

LOVE AND INFIDELITY

All You Ever Wanted To Know About Affairs



By Daniela Roher, PhD.

The ♥ of Conflict

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**Love and Infidelity:
All You Ever Wanted to Know About
Extra-Marital Affairs**

By

Daniela R. Roher, Ph.D.

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Table of contents

Conditions Favorable to Affairs	page 6
Vulnerability to Affairs:	
Situational Elements	page 8
Gender Differences	page 12
Psychological Elements	page 14
Physiological Elements	page 19
Internet Affairs and Cybersex	page 22
Most Likely Lovers	page 26
The Affair is Over: Now What?	page 28

From time to time, by following the sexual and emotional escapades of married celebrities, we are reminded of how common and frequent extra-marital affairs are. So much so that latest statistics indicate that in this country **55% of all married women and 65% of all married men had an affair while in a committed primary relationship** (Atwood & Schwartz, 2002.) If we consider it unlikely for all cheating people to be married to one another, then we can infer that cheating affects approximately 80% of all marriages in the U.S.! Additionally, recent trends indicate that, under the age of 40, women's rates of affairs are getting very close to men's, closing the gender gap.

This is a departure from a more traditional profile of the cheater as typically male, middle age, sex-starved, looking for excitement and adventure and needing to be made to feel young and attractive again, preferably by a woman much younger than his marital partner. Not that this profile does not exist any more, but it does neither exhaustively describe nor explain why people cheat in a society where sexual mores have become more relaxed and open, and where women are as likely as men to act out their emotional and sexual fantasies. In a book to be published in January 2011, M. Gary Neuman reports that only 8% of the men he interviewed stated sex was the primary reason why they had an affair (M. Gary Neuman, *Connect to Love. The Keys to Transforming Your Relationship*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2011.)

Other changes in patterns of affairs have to do with the way in which today people connect with one another. The increasing use of the Internet as a social network creates a whole new set of opportunities, and threats. The fact that about 35% of all divorce litigations cite internet affairs as the cause of them, attests to the widespread use of the Internet for this purpose. People get in touch with one another after years of disconnection, or they anonymously connect with others in ways that create new virtual networks. About 70% of the time people spend on line is allegedly used to visit “chat rooms” or sending/receiving e-mails. The vast majority of interactions in chat rooms are of a romantic nature (Adamse & Motta, 2000.) Because all this was unheard of just a decade ago, we are just beginning to grasp its importance and its effects on intimacy and love.

One of the astonishing differences between romance and sex in cyberspace and in real time is that more than half of all men and women who engage in cyberspace romance and sex believe what they do is not adultery. I believe this contributes to lowering the threshold between thinking and wishing to have an affair on the one hand, and carrying it out on the other. This belief, in fact, by lowering one’s inhibitions and reducing guilt, increases acting out emotionally and sexually.

In addition to the opportunities offered by the Internet, the ways we live today are also more conducive to temptations and emotional and physical connections.

Women and men no longer live lives segregated from each other, with women and children typically at home, and men at work, when they interact mostly with other men. Male and female worlds are much more fluid today, with both sexes able to access them freely.

Conditions Favorable to Affairs

We all fantasize at times about what it would be like to have an affair with one person or another. These fantasies can reflect the dissatisfaction we may experience at some points in our lives, the chronic stress, the frustrations, the boredom, or the need to recapture the excitement and the passion of a time in our lives that now seems gone. At times, these fantasies are indications of something amiss in our lives. Acknowledging them helps us face and address the issues at hand. Fantasies about affairs, however, may also just reflect curiosity, the excitement that comes from someone new, and the sexual attraction we may experience for this person.

Because we live in a society where there is constant contact with people other than our mates, the opportunities to fantasize about them abound. 2 out of 3 women and 3 out of 4 men admit to having had sexual thoughts about a co-worker. And, if we consider that most of the affairs develop between co-workers, we can see how daily contacts with other people can facilitate the development of feelings, friendships and sexual fantasies and opportunities to act them out.

However, even though all of us are exposed to these daily opportunities, it is important to know the difference between fantasy and reality, and be mindful of not going over the threshold between the two, unless we are quite clear this is what we want to do and have thought through this decision. While some affairs

may develop into healthy, long lasting relationships, statistics indicate that very few lovers actually stay together for more than four years. And, of those who marry, 75% end up in divorce (Geo, 2009.)

Let's explore what are the elements that contribute to the occurrence of most affairs. We have grouped them under three major headings: **situational, psychological and physiological**. Each will be discussed in turn.

Vulnerability to affairs:

Situational Elements

Let's begin with **situational elements**. Are certain situations more likely to make people vulnerable to extra marital infidelity? YES.

Some situational elements are typical of long term relationships. When people have been in a monogamous romantic relationship for some time, the initial spark and passion for one another typically decreases. The **predictability of married life**, added to **external stressors** such as little children, busy schedules, financial strain and spousal disagreements and conflicts, can lead to **dissatisfaction** between romantic partners and **lack of or dissatisfying emotional and physical connection** with one another. These conditions may make one or the other partner more vulnerable to extra marital infidelity. The affair can function as distraction from the nitty-gritty of daily life, like what happened to Scott and Minnie. They had been together for many years and Scott never saw himself as someone who would stray. He described his relationship with Minnie as "solid". He said he loved her dearly and had a lot of respect for her. However, when Anne, a co-worker, began to linger in his office longer than needed, he noticed her slim body and her sexy clothes, very unlike those Minnie typically wore.

The affair happened when Scott and Anne went out of town on business together. They had dinner one night and quite a few drinks. They were both in the elevator going to their respective rooms when they began to kiss. It felt strangely easy for Scott to do so, and natural. When the elevator door opened on Anne's floor, Scott got off with her and never made it to his room.

In addition to the general situations created by being in long term intimate relationships, there are specific elements that make affairs more likely to occur.

When people live in marital situations where there is a lot of hostility, for instance, an affair may be a way of getting back at a spouse seen as insensitive, uncaring and rejecting. At times they are ways of getting out of the marriage. These affairs are called "exit" affairs.

Laura's affair was just that, an exit affair that gave her the final push out of a relationship that was full of anger, attacks and contempt on both sides. Laura had felt too guilty in the past telling her life partner she wanted out but, after the affair, she became more determined, and her partner did not try to talk her out of it.

Going through a life transition, like entering middle age, may also increase chances of one partner getting involved in an affair. The unconscious purpose of the affair here is to deny reality by engaging with a partner – typically younger -

who finds us sexually attractive and gives us the attention we crave and that we may not be getting at home.

Rosie had put some weight on after her pregnancies and had never lost it. Mark, her husband, made frequent comments about her body not being as attractive to him as it used to be. Rosie had learned to find excuses to avoid physical intimacy with Mark, as she had become very self-conscious about her body. When Ben began to give her attention and remarked about her being sexy, Rosie felt attractive again. When her relationship with Ben became an affair, Rosie was feeling, once more, valued, appreciated and desired.

Losing one's job, recovering from a life threatening illness or getting through the birth of a baby are transitional times where usual patterns of connecting with one's mate have been altered by these events. Because of this, these emotional connections no longer provide the comfort and security they might have provided in the past. These times also force some people to see their lives differently and reflect on what they want. Consequently, they may develop different priorities and different goals for themselves. Some may struggle with these changes, conflicted about who they used to be and who they are now. Extra marital affairs may both contribute and reflect these changes.

When Leo was diagnosed with throat cancer, he felt a sense of urgency about experiencing life at its fullest. The affair with Marnie, a nurse who worked at the

same hospital where he was getting his treatment, was his way of feeling alive, vibrant and still energetic. This affair also provided Leo with a distraction at a time in his life when cancer had taken the central stage.

People who are better off economically and have higher levels of education tend to get involved in extra-marital affairs more often than people with lower incomes and lower educational levels. Further, people in occupations with high levels of stress, like working in an emergency room, being a firefighter or a soldier in a combat zone, have higher incidence of affairs than people in professions with less drama. People in the entertainment business are extremely susceptible to getting involved in affairs, because they have the financial means and lead lives full of excitement and high drama. They tend to want to maintain the excitement even outside their work, as they enjoy the adrenaline rush their lifestyles offer them. This is also true for surgeons and politicians, as they operate in high visibility and high drama professions.

Vulnerability to Affairs

Gender differences

Do men and women act differently when it comes to extra marital infidelity? Current trends indicate that the gender gap is closing, as more women are likely to engage in affairs, particularly younger women. We can speculate on what the reasons for these changes are.

I think one of the main reasons is the more open attitude about sex and women today, versus the past. Also, most of women in long term relationships now work out of their homes. They are thus in daily contact with other people, exposing themselves to the same risks and vulnerabilities as men. Earlier we talked about the fact that most affairs develop in the office, where both men and women are in daily contact but without the stresses of living together.

Nowadays, women are also quite aware of their needs and are more assertive in verbalizing and meeting them, rather than passively accept their situations. Also, it is quite possible that in the past there was more secrecy about women's affairs. Today, even if some women may still be more reticent than men to divulge having or having had an affair, some of them are more comfortable and open about their sexual lives.

There also seems to be a correlation, in women, between age of first intercourse and infidelity later in life. The earlier the first sexual experience, the more likely women are to engage in extra marital sex later in their lives.

Vulnerability to Affairs

Psychological Elements

Our minds are very complex. So, when we look at our thoughts and feelings in order to understand certain behaviors, we cannot find an easy answer that explains everything for everybody. In the case of people having affairs, there is no single easily identifiable psychological trait that explains why some people stray and others don't. Nor is there a single reason why people decide to have affairs. However, there are some psychological traits that play a role in people's vulnerability to them. These traits have to do with how we emotionally connect with significant others.

We all have a need to feel emotionally and physically connected to the person we love. When this happens, we can manage our emotions better, without letting them get out of control, thus decreasing anxiety and fear and making us feel secure that everything is all right for us. The ability to create this secure emotional connection depends on our ability to develop close, intimate and trusting relationships with significant others and to sustain them over an extended period of time. People who can do this have **secure attachment patterns**. They are able to enjoy the closeness and intimacy that grow through years of being together and experiencing life as a couple. This does not mean, of course, that people with secure attachment patterns never experience doubts, confusion and ambivalence about their primary relationships. But it means that,

when these difficulties arise, they are more likely than others to address and resolve them in appropriate, healthy ways.

Some people are unable to do so. These people tend to have **insecure attachment patterns**. They may be afraid of being rejected, and thus keep at a distance, in this way not allowing intimacy to develop past a certain point. In so doing, they sacrifice closeness and intimacy in order to “protect” themselves. Others may get close, but cannot sustain closeness for an extended period of time. Then move away, in a back and forth motion that creates a dependent form of intimacy and restricts autonomy. People with insecure attachment patterns are the most likely to engage in extra marital affairs, because they are unable to get close enough to their mate to fulfill all their emotional needs. These people also tend to have an easier time separating sex from emotions and are thus more likely to engage in casual sexual affairs that may not be emotionally meaningful to them. Because they separate sex from emotions, they may also be better able to rationalize their actions, and thus feel less guilt over them. For these reasons, they may also become repeated cheaters.

Although attachment patterns seem to remain quite stable throughout our life span, there are some situations that may affect them. Losing one's job, recovering from a life threatening illness or getting through the birth of a baby are transitional times where usual patterns of connecting with one's mate may become altered by these events. Because of this, these emotional connections

no longer provide the comfort and security they might have provided in the past. These times also force some people to see their lives differently and reflect on what they want. Consequently, they may develop different priorities and different goals for themselves. Some may struggle with these changes, conflicted about who they used to be and who we are now. Extra marital affairs may both contribute and reflect these changes, even for people with secure attachment patterns.

Emily, for instance, had had a very secure relationship with her partner Janis until Janis became severely ill. Without Janis as her rock, Emily felt scared and lonely. It was at this time that Emily met Christina. Christina was strong, healthy, and optimistic about life and Janis fell in love with her. While Emily felt horribly guilty about this affair, she couldn't bring herself to break her relationship with Christina off, as it helped her cope, albeit dysfunctionally, with a very traumatic situation.

It is often the emotional disconnection from their romantic partners (over 90% in a survey of over 4,300 people) – whether because one or both are insecurely attached, or because external circumstances weakened their emotional connection with one another, or because the emotional connection was never there - that makes some people more vulnerable to get involved in extra marital affairs. Most cheaters confirm this when they state that the primary reason for cheating is emotional, not sexual (Layton-Tholl.)

When this lack of emotional connection and closeness with their mates gets married (no puns intended) to the pull of desire, as well as the excitement of the new and forbidden and the fantasy that, with another person, they can achieve the intimacy they want and need, we have a perfect storm for an affair to happen.

Some people tend to be impulsive in their behaviors and actions. Impulsivity facilitates the shift from thinking about doing something to actually carrying the thought out in reality. So for them it is easier to carry out a plan once they decide this is what they want to do. They tend to focus primarily on the present moment and their present needs, and block out any thought about the possible repercussions of their actions. Impulsivity also blocks out any thought about how a certain behavior may impact people who are going to be affected by these decisions.

Some other psychological elements may increase the chances of people having extra marital affairs. People in the high drama professions, as we said earlier, are more at risk for extra marital infidelity. Psychologically, people who choose these professions have a low tolerance for routine, as they get easily bored, and they are attracted to unpredictability, exhilaration and constant stimulation. Affairs, to these people, are highly appealing and tempting because they feed their need for excitement and risk. These are also people who tend to live in the present, and don't worry too much about the repercussions of their actions in the future. So, they don't think about what will happen to their primary relationships as a

consequence of their affairs, or to their lovers, often until it is too late. In such cases, impulsivity gets coupled with an exaggerated sense of entitlement and a feeling of being above rules that apply to everybody but them.

Vulnerability to Affairs

Physiological elements

Is there a correlation between the levels of some brain chemicals and vulnerability to extra marital infidelity? Research in this area indicates that, while physical tendencies may be changed by our ability to think things through and reach logical decisions, our brain chemistry can nonetheless have an influence on our behaviors and choices. Of these chemicals, three in particular affect sexual and romantic behaviors in men and women. These are: **Testosterone, Dopamine and Oxytocin**. Elevated levels of these chemicals contribute to the development of **lust, romantic love and attachment**, all elements that play a role in intimate relationships and thus in affairs as well, separately or together.

Testosterone is a hormone associated with lust. While men tend to have higher elevations of testosterone than women, women can also be affected by this hormone's levels. In women, lust waxes and wanes according to their menstrual cycle, typically reaching a peak during ovulation - the second week of the menstrual cycle - which is also their most fertile time (Havelick.)

Studies indicate that people with high circulating levels of testosterone tend to have more affairs and higher divorce rates than those with lower testosterone levels. And, while some people may have inherited high testosterone levels, certain situations can also elevate or lower their levels. For instance, single men

have higher testosterone levels than married men. In married men, when marriages are in trouble, levels of testosterone raise (Booth and Dobbs), making affairs more likely to occur.

Dopamine, our most powerful stimulant, is a neurotransmitter that becomes elevated in addictions, and is also elevated when we are in love, contributing to hyper-focused attention, exhilaration, obsessive thinking and increased levels of energy (Fisher.) Research found that novelty (like in an affair) can trigger the release of dopamine and promote romantic love. Dopamine, in turn, stimulates the release of testosterone, which increases one's sexual drive.

Oxytocin is called the "cuddle hormone" because of the role it plays in intimacy. The role of oxytocin in affairs seems to be particularly important when we consider affairs women tend to engage in. Women, in fact, are more likely than men to have affairs because they are looking for a soul mate, someone they feel emotionally connected to, and with whom they can share their innermost feelings (Spring.) For them, elevated levels of oxytocin contribute to their vulnerability to affairs.

Men, on the other hand, are more likely to look for a playmate, someone with whom they can engage in activities and pursuits they both like and enjoy, including sex. Oxytocin levels, for them, are not as important in predicting the likelihood of affairs.

As we can see, “Love is a symphony of feelings with many notes and chords,” as author Helen Fisher tells us in her book “Why we Love.” There are many elements – we discussed the psychological, environmental and physiological ones - that contribute to making it as exciting, attractive and irresistible as it is, at all ages and under all kinds of circumstances. But, while its elements have been the same throughout history, new technological developments have created circumstances and opportunities for the development and expression of lust and romantic love that are completely new. Internet affairs are examples of such new circumstances, providing hitherto new and fantasy rich romantic and lustful encounters for both men and women.

Internet Affairs and Cybersex

Internet affairs have become quite common, so much so that one third of all current divorce litigations in this country today are caused by online affairs (The Fortino Group.) Internet infidelity is an issue of endemic proportions not only for the sheer number of people involved in them, but also because of the endless possibilities at one's fingertips that online dating offers.

So, let's talk about how online affairs are different from real time ones. I see the following as some of the main differences between cyberspace and real time affairs:

1. **Anonymity** encourages people to share more personal and intimate parts of themselves; to verbalize fantasies and wishes that might be more difficult to discuss with someone in real time, and to be bolder and more experimental with specific desires and interests.
2. **Containment.** Lack of physical and sexual contact online makes people feel less at risk of exposure. They don't have to be afraid to be seen; they don't have to worry about explaining to a partner where they spent the last few hours, or where they have been, and they don't have to worry about safe sex. This feeling of safety is illusory and misplaced. However, 50% of people who meet on line progress to communicating with one another

over the phone, and 31% end up having sex with one another at some point in the course of their relationship. Other people, however, prefer to maintain a virtual-only relationship, and resist meeting and getting to know each other in real life.

3. **More room for fantasizing.** Because the person at the other end of the screen is not a person in flesh and bones, she or he can easily become an image onto whom all kinds of fantasies are projected.
4. **Unlimited pool** from which to choose the person who meets one's fancy and desires. This almost unlimited pool is available twenty four seven, across the globe!
5. **Dissociation from reality.** This element contributes to secrecy, compartmentalization and denial. All affairs, including those in real time, are kept somehow dissociated from reality. However, online affairs are even more so. A large proportion of people who engage in Internet infidelity do not even believe they are having affairs. This belief reduces their guilt and responsibility about what they are doing, and discourages them from stopping these behaviors.

6. **Easier to begin intimate relationships.** Fears of being rejected, of being inadequate, unattractive and socially awkward are greatly reduced in online affairs, due to the lack of physical contact, at least at the beginning.
7. **Relationships become intimate much faster than real time ones,** due to lowered inhibitions and ease of communication by text only, rather than face-to-face interactions.
8. **Easier to end relationships,** without awkward explanations, guilt and repercussions. The concept of “un-friending” used in some social networks is an example of the ease with which people online end relationships.

Because of all these characteristics, online affairs paradoxically tend to be deeper and more intimate and at the same time more superficial than real life ones. In internet intimate relationships, the sense of time is skewed. The normal progression from superficial to more intimate knowledge of each other is not gradual, as couples can become very intimate right away, while in other areas they may continue to be total strangers to one another.

The biggest danger of online affairs is the illusion that what is happening is real, when in fact it is walled off from reality, and totally disassociated from it. These walled off experiences represent an altered reality that is maintained isolated, nonintegrated from the rest of one’s life and secret. Its presence

prevents people involved in it to deal with the problems they face in real time relationships. Instead of addressing real life challenges, people retreat in opportunities and fantasies provided by access to the internet, maintaining two realities that don't communicate nor interact with one another.

Most Likely Lovers

We mentioned earlier that almost 50% of affairs for women occur with co-workers and more than 60% of affairs for men begin in the office. This is a clear indication that it is people in our daily lives that ignite passion and create situations where lust can be experienced, even if people do not realize what is happening until much later.

More recently, online affairs have become as popular as office affairs, as virtual proximity and accessibility substitutes for physical proximity and daily interactions.

An office co-worker can become attractive for different reasons. These reasons can occur concurrently or individually. The following are some of the most common:

- **The Friendly Ear**

A person can become the friendly ear that listens and empathizes with one's stories of dissatisfactions, boredom and unhappiness. He or she seems to be available when needed, with unlimited patience, interest and empathy. It becomes comforting to get together and support each other. From here, the relationship can grow and morph into something more personal, more special and intimate.

- **The Unexpected**

At times at the beginning of an affair neither person plans to get deeply emotionally entangled with one another, but this happens gradually, almost unnoticed. Intimacy develops with increased sharing, a sense of being understood, valued and appreciated. The step from being friends to being lovers is often quite short.

- **The Sexual Allure**

At times a person is seen as sexually attractive and alluring from the very beginning. When this person is around, there is such electricity in the room that cannot be ignored. Thoughts about that person start to creep in one's thoughts even when he or she is not around. Obsessive thinking and fantasizing develop, with increasing intensity and frequency. If the other person responds to this attraction, an affair develops and blooms. This relationship may evolve into a deeper one or remain exclusively sexual. If it remains strictly sexual, typically is short-lived.

- **The Soul Mate**

Often this is the next step in the 'friendly-ear' scenario we discussed earlier. As a couple gets to know each other more intimately, they discover they think the same, they like the same things, they have similar goals and views of life. They seem to be on the same wavelength, so there is little need for words in order to

communicate to one another. This relationship can become sexual, but does not have to in order to become powerfully attractive and highly emotional for both people involved.

- **The Attraction of Youth**

For someone who is reaching middle or late middle age and sees his or her looks change, the allure of a younger person can be quite powerful. These types of relationships typically don't last for a long time, as differences in age and being at different points in life create a wedge that later on affects the relationship, often dooming it.

- **The High School Sweetheart**

People look up old friends on line or see them at school reunions. These are friends from a time in their lives that felt good, pregnant with possibilities as the whole future was still in front of them. When people reconnect, old feelings may get rekindled. Couples feel they already know each other quite intimately, even if they have not seen each other for over thirty years. This feeling of familiarity provides comfort, security and encourages trust. Often, when old High school or College sweethearts see each other again, they don't see who they are today but who they used to be. This experience seems to occur in a time warp, catapulting the people involved to earlier and happier times. It is the wish to recapture this time and the feelings associated to it that make these relationships so appealing, because their deep roots and very intense emotions are enduring.

The Affair Is Over: Now What?

Only 35% of couples with marital infidelity stay together. Hurt, humiliation, disappointment are very powerful feelings that often lead to blaming and attacking or withdrawing, physically and/or emotionally. Depression, anxiety and fear can occur following the betrayal. Trust is gone. There is a deep feeling of loneliness and shame, and concern about the future. Partners often don't know how to deal with these intense emotions that create havoc in their lives. The very person who used to provide comfort and reassurance is now the one who is now causing the pain. This situation is not very different from incest situations where the incestuous parent, who is supposed to provide protection and safety, is actually breaking these rules making a child feel unsafe and alone.

Women in general tend to want to see if there is a way of repairing the damage caused by the infidelity. However, they tend to have a very difficult time with trust and with re-engaging in sexual activities with their partners. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to want out of the relationship if it is the woman who was unfaithful. Women are more likely to get depressed in these situations, whereas men are more likely to get angry (Spring.)

Forgiveness is what needs to take place for the relationship to survive infidelity. **Forgiveness benefits both partners and can take the relationship to a deeper level of intimacy.**

However, forgiveness is not an act but a process that requires certain elements to be in place in order to occur. These elements are:

1. EMPATHY.

The person who had the affair needs to become aware of the full emotional impact of his or her actions on the other partner and feel what the other is feeling. Up until that point he or she might have minimized this impact, assuming that what is not known does not hurt. However, without open communication, the injuring partner won't be able to achieve a full understanding of his or her actions and own responsibility for them. Once the two partners develop an honest way of communicating their feelings, they need to give each other all the time required to process the emotional impact of the affair. The length of this process vary from couple to couple, as a lot of specific elements may speed it up or slow it down. This part of the work requires patience staying with the feelings, even and particularly when they are uncomfortable. For the injuring partner, it requires being emotionally available to the injured partner to talk, reassure, comfort, promise and empathize.

Betsy had decided to work at repairing her relationship with Martin, after he confessed to her that he had been having an affair with their next door neighbor. Betsy felt betrayed and deeply hurt by Martin's actions, but felt the two of them had enough strengths in their relationship that it made it worth trying to repair the damage caused by the affair. Things got better between the two of them when Martin was able to tell Betsy that, whenever she was critical of him – and she had been very critical for quite some time – he saw in her the mother he grew up with and whom he could never please.

After a while, Martin had given up trying to please Betsy in the same way in which he had given up pleasing mother as a child. He disconnected emotionally from both. Of course Betsy was not responsible for Martin's affair. Martin took full ownership of that, as he should. However, his affair provided the two of them with a chance of exploring and understanding old unresolved issues and healing them together.

2. REMORSE.

There needs to be a reasonable expectation that this behavior won't occur again in the future. I say "reasonable" because none of us has 100% security about what another person will or will not do in the future. However, it is important for the partner who was betrayed to begin to feel safe again in the relationship. And, this is possible only if the person who had the affair

becomes fully aware of the seriousness of his or her actions and willing to do whatever it takes not to repeat similar mistakes in the future.

Forgiveness applies only to those actions that occurred in the past, not to those occurring in the present or potentially happening in the future. It is only when the partner who had the extra-marital affair can provide reassurance that he or she is a changed person, that the injured partner can start rebuild trust. The injuring partner needs to feel and express **regret** and **remorse** and communicate these feelings appropriately to the injured partner. The reparative process is often long and arduous for couples, but can yield very powerful results. As E. Kassoff says, "Affairs can end in heartbreak, or in wisdom and renewal."

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