
REVISED EDITION

Surviving an *Affair*

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To Joyce and Phil



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You Can Survive This Affair

If you are a victim of infidelity, you have been on the emotional roller-coaster ride of your life. Most couples caught up in the tragedy of an affair tell us that they have never felt such intense emotions. They are overwhelmed by anger, depression, fear, guilt, loneliness, and shame.

A betrayed spouse will ask, *How could my spouse do this to me—cheating on me, lying to me over and over again? I can never trust my spouse again. I have so much anger and resentment it scares me. My feelings go way beyond hurt—I can't even put into words the pain I'm feeling.*

A wayward spouse often says, *I used to beg my spouse for more attention but I never beg anymore—my lover gives me all the attention I need. But I don't know if the attention I'm getting is worth the price. One moment I'm sure I've done the right thing. Then I look into the faces of my spouse and children and I'm not sure anymore. I don't want to give up my family, but if I give up my lover I'll be losing the best thing that ever happened to me. What should I do? I'm an emotional wreck!*

When a couple feels such strong emotions, many question if marital reconciliation is possible. *How can we ever recover from such pain? And even if we recover, can we live with the memory of betrayal? Can we ever trust each other again? Can we ever love each other again?*

As marriage counselors we have been asked these questions thousands of times and have been able to respond with a definite *yes*. Let us assure you that if you put into practice what we recommend in this book, the prognosis for the future of your marriage is very good.

In the pages that follow, we use “I” to refer to either of us as we describe our experiences and counsel.

It’s Hard to Believe That Marital Recovery Is Possible after an Affair

When I first counseled spouses who were trapped in an affair, I thought I would be preparing them for divorce. But to my surprise, again and again I saw opportunities to save marriages. Infidelity did not necessarily cause either the betrayed spouse or the wayward spouse to want a divorce. Often what they both wanted was to escape the pain of their mistake and create a thriving marriage.

So that became my mission—to help couples recover from the disaster of an affair and create a fulfilling marriage that would prevent any future affairs. Unfortunately, my early attempts to save these marriages failed because I wasn’t listening.

In case after case, the unfaithful spouse told me that they had lost their love in marriage and had found it in another relationship. They felt that they had to choose between a passion-filled affair and a loveless marriage. Initially, I ignored the obvious—helping them to create a passion-filled marriage—and instead focused on communication training that did little to create the passion they had experienced in the affair.

The betrayed spouse was equally pessimistic about creating a passion-filled marriage. After going through the worst experience of their life, they certainly were not feeling very passionate. It was all they could do to just hang on for the sake of their children.

Eventually, I came to understand that if I were to save these marriages, I would need to help couples recreate the passion they once had for each other. Once they were in love, the horror of the affair would fade away and the risk of divorce would end.

When spouses are in love with each other, they never divorce. Never! So it certainly makes sense to teach spouses how to fall in love and stay in

love with each other. And that's what my program of recovery achieves. If you follow it, I guarantee that you will be in love with each other. And when you are in love, you will not even consider a divorce.

Ever since I began helping these tormented couples fall in love with each other and protect their marriage from any future affair, I've witnessed the recovery of thousands of marriages. But the path that leads to recovery is very narrow, and unless couples follow that path, the tragedy of an affair can permanently cripple a marriage and often leads to the further tragedy of divorce.

If you are a wayward spouse or a betrayed spouse, you may be undecided as to what to do next. One moment you want to divorce your spouse, and the next you want to try to reconcile. That's the way most people in your situation feel because there are advantages and

disadvantages to both choices. Divorce carries with it the destruction of a family and the loss of a spouse you may still care for, yet reconciliation means you will be living with the scars of betrayal and the risk of another affair. Your emotional reactions may be so strong that you simply cannot make the choice right now.

Even if you have decided that marital reconciliation is impossible, or if it's only you or only your spouse who wants to survive the affair and restore your marriage, I would like you to consider my strategy for recovery. It has proven successful for thousands of couples in hundreds of cultures around the world, and once you understand its objectives, you may be willing to try it. My plan is that narrow path that gets you beyond the affair, helps you make your marriage better than it's ever been, and protects you from future affairs.

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You Can Do Better than Survive—Your Marriage Can Thrive

There is hope for the recovery of your marriage, and thousands of couples have proven it. When you complete my program for reconciliation, you will

My plan is that narrow path that gets you beyond the affair, helps you make your marriage better than it's ever been, and protects you from future affairs.

have the marriage you have always wanted—one that is filled with love and compatibility.

But before I tell you about my plan for recovery, you need to know some of the common characteristics of affairs. I want to tell you about Jon and Sue. Their situation may be different from yours, but it illustrates some of the basic elements of most affairs. Like so many couples, Jon and Sue thought it could never happen to them.

It Could Never Happen to Me!

Jon and Sue were about to celebrate their eighth anniversary and had good reason to celebrate. They had two healthy daughters and a beautiful home, and Jon had just been promoted to a new position that increased his salary by almost 50 percent. That extra income allowed Sue to cut back on her hours at work so that she could spend more time with their children.

Sue was content with her life. She enjoyed the comfortable home and other luxuries that Jon's income was able to provide. She worked as a part-time special education teacher, allowing her time to do what she loved most—raising her children. But when it came to her relationship with Jon, the romance was gone. Sometimes she daydreamed about the times they had spent talking to each other, showing their affection for each other, and making love with passion and excitement. But with his new job there was no time for that. Besides, Sue's life was enjoyable in so many other ways that she thought she could overlook the loss of Jon's companionship.

Jon was also content. He loved his wife and children and was proud of the quality of life he was able to provide them. His new job was enjoyable and challenging, although it required most of his time. He wanted to spend more time with Sue and his children, but he and Sue had both agreed that their time to be together would come after he was more established in his career.

Jon was an achiever, and Sue loved that trait in a man. In fact, she had married him partly because she knew he was ambitious and would provide well for her and their children. She had encouraged him to accept the responsibilities that led to his advancement. Sue wanted Jon to reach his highest potential but she didn't understand that the time he spent away from her prevented him from reaching his potential as her husband.

On the evening of their anniversary celebration, Sue and Jon exchanged cards and gifts that expressed their love for each other. Then they went to dinner at their favorite restaurant, where Jon had asked Sue to marry him.

But something wasn't right. Sue felt uncomfortable talking to Jon. Their conversation about their children, his work, her work, and even about their plans for the future all seemed contrived and forced. She felt so distant from Jon that it was as if she hardly knew him.

When they returned home, Jon expected to end the evening making love to Sue, but to his astonishment, she was not interested. Jon and Sue had agreed from the beginning of their marriage that sex was never to be a ritual. It was to be an expression of their true feelings, something they did when they both felt a sexual passion for each other. But though Sue and Jon had been out together on their anniversary, Sue still felt lonely and certainly not passionate. When she told Jon she wasn't interested in sex, he went to sleep very disappointed.

The next day Sue felt guilty about the way their anniversary had ended and called her husband three times to tell him how bad she felt. She blamed it all on having been in a bad mood that week and tried to assure Jon that it wasn't anything he had done to upset her. But she was at a loss to know what was causing the problem or what to do about it. The passion was simply gone.

So instead of admitting her lack of feeling for Jon, Sue made love to him the next night, even though she did it because of guilt, not passion. What's worse, she pretended to enjoy the experience as much as she had in the past. She decided that it was unrealistic to have sex with Jon only when she felt passionate.

Sue didn't tell Jon how she now felt about sex. So he assumed that whatever was bothering her on their anniversary had ended and everything was back to normal again. In fact, after their anniversary Sue saw to it that they made love more often than before, which made Jon very happy.

Sue, though, began to feel restless and bored with her life. When a friend suggested that she volunteer for the Lake Restoration Committee, she jumped at the opportunity. Sue and Jon were both concerned about the way development was affecting the quality of the lake that bordered their community. The committee met monthly and Sue enjoyed being part of a group that was doing such important work. She became friends with several of the committee members and developed a particularly good friendship with Greg.

It was so easy for Sue to talk with Greg at the meetings. They usually sat together and he was always very friendly and cheerful. He listened attentively to her ideas, rarely interrupted her, and discussed issues with her in a respectful and supportive way. In fact, he usually came to her defense when others disagreed with her opinions.

Between meetings Greg often called Sue at home to discuss committee business, and once in a while they would meet for lunch. The more she got to know Greg, the more she looked forward to his calls and their lunch dates.

Greg had been divorced for three years and had custody of his two boys, who were five and seven, close to the ages of Sue's children. Sue admired him for the good job he did caring for his children without the help of a wife. But she also felt sorry for him bearing all of the burden himself, so she offered to help him care for his boys if he was ever stuck.

At first, Sue told Jon about her friendship with Greg. When she had lunch with Greg or watched his children in an emergency, Jon knew about it. Jon had lunch with women from work once in a while, so he could not see a problem with Sue having lunch with a man. Besides, he trusted Sue. He believed that she would never be unfaithful to him. And Sue would never have imagined that she could be unfaithful to Jon.

But as Sue's friendship with Greg deepened, she became increasingly secretive about it. She knew that if she were completely honest about how much time she was spending with Greg, Jon would become alarmed and encourage her to put a stop to it. She told herself she had a right to a friendship with a man, and that she could handle it. Besides, Jon didn't usually ask her what she did during the day, so she seldom had to lie. She simply didn't talk about her growing secret life.

Within a few months of Sue and Jon's anniversary dinner, Greg had become more than just a friend to Sue. She had fallen in love with him,

and Greg was in love with her. Sue could not remember ever feeling so attracted to a man, not even to Jon. Greg made her feel beautiful, interesting, desirable, and alive.

The secret life, however, could not remain a secret forever. It came crashing into the open when Jon decided to surprise Sue by returning home two days early from one of his many business trips. Sue had arranged to have the children spend the night with her parents so she could be alone. Jon quietly entered the house and went to his bedroom with flowers and candy in his arms. There he found Sue—and Greg! Greg grabbed his clothes and ran out of the house, leaving Sue alone to try to explain what had happened.

The Dangerous Illusion: It Could Never Happen to Me

In their eight years of marriage, neither Jon nor Sue ever thought they would be the victims of infidelity until it actually happened. They had friends who had been unfaithful to a spouse, but Sue and Jon felt they could never betray each other's trust that way and they believed their moral standards set them apart from those who yield to the temptation of an affair.

Spouses who have not experienced an affair firsthand are usually very trusting. They don't believe that infidelity could ever infect their marriage. I often hear, "My spouse could never be unfaithful—she has my utmost

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*Infidelity happens in
most marriages.*

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trust," and "He has such strong moral convictions that an affair is unthinkable."

When a spouse has an affair, it usually comes as a complete surprise even to him or her. That person often reports, "I had always regarded those who had affairs as selfish, misguided fools with no discipline whatsoever. I could not have imagined having an affair myself."

But infidelity is something that doesn't just happen on TV dramas. It happens in most marriages. *Most* marriages, you may ask? Yes, unfortunately, most marriages.

As common as an affair is in marriage, it is always devastating to almost everyone involved. It's one of the most painful experiences that the betrayed spouse will ever be forced to endure, and it is traumatic for the

children. Friends and members of the extended family usually suffer as well. But what most people don't realize is that the wayward spouse and the lover are also hurt by the experience. They almost always suffer from acute depression, often with thoughts of suicide. With all of the sadness and suffering, why do so many people have an affair?

The answer is that, for the moment, it seems to be the right thing to do. Men and women are easily carried away by their emotions, making the worst mistakes of their lives.

One would think that at least the people with strong religious convictions and moral commitments would have special protection from extramarital affairs. Yet I have counseled hundreds of people with these convictions who were not able to resist unfaithfulness. Just observing the many religious leaders who have succumbed to the temptation of infidelity proves to me that under certain conditions infidelity is irresistible.

The truth is that infidelity doesn't necessarily develop out of a bankrupt moral values system. Instead, personal values change to accommodate the affair. What had been inconceivable prior to an affair can actually seem reasonable and even morally right during an affair. Many people who have always believed in being faithful in marriage find that their values do not protect them when they are faced with the temptation of an affair.

It became clear to me early in my counseling experience that affairs were much more common than I had ever imagined. Now, after years of marriage counseling, I have come to realize that almost everyone, given the right conditions, would have an affair.

Sue's Side of the Story

I never thought I would be unfaithful to Jon. I had always looked at people who had affairs as moral weaklings. But my view has changed. Now I understand how important it is to be with the one you love, even if your friends and family don't approve. And I have a new appreciation for others who have affairs.

I broke my vow of fidelity and feel very guilty about it. Jon wants to work things out and get our marriage back on track, but I would rather die than leave Greg. I now believe my marriage to Jon was a

mistake because I didn't understand what love really is. I never would have married Jon if I had known Greg first. We will be soul mates for the rest of our lives.

I feel guilty and ashamed of what I've done, and even what I'm thinking, but nevertheless my feelings for Greg are powerful and undeniable. I've tried to forget about him but I can't do it. Greg rekindled feelings in me that have been dormant for a long time. I find myself thinking about him often and wish I could always be with him.

Jon is a good man and doesn't deserve what I've done to him. I know he loves me. But I cannot remain married to a man I don't love, even though a divorce would probably be hard on our children. If I were to lose Greg, I would lose my soul and my spirit. He has become a part of me, a part I cannot abandon or ignore. Even if I never see Greg again, he will be in my heart for the rest of my life.

Most unfaithful spouses see an affair as enlightenment. They did not know what they were missing until the affair revealed it to them. In many cases a spouse is feeling depressed and unfulfilled, and the affair changes that. What had been missing in his or her life is found, and it's a wonderful relief. What years of therapy can't achieve is instantly accomplished whenever the lover is present—happiness and fulfillment.

But in some cases a spouse is not depressed prior to an affair. Sue, for example, was content with her life. The only sign of her vulnerability was that she no longer felt like making love to her husband. Her passion was gone, leaving a void that Greg willingly filled.

Sue did not develop a friendship with Greg because she wanted him as her lover. She simply needed a friend. And she never intended for their friendship to develop into an affair. She trusted herself to be faithful to Jon. But Greg did such a good job caring for her that he met her important emotional needs and she fell in love with him.

What made Sue's relationship with Greg seem so right was that it was unplanned. It just "happened." That's why Sue felt that Greg was meant to be her lover, because she had not done anything to encourage it. They simply found each other and when they did, they each thought they had found their soul mate.

Jon's Side of the Story

Jon, of course, was blown away by what he saw when he returned from his trip. He had no idea that Sue was having an affair. It seemed like a very bad dream from which he would eventually wake up. But after a few days passed, he had to face the truth. He had been betrayed by the person he trusted most in life: his wife. She had hurt him more than he could have ever imagined.

When we first married, Sue and I made an agreement with each other that we would always be honest about our feelings. I trusted her and never doubted her word. Now I will never believe a thing she says to me again.

Ever since I've known her, she has cared about the way people feel. She can't even hurt a bug. Yet she has chosen to hurt me, the one she promised to care for the most. I thought I knew her but I guess I never did. How could I have not seen through her deceit? How could I have been so blind?

Sue and I both worked very hard to build a good life for ourselves and our children. I admit that I have not been with her much these past few years. I could have done a better job helping her raise our children, too. But we talked about all of that and she agreed with me that what I was doing was best for all of us. I didn't complain to her about the sacrifices I was making for our future, and she didn't complain to me, either. We just did what we felt needed to be done.

Now I don't know what to think. What gets me is that I had plenty of opportunity to cheat on her, but I resisted the temptation because I would have felt too guilty about it. Apparently she doesn't care enough about me to feel guilty. She can just jump in bed with whoever happens to come along and feel great about it the next day. I just don't know her anymore.

I strongly believe that a husband and wife should have the freedom to have any friend they want, male or female. My wife and I have discussed that in the past and we agree. When she asked me how I'd feel if she had coffee with her friend Greg, I said, "sure." I didn't think anything of it. It was the worst mistake of my life. I can't believe that she fell in love with him. I trusted her. We had an agreement.

As painful as this is, I still love her and I hope we can work this out. At first I wanted a divorce. But now I am willing to fight to win her back, even

though I'm not sure she's worth fighting for. She cheated on me! Maybe I should just end all of this now and get a divorce.

Most betrayed spouses are blindsided by the affair. They trusted their spouse and their spouse betrayed that trust. Their feelings swing from wanting a divorce and ending all the misery to wanting to save the marriage at all costs.

The emotional impact of an affair on a betrayed spouse is incredibly powerful. Many cannot sleep for days and experience the worst depression of their lives. At the same time, they are on the verge of angry outbursts, losing their temper whenever they get on the subject of the affair. Their

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anxiety is also out of control as they panic over where this affair will lead. They see no hope of recovery, their lives totally ruined.

The betrayed spouse feels pushed into a pit, crying out for help. The wayward spouse comes to the edge of the pit but instead of tossing a rope, hurls stones. Emotionally torn to pieces, the betrayed spouse can't imagine ever trusting anyone else again, least of all the wayward spouse.

Greg's Side of the Story

There is one other person who is an important part of this drama—the other man. He has a very different perspective on the affair than either Sue or Jon.

My friendship with Sue began very innocently. We worked together on a lake restoration project, and that gave us a chance to get to know each other. I was very attracted to her from the first time I laid eyes on her but I knew she was married and I don't believe in interfering with someone else's marriage. So I was very careful not to make any moves that she would interpret as inappropriate.

But as we talked about our personal lives, I about my ex-wife and she about her marriage to Jon, we found many similarities. My ex-wife had ignored me for years and had pursued a career that may have satisfied her, but it sure didn't take me into account. One day she announced that she

was leaving me because she was no longer in love. Now that I look back on my marriage, I'm glad she left because I don't think she ever was in love with me.

Sue's husband had not left her but he may as well have left. He spent very little time with her or the children. All he did was pay the bills. Sue craved attention, and I was willing to give her that attention because I was her friend. I was willing to do the things for her that her husband should have been doing. I helped her with her children, I was there to talk to her whenever she needed to talk, and as our relationship developed, I was able to give her the love and affection that she had been missing in her marriage. I gave her the very things that I had missed in my marriage. And Sue was very grateful.

Our friendship is very real and very right. We are two friends who support each other through good times and bad times. We do for each other what a husband and wife should do—we care for each other.

I don't believe that I am the cause of Sue's marriage breaking up. I think Jon is fully to blame for that. She would be making a big mistake not to leave him because, after the dust settles, he'll go right back to working all the time and leaving her home alone.

Sue and I were meant to be together, and I will wait patiently for Sue's divorce. She is not certain what she wants just yet, but I know she loves me and eventually we will be together.

It would be easy to see Greg as the villain in this tragic story. After all, he was the one who pursued a married woman with children. And yet his motives were not entirely selfish. Greg helped Sue as one friend would help another. In fact he did such a good job helping her that she fell in love with him. As the relationship deepened, he became aware of her loveless marriage. After all, that's how Sue described her marriage to Jon—loveless. So, as a friend, he tried to help her with this problem. Greg's own divorce had led him to believe that people sometimes make bad choices when they marry. He saw his divorce as inevitable. So it made sense to conclude that Sue's marriage was also the result of poor judgment. Sue and Jon were simply wrong for each other, and the sooner Sue left her marriage, the happier she would be.

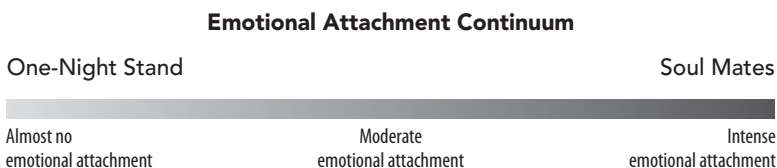
Jon, Sue, and Greg were surprised by what had happened. But if they had understood how vulnerable people are and how easy it is to fall in love with a good friend of the opposite sex, they all would have predicted Sue and Greg's affair.

The Emotional Attachment Continuum

Sue's love for Greg made their affair particularly threatening to her marriage. But affairs that are sexual do not necessarily lead to the feeling of love. In fact most affairs never do reach the level of emotional attachment that Sue and Greg felt for each other. Why, then, would I select Sue's affair as my main illustration when it is not the most common type?

I have chosen Sue's affair as my primary example because her type of affair makes marital reconciliation seem particularly hopeless. By Sue's own admission, she would have been willing to give up everything in her life for Greg, especially her marriage to Jon. With that attitude, is there anything that can be done to save her marriage? Remarkably, there is still a way to achieve that important objective. And that method for recovery works even better in affairs with less emotional attachment.

Since the affair you are struggling with may not be like Sue's affair, it would be helpful for you to see your type of affair in comparison with others. So I will break away from Sue's affair to introduce a variety of ways that people have affairs. The best way for me to describe them is to show you a continuum that reflects the degree of emotional attachment in each affair. On one end of the continuum are affairs like Sue's with intense emotional attachment—those involved consider themselves to be soul mates. But on the other end of the continuum are affairs with almost no attachment at all. The affair you confront probably falls somewhere between these two extremes.



The One-Night Stand

On one end of the emotional attachment continuum where there is almost no emotional attachment, the “one-night stand” is the most common example. It often takes place when a spouse is away on a trip, or when one has gone out partying without the other spouse. In many cases alcohol is a necessary ingredient for these affairs and it enables people to lose enough of their inhibitions to enjoy sex with a total stranger, or at least someone they don’t love. Alcoholics are likely to have many of these loveless affairs during their lifetime. In many cases, they can’t even remember who was with them for the night.

“If you’re not with the one you love, love the one you’re with,” is the guiding principle in these affairs. People often begin these short-term relationships in such places as bars and dance clubs. But they can also take place on the job, particularly when a spouse is on a business trip. What begins as a casual working friendship in the morning can end with being in bed together at night.

Many people who engage in short-term relationships become very professional at creating just the right climate for a brief affair. Drinking and dancing usually create the mood, and instinct takes over from there. Both people who participate in a relationship like this usually understand that after the evening is over, there should be no serious effort to build the relationship any further. But a “black book” is usually kept so that a call can be made when it’s convenient and the other person might be available for a repeat performance. This happens, not because of an emotional attachment, but because it’s easier to get together with someone who already knows you than with a total stranger.

While a one-night stand can be an isolated mistake in an otherwise affair-free marriage, it is more often a habit that is repeated by an unfaithful spouse, sometimes hundreds of times. Once in a while a one-night stand will develop into a deeper relationship, but that’s unusual.

Those most likely to engage in one-night stands are people who travel as part of their job—interstate truck drivers, airline pilots, flight attendants, traveling sales representatives, business consultants, actors, musicians, seminar speakers. The advantage to these short-term flings, from the wayward

spouse's perspective, is that they meet a momentary need with no further commitment or consequences.

There are other types of emotionless affairs besides one-night stands. A spouse who hires a prostitute is an example, although even relationships with prostitutes can become emotional. Occasionally, people may

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have a lengthy affair but never form an emotional attachment to the lover. These people usually have difficulty being emotionally attached to anyone.

People who derive a great deal of pleasure from flirting may also have emotionless affairs. Their challenge is to attract someone of the opposite sex to boost their self-confidence. They may not intend the flirting to lead to lovemaking;

they may just want to see a willingness to make love, proving their ability to attract a lover. If the flirting leads to sex, that often ends the relationship. Then the flirt moves on to someone else.

Soul Mates

At the opposite end of the emotional attachment continuum are relationships in which there is an intense emotional bond. They usually begin as a friendship, with no flirting whatsoever, and certainly not as a one-night stand. Over time the friendship becomes increasingly caring as the partners come to understand each other's emotional needs and learn to meet them. As more and more needs are met with increasing effectiveness, this relationship often becomes so exclusive that it cannot be maintained along with a marriage. Those who separate from their spouse just to "sort things out" are often engaged in this type of affair, unknown to the spouse. The separation allows for the private and exclusive relationship the lovers desire.

Sue and Greg's affair falls into this category of intense emotional bonding. Their friendship began because of their common interests but developed into a mutual ability to meet each other's emotional needs. They did such a good job caring for each other that they had developed an emotional

attachment well before they had made love for the first time, so sex was not a primary motivation for their relationship. But once they began making love, it definitely contributed to their feeling that they were soul mates.

Since friendships are the basis of soul mate relationships, it's important to understand how these friendships usually begin. In many cases, a man and woman simply find themselves together because of employment or a special interest. Sometimes they are neighbors or attend the same church.

*A friendship develops
from a special willingness
to care for each other.*

Simply being together, however, does not create a friendship. A friendship develops from a special willingness to care for each other. When one needs help, the other is there to provide it. In many cases a friendship develops over time as a mutual willingness to help each other unfolds.

When Greg first joined the Lake Restoration Committee, he needed help understanding some of the issues that were being introduced. Sue met with him after the meetings to answer his questions. They quickly discovered that they held similar views on most issues, and when the committee discussed and then voted on various questions, Greg and Sue could count on each other to support their position.

Greg and Sue's mutual support with committee matters expanded to helping each other with other difficulties they both faced. Their conversations were filled with concern for each other and appreciation for each other's care.

This willingness to help each other created a very deep friendship that existed before either Sue or Greg talked about their feelings for each other. But one night, while they were talking to each other on the telephone, Greg brought up a subject that changed the course of their relationship. He told Sue that he was in love with her. Sue responded that she felt the same way toward him but she didn't want to do anything to threaten her marriage. Unfortunately, it was too late. Their friendship was already threatening her marriage—the affair had begun.

A friendship develops into an affair the moment a man and woman feel love for each other and express that love to each other. It opens Pandora's box, and from that point on, neither person seems to have much control over the future of their relationship. Their growing willingness and ability

to care for each other creates a growing emotional dependence. They both come to need each other's care so much that an end to their friendship is unthinkable.

It was several weeks after Greg's expression of love that they actually made love. Sue was very reluctant to have sex with Greg. She had told herself that friendship with him was okay, as long as it was platonic. She believed she should be able to have as many friendships with men as she wanted, as long as they were not sexual. But she became increasingly affectionate with Greg, and soon they openly expressed to each other their sexual feelings. Finally, the temptation became too great. Her first sexual experience with him was the most intense and fulfilling she could have ever imagined. In comparison, she regarded her sexual relationship with Jon as a joke.

But Sue's affair was no joke, and she knew it. She did not want a divorce because Jon and her children didn't deserve it. She appreciated Jon's ambition and success in his career and she knew how much he loved her. She was also afraid that a divorce might tear her children apart emotionally. Most

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of the time she was able to convince herself that, as long as no one knew about her affair, no one would ever be hurt. But occasionally the fog of her illusion lifted and she saw the tragedy of what she was doing. In those moments of clarity, she often felt so distraught that she considered suicide.

Most affairs like Sue and Greg's begin as friendships. As the friendship grows, out of genuine concern they try to meet each other's needs. When the needs are met, love is created. Then, one tells the other about his or her feelings of love, the other reveals the same feeling of attraction, and the affair is off and running.

Between One-Night Stands and Soul Mates

I have described the opposite ends of the emotional attachment continuum. One-night stands usually involve little or no emotional attachment while those who consider themselves to be soul mates are highly attached to

each other. In between these two poles of my continuum lie the majority of affairs, involving various degrees of emotional attachment.

As I will explain later, marital recovery requires a complete separation of the wayward spouse and the lover, and the separation of “soul mates” is quite a challenge. So I have deliberately chosen Sue’s affair as my reference example because they are usually the most difficult to separate. I won’t ignore one-night stands and affairs with less attachment, but those who engage in them are usually willing to end the relationship without much fuss.

However, whether an affair is a one-night stand, years of intimate friendship with sexual contact, or anything in between, the way to end the affair and restore a marriage is essentially the same. So even though my initial example is the affair of soul mates, the methods I suggest for ending an affair and restoring the marriage should be applied to all affairs.