



Rebuilding Trust After an Affair

Recovery Guide and Worksheet

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Introduction

While part of the draw to cheat can be the thrill of romance, it usually starts off with dissatisfaction in the relationship. When the relationship does not feel safe, instead of learning how to resolve the problem, people check out and get their emotional needs met elsewhere. It is much more about the emotional need than anything sexual.

People don't usually wake up one morning and decide they are in the mood to cheat. In my work with couples I explain to them that our energy goes out of the relationship when we don't feel safe connection. As we may not know how to articulate our feelings of disconnect or it feels too scary, we find other ways to direct our energy. For some it may be work, the gym, facebook. For others it could be alcohol or infidelity. While we all have free choice and this does not exonerate us from responsibility, it is helpful to be aware that there is often something weak in the foundation of the relationship that needs to be addressed.

Whether you're a therapist wanting to navigate your couples out of the affair or part of the couple yourself, we are committed to supporting you.

Read more and complete the worksheets to the best of your ability. We'll provide more support as time goes on.

Rabbi Shlomo Slatkin, M.S., LCPC

Can a couple recover from infidelity?

Infidelity is never an easy thing. It is extremely painful for the spouse that was betrayed. Trust has been broken, and it's hard to believe you can ever feel safe with your partner again.

Ultimately, it all comes down to how much the couple wants the relationship to work and the effort both people want to make to save it.

However, we have seen countless couples repair their relationship after an affair. Forgiveness is possible and a new and improved relationship lie in the wings.



How Do You Reestablish Trust After Infidelity?

The most difficult part of staying together after cheating is reestablishing trust. It is possible (but hard work) to regain trust after cheating. If you and your partner would like to work through this experience together, we strongly encourage you to consider the following suggestions.

- **Start Relationship Counseling**
- **The Cheater Must Express True Remorse**
- **The Spouse Who Was Cheated on Needs Closure**
- **Establish Weekly Communication “Meetings”**
- **Set New Boundaries**

Worksheet

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF AFFAIR

We understand how difficult it is to face the challenges that arise after an affair and we are here for you. These questions below will help you understand how your partner's behavior was affecting you long before they had an affair.

WHAT IS CURRENTLY YOUR BEST UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT LED UP TO THIS (YOU, ME, OUR RELATIONSHIP)?

HOW DID YOU MEET?

WHO "CROSSED THE LINE" IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP FIRST?

**WHAT ARE SOME COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS THAT YOU HAVE?
WHAT IS THE GLUE THAT HAS KEPT YOU TWO TOGETHER?**

Worksheet

QUESTIONS ABOUT AFFAIR DETAILS

This questionnaire is meant to help you put together a basic timeline of your affair. This will be helpful for you as you begin to recover from the emotional stress and trauma of your extramarital relationship.

By identifying and ordering the events that led up to, took place during, and followed your affair, you can get a better understanding of who was involved, what was going on in your life at the time, and what might have contributed to your decision to have an affair in the first place.

WHERE DID YOU GET THE MONEY TO PAY FOR THE AFFAIR?

HOW MUCH DID YOU SPEND? DID YOU GO PLACES SOCIALLY?

☐ OUT TO DINNER

☐ DATES

☐ SHOPPING

☐ GROCERIES

☐ MOVIES

☐ OTHERS:

DID YOU BUY EACH OTHER GIFTS?

☐ YES

☐ NO

DO YOU STILL HAVE ANYTHING THAT WAS GIVEN TO YOU?

☐ YES

☐ NO

DID YOU EVER TALK ABOUT ME OR YOUR FAMILY?

☐ YES

☐ NO

Worksheet

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HOW MUCH DOES THE OTHER PERSON KNOW ABOUT US?

HOW OFTEN DID YOU COMMUNICATE?

WHAT ARE ALL THE WAYS YOU COMMUNICATED?

☐ TEXT

☐ FACEBOOK

☐ PHONE

☐ DATING APPS

☐ EMAIL

☐ OTHERS:

HOW OFTEN DID YOU MEET?

HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU HAVE SEX?

Worksheet

QUESTIONS ABOUT ENDING THE AFFAIR

Ending an affair is difficult and painful, but it is also courageous. By taking steps now to deal with the affair, you are taking the first step toward healing yourself and your relationship.

This questionnaire will give you some insight into what your decision means for your life.

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU HAD CONTACT OF ANY KIND WITH HIM/HER?

DOES HE/SHE STILL WANT TO BE WITH YOU?

☐ YES

☐ NO

STILL TRYING TO CONTACT YOU?

☐ YES

☐ NO

DO YOU STILL STRUGGLE WITH WANTING TO BE WITH THE OTHER PERSON?

☐ YES

☐ NO

WHAT ARE THE REASONS FOR WANTING TO BE WITH YOUR PARTNER?

DO YOU HAVE ANY REMINDERS OF THE AFFAIR (LETTERS, EMAILS, CARDS, PICTURES, SONGS, GIFTS, MEMENTOS, ETC.)? IF SO, ARE YOU WILLING TO GET RID OF ALL OF THEM?

WHAT WILL YOU DO TO HELP YOUR PARTNER FEEL SAFE WITH YOU?

Strategies to Overcome Cheating in Your Marriage

Only you can know what's right for you if your relationship is affected by infidelity. But if you and your spouse choose to navigate the stormy waters together after an affair has been revealed, these 5 tips might help.

Take a step back and look for patterns.

Most of the time, people don't wake up one morning and decide to cheat. There is usually something going on in the relationship where needs aren't being met.

STEP
01

Full transparency starts with remorse.

Glean whether your partner has remorse over what they did by having frank and honest discussion that include passwords being given over for full transparency.

STEP
02

Learn new ways of communicating that are emotionally safe

Emotional safety is key here and likely you both don't currently feel that safe. Learn how to talk without blame or shame using the Imago Dialogue and start creating a new environment where safety is paramount.

STEP
03

Be patient but diligent.

Healing from betrayal takes time. Resist the temptation to bring up every single grievance from your past and instead focus on the matter at hand.

STEP
04

Team up with a licensed marriage counselor.

An affair is often too hard for couples to process on their own. It's an "exit", a way to escape the relationship that may not have been comfortable to begin with. Sealing those exits can be tricky. Talk with us about how we can help you recover from the affair.

STEP
05

Worksheet

ARE YOU READY TO FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER?

Surviving an affair is a complex, challenging process. But it's also a unique opportunity to rebuild your relationship on stronger principles, and to help each other become better people along the way. These questions will help you reflect on where you stand in your relationship.

	YES	NO
Do you truly believe your partner has told you everything about the affair?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you think your partner is responding appropriately to the affair?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you genuinely feel the affair is over?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you believe your partner can learn and grow from this experience?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel your partner is genuinely remorseful?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your partner willing to get help with dealing with the underlying issues that lead them to making the choices they did?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your partner willing to act with transparency from now on?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Before the affair, would you have described your partner to be a fairly honest person?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Have you had difficulties in the past forgiving or carrying grudges?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Worksheet

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WHAT ARE THE 3 BIGGEST THINGS THAT MAKE YOU INCLINED TO FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER?

WHAT ARE THE 3 BIGGEST THINGS THAT MAKE YOU LESS INCLINED TO FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER?

WHAT DO YOU FEAR WOULD HAPPEN AGAIN IF YOU DO FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T FORGIVE YOUR PARTNER?

Sharing your Feelings with the Affairer

THE AMENDS PROCESS

Part of our amends process after an affair is that the spouse who was betrayed can ask what they need to ask about what went on. This may take many times until they feel they can trust again. The affairer needs to be very transparent about all of their actions in order to regain that trust and that can take a while. It's incumbent on the affairer to be fully open and patient with the repair process

**WHAT SCARES ME ABOUT THAT...
WHAT HURTS ME THE MOST ABOUT
THAT...
WHAT I REALLY WANT TO KNOW...
THE REASON I WANT TO KNOW IS...
WHAT I KEEP THINKING ABOUT IS...
WHAT I WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT ME
RIGHT NOW...
THE HARDEST TIME OF DAY FOR ME IS...
ONE THING YOU COULD DO EACH DAY
THAT WOULD
REALLY HELP ME...
WHEN I TELL YOU HOW I FEEL, WHAT I'D
LIKE YOU TO DO IS...**

For the Affairer to Share

THE AMENDS PROCESS

The spouse having the affair can safely share more about his/her feelings about what went on with the following lead lines. Obviously this can be very sensitive so use sensitively.

FOR THE BETRAYER TO SHARE

What I want you to know...
When I see you hurting....
What scares me about all this...
What I want for us...
What I want you to know about me...
When you ask me questions about the
affair....
Sometimes when I think about all this,
The part of me who doesn't want to stay and work though or issues.....
and
the part of me that does"

For the Affairer to Share

AN APOLOGY

While saying sorry is helpful, a more involved apology is helpful at making amends and showing sincere remorse. If you are the affairer and are willing to do this, it can help you move towards some closure.

FOR THE BETRAYER TO SHARE

Make sure it is a good time to talk.

Share the following-

1) I would like to make amends and what I would like to make amends for is ...

2) And specifically what I did....

3) You did not deserve this and how I imagine you must have felt when I did this was...

4) How I would have liked to have done this differently is...

5) I am sorry that I did that and that I wounded you...

This allows the affairer to take ownership, ask for forgiveness, and show compassion and empathy for their partner

Where do we go from here?

Affair recovery is a process. It will take time to build trust. Once the initial work to move past the affair has gotten underway, you will both want to put effort in strengthening your relationship. This means learning about what was not working before and making the necessary changes so your relationship can be better than ever. It is normal for there to be doubts or distrust from time to time. The more transparency and the more initiative to improve the relationship, the faster the process will go. Every couple works at a different pace but with effort and time, you will begin to see the fruits of your labor.

Contact Us

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Book a time to talk

www.themarriagerestorationproject.com