

How to Recover from an Affair Part 2 of 2

After the affair has been discovered, it is important for the one who has betrayed to recognize his/her role in the recovery process. Last issue, I focused on the one who has been betrayed. The following article is written specifically for the one who has betrayed.

First, make a conscious decision to break all ties with the other if you want a relationship with your partner. To continue to vacillate between your partner and the other is destructive for all those involved.

Be aware that anytime there is a break-up, it will not be without pain. Recognize that even though you have made the choice to reconcile with your partner, you may grieve the loss of the other. If you still have some attachment to the other, seek counseling to help you process your emotions.

After making the decision to rebuild a relationship with your partner, the following suggestions may be helpful.

- **“Be Honest”**

It is critical to tell the truth in the beginning. Do not leave out details. If your partner discovers later (which is likely) that you left out details, the recovery process is compromised and she/he may never trust you again.

Because trust has been broken, you will have to be vigilant about where you are, who you are with and how you can be reached at all times. For example, you may need to make your email, cell phone, address book, etc. accessible to your partner.

Be willing to answer all questions your partner may ask you. By doing so, you are helping your partner get the facts rather than continue to “wonder” what really happened.

How to Recover from an Affair Part 2 of 2

- “Take Ownership”

You acknowledge you are the wrong doer. It is necessary to express genuine remorse for hurting your partner. An important element for recovery is not only asking for forgiveness, it is also behaving in a way that is congruent with your remorse.

Accepting full responsibility for betrayal means being able to be open to your partner's expression of anger and blame. This is not the time to “defend” yourself. This is the time to be “humble”.

Recognize your partner is not to blame for your choice. Therefore, do not justify your behavior by telling your partner what has been unfulfilling for you in the relationship. For example, “If you were more physical, I would not have looked elsewhere.”

- “Patience”

Recovery takes a long time. Be careful not to dictate for your partner “how long” she/he should take to “get over it”.

Because you are uncomfortable, you will have a tendency to want to “hurry it up” and move on. Unfortunately, the betrayed emotional brain does not work that fast.

Develop empathy for your partner's struggle. Imagine how it would be for you if you were the one who has been betrayed.

How to Recover from an Affair Part 2 of 2

- “Establish a Healthier Relationship”

Even though the trust has been broken, this can be an opportunity to create a “new” relationship that can be stronger and more fulfilling.

Couples in “crisis” do have the potential to build a much stronger bond because their relationship has been tested in the worst possible way and they survived. I tell couples this can be a time of rebuilding their relationship in a way that could not happen without the crisis.

Creating a new relationship with your partner will involve you initiating time together that is mutually fulfilling. For example, you may want to begin a joint project or shared activity which allows each of you to re-connect in a meaningful way.

Most importantly, recognize this is a chance for you to have a much greater appreciation of your partner. You can begin to honor the sacredness of the relationship that can last a lifetime.

“It has often been noted that most, if not all, problems brought to therapists are issues of Love. It makes sense that the cure is also Love.”

Thomas Moore