

How to Recover from an Affair Part 1 of 2

Finding out that your partner has been unfaithful is devastating! The violation and betrayal of trust can be repairable, but it takes a long time to heal. The success of a couple rebuilding a broken relationship depends upon commitment to change and willingness to be patient.

"It takes years to build trust and only seconds to break it down".

It is important for you, the partner who has been betrayed to know you will experience a full range of emotions, to include; rage, sadness, resentment and deep hurt. Give yourself time to process and express your feelings. This is a time to be gentle with yourself; not a time to make a life altering decision. The following stages will give you some guidelines as to what to expect.

- **"Shock"**
You can not believe your partner has cheated. It feels like a nightmare and soon you will wake up. It is not really happening.
- **"Rage"**
Reality sets in and you may become physically ill. You do not even recognize your behavior; screaming, breaking objects, uncontrollable crying and generally feeling out of control.
- **"Resentment"**
You want your partner (and other) to hurt. Be careful not to do anything which could compromise your self-dignity or you would regret.
- **"Sadness"**
You are deeply sad and hurt because you thought you were safe and secure in this relationship.
- **"Acceptance"**
You recognize your vision of the relationship has changed. You are now accepting that the relationship will not be how it was. Regardless of the outcome, either to reconcile or end the relationship, you are ready to move on to a healthier you.

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After you have had time for introspection as to what has happened and you decide to give your partner another chance; the following commitments from your partner are absolutely critical!

- Genuine Remorse as well as accepting responsibility for what he/she has done to you.
- Complete Honesty and willingness to answer all your questions.
- Break all ties with the other person.
- Commitment to couple therapy with a trained professional.
- Be Emotionally and Physically Present to your needs.

If you do not get these basic commitments, it is time to move on. If your partner is not willing to devote energy and attention to the recovery process, you will not be able to rebuild trust.

Begin making life choices that will increase your self-esteem and allow you to emerge into someone you can love and respect. The following are some suggestions:

- Re-Claim Your Value
Acknowledge your positive attributes. Realize your worth is not defined by your partner's choices. Treat yourself to a lifestyle that helps you feel good about yourself.
- Trust Yourself
You know yourself better than anyone else. Be careful not to fall into the trap of following advice from your well meaning friends, who may sabotage rather than support you.
- Develop a Healthy You
You will recover. You will develop a greater wisdom and strength which will allow you to create a more meaningful and fulfilling future.

*"In the midst of winter, I found inside of me an invincible summer".
Albert Camu*