Also, doing anything for yourself, even if you don't feel like it, such as exercising on a regular basis, talking with friends that you perhaps didn't make time for before, reading books for fun, making yourself more attractive (for you) are all huge helpers. I didn't feel like doing any of those things but somehow forced myself to and continue until now to do so. These things have proven to be invaluable to my recovery (especially the friends) not only to the way I view myself, but to the way my husband views me as well. Infidelity is a gut wrenching, fear inducing assault on one's very being that can, in the least, tear your very life apart. It can also, and I believe this about every kind of cheating scenario, be the door to a better future, a better you. It takes time and soul

searching and the guts to tough out the fear of the unknown. The fear of rejection. The fear of being alone. But it can be done. Anyone can do it if they allow themselves to trust again and know that there are no guarantees in this life. We will fall but we can get back up. We will be bruised, but we can heal. We will lose love, but can love again. It is our choice. We all have a choice.

I crashed whenever I was alone. I have a young daughter, so it was very hard keeping a stiff upper lip in front of her. But whenever I was alone, I listened to music, and cried. I especially liked listening to an Evanescence song, "Bring me to Life"...because I felt dead inside, and I needed something or someone to bring me to life. I exercised ruthlessly, followed the low carb diet and lost a lot of weight, which helped my self-esteem . It is so hard when I imagined my husband with another woman....and remembered his coldness to me...the typical "shutting down" of a relationship in order to carry on with another woman. I talked a lot to my husband, he apologized, and sometimes just held me..that made me feel better. But then he would leave the house, and I would feel a panic attack coming on again. I even developed high blood pressure. I did deep breathing to relax myself. I wrote my husband letters and had him read them expressing the horrible pain he put me through....every time I wrote one of those letters, I would get some relief, like releasing a pressure valve. but the pain would come in cycles, I would have a good day, then regress into depression again. It has now been 3 years since my confrontation. I am better, but I thought that I would be more healed...it still hurts like hell, and I still have to bring it up sometimes to get some support from him...I try to keep it to a minimum, but it isn't fair that people say never to bring it up again. what if I suddenly have feelings of mistrust or insecurity? yes, he doesn't like it when it comes up again...but as long as I keep it to a minimum, I think he owes it to me to let me express my innermost feelings for as long as I need to . I am sad to know that life never will be as secure, warm and cozy as it used to be before this rude awakening to tragedy....kind of like walking through life with a thorn in your foot...sometimes you think it is finally gone, but then it comes back to you. I just try to find some sense of happiness as much as I can.

After finding out about the affair or should I say, after he finally admitted to be having an affair, I was of course in shock. I continued to stick to my routine even though you just want to go to bed and never get up. I tried to continue to be very pleasant to my husband.

I immediately called a marriage counselor to act as a mediator for discussion. With just the two of us, there was anger and accusations. The counselor helped us know the most effective way to talk about it.

The pain was so intense after 37 years of marriage discover my husband was having an affair with a friend was so totally devastating that I remember crying for months, but the one bit of advice that helped me was something I read that said, "Infidelity is like a death and the advice not to make life changing decision for a year unless you have not other options applies to infidelity as well. You can get a divorce anytime so don't rush to that decision." That helped me be able to put one foot in front of the other the first few weeks/months and realize that the divorce decision could be made later when I was more sane. It has been almost 2 years and we are still together.

The affair I discovered my husband was having with the wife of our closest friends. I suspected something was between them about 10 years ago, but my husband denied everything and I did



not bring it up with her. Over the time I convinced myself that there was something between them for a little while but they stopped it. After I discovered emails my husband wrote to her that revealed the deepest feelings he had to her, I could not breathe. For me it was a double betrayal - from him and her, whom I considered to be my friend and spend all the time together. I confronted my husband who tried to minimize the situation and actually never honestly admitted anything. We had talked for hours in the first couple days, going back to when we got married (28 years). My husband was devastated when I told him we can no longer see her and her husband. We were seeing that as the end of his world, his life. He questioned what we will say to our friends, children when they ask what happened. He has an extremely strong emotional connection to her for the last 10 years! He denied having sex with her, saying it was not relevant. What helped me in that time was talking to my friends who were all very supportive to me. Just talking it through helped a lot. In the beginning I was seeing that as a probable new beginning for us, the chance to start new relationship, and it made me hopeful for a new beginning.

I was fortunate to have downloaded your E-Book Break Free from the Affair very early on after my husband's disclosure that he was involved with another woman -- within a week or so. I read it obsessively and made notes in the margins wherever things resonated. I determined that the affair was predominantly an "I Want to Get Back at Her or Him" affair, with characteristics of "My Marriage Made Me Do It" as well. I practiced charging neutral early on, but I also used other measures as recommended, like "leave your partner," and "make him right" and several others, too. I also was fortunate to have had the means to move out of our home to let him have his "fling," although we did still interact as a family with our adult children and our youngest son, who is a teenager. I was also very fortunate to have had the opportunity to take several months off from work and so I immersed myself in taking care of me, counseling, reading everything about affairs I could get my hands on and reconnecting with old friends. One stipulation I had asked my husband was to not bring the OW around our area or around our kids until our divorce was finalized. (He had said he wanted a divorce.) He pretty much

honored that request, except for one incident that I know of where she showed up at our marital home, where he and our son stayed. (I guess she just couldn't resist leaving her 'scent' on my territory!) I tried my best to follow all the Do's and Don'ts listed in the E-book. In fact, I copied them onto an index card and kept it folded in my pocket or wallet and I would read it throughout the day whenever I felt panicked, which was very often in the early stages. (I still have that card folded in my wallet and I still take it out from time to time to remind myself of things -- like don't cry, plead, whine, or complain, act happy, get sexy in a healthy way, etc.) In truth, I was a basket case on the inside but thanks to the advice I read, I kept up a good front to my husband for the most part. Not wanting to expose our marriage to the opinions of too many people who might later prove a problem if we chose to reconcile, I confided only in a few close friends and my sister about the "tactics" I was employing. This proved to be a very wise decision because they gave me support all along the way and never judged him or me when we reconciled. Early on I did let my husband know that I still loved him and would be willing to talk about reconciling if and when he decided to end the affair. For the most part, though, I BACKED OFF and LET HIM HANG HIMSELF. I had had the intuition all along that the woman my husband had gotten involved with was the possessive and clingy type and as it turned out, I was right. Within six weeks he was calling me just to "chat" and he would drop little hints that let me know he was finding the grass wasn't greener. Our chats were more like that of a brother and sister for that time period. It took a tremendous amount of self-restraint not to scream or yell at him about how hurt I was. I would simply "charge neutral" and then cry in my pillow afterwards. A few times he came over to my rented place do dinner at my invitation and we'd talk about the kids or whatever, but I didn't hound him about the OW. I pretended she didn't exist unless he brought up the topic, in which case, I'd remind him to watch out for himself above all else. He never did come up with any divorce papers and when he came to tell me he had ended the affair (within two months of its inception, as far as I know, that is), I expressed my hopefulness for our marriage, but I wasn't overly anxious to reconcile. (I knew that would be a turn-off for him). So we began dating for several months and then I moved back home at his and our son's request. I've been home

four months now and we're rebuilding our marriage. It's hard because I don't think the pain and mistrust caused by the betrayal will ever completely go away, but I choose to live in the present. I'm not sticking my head in the sand about it, but neither do I dwell. We've worked through the initial stuff that needed to be said and we've examined the why's and wherefores of our marriage's dynamics prior to the affair and identified areas of vulnerability in hopes of preventing such trauma again.

The first day, I called my sister within a few hours of finding out. I spoke to her very often those first few days for hours at a time. I then called a therapist and went within three days to start getting help with a situation I didn't think I could survive.

At first I was obsessed with the affair. I couldn't eat and I lost 10 lbs in 2 weeks. I decided that I was not going to let this one thing define my marriage. I prayed for understanding and realized that I too could have owned up to some neglectful things. My husband and I discussed where we wanted to go in this marriage and we discussed a plan for me to try to start trusting him again. Around this time he was leaving to go and work out of town so we had a lot of discussions over the phone and I just began to forgive and let go of the pain.

I moved out giving him time to pack and leave. I went to counseling and suggested he do so also. I only confided in friends and family that loved BOTH of us because I did not want negative advice or feelings expressed by others, just healing, no matter what the outcome might be for the relationship. I continued to talk calmly to him about day to day affairs with the household and our children. I still continued to show respect and consideration for him, even though our relationship was a huge question. I joined a gym, and pursued night classes after work. I focused on healing myself

I was filled with a terrible pain, which would not go away, we are now trying to work through the marriage, I found it hard to look beyond the affair that he had, but with questions that he answered honestly and I made sure they were truthful by asking the same thing in so many different ways and listening, I talked to two very

good and close friends which I also found useful, but it wasn't until I was able to talk to my partner in a controlled environment and letting him see it from my point of view as well as his own, empathy was the answer but not easy to do. As he wanted me to feel the breakup of his pain over the affair, it very much depends on how much you want to save your marriage as to how hard you fight for it and you must always put yourself first because your partner hasn't.

It was very devastating and I was in a self-destructive mode. My husband is still in an affair but what hurts the most is that the OW is trying her best to separate my husband from me. SHE is the aggressor. My husband just lets her say and do anything so that he can have the "thrill" of having an affair. He has always denied having one even though I have more than enough proof. Why I'm staying is because I want my family together. It's also my kids' wish for us to be together. I'm now focusing on MYSELF, to improve myself, because I know now that I can't change my husband. I do the charging neutral method and it's a way for me to demand respect from my husband when he's being obnoxious. I have taken a step back and stopped pushing my husband with questions/insecurities, etc. It's amazing what a change of attitude can do. It's very difficult but I'm trying my best not to focus on the affair.

I did not find a marriage counselor helpful, just a waste of money. I stayed outdoors a lot because I love nature and rode my horses to occupy my mind. I also took care of myself by going to the gym and trying some new classes. Yes, I got all of the books and we read a chapter each night together. The initial pain was as intense as my mother dying.

I joined the most fertile marriage fitness course and it has changed my life. Fixing me fixes him. Love is a discipline doing what you don't want to do when you need to do it. I killed him with kindness. He has noticed changes in me. He is still with the OW but they are constantly having problems and fights over me. I am not fighting about her but she sure is fighting about me. The tables have been turned. But I am not being manipulative like the OW. No I am giving unconditional love and consistent over time change.

The first few hours were the strangest. When I was told, I had a huge feeling of disbelief. I knew that something was up, but I had no idea of what it was. I didn't sleep that night and the following morning I felt terrible and tired. I also felt helpless - that this was beyond my control. Three things happened which changed me. Firstly, I saw a psychologist - initially with a few to get her to see my partner. I was shown that my sense of guilt was not justified and that the problem was that of my partner. Secondly, I searched for knowledge on the internet and I discovered very quickly *Break Free From the Affair*. I bought it and I managed to pin point my affair. The insanity of what was happening I began to understand, was not me but my partner. I could begin to see a path that I could take - and I quickly saw some hope. Finally, I started sports - I concentrated on my physical self (I had lost a lot of weight within two weeks of learning). It helped me take my mind off what was happening - and to take my focus off my wayward wife. I was thinking about me - possibly for the first time in my relationship.

Bob, when I learned about it. It was 12 midnight I just grabbed his cellphone so I can send a text message to a friend. Then I saw the text message from a familiar number, following up on the delayed allowance of a child. I checked if it was addressed to somebody else, since it's a company-issued cp, but I confirmed it since my husband sent a reply message saying that he will provide the money later as he can't go out the office yet, he's been busy. After knowing that "this is it, it's is true". Here is my blog on the first few days/weeks: June 2, 2008 2:55 AM Devastated. This is the best word to describe me nowadays. Have you experienced knowing something and literally sucked the life out of you? ...Or going into shock and the only thing you hear is your heart beating, pumping the blood to keep you alive? Then suddenly you fear if you'll have a heart attack, you just wait for it to happen? Have you experienced not sleeping through the night and wept the whole time?.. waking up ~twice in the middle of the night, as if somebody's sitting on your chest, heavy because of the hurt and pain. Your hands cold and trembled, and felt your blood running through your veins from your hands to your shoulder? How about feeling heavy inside, as if somebody knocked you off your chest. And then tears just continue to roll down your cheeks, even if you're not thinking about anything? Have you experienced wanting

to get out of a situation but you can't. You just close your eyes, weep and try to cover it with your very hands? You just shake your head with great disappointment? How about almost fainting because of too much pain inside? ...when you prayed so deep like you never did before? When weeping and praying is like morphine, it stops the pain for a while and that pain just comes out as tears? How about waking up and asking yourself if it's just a bad dream? Was it real, did it happen? Sometimes, you just feel and can't explain in words. I saw Jesus on my mind, and just like Him, I felt like I was the one carrying the cross, somebody beat up your knees, yes very crippling. It almost killed me, I felt I was drowning, I try to breath some air, but when I do, I feel like my nose is the only thing left floating on the water, my whole body completely under it. Do you think this is an exaggeration? No. It is not. I felt all of this, literally, when I knew. Yes, April 9, 2008 - the saddest night of my life. When you just knew, all this while, your husband whom you loved so dear and with your life, betrayed you - your love and trust. Now, I knew the meaning of all negative words - devastated, shattered, crumbled down, agony, pain, hurt, hatred. He had an affair, and not just any affair - it was an affair of the heart, and bear fruit from it. The night I knew, I said to myself it already happened - the most painful thing that can happen to a marriage, or the ever feared situation a woman would never wish to encounter - an affair and a child from it. At that point, I was waiting for him to alibi, pero I can never cheat myself out of it. It is so true, no alibis, he was the one who replied back to the msg, it was addressed to him really. That's the time I wanted to walk out, but I didn't do it - not just because it's way past midnight, and I don't think I can even turn a car key. But literally, because I simply cannot move, I was so weak, so overcome with the betrayal and deception that came to my life. I just wanted to cry, rage, vent, etc. It's the turning point in my life - and I knew I can never go back to my old life. I now knew how it feels when all the sadness, pain, hatred and darkness bestow their might on you. Yes, they can kill you if you're weak in spirit. I hold on to God and prayed like I never prayed before, it's consuming me. There's only one thing, I got, a message he planted in my heart. Out of all the confusion, fear, questions, frustrations, etc. simply nothing clear emerged on my mind, but this thought >> "Nancy, trust me on this one, Hold on tight, it's not going to be an easy ride. But I

promise you, all that's been taken away from you - I will return to you double." And there goes my faith, those were His words to me on my darkest hour. And I believed Him. That's the greatest affirmation of God's intervention in my life - and I will always believe that, always trust God.

I 'seperated' from my husband for 3 weeks (at his request) even though HE was the one that had betrayed me. I moved out of our home and into an apartment with a girlfriend (nearby.) I got a membership at a local 24 hour gym. I went to church daily. Each day, I went to my job, the gym and church. It became a routine that allowed me to have 'ME' time and just be able to rest, reflect and let go. I had been going to a counselor prior to the discovery. I kept going to the counselor. I eventually 'shared' with some close family members who were able to be mediators for my husband & me and help us on a path to trying to redirect our marriage and our method of communicating. We agreed with their suggestion that we needed to go back to couples counseling. Although it didn't last any longer than 6 months on my husband's part, I continue to go to MY counselor. I am still going to the gym. And, I continue to go to church as often as my schedule allows me. I am not as social as my husband. I prefer to think 'alone' and not share with a lot of other people. This is what helps me

It has taken two years for me to get over my husbands affair. I'm seeing a theraphist who has shown me that I needed to make myself the most important person and not make my life with my husband seem a failure. Once I got me together every thing starting to come into place and I have become stronger and have made our marriage even stronger.

I called the other woman and got what information I needed to know from. She eagerly gave me what I asked thinking that I would leave my husband. I gave my husband a list of things he had to do if he wanted to keep our family together. 1. Call her and tell her it was over with me standing there, 2. shave the mustache he had worn for over twenty years because he had had it when he had oral sex with her (dirty to me), 3. start wearing his wedding ring again, and 4. start going with me to church. He regretted the affair and wanted our marriage to work. We went to counseling with

our preacher during which time Jesus entered his life. I read all the scriptures that let me know that God hates divorce and wants our marriage to work out. I read from the Bible and books from Christian sex therapists to help me learn to forgive my husband and the other woman. My husband is now constantly by my side. We are retiring, moving to another state, and renewed our vows in December. Faith in God got me through this.

Talk a lot with friends and colleagues about it. Quite a few went through the same and they made it in the end. One ended up using drugs and almost throwing his life away and is happy now. That was one thing that kept me going, knowing I need to stay sane. I tried to stay as busy as I could be so I have no time thinking about the affair.

I got on the internet and studied. I approached it like I was getting a PHD in "how to survive an affair". Not only did that help me with suggestions, but it distracted me from the hurt. Then I joined a gym and swam. I would go right after work and swim until I couldn't swim anymore. Somehow just the process of flowing through the water helped to wash away some of the pain.



I think being around people you can talk to is important. People who will just listen. It helps you to sort through all the confusion. I thought I was crazy at first and some people make you feel that way. But when people let you sort through your feelings and the actions behind them that are happening to you, 2 + 2 starts to = 4. You go through a lot of emotions with the pain and it takes a very long time for all the craziness inside of you to subside. I used to count the times each day that my mood would change.

After the initial discovery of my husband's affair with a very dear friend, I was met with anger and denial on all fronts. I didn't want to accept it either. The hardest thing for me to do, was to make the decision to find out the truth. I was being told that I was crazy, and that I was imagining everything. I was told that I was being lied to and none of the things that other people saw were legitimate. I confided in a very close friend of mine, told her the situation, and she helped me to remain level headed. If it wasn't for her, I would have gone off the deep end. She assured me that I had more than enough reason to believe that something was very wrong. I took her advice, and bought a very small digital recording device and placed it in a strategic location. I had to know if I was imagining things for the sake of my own sanity. I was hoping to find out that there was nothing valid in all of the accusations against my husband and the OW. Well, the first time I used the recorder, I struck pay dirt. Finding out that I wasn't crazy was very liberating. Armed now with knowledge, I took steps to ensure my survival and the survival of my family. By knowing details from private conversations, I was able to see how the OW was playing my husband. I was able to have insight. I knew how to react to certain circumstances, because I wasn't taken by surprise. In short, I knew what was coming. Knowledge is power and that's what helped me to keep my home intact. The most helpful thing was having one person that I could tell everything to. She tried her best to remain neutral and give me helpful advice. I did have other friends and relatives that wanted to help, but all they seemed to do was generate anger. They meant well, but it is not at all helpful to have people constantly calling you and telling you what a low down jerk your husband is and that you need to dump him. Keep details to yourself, and don't volunteer information. Too many cooks can spoil the pie

Once I found out my husband was having an affair I packed his bags and took them all to his mother's house. 12 months on there are things I shouldn't have done, but at the time you don't listen to anyone and think you will win them back. I was very bitter and every text and phone call was quite aggressive and very cold and antagonistic. The one thing I used to read but couldn't understand, is that my husband had moved on and into a life in which I and the children didn't really exist. He was 'happy' to be away and in another environment. I knew it wasn't just the other woman, but issues with his business and some failings - he thought he had failed me, and I was the successful one. He thought, and still thinks, there are things he needs to do as a single person without the confines of marriage, but still says he loves me and could n't live without me in some way. We are not back together as I don't trust him: but he hasn't tried to put everything back together. He still has to find himself and what he really wants. I don't know whether I am doing the right thing by having him around some of the time, but I feel quite happy having my own space. I am not as angry, I have found myself, but am living in limbo day to day. I need to make some decisions, but family is extremely important to me. The thought of going out with someone else is fine, the thought of bringing a person into my children's life is not ok. That's where I am at the moment having spent Christmas, New Year and the first 2 weeks of this year with my ex!

When I discover about the infidelity I need to call a friend of mine who is also a Christian like me, I really believed that she can give me good advice. I needed to voice out to her what I was feeling that time, Ofcourse I cried...I think that by doing so, it releases some pressure and pain from within you. My friend just told me to pray and pray and read the Bible and listen to what GOD is telling me from His very words. I did that, I thank God for giving me strenght and faith with the trials I was facing. Till one day, about less than 2 weeks of not talking to my husband, he finally asked for forgiveness and told me that he doesn't want to lose me and his kids and that he would like to start all over again. I forgave him and now we are doing great!



First, crying, drinking some, & depression. That didn't help much, but it was all I could manage at the time. What was most helpful in the weeks following was shopping, exercising, talking with someone I trust, praying about it, spending time to make myself feel more attractive, reading Dr. Huizenga's book & uplifting emails, reading other books of help on the subject, and deciding that I would not let myself continue to be treated that way. I am still having some difficulty knowing whether I can trust again because I just don't know what is truth or lies anymore (supposedly, it's over between them). I just live each day in hopes that it will continue to get better. If I find out it's not, I think I will be strong enough to end the marriage and go on with my life. I will

at least know that I have tried, but I also know that I do not deserve to continue to live in a marriage where I feel I have to compete with another person. I am who I am, and that is good enough. I will not try to change to be someone else.

She kept lying and lying, but with all the clues, I couldn't believe her. But I had no solid proof. So I hired a private investigator who got the pictures, times, dates, etc. Knowing the truth for sure has helped me a lot to get over the pain.

My husband and I hadn't been communicating for a long time and I was concerned so I asked him one day if he wanted to work on our relationship and he said "no". He said he had already given up on us. I asked what that meant and if he wanted a divorce and he said "yes". That was how it all started and although I had my suspicions I didn't "know" that he was having an affair for several months after he had already left. Of course, he insisted over and over again that he wasn't having an affair and had always been loyal. He said he left because of my problems and his inability to live with me any longer. It was a horrific burden since I had been accepting blame for everything that went wrong in our marriage since the beginning. However, through a mistake he made I was given access to his secret email account and found out much more than I would have ever wanted to know about his current affair and much more. I had a hard time believing what was before my eyes. I went quiet and then alternated that with rages of despair that I had never known the man I was married to. I searched the internet for help in understanding what I was going through and for advice on handling a divorce since once he stated his position he never backed down from it. What I found from your emails, ebooks, and website was that I had made every mistake in the book before I ever knew what was happening. Yes, I did. So, I initially felt guilt about that also. I read "Surviving the affair" over and over to try to help me accept that it was truly not my fault that he chose to cheat again. Yes, the truth of it was that he had cheated before on multiple occasions. And when he did it before he blamed me then too. The reasoning was always just a little different, but somehow I was to bear the burden of his infidelity. I know I wasn't the perfect wife, but I wasn't the monster he tried to portray me as either. I'm actually a kind and loving person, a

great mother and friend, but I didn't provide the continual thrills and excitement he needed in his life. So we are divorced. It was not my choice and I would have tried to heal our marriage again as I truly married for life and loved him. He admitted regretting his choices at the end and justified continuing as he felt I would forgive, but never forget. He was right. I have continued to read your emails and occasionally re-read "Surviving the Affair". It helps me to accept the things that were out of my control. I wish things had ended differently, but that was not to be. One day I also realized that I had spent way too much time in my life thinking about "the other woman" and about what I had done wrong. First, she wasn't worth the time I gave her and I may have done some things wrong, but I did alot right and it was finally time to forgive myself. Last, I used many of the techniques perhaps not to survive the affair, but to help me put some distance and objectivity between my emotions and what was happening during the discussions relating to our divorce. My ex-husband wanted a "do it yourself" version in which he remained in charge of what was happening. He was willing to help me, but on his terms and with no binding agreement. After 37 years and lots of lies, I felt I deserved a bit more consideration than that. While I didn't want to spend thousands of dollars on a lawyer, I realized I was in a very vulnerable position since I was the one who did not want the divorce. I got a lawyer to protect myself from myself as well as him. I just went for fair and was okay with that.

I was very angry and definitely wanted to leave. I did just this. Two weeks later my husband had a heartfelt desire to be together. I cautiously listened to make sure he was being honest about making it together. While I was away I had talked my heart out with wonderful counselors and those in my same position. I prayed, looked at myself and asked myself what do I have to give this man now. Well, nothing but to let him know how he hurt me, and to take responsibility for his actions. He needed to know what he was losing. I prayed and listened and talked about infidelity, what it does to marriage and how there is no going back to yesterday. I have allowed myself to give my time, love, physical and emotional, to him a little at a time. He now knows it may take years but has hope for us. I stay for reasons such as financial, security, hope for future, religious convictions because at 66 and

he is 64 where do I really go?? Many would love the attention he gives me now but it is only done out of remorse and hoping I will stay. I continue to want to leave and yet I am still here. God help me because I am very bitter. It is so hard to give in. We don't talk a lot about our feelings and emotions much. He just does not want to admit all, only the fact he got caught and wanted to get it out finally. I just get sad, sad and more sad. I have always been a positive enthusiastic loving person and today I am just so negative. This is not good and I know it. I just want to wallow in my hurt and hurt him also. I hope someday this will stop. I hope at some point there may be another major point in our lives to bring us together and not apart as his infidelity did. Inside I love life and people. I only tell myself I will survive, I can handle this and be a strong person letting him know he must be honest, loving, and tell me what I need to know about the affair. (If ever) Well Dr Bob I just continue to look forward. We do normal things, plan and eat and pray together but this other woman is always here in many ways. Good luck to any out there. Keep up the hope, love him, and listen. I cannot forgive my husband and through thorough study of scriptures I do not have to forgive adultery. Yet that can change at any time. There is hope and a will and way if you wait long enough . I have only known for sure since Oct 23,2008 just a few months. No one can predict for sure our future. We have shut people out so we can work on this. It was a good thing.

I did many things but the main thing I did was wait, my husband was acting very strangely and in the end he ended up having a breakdown. This was an unbelievable sight. He completely lost it. He kept crying and wandering the streets. Even though it was difficult I kept supporting him because I love him and I didn't know what else to do. It is nearly a year on and although things are not perfect, I believe I did the right thing because I would not have been able to live with the fact that he killed himself, how would my son deal with this. He is very grateful to me and thanks me compliments me on how I handled everything, the emotions, the household, our son, my elderly mother. I still cry a lot and have a lot of pain but it is improving slowly.

To be totally honest, when I first got the phone call from the op (other person) I was shocked. I had to wait three hours until my

husband came home. Once he did, I confronted him as soon as he sat down. I wasn't angry at that time. I wanted to hear from him, I wasn't going to take someone's word that there was deception in my marriage. Once he told me that he had been spending time with this other person, I was in a limbo. The emotions hit me like a brick wall. I felt hurt, angry, lost, confused and believe it or not, I was trying to figure out what I had done to cause this behavior from him. The first thing I did was cry, and cry, and cry. I didn't mean to, it was just a natural reaction. I didn't sleep much that night, or the next few nights. I used my time to get online and do as much research as I could on the subject. Thank God for Dr. Huizenga. I came across his books *Break Free From the Affair*, and *Surviving the Affair*. Wow, what an eye opener! I determined after the conversation with my husband and I hate to say it, listening to a voice activated tape recorder I planted in his car, that he was having an emotional affair. He worked with the op which is not an uncommon place for affairs to start, and she was very demanding of his time and wanted to know why he wasn't having sex with her. That, as painful as it was to hear them making nice talk to each other, was when I realized that he was telling me the truth about the fact that there was an attraction, he liked being with her, he thought he was falling in love with her, he wanted to have sex with her, but there was just something missing and he couldn't. The more of the book I read, the more powerful I felt. I wrote my feelings, anger, concerns and pain in a journal. I sometimes did it on the couch in front of my husband. When he asked what I was doing, I would just tell him that I was writing in my journal. I followed the suggestions given in the book and now, a year later, things are a lot better. The trust issue is still in the back of my mind, but I have to allow myself to trust again. That isn't easy, but it is coming. Once he broke it off with her, he started trying to show me that he was with me because he wanted to be and that it would never happen again. By that time, I was strong enough to tell him that was a good thing, because if it did, I wouldn't be here when he decided that what he was doing didn't feel right. I still have post it notes on my computer at work and various places throughout the house with "I Will Make It" in big letters written on it. I did make it, and no matter if you decide to stay with the cheating spouse or not, You will too. Before you make that decision, think about it. Think about it long and hard. If

you don't think you could ever forgive and trust again, don't waste yours or their time. Don't rush to a decision. I use to be the one that said if he cheats, it is over. That was before I found out that there are different types of cheaters. I can live with this, things are getting better every day. We talk more, and are getting closer every day. He still tells me he is sorry when something comes up on tv, or in general conversation that reminds him and he knows it hits a nerve with him or me. I don't say anything, he sees it in my face. I will be honest, I thought about having a revenge affair. For me, and my feelings on the matter, I talked myself out of it, and I am glad I did. See, if I were to have an affair on him, that doesn't make me any better, or any more right than he was. I love my husband very much. I know the pain I felt, I wouldn't wish that on anyone, not even the op. It was hard for me to feel sorry for either one of them, they both knew he was a married man. That is why she called me to get things moving. She figured I would throw him out and he would come running to her. I figured that was the reasoning when I got the call, but, that was the last thing I was going to do. I was not going to give her the satisfaction. I am so glad I didn't. Best of luck to anyone going through this tough time. My best words of advice are; Everyone handles this type of situation differently. Trust the doc, trust his advice, it works. Be strong, and realize, YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING! Keep your head up. I know what you are thinking, YES YOU CAN! YOU CAN MAKE IT!

Before I had even taken the "knife out of my heart," I started rebuilding me! I told him nothing (drove him crazy) and became the attractive, confident woman that attracted him in the first place! It was like saying, "you don't want me? I'll manage rather well, thank you very much." In my mind I think all the time (ironically) First, he had a wife he didn't want and a lover he couldn't have, NOW he has a lover he doesn't want and a wife he can't have (he doesn't deserve me anymore lol).

The shock of discovery nearly paralyzed me the first few days. But I knew that I had to care for and protect my younger children (aged 12 and 9) so I forced myself to get up, go to work, make them supper, etc. I was going through the motions in a fog, but in doing the everyday things that needed to get done rather than

staying in bed curled up in the fetal position as I would have preferred, made me realize that I was a good mother and a strong, caring person contrary to what he tried to tell me that I was. It also reinforced that my priorities were in the right place even if my husband's were not. I kept my children's well-being in mind at all times and allowed my husband to stay in the house rather than devastating my children, who adore their father, by kicking him out as I thought I should, or as I always had thought I would. I refused to react to his baiting insults and become the "crazy b-----" he accused me of being. I also came to realize that my husband had been maligning me to his family, in particular his mother with whom he knew I was very close, to cover his tracks if he were to get caught, I guess. So I decided to divulge his dirty little secret to my mother-in-law face-to-face. I calmly told him what I was going to do and refused to listen to his accusations of how selfish and uncaring I was being or how much I would only be hurting his mother. I knew I had to set the record straight and let the truth be known. He beat me to it by calling her and confessing. Then he called my parents and confessed to them as well. The love and support I received from his family as well as my own was my lifeline. I was very selective in which friends to tell, choosing to tell only our closest friends that I knew I could trust. Their support was a huge help to me as well. Then I went online and read everything I could find on the subject of infidelity. Learning that I was not alone and that my feelings were valid and normal was an immense help to me. Perhaps one of the most helpful things was reading that IT WAS NOT MY FAULT. It was devastating to have to face up to and admit that my husband's character was lacking so much more than I had thought throughout our 20 years of marriage, but it was not my character that was at fault, it was his. No matter how much he tried to put the blame on me, I kept telling myself it was not my fault--it was his and his alone. Then I insisted on getting marriage counseling and would not take no for an answer. So, to summarize, I kept my children's well-being as my number one priority, I refused to become the raging b---- he accused me of being, I told family and only my most trustworthy friends, acquired the mantra "It is not my fault" and repeated it to myself until I believed it, and then insisted on marriage counseling. It has been almost four years, and my marriage is now more honest and solid than ever. But the disappointment in his lack of

character and my lack of complete trust in him are sad consequences that I believe will remain with me forever.

What I did I wouldn't recommend to anyone but it is how I coped and how I am continuing to cope. I quit eating, I started drinking hot tea, stopped drinking coffee and started exercising like a crazy person. I cried a lot and didn't make any demands or decisions-I knew I wasn't thinking straight and I didn't know what I wanted yet. I also went a little nuts trying to find out as much about the OP as I could. It has been a little over two months now and I am still not sure what is going to happen. He is still in our home but he hasn't ended it with her yet and I don't know if he will. I have given him to the end of January to make a decision-I was and am going crazy knowing he is still seeing her and talking with her on the phone and internet and I can't live with that. We'll see what happens-I have learned a lot about myself and I am not so sure I want to stay with him anymore. I pray daily for strength and wisdom and to accept whatever happens.

To start with my boyfriend of three years cheated on me. We had a long distance love affair going. We lived an hour from each other. Children and Responsibilities kept us from moving in together. He was the one person in my life that was never going to hurt me that way. We were going to be together forever. Well he left me for another woman. I did not know it at the time, he told me months later. We always kept in touch. I thought my world was going to end. Sometimes I could barely breathe. I turned to my guardian angels! I am not a religious person, I do not go to church, but I have a strong faith! I could not do anything without sobbing. I didn't want to do anything. But I literally asked for help from heaven up above, from my angels, not knowing what was happening. Funny thing is I felt the serenity. People came into my life that wanted to talk about it. We all know we shouldn't talk to family and friends about too much. I believe today she, my new friend, was sent to me to help me deal with all the pain and loneliness. We have since gone our separate ways. I also dove into self help books, videos, the internet, what ever I could get my hands on. What role did I have in this? Why did I fall for him, I had a lot of whys? In doing so I learned so much about myself, I found myself again, better, stronger! I loved him, as a friend, through it

all, but more importantly I found out that I really liked myself. I did not need to accept his behavior, I needed to challenge him to do better. But I could only do this if I was worth it, if I felt I was worth it. I also learned a lot about relationships, and what makes them work. It has been a long road and we continue to fall off, but we pick each other up, wipe ourselves off and get right back on. Yes, we have been back together now for almost another 3 years. I now live 10 minutes away from him, my family is 3 min. I don't know where we will be tomorrow, I only know that what he does has everything to do with him and how he feels about himself. It's my choice to stay with him and accept his shortcomings or go. I have decided to stay. He after all is trying! And sometimes I know how hard that is for him. I still ask and seek the guidance of my guardians. They are with me all the time. And as you can see I still seek the knowledge to better our relationship and take it to the next level. Scary, yes! But fear is the root of all unhappiness! And Yes, He still makes my heart flutter everytime he walks into the room. You just have to have a little faith! Thanks for all your advice, letters, etc.

Confiding in someone helped immensely for support. I kept a diary of those days, writing it down helped me deal with the pain. It also helped me understand my feelings better when I read it later.

Depression set in very quickly and the first week after I found out was spent in tears and in bed and more tears after feeling I had been living a lie for 20 years. Lots of doubts of myself. The day that changed it all for me was about 2 weeks after finding out, my daughter came to me and said she was really missing me and it was hurting her to see me this way at that point I said enough, my husband had already hurt me tremendously and it had to stop right there. That day I made an appointment with my doctor & then a counselor. Yes I used anti-depression medicine for a few months and it helped tremendously. I forced myself to be there for me & my children. I decided I needed to take care of me. My husband was proclaiming to be very sorry & very much wanting to fix things, but I had decided I was going to take care of me first and then I would make the decision if we stayed together. Well it's now 11 months later and we still go to marriage counseling and things are good for us. Yes there's times it still comes to my mind

and I feel disappointed that this happened, but not in myself because I now know this was not about my failures as a wife, but my husband's selfishness which he is working on. The best thing I did for myself was to put me first and decide that if my husband chose this other woman I would not sacrifice my self-worth to stay with him. There were many arguments in the beginning and it got no where as far as my feelings, but as soon as I made the commitment to myself to put me first and not tolerate the affair, my husband decided he did not want to lose me and decided to fully concentrate on making things right between us. Things are much stronger between us and there is much more intimacy, but I also am a much stronger person and now am much more aware of myself & our relationship.

Talking to my best friend; crying a lot; talking to my partner, getting his reassurance that it was me that he loved most and wanted to be with. I don't think I coped very well...I started having panic attacks and couldn't eat or sleep. So, I don't think my story will help anyone else.

I had a 14-month-old! I took care of myself. Took some time off work, got a makeover, and found a babysitter so I could start to reclaim myself. Then I moved all the furniture around in the house to suit the way I wanted it. I started refusing to let him into the house whenever he felt like it. I bought a new wardrobe piece by piece. I told my boss; I wound up being very glad that I did because I was struggling with keeping up. I went to the park and looked at the turtles in the pond.

I was able to get some of my feelings and thoughts out in an art journal that I hid when my husband (who finally confessed he had fallen in love with another woman) was supposed to be home. I loved Christina Aguilera's song 'Fighter'. I needed to hear a strong woman saying powerful words! Currently I love Pink's song 'So What'. I exercised when he would leave during the night or not come home. I read library books dealing with infidelity, saving the marriage, divorce, and wrote notes in my art journal. I talked with my congregation's elders to build up my faith. At the time I was a SAHM and a volunteer at our kids' school (one of my husband's complaints before he left us was that I wasn't helping with the bills,

but he also didn't want to pay for childcare nor come home at a regular hour so that I could get a paying job while he watched our kids). I talked with friends and family, including my MIL, to set up my support system--who can watch my kids on snow/vacation days when I have to work. Yes, I finally got a part-time job thru my sister and it's during school hours which is good! I really appreciated the free counseling I received at a shelter for domestic violence/emotional abuse. I also cleaned out a small room for him (another of my husband's complaints was that I had too much junk/papers/books and he had no space, so I was able to get rid of a bunch of stuff because I was numb or crying at the time), but since he left, now it's just a storage room for some of his stuff. It's been almost a year since he told me about her and a few months since he moved out. I know I'm doing better, but I still miss him.

## **Conclusion**

I hope you gain an appreciation for navigating the turbulent waters of infidelity and now know the calm waters are in your future.

More than calm waters, you hold within you the capacity to redesign your life and relationships in ways that honor you and those around you.

Maybe others around you (including your cheating spouse) will join with you in creating new ways of thinking and doing.

If not, you can rest with the fact that you did everything in your power to move self and marriage to new levels of awareness, development and richness.

As you look back 2 years from now, I want you to be able to marvel at the changes taken place in your thinking, feeling and the environment that you are now creating.

If you can survive the agony of infidelity, you can survive anything. However, please know that I want you to more than survive.

This ebook helps in that first step of knowing that you can and will survive.

But, there is more for you. A new future awaits you.

Please believe that, as difficult as it may seem at the moment.

I close with one of my favorite mantras, "This too shall pass."

Dr. Robert Huizenga, The Infidelity Coach

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

<http://www.infidelity-help.com>