



WHO'S CHEATING WHO  
RELATIONSHIP REALITIES

by

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## Contents

Preface

### Part 1 –Cheating 101

- 1- Cheating-What it is and Isn't
- 2- Profile of a Cheater
- 3- Choosing to Cheat
- 4- The Discovery

### Part 2 – After the Fact

- 5- Fixing What's Broken
- 6- Why We Stay in Bad Relationships
- 7- When Love and Dreams Die
- 8- Saying Goodbye

### Part 3 – Prevention & Cure

- 9- Communication 101
- 10- How Ready Are You For a Commitment?
- 11- Relationship Success by Design
- 12- Are You at Risk?

In Closing

About the author

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## Preface

Approximately 1.5 million websites and over 1000 book titles are dedicated to the subject of cheating. Many focus on proving the infidelity, while others discuss the many aspects involved in catching the scoundrel in the act. Most, however, address coping with the pain and shame of being a victim. A close analysis of the facts and realities of any one situation will often create uncertainty regarding the true identity of the victim and perpetrator. We are left to question exactly where our compassion and sympathies should lie. We are forced to reconsider our concepts of relationships and the substance of our role as a partner. Untangling the complexities to find the truths, provokes a host of questions with many complicated answers.

Cheating is not as simple as one individual in a relationship behaving badly, and the other being wronged. It is a multi-faceted, complex *reaction* stemming from many different places within the human psyche. Cheating involves two people making well-informed decisions and choices *before* committing themselves to a relationship. Compatibility, needs and the realities of human nature must be understood and agreements solidified in order to form the lasting bonds necessary for success. A lack of attention to any one of those vital relationship components provokes reactionary behaviors as a matter of course. The need to cheat comes as a natural *consequence*, which is facilitated by a serious lack of consciousness.

The dictionary defines cheating as being ‘sexually unfaithful’, but adds that it is relative to ‘depriving someone of something valuable’, ‘falling short in satisfying the expectations and hopes of another’ and ‘to influence by deceit or trickery’. Any one of those descriptors could represent the cause for cheating in relationships.

Given the diversity of those definitions, we are able to extend our view of what cheating really is. It broadens our perspective regarding the roles of the cheater and the victim. We are prompted to question if cheating, as we know it to be, really exists, or is it an instinctive human response to *being cheated* out of the human essentials.

In the beginning, couples tend to ignore any negatives, which might later become an issue in their relationship. Caught up in the euphoria of new love, men are not always clear about their true sexual needs and women do not admit that when the intoxication of new love wears off, so do their intense sexual desires. They are compelled to don new hats and switch roles to accommodate pre-programming. Could the lack of attention to those details constitute deceit and trickery? Perhaps couples simply do not recognize the serious nature and responsibilities of their commitment when cast into the spellbinding dusts of lust and love.

Cheating is all encompassing and is not always provoked by sexual deprivation or a lack of fulfillment. It involves growth issues, intellectual stimulation and non-sexual needs that were not made clear in the pre-commitment conversations. The lack of attention to detail regarding mutual needs often promotes complacency. Many couples will travel on different paths due to the individual rate of growth or circumstance. Some simply will lose interest once the spell begins to lose its power. Far too many commit in haste, while under the influence of lust and as the haze clears they find their mistake has left them in misery, feeling trapped. The deeper we dig into cause and effect, the more questions are raised. The answers are obvious if we hold an honest vision of the facts.

Relationships involve two people giving an equal share of themselves to ensure the happiness and fulfillment they desire. The two must accept responsibility for their individual contribution to its success or failure. Both parties come with their own agenda and destructive powers.

Women come with their set of issues and pre-programming and men with theirs. Women often want their partner to conform to a new set of rules once a formal commitment is set in place. Some change expectations in mid-stream or offer their partner little incentive to stay at home. Men become distracted, lose direction and focus or allow outside influences to interfere with their responsibilities to the commitment. In either scenario, addressing mutual needs is lost to individual priorities. In the end, both suffer losses and pain. The patterns present a sad commentary to the basic concepts of human relationships.

Both sexual and non-sexual needs are at issue, and both hold equal value on the list of priorities. Intellectual stimulation is as important as sexual satisfaction. Having those needs met is basic to all the laws of human nature. For many, the natural response to a lack of fulfillment in either category is to seek resolve in whatever venue holds the offering. Unfortunately, cheating is most often the first option. Confrontation is seen as a harsh alternative, which can rattle securities and usually leads to no resolve. Cheating is simply the easy method for dealing with the issues. No one is hurt, life remains secure and the relationship intact. That has become the standard.

The rules of commitment and marriage do not specifically mandate one partner is to serve a self-sacrificing role to maintain the relationship. Yet those who see themselves as victims in a cheating scenario, cry foul when confronted with their own lack of consciousness regarding their partner's needs. Ignoring them simply provokes cheating. Do we ultimately cheat ourselves by making bad choices and decisions? Is our partner to become the scapegoat for our lack of commitment to the relationship? The answers are complex and will add new dimension to our standard views of cheating.

In reality, most often the cheater is the victim. Cheating usually stems from being cheated.

We generally create our own discontent through a lack of attention to detail when it comes to our sexual needs and the need for mental and emotional stimulation. We ignore incompatibilities and the possibility of making the wrong choices. In many instances, both parties become victims. Both hold the power to create success or to provoke an environment for a cheating scenario. How each partner chooses to respond to his or her individual relationship responsibilities will determine the outcome. Create a welcoming environment for cheating and it will come...to stay.

In the pages that follow, we will discuss the realities of human nature and the many facets of cheating. We will explore the complexities of relationships as well as the truths of being the victim and a cheater. This book is designed to provoke thought and questions. The answers are surprising, true and may cause the reader to analyze his/her own situation. The information provided here could help prevent cheating and the ensuing relationship failure. Is your relationship at risk?

## Part One

### Cheating 101

Cheating is far from a basic concept and involves much more than bad partner vs. good partner. It is complex and reflects many variables within the human psyche. Cheating is a reaction or response to *being cheated*. Providing a description of a cheater and explanations for why people do it is not a simple task. Each incident will be as different as the people involved. It will reflect their circumstance and relationship agreements. There can be no stereotypical explanation, collective response or solution. We would have to consider the basic concepts of human nature and know the personal standards each couple has or has not set from the beginning, before coming to any conclusions. There is not one simple cause or descriptor, which sets the qualifier for cheating. Many intricate aspects of the human experience and the dynamics of relationships create a true and accurate profile.

A cheater is not always representative of the *bad* partner in a relationship. In more instances than one would think, the cheater is actually the victim. In many cases, both partners are victims and there really is no *cheater*. That may sound complex and hard to fathom, but cheating is exactly that. It is the reason successful relationships take planning and careful consideration. Commitments require honest assessments and a careful dissection of all compatibility issues from the beginning. Couples do not want to disrupt their time in lusty infatuation to consider any negative possibilities. However, those realities do exist and require attention.

Most couples see only their dreamy visions of grandeur and fabulous sex, their rational thinking veiled by the pleasures of new love.

Is that *momentary* high enough to sustain a long-term relationship? Too often, we allow our future to be determined by dreams we misinterpret as reality while in a hypnotic state of *the moment*. Most of us would not have what it takes to admit that it felt good while it lasted, but not compelling enough to sustain a forever. We cannot see past the intoxication to say “thank you for a lovely evening”, and then walk away. Unfortunately, we feel compelled to hold on to something that really doesn’t exist. In the namesake of ‘doing the right thing’, and because ‘it feels right at that moment’; we forge ahead, guided by our dreamy haze.

Those awesome *moments* do not come without major flaws. Their spellbinding affects can last for months, even years. Too often, however, they cannot last a lifetime. If the *moments* are all we have, should we ignore the needs, which will not be addressed through sex and the euphoria of new love? When our needs become too intense to ignore, do we give in and cheat? Do we call it day? The ‘what ifs’ need to be considered and planned for. No one likes the formalities. The preferred course is to go with the good feelings and ride them until they are gone. It is not the wise choice, but it is easier.

It would be prudent to consider the possibilities of a cheating scenario. Could those wonderful feelings be a sham and leave you at risk? You should know what signs to look for and how to fix them when all the tingly feelings go away. It is easier to make those determinations proactively in our pre-commitment conversations, rather than try to make decisions in the midst of crisis and chaos. That plan of action should be part of every couple’s essentials packet. It is basic. Planning for success helps create success.

## Chapter One

### Cheating – What it is and Isn't

The dictionary defines cheating as an act of being 'sexually unfaithful'. However, the standard vows of marriage and commitment speak of honor, love, cherishing and even being obedient, but sexual fidelity and other related issues are not addressed. Therefore, accepting the dictionary's definition would lead us to question whether or not vows taken in marriage or other relationship commitments specifically address long term sexual needs or is it a given, without the benefit of discussion? Are verbal or written relationship agreements, between two consenting adults, truly valid without a parley and alliance regarding sexual needs? Would it be a breach of the marriage vows or contract if those needs are not met? Would a lack of fulfillment give reason for automatic termination of the agreement?

Several terms are available in the dictionary, which define the different forms of cheating. Being sexually unfaithful is the least appropriate term in the context of relationships, although it is listed as the number one explanation. The definition, which best fits in a relationship scenario, is 'falling short of satisfying the needs, expectations and hopes of another'. That description truly represents the *facts* regarding cheating. It addresses all aspects and appropriately describes the reality of those who cheat. Sex may or may not be a factor in the scenario, leaving the original definition as merely a potential, partial portrayal of the truth.

Another of the listed definitions, which might propose intent, would be 'to influence or lead by deceit or trickery'. That would depict a lack of attention to detail in pre-commitment conversations. It might include those facts we are afraid to share. Those things we mention after the fact. The "oh, by the way", details we don't make clear in the beginning.

The elements of cheating can be more appropriately determined when *all* aspects of the relationship are given consideration. It becomes easier to discern the role of a perpetrator and the victim. Most often the wrong reason is *assumed* before all of the facts are known. The partner cheating is not always aware of his/her motivations. They too assume a cause without viewing the relationship holistically.

In most instances, the victim and perpetrator are one in the same. Yes, it is absolutely possible. A cheater generally cheats because his/her needs are not met. The other partner (the alleged victim) who ignores the needs of the cheating partner, *cheats* him/her by provoking their need to seek satisfaction elsewhere. Either the roles reverse or both become victims. Whether the cheating is sexual in nature, prompted by growth issues or blanket incompatibility, the results are the same. No, sex is not always the catalyst for cheating. If we have not chosen well and mutual needs are not a priority, then cheating is the natural response. It is not a matter of malicious intent, rather a fact of human nature.

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Cheating relates to compatibility, needs, and requires conscious planning. Given such impalpable elements and the lack of exclusive characterization, how do we truly define it in relative terms? The search for clarity proved to be a challenging and complicated affair. Seeking to untangle the complexities merely provoked more questions with few concrete answers. After years of research, study and coaching experience, I have gained a broadened perspective on the subject. There is a need to question my own beliefs, rethink values and wonder exactly where my compassion and sympathies should lie. It is not as finite an issue as we are lead to believe.

Societal dictates and religious beliefs, as well as friends and family, do unfortunately influence our sexual experiences and manipulate our needs, desires and choices. Does this interference and control inhibit our cheating practices, as it is designed to do, or does it actually promote it?

Based on the premise that we are each responsible for our own life experiences as well as making good choices, should we allow the direction of others to rule our private life choices?

Who determined the standards for cheating? Where did the rules come from? Since we are a mass born of a predominately Christian, patriarchal society, one might be lead to assume that male clergy made the rules. The government followed suit and made their own. Is the government or our religious leaders responsible for setting our sexual code of ethics? Do they truly have the authority to dictate what we can or should do in the privacy of our bedrooms? Whose rules are broken in a cheating scenario? Is having one's sexual needs and desires attended to, a personal, moral or legal issue?

The questions are endless and thought provoking. The answers will astound and provoke many more questions. There are even more questions which have no definitive or stereotypical answer. Most often, the answers involve personal conviction and opinion that bear no validity past our own belief system. So, what exactly is cheating? If we accept the dictionaries closest definition of 'falling short of satisfying the needs, expectations and hopes of another', then who cheats whom? Is reciprocal cheating a true form of cheating or simply giving in to the call to have our needs met?

Does cheating include extenuating circumstances and sexual encounters involving other forms of sexual gratification? For instance, if someone has a sexual encounter online or over the telephone does it constitute cheating? By whose standards is that determined? Is oral sex really 'sex' or does it take actual penetration to be considered sex? If a spouse, mate or partner cannot or does not want to meet your sexual needs and gives permission to have them met elsewhere, is it still cheating? The answers to those questions will be different for each of us and will create controversy for generations to come. Since cheating is not always prompted by nor includes sex, it is difficult to say with any accuracy what it is or isn't.

Hindu spiritual leaders and the ancient religions of India, China and Arabia firmly believed in the seriousness of having our sexual needs met. As early as the 1<sup>st</sup> century and then later in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, there were writings which clearly stated the importance of sex as part of our everyday life. The Hindus recognized that not only was sex an essential in life, but was also included as part of their religious practices and beliefs. It was their feeling that sexual energy could contribute to a higher level of spirituality and connection with the Divine One. Buddhists believed that through sex we could increase our vitality, health and spiritual experiences.

Tantric and Taoist sexualities suggest that sex should be integrated as part of our daily health regime and is needed to complete us. The teachings were emphatic about having those needs met and that they should not be ignored at any cost. Sex outside a marriage or other commitment was recommended, if need be, to fulfill those needs. While that does promote *cheating*, it speaks to the serious nature of having our sexual needs met. If mandated by religious beliefs would it be considered cheating?

Is cheating always about sex? Absolutely not! It involves other facets of the human element and encompasses our many needs and requirements. The body, mind, soul and spirit all require certain elements in order to thrive. Our bodies *require* a certain level of vitamin B-12 to maintain healthy blood cells. Without a constant flow of input and the benefit of the learning process, our minds would wither and die. Our souls need light and the spirit needs to soar. Every part of our being has requirements and needs, which promote growth and allow us to flourish.

Sex feeds and nourishes every aspect of our being; however, it cannot sustain us. We need intellectual stimulation and spiritual fulfillment, as well as companionship, friendship and love, in order to thrive. Expecting that our partner will provide for all of our needs would be absurd and cruel. Emotional self-sufficiency is necessary if we expect our relationships to endure.

There is, however, a certain level of sharing and bonding that must take place, to sustain a healthy and successful relationship. That success involves balance in all things and respect for our partner, with each individual contributing a share.

The thesaurus offers several descriptive words and phrases relative to cheating. 'Misrepresent', 'fake', 'evade' and 'to disappoint, are a few on the list. All of those offerings provoked a great deal of thought and produced yet even more questions. If one of those descriptors relates to cheating, does it represent the partner who is cheating or the one being cheated? Are they one in same? Perhaps it was the victim who cheated first by ignoring his/her partner's needs. Would that give the disappointed partner the right to reciprocate? Maybe it isn't really 'cheating', rather a basic instinct of survival.

When we have our needs met outside of our commitment, it makes a clear statement regarding our happiness and contentment. Obviously, where we are is not the place we need to be. The questions should begin to flow regarding the reason for that discontent and promote discussions in reference to fixing it. Cheating won't fix what's broken. It merely bandages a wound that will never heal on its own.

In reality, we cheat ourselves by making a choice, which merely addresses the short term. We do not give attention to long-term mutual needs and the 'what ifs'. When the excitement of new love and grand sex is gone, we are left with a void. We turn to our partner for a rescue, only to discover they are stuck in the same place and have no answers. Our partner cannot be held accountable for our changing needs and rate of growth. Nor can one partner alone be held responsible for the lack of planning and foresight. Planning for success involves two. The basics and details should be thoroughly addressed in the pre-commitment conversations. When long-term compatibility is misjudged, both partners suffer and relationships fail.

No one can be expected to shoulder the responsibility for our happiness and sacrificing our needs is not a requisite to maintaining a successful relationship. For the sake of society and moral compliance, we often accept what doesn't belong to us and find ourselves in an unhappy place, blaming our partner for our bad choices. Many of us play games or break rules to achieve our own end. Still we blame our partner if things do not turn out as we planned. The sad realities show many relationships and marriages are based in satisfying an individual need at a single moment in time. Love and mutual needs are not the main consideration.

The questions and answers regarding cheating are endless and thought provoking. Ultimately, we each must determine our own definitions and explanations. It is wise to view the situation as a whole, with an open mind and from a place of neutrality. Honesty and a firm grasp on reality must play a part in any conclusions and resolutions. Are you at risk?

## Chapter Two

### Profile of a Cheater

What does a cheater look like? Do they stand out in a crowd? Perhaps they have special markings or a defining glow. While some are obvious, due to their behavioral traits, most simply live their secret life without any display for others to see. Actually, cheaters are average people like you and me who, out of frustration, make bad choices in desperation or in hope. They are humans responding humanly to what they perceive as a difficult or intolerable situation. Most are merely trying to correct a choice or decision made in error. While that offers no excuse, it does speak for rationale.

Some of the most brilliant minds and prominent figures in history, as well as government and religious leaders, were/are cheaters. Unfortunately, being famous cannot erase needs. Their chosen profession does not come with the guarantee of intellectual or sexual fulfillment. However, once their indiscretions are made public, they are judged the same as the rest of us, without knowledge of the facts or reasons behind their choices and most are forgiven due to their celebrity status.

Unfortunately, most of those people who cheat do it because they discover their mistake and then decide to correct the error in a less than appropriate manner. They cheat. Either intentionally or unintentionally, they find a fix for what ails them. Many get their fix from cheating as it addresses a host of issues they don't know how to deal with any other way. Some have emotional issues involving sex or use sex as a tool to relieve emotional pain. Others choose cheating as a way of dealing with the issues of aging and the need to feel young and alive. Still others are not able to express their sexual needs to their partner and instead take the 'easy' way out and cheat.

A small number of individuals have an addiction to sex and could never be satisfied with just one partner. Some of those with addictions are not aware they have a *problem*. Most are simply discontent and don't know why.

Men and women are equally prone to cheating. In the past, men comprised the greater number of cheaters. Cheating automatically prompted visions of a man and his mistress in a steamy sensual embrace. However, today's lifestyles and relationships, along with women's free voice, have contributed to an increase in the number of women who choose to cheat. Women are no longer content to take what is offered and now demand the same rights and privileges to sexual satisfaction as men. The dutiful nightly rituals and sex for male gratification are no longer acceptable. When their cravings get the better of them or they hurt, cheating fills the voids and takes the pain of loneliness or discontent away.

Women have always had the same desires for wild, passion-filled sex as men. It was assumed that along with their preprogramming issues, women did not share the same sexual interests as men. Most women understood their primary sexual goals were to serve the cause of their man. For generations women have been taught the fine art of using sex as a tool for manipulation, as well as a weapon for punishment. They never thought to question why, they simply followed the age old teachings of using sex to control and torture the male population. It seemed right and served their purpose well.

Women have finally grown past those limiting prescripts. They understand and appreciate the value of a shared power and are able to assert their sexual voice without demands or manipulations. They are enjoying the release of power in exchange for a mutually fulfilling sexual experience. Given these changes in women's sexuality, profiling a cheater must now include the unsated woman who is in search of more.

Society's rigid standards and programming tend to leave both men and women in a quandary. Most men find it difficult to broach subjects they believe might *cause trouble* in their relationships. Sexual needs are at the top of that subject list. Men do not always make their needs clear in the beginning. Women are left wearing the 'bad guy' hat if they are not able to provide for a need, which is discovered later and over extends their limits and boundaries. Most women are still affected by the 'old ways' and are guided by fear of shame and reprisals regarding their sexuality. The rules are restrictive and cause anxieties for all. That hardly presents sex in a positive light.

Even though women have found their voice and assert their needs, the old tapes often still play. In far too many instances, women continue to assume the power in their relationships. Sadly, many women do not know how to use that power and men *think* that love or sex will cure the indignations of the power exchange. Unfortunately, marriage and commitments often do provoke power issues. The long-standing assumption is that *someone* needs to be in control. Women naturally assume that role as tradition dictates. Sex is the preferred instrument used to achieve that end. There is no delicate way to present those facts.

Societal dictates remain the determining influence. As it has been for generations, our sexuality and lifestyles continue to be predicated on the judgment and behaviors of the masses. We all follow the patterns that have been set for us, without thought of the risks involved. Our relationships literally hang in the balance. When the realities play out without resolve, the cheating begins. It is a pattern of years, and while changes have come, it has not yet reached a level that will cancel the existing reasons to cheat. The profiles remain the same with a few twists to add to the mix.

Cheating most often does become a 'pattern' or habit. Cheaters keep cheating. They repeat the behavior because the original cause has not been addressed or satisfied.

All of the same reasons still exist. Forgiveness is admirable; however, change cannot be expected unless there is a resolve of the issues within the relationship. Addressing mutual needs becomes a priority. In some cases, that provides no guarantees. If the feelings of love were affected, damaged, there may be no returning to a place where the relationship works. If it is not working, the best resolve is to call it a day rather than continue a pattern of cheating. Cheating keeps the other partner locked in a relationship that is probably not satisfying his/her needs either. Both partners deserve the opportunity to move on and find true happiness.

No one descriptor or label is going to appropriately represent cheating, nor is there one specific personality trait, which will identify a cheater. Cheating is far too complex for stereotyping, and everything associated with it extends beyond any concrete, black and white interpretation. No good guy, bad guy scripts exist. The truth is most people struggle with their decision to cheat. There is no malicious intent or contempt involved in that process. A cheater usually harbors no desire to hurt anyone. Their needs have been suppressed for too long and left unattended, have become overwhelming. They are compelled to seek a *fix* in whatever venue holds the offering. For some, the opportunity presents itself and the events 'just happen'.

Cheaters are not always obvious or evil. Men and women who cheat are unhappy, discouraged and desperate individuals who are guided by their intense emotions. Emotionally driven equates to bad decision making. No matter the how and why, cheating is not a behavior we can promote or condone; however, we might understand why it happens and even sympathize. It is not an acceptable cure for relationship problems. Cure the cause or terminate the relationship and move on. The reasons are complex. The solution is simple. Be sure of your choices and decisions *before* a commitment is made.

## Chapter Three

### Choosing to Cheat

Why is cheating the preferred option for resolving relationship issues? What provokes people to make such a detrimental and consequential decision? Obviously, their needs have been neglected, creating a sense of urgency and desperation and they are now compelled to seek a fix. It is also clear they are focused on the emotional pain they are experiencing. While emotionally driven, we are all more likely to make inappropriate choices and decisions in any arena. Why is cheating the first-line option? The offering is there for a quick fix and an easy out. There are no grandiose displays of emotion and needs are satisfied.

Unfortunately, cheating simply prolongs the inevitable and creates more drama in the end. Wouldn't it be more prudent to do the right thing and simply say what you know needs to be said? Asking your partner to discuss the issues and finding a compromise would offer a better solution. Telling your partner that your needs have long been neglected and are at a point of crisis might be helpful. Give an ultimatum, stating emphatically that if there is no resolve, you will have no choice but to consider cheating or leaving. It's that simple!

No, cheating is never simple even if the solution might be. This aspect of life and relationships is out most critical and complex. The decision to breach the vows of a commitment is not usually made in haste or taken lightly. Most often, the issues have been steeping for too long and are now boiling out of control. There is a demand for attention and resolution.

Being honest and forthright would be the ideal, but for many, discussions produce no solutions and there is no point of compromise. Some do choose relationship therapy or attempt a compromise; however, those endeavors are most often short lived or failed attempts and merely stay the inescapable reality. The options are limited. The choices are to stay and deal with it, cheat, or leave. Neither one of those options is easy or necessarily appropriate, but few see any other alternatives. Most people choose the road in the middle rather deal with the harshness of the two extremes. Cheating becomes the least formidable recourse.

The majority of those who choose to cheat give their decision serious, rational consideration. Their actions are well thought out, the risks calculated and all matters of concern have been thoroughly addressed. However, their rational thinking processes are entangled in emotional pain and the well-designed plans are conceived in desperation. Their *secret* life is likely to unravel and their deceitful ventures spoiled due to the level of intense and conflicting emotions. “I’m so happy” challenged by “I’m a terrible person” puts a damper on the happy and relief that is supposed to ensue.

The list of reasons for cheating is extensive. There may be a common catalyst such as sexual or intellectual incompatibilities, but the realities are complex and involve many different aspects of the individuals involved, as well as the relationship they have built. As a result, cheating is not normally precipitated by one surface factor, nor can a single personality trait shoulder the blame. There are many, and they come with the sordid details associated with years of pent up neglect. Rarely is it due to a simple desire to try greener pastures.

Cheating is based in the realities of human nature. We all need love and to feel loved. Sexual intimacy and intellectual stimulation are also on our list of must haves. We need friendship, companionship and spiritual connection.

Without those components a part of us is left incomplete, longing and in pain. When our relationship fails to meet any part of those needs, we cheat. Deciding to cheat is an excruciating process. For some, the first encounter is an unpremeditated event. It *just happens*. Circumstances present themselves, chemistries are in harmony and it's done. The unfortunate result is a want of more. The feel good feelings create a kind of addiction, which warrants a regular fix. It becomes easier and preferable to confronting the harsh realities of a major argument or break up. So, it continues. Cheaters keep cheating because the original cause remains.

The excitement and happiness vs guilt goes on until that moment when the dastardly deed is discovered or a replacement is found for the unsuspecting and now *ex-partner*. There is peace in having someone to share in the pain associated with ending a relationship. Unfortunately, many do not completely resolve the issues that caused the need to cheat. They are transferred to a new partner and the pattern of cheating continues with many subsequent partners. A cycle of discontent and short-term fixes is born. The cheater is labeled as evil and the ex-partners earn pity for the choices they made.

Making the decision to cheat constitutes a serious error in judgement. Not simply for the obvious reason that cheating is *wrong*, but more for the neglect and resulting harm caused to your partner. The lack of attention to needs and failure to recognize your responsibilities as a partner in a relationship creates the atmosphere for cheating. Who then cheats whom? *Before* making a commitment, it is our responsibility to be sure our partner is made aware of our needs and that there is certainty we can meet theirs. If we don't find our partners needs important or commit knowing we can't meet them. the 'bad guy' title belongs as much to us as our cheating partner. We cheat our partner out of the necessities of life. We become the problem and the reason to cheat.

Successful relationships demand open, honest communication. No excuses. Each partner is responsible for insuring he/she can meet the needs of the other and is committed to that course. On the other hand it is up to each partner to be sure he/she is honest about needs, wants, desires and haven't set their partner up to fail. It is up to the individuals to know *all* the facts *before* saying yes. Each partner is responsible for *knowing* what makes the other tick and tingle, what makes their heart sing, their spirit soar. What makes them want to get out of bed each day? Knowing the details, and how to satisfy them will alleviate the need to cheat.

Without a mutual consideration and commitment there can be no *relationship*. It becomes two people sharing space. It takes knowing what they *need* and fantasize about in the bedroom. It means being intellectually compatible and addressing spiritual concerns. It often involves compromise. If those needs can't be met, it should be clearly stated out loud. You cannot expect a *need* to go away, and committing in that hope makes you the cheater. Their decision to cheat will simply be a reaction to *your* lack of commitment. Both partners become the victim and both are cheaters.

If it isn't working, fix it. If it can't be fixed, the right thing to do is move on and allow your partner to do the same. Choosing to cheat will only prolong the inevitable and result in drama for all.

## Chapter Four

### The Discovery

The discovery of cheating in your relationship is a devastating and intensely emotional event. How does one react, respond, and cope with the implications and disappointment? What do you do with your feelings of sadness, anger, rage, pain, love, hate and shock? It is difficult to process and contain the volatile mix of emotions that will flow through you. Your partner has made an obvious and demonstrative statement regarding his/her discontentment and unhappiness through cheating. Why? How could they do such a despicable thing? Who was their cheating partner? What brought us to this? Only a dreadful person would commit this appalling act of betrayal!

Let's examine those questions and the statement regarding the quality of being who would choose to cheat. The why is obvious. Your partner is unhappy. Who is to blame for the infidelity and will blaming help? How it can even be a consideration speaks to the degree of unhappiness. The one who chooses to cheat normally does so out of desperation. Their pain and suffering have been great and their needs ignored for a long period of time. Who the partner was, is irrelative. It was someone who was willing to fill the voids. One who may have needed what was being offered. What brought you to this is self-explanatory. Needs were not met, someone was not paying attention.

There is not always a bad guy scenario that accompanies cheating. Good and bad don't really exist in the realm of cheating. It's all about needs, compatibilities and human nature. Character assessment of the individual who cheated is dependent on many complex factors. Choosing to cheat is never a good idea, but sometimes is seen as the only option or the easiest solution.

Yes, cheating is bad, however it doesn't necessarily equate to the cheater being a *bad* person. As imperfect humans, we are prone to making mistakes, it's what we do. When we cheat we make a mistake in desperation and create a radiating pain which extends beyond ourselves. The more appropriate options appear complicated and painful, so they are passed over for the seemingly better solution.

You do have options when your partner makes the decision to cheat. Allowing emotions to take control is the standard, unfortunately. Reacting according to the dictates of your emotions isn't going to make things better, however. Placing blame, rage filled tantrums, the use of guilt to trap your partner and not accepting responsibility for the role you may have played in their decision, won't make it all disappear. It requires dealing with your emotions before attempting to discuss the real issues, and before making decisions regarding your future. Those tasks are not easy and may take days or weeks to sort out. You must experience every emotion in order to 'deal' with it, put it in its proper place.

What do you do with all of those feelings? Live them, every one that may reside inside. You won't be able to move on and have a successful relationship if you don't. It is best to take a break from your partner during the sorting process. You need time alone, without outside influences to feed your emotions or sway the outcome. You will be inclined to relive your relationship and no one knows what really took place but you. No one can make this decision for you. Mostly importantly, you must be honest with yourself, try to remain objective and see the issues from many different vantage points. Yes, it will be difficult and yes, you have options. You can choose to call it quits, but you will still have to deal with your emotions, they don't go away when you say goodbye. The only way out is to face the drama and trauma head on.

Emotions in check, it's time to ask the hard questions. Can you or will you risk forgiveness? Is there a relationship to salvage? Do *both* partners truly want to fix it? Are you able to admit that you may have contributed to your partner's decision to cheat? What would your relationship be like now that trust and respect have been compromised? What is to come next? Can you recover what was lost? How can you insure your partner won't do this again? Emotion, guilt and shame aside, what do you want to happen now and will it be the right choice? The answers to these questions will not come easy and must be determined by you and your partner without outside influence. Only the two of you know what is in your best interest and what will best serve any children who may be involved.

If there are children involved, care must be taken to keep them from living your pain. They are innocents. They must know that this is not their fault and they did nothing wrong. Both parents need to make that happen. NEVER speak badly about your partner in front of the children! No matter how angry you get or how horrible you see your partner, the children will suffer greatly over parental bashing. It will tear away pieces of their trust, respect and security. You both will become the bad guy in their eyes. They may feel compelled to take sides and will be left with no source of comfort for the anger they must feel toward the *bad person*.

The third party's feelings are also a consideration. Yes, they took part in this evil plot; however, they too may suffer consequences and pain. The cheating partner will have to deal with those issues as well. When choosing to cheat, it is imperative to consider the inevitability of discovery, and the many people that will be affected by taking this path. Family, friends, co-workers and others will be exposed to the resulting drama. Many will pay the price for this decision.

Most everyone who cheats is discovered in time. Some may want to get caught and use it to get out of their relationship.

Oddly, they find it easier than openly stating their discontent and prefer it to having to say out loud that they need relief or want out. No matter the reason for cheating and when or how a cheater is caught, people get hurt. Emotional levels run high and irrational decisions are made while under the influence of these intense emotions. No one comes out of this scenario a winner. Both partners become victims.

Whether you are the 'cheating' partner or the 'victim', discovery will be a life-altering event. If not handled appropriately, the consequences will be devastating. Making the decision to fix the problems or call it quits requires that both partners have their emotions in check and make choices without blaming or labeling. Most importantly, the solutions must come in honesty, with both partners willing to accept responsibility for their actions. Particular attention must be paid to the needs and feelings of others who have suffered from your decisions.

As you begin your analysis and decision making process understand that you will most likely find the cheater and victim are one in the same. The cheating partner normally carries the burden of being the bad guy, when in fact he/she is simply following the course of human nature in seeking to have their needs met. Needs have been ignored or compatibilities grossly miscalculated and one or both partners suffer. Cheating is a cry for relief and discovery ends suffering.

## Part Two

### After the Fact

Choosing to remain in a relationship or commitment that isn't working for either one or both partners, is never a viable option. Alternatives can be found for *everyone* in that situation. No one should feel compelled to settle for a life, which dampens his/her spirit and stifles growth, or provokes a sense of hopelessness or failure. Cheating may answer the call for the short term but is not a true resolve. So, what are the options for couples, who are in dire need of change? Solutions lie in the true desires and needs of the individual. No standard form will address the issues. Regardless of any proposed solution, one fact remains clear. No one need ever feel compelled to endure a life of despair for any reason.

The reasonable solution is to be sure your relationship is solid *before* you commit. Be positive you are compatible in every aspect of life before you agree to be in a relationship or other commitment. Most couples bypass that vital step and dive in without knowing if it will last past the first six months and if it will endure whatever unforeseen events life may send their way. Lust is a powerful force and can influence those decisions. Even the wisest of us is not spared its hypnotic affects. As a result, well thought out decisions are lost to dreamy choices made while 'under the influence'.

Awakening to discover your choices may have been made in error, does not propose that you are *stuck* with the consequences of your decision or that corrections can't be made. However, it does mean that the situation will have consequences and you must deal with them in an appropriate manner to limit the amount of pain and suffering of all the parties involved.

Yes, you neglected to consider *all* of the important issues and will have difficult decisions to make regarding the future. You can repair the damages, find ways to reconnect and bond, or seek intervention from professionals who are trained to help in this type of situation.

Repairs may mean *honest* communication about needs and desires, compromise, sometimes even sacrifice, if the relationship and partners are to flourish. There is debate, however, about compromise and sacrifice being relative to settling. You don't want to make another mistake to compensate for the original one. Accepting unhappiness as a way of life to maintain a relationship for whatever reason or excuse is NOT the answer. Sometimes the most we can do is admit we blew it and move on.

Make no decisions in haste or in anger, but make them, and don't drag the anguish on in the namesake of heroism or guilt. Consider any future decisions regarding your relationships with care. Question the need of marriage contracts and other commitment agreements that would potentially be restrictive and inhibitive. Don't allow yourself or your partner to be held hostage by a mistake. *Know* the answers to *all* the important questions *before* you say yes.

Making decisions based in hope is never a wise choice. If you know a deal breaker exists, but have *hope* something will work out later, don't say yes. There are solvable problems, which are needs, desires, and there are those that unfortunately have no fix, and compromise won't do. Those unsolvable issues are requirements, not needs and cannot be compromised. They can hold your dreams of bliss and relationship goals at bay. Consider how your mistakes will affect others if that helps in motivating you to face reality and make the right decision. Hope and dreams, wishing it so, won't help make it happen.

## Chapter Five

### Fixing What's Broken

Is it really possible to *fix* a relationship after its covenants have been breached by a cheating event? Why would anyone consider putting forth the effort to make repairs? Isn't it obvious that the cheating partner is not happy and wants something else? .What would be left to fix? All are valid questions, which involve complex issues. The answers and solutions will be unique to the couples involved. No stereotypical response or resolve exists that would address the needs of the masses.

Whatever attempts are made to reconcile will demand honesty and sincerity of desire in your efforts. Honesty will determine the success or failure of the communication and negotiations in this regard. There must be a willingness to admit without anger, that life has not turned out the way you had hoped. *Both* partners must be able to admit openly that mistakes were made in their commitment assessment and agreement, as well as their actions and intent. When anger is allowed free reign in the dialogue only detrimental results can prevail. It will require moving past your emotions and issues to find a successful union.

There is sound argument for and against attempting a fix. Some claim that cheating creates too many trust issues to repair the damages. Others see the positive aspects and argue that the couple can move past the pain and aftereffects to rebuild a loving, enduring relationship. The determinate factor essentially lies in what provoked the cheating. The reasons will reach beyond sex and include emotional needs and elements of the psyche, physical needs, growth issues, a partner's past, stress levels, mistaken identity, and sincere interest in continuing in the relationship.

Other causes might include the need of one partner to be in *command*, a fear of growing up or fear of growing old, impossible expectations, focus on individual agendas, and a demand for self-sacrifice.

No matter, cheating is clearly all about *needs*. Whether or not a relationship can be fixed, once cheating occurs, is dependent upon the desire and capability of the partners to recognize and satisfy each other's needs. It is that simple. That *fact* is not negotiable or complex. A breakdown occurs when the partners are unable to communicate their needs or when voiced they are ignored. Left unattended or passed over, needs become an 'issue', which must be satisfied. That is human nature.

Needs speak to our essence and are vital elements of consideration. Without addressing those details, the relationship is lost and holds little value to either partner. In our quest to 'fix' a relationship we must question the many aspects of the partners individually as well as the two as a couple. We need to know which partner owns the issues. Who actually cheated first? Each component, which contributed will have its own subcomponents, so how do we sort it all out and begin to make repairs? It appears as a herculean task, complicated and overwhelming doesn't it?

So, where do we begin? Below is an outline of a painstaking process, the 'must haves'. No, it isn't as easy as forgiving and forgetting and continuing on as usual. That doesn't happen in real life. There is a lot of work to do. Remember cheating is complex. Easy is not a part of this venture. For that reason, there has to be a sincere desire to want to keep the relationship intact. Both partners must truly want to stay together and for the right reasons. Without a sincere and diligent endeavor, it will simply be a waste of time and energy.

Below begins a series of questions and thoughts to ponder regarding a fix. Thoroughly address the following aspects of your relationship.

Share with your partner and discuss each of the issues openly and honestly without any reservation or hesitation. An inability to communicate in honesty will negate any perceived progress and prove a lesson in futility. There is nothing to lose when you have arrived at this point. Go for it all. Make sure your partner is fully aware of your needs and you theirs. Leave nothing to chance. Be sure you find the root cause for the cheating. Don't be afraid to ask the hard questions or to give the least favorable answer. Avoiding the truth will not be of benefit to anyone and will solve nothing. You will be back at this same place again if the *true* issues are not resolved.

1-Is it the *sincere* desire of *both* partners to repair and continue the relationship, and is it for the *right* reasons?

Do you really *want* your relationship to work? Have the issues grown past a fix? Is there love or merely a sense of duty that would compel you to stay and make repairs? Without love and sincerity of desire, there is no purpose. Attempts to make repairs will be in vain. The efforts will simply waste time you could spend in healing and moving on.

2-Determining the issues and accepting responsibility

Did you seek resolve outside of your relationship because your partner intentionally neglected your needs, or is it that you weren't honest with him/her about your what they were? Who was responsible for the lack of attention to the issues? Answer the questions with honesty, emotions aside. Admit your mistakes and take responsibility for your actions. Most often, both partners have made mistakes and acceptance of that fact will offer easier access to repairs.

3-Assess the damages- Is there a fix?

Is there a way to correct the problem(s) or is there room for compromise? Both partners must be open and honest about the role they played in the lack of attention to their individual needs.

Are you aware of what your needs are? Have you made those clear to your partner? Is your partner truly capable of meeting your needs? Does he/she find them important? Is the damage from the lack of care overwhelming?

4-Assess the structure of the relationship. Can it endure a fix?

Has there been open communication between you and your partner from the beginning? Have you since communicated your needs and discussed the problems? What was the result? Do you know what you need from your relationship? Can you relay that information freely now? Are there past issues to resolve that do not involve your partner? Are you asking your partner to carry too heavy a burden? Should those expectations continue? Is there anything left to salvage?

5-Communicate for success

Talking is a necessary path to a cure. Are you able to openly discuss the *true* issues, or do you feel you have to say what you think your partner would readily accept? Saying what needs to be said is the ONLY option. If your partner cannot understand and cope with the realities, you will be better equipped to make a well-informed decision about putting forth the effort in a fix. Is staying in the relationship the right course?

6-Removing obstacles

This is often a difficult process, but necessary for every couple *before* they commit. Any negative emotions or issues from the past must be confronted and put in their proper place. in order to avoid them influencing your new relationship. It is needed if the expectation is to share in a healthy relationship. Getting through personal or past issues after you have committed to a relationship is much more difficult and sometimes impossible.

This step is critical in order to move on with or without your partner. Work through anger and pain or seek help from a professional, if needed. Without a thorough cleaning of the attic, there is no room for the positives to be stored. Without the ability to accept and forgive, there is no point in moving forward.

#### 7-Compromise is an option

Are you open to compromise? Would compromising be equal to 'settling'? Can a compromise truly meet your needs? If the love and trust have been damaged or destroyed, there is little point in continuing. There can be no compromise or fix. People often associate compromise with weakness, but it is about making a deal to meet in the middle. It's working together without the influence of power to come to an agreement to make things work. The important rule is not accepting deals you know aren't going to be in your best interest or offer a cure. And, never settle!

#### 8-Implementing change

It's easy to talk about what needs to take place. Making the changes and actually doing what you talk about is not always so easy. How would you go about making the changes? Are the changes truly possible or are they simply hopes and dreams of what could be? The adage about it sounding good on paper would apply here. You have to have follow through and implement your ideas into positive actions. Be willing and resigned to back up your word. If there is doubt, is it fair to ask your partner to wait and see or is it best to allow them the freedom to move on?

#### 9-Attitude determines success

If you view an attempt at repairing your relationship as difficult, overwhelming, impossible, then it will be, and there is little point in going through with it.

A positive attitude and genuine love for your partner is what it will take to accomplish your goals. If you see inevitable failure, it will fail. Don't waste everyone's time.

#### 10-Abusive relationships

When physical or mental abuse is involved in any relationship, there is only one solution. Leave. Do not attempt to repair. There is no fix. There is no reason good enough to stay and put forth the effort. Abuse is not love. You are worth more than that. There are resources to help with anything you might need through your local county or church organizations.

When relationships go wrong and one feels the need to cheat, it speaks volumes about the relationship and the value in trying to save it. Are you obligated to stay and endure? Self-sacrifice is not expected, and offering it doesn't make you the honorable partner. It is not considered self-serving or selfish to have needs, and ask that they be addressed. Relationships are *shared* experiences and do not propose one partner as responsible for its success or failure. Mutual satisfaction requires a *combined* effort, built on the partners' desire and capability to satisfy each other's needs. While you are not completely responsible for your partner's happiness and contentment in life, there is an expectation that certain needs will be met.

Relationships are complex, emotionally driven events in life. They carry our trust and when we decide to become a couple, we allow another person to see inside our darkness, share our hopes and dreams. If not given an honest, open view of the realities of us they can't know how best to promote the relationship's endurance. Committing without full disclosure and knowledge of the facts inhibits your partner from meeting your needs. Both partners contribute to that aspect of a relationship and both are held accountable for its downfall.

Cheating changes the dynamic of all relationships. The bond once shared will never be the same. In rare instances, it can create a positive change; however, most often there are tensions in the air, which don't ever go away. There is sadness in the partners they can't identify or verbally express, an ever present painful weight they must carry in silence. Cheating, after all, is the ultimate betrayal and a grandiose display of unhappiness and discontent.

Any attempt to rescue the relationship from the devastating effects of cheating, commands a want of *both* partners. Recovery will be long and require that they accept responsibility for their role in the event. Each partner contributed and each must be willing to admit and accept his or her share. Should you try to save it or should you move on and find what you really need? Only the partners know what they lived and felt and they are the ones who must answer that question.

There are arguments for working it out and others for letting go. Ultimately, only you know what is best for you.

Many factors contribute to a decision to cheat and all of those factors must be addressed in consideration for repair. Leaving one to chance could ruin your hope of success. Reconciliation is not simply a matter of changing your actions it requires satisfaction of needs. Yes, you can change behaviors, but you cannot erase desires and needs. Left unattended, they fester within creating resentment and desperation, pain and discontent. Needs and desires will be the primary focus.

Your partner must know your needs (all of them) from the beginning to determine if he/she can meet them. They "can't fix what they don't know is broken". That is the first rule in relationships. Acceptance is the second. It is the key to any successful relationship. Commitment equals acceptance. You commit to your partner with no designs for change. Either they suit your preferences or they don't.

If there is a need for change, then that person isn't right for you. Keep looking for one that doesn't require alteration.

The third rule is vital. It requires validation of your feelings and sexual compatibility. Is your want to commit based in lust or is it love? Is there a lasting sexual compatibility or will that require change or manipulation? When love or lust is new, we don't consider the importance of the finer details. However, they will be the determining factor in its endurance. They will be key in any attempt to repair and recover from a cheating event.

There is not just one 'bad guy' in a cheating scenario and one partner alone cannot repair the damage and be committed to the relationship. Fixing what's broken is a two person venture. Each must have the desire to reconcile, based on their realities rather than in hopes and dreams. It is vital that it be a positive for *both* partners. It will take effort, love, patience, honesty and sincere desire to make it work. Wishing and guilt motivated efforts merely prolong the inevitable and create more misery. If there is doubt, give serious consideration to whether or not your efforts will be in vain.

The following pages represent some of the more important considerations when making a decision to reconcile or in choosing to call it quits. Make yourself aware of the realities and address all of the core issues. Another mistake would not be of benefit to either partner or others who may be involved.

## Compatibility & Needs

Needs neglected, and a lack of consideration to compatibility issues before committing are the leading cause for cheating and failed relationships. Both areas of concern involve personal and professional interests, values, sex, attitude/outlook, personality, spirituality, family and friends, to name a few. Most people who find themselves in a state of discontent, did not consider the implications and importance of long-term compatibility and/or suffer from a lack of attention to their needs. Both partners hold equal responsibility for these issues and bear the burden of failure. Do you know what your partners needs are? Are you capable of meeting them?

Very few couples address and prepare for the 'what ifs' and little attention is paid to the complete list of 'must haves'. The result of a lack of preparation and attention to detail is costly. Assumptions and neglect warrant cheating and relationship failure. Discontentment and unhappiness are the consequences of a lack of consideration for these two vital aspects of your relationship. They need your attention *before* commitment and certainly while attempting to repair a broken relationship or marriage.

Some men and women find it difficult to talk openly about their sexual needs, but those issues are the root cause of most all incidences of cheating. It is a need and is a major compatibility issue. Why ignore a subject so detrimental to the endurance of your relationship? You have to openly discuss your essentials list, your partner cannot fix what he/she doesn't know is broken. Women carry a history of preprogramming issues and men continue to ignore the consequences of those issues. Both genders continue to follow the path of previous generations, commit in haste without an understanding of who their partner really is and what their needs might be. They ignore their responsibilities and hope for the best. Reality gets lost to frivolous want and self-serving desire.

The fact is that all of us have needs, and while our partner cannot be expected to serve all of those conditions, some are anticipated, expected, or assumed as part of all relationship agreements. If necessities can't be met you cannot assume or expect compatibility. Relationships require that you accept your partner 'as is' and agree that you will be able to meet their needs or you make no sense as a couple.

Compatibility and needs will make or break a relationship or marriage. If attention is not given to this aspect of your relationship, there can be no 'relationship'. It then becomes a matter of two people being miserable together without cause or one partner cheating with cause. Those components will determine whether it is wise to stay or go when the cheating is discovered. Houses, cars, duty, pity, guilt, kids, friends, family and insecurities should not play a role in your decision to make repairs or call it a day. Based on those elements, the commitment is doomed to fail and everyone involved will remain discontent and unhappy.

Your problems may be complex but the solutions are simple. Ask yourself the important questions. Do you genuinely love your partner or is there simply a sense of duty? Do you have a sincere desire to make your relationship work? Can you move past the trust and respect issues that now exist from the cheating? Can you meet your partner's needs; can he/she meet yours? Do you honestly feel you will be happy and content if you stay, and will your partner feel the same? Would it be best to say goodbye and search for more suitable partners?

If you can't find good cause to stay then it's time to say goodbye. Compatibility and needs are essentials to every commitment, and without those elements appropriately addressed, the relationship is doomed to fail. Cheating will not magically disappear because we wish it so. If our essentials list cannot be fulfilled and compatibility remains an issue, the cheating will continue.

It is human nature. Both partners deserve to be content and happy with someone who will eagerly meet their needs and with whom they are compatible. Staying makes no sense if either partner is unhappy. Continuing to cheat is a mistake and will only prolong the inevitable. It's best to kiss and say goodbye. It is the best solution for all who are involved, including the children.

## Dependency & Sacrifice

Every type of relationship comes with a certain degree of dependency and will occasionally provoke the need to make sacrifices for the greater good. On different levels, we do become dependent on family, friends, and our partner; it is human nature. Periodically, we may find it necessary to make sacrifices for the sake of those we love. However, when dependency reaches an unhealthy level and sacrifice becomes a way of life, serious attention must be given to the realities and consequences of maintaining such a relationship.

Dependencies often create resentment and can erode relationships. A cheating event can enable the use of dependency to summon a bogus call for sacrifice, manipulating a partner to stay in a dysfunctional relationship. When dependency becomes a tool to manipulate, it is transformed into a dangerous weapon that can ultimately ruin lives. It is loaded with emotional *issues*, representative of unhealthy insecurities. When deciding the viability of repairing a damaged relationship or saying goodbye, dependency can be a formidable and powerful component. It can get in the way of making the *right* choices. If allowed to control our decisions, it can lead to detrimental mistakes.

Dependency can emulate a prison of sorts, feeling trapped, powerless, and will actually promote cheating as a means of escape and relief. It can destroy relationships and marriages and if it is part of the downhill spiral of your relationship, is not easily negotiated. At its worst, it is overwhelming and cannot be remedied without intervention. The needy and dependent partner taints the air with oppression and devours hope and joy, leaving the other partner desperate for relief. Relenting to sacrifice led by emotion, or cheating are seen as options. Sacrifice can mirror doom and cheating brings the pain and anxieties of guilt. Getting out is seen as an overwhelming task or an impossibility. Cheating makes the task easier. It actually allows the confidence and strength needed to break free.

Being a couple does not require sacrificing happiness for the sake of your partner, nor is one partner solely responsible for maintaining the integrity of the relationship. Enduring and healthy relationships demand that each partner be responsible for his own feelings and well-being. Emotional self-sufficiency is necessary in both partners to achieve success. It is never wise to enter into a relationship knowing it serves only one partner's advantage. Love is not displayed in that type of idealism.

Dependency promotes guilt, a sense of duty, shame and creates a forged demand for sacrifice, neither of which is healthy. If both partners are dependent and needy, an endless cycle of dysfunction is created and no one's needs are truly ever served. The cycle must be broken. Guilt or duty is likely at the helm when dependency goes too far, and then is transformed into sacrifice. When sacrifice becomes a necessity it negates any positives and damages the relationship beyond repair. Sacrifice should represent a freely given gift rather than be a chore. It is never wise to give your power and essence away in the namesake of saving your relationships. There is no guarantee your act of heroism will serve a real purpose when all is said and done.

When deciding the future of your relationship, it is vital to assess the facts, the *realities* of your situation. Has love been replaced with a sense of duty or dependency? Are you willing to give yourself to another's needs in exchange for *the loss* of your own? Should settling or complacency override your right to be happy?

## Guilt & Regret

Guilt and regret are inevitable side effects of failed relationships, saying goodbye, and cheating. Guilt is feeling badly for a mistake we've made that may have hurt another. Regret is wishing there was a way to rewind and make a different choice. They are those nagging thoughts and feelings, which prick at our conscience and leave us in anguish. Making mistakes, however, is part of the human process; it is normal and unavoidable. As imperfect beings, it is what we do. Our greatest challenge involves getting past the intense effects of the guilt and regret, to find a healthy perspective. How can we address consequential issues when driven by such persuasive emotions? What can we do with the doubt and dutiful reasoning that ensue?

Getting past emotions to deal rationally with the issues appears an impossible task. Guilt is a compelling force, which can drive us to behave more irrationally than we would under 'ordinary' circumstances. It can push us to make even more detrimental mistakes. Guilt will provoke many other compelling emotions and as a result, is all too often used as a tool to try to force a partner to stay in an unhealthy relationship. We carry guilt and have regrets about the role we played as a partner and in the outcome of our relationship. Since they are the natural effects of our situation and can't be avoided, how do we deal with them? How do we make it all go away?

There is no way to get around it or make it go anywhere. The monster of all emotions has been brought forth and must be dealt with. Dealing with it does not include placing blame on your partner, yourself, or any third party. Blaming will not erase any act or its effects. You must consciously and with great effort, force yourself to realize the humanness of your situation and do what you feel is in the best interest of all involved parties. Most importantly do what you know is best for you.

You could spend your energies in the psychology of your situation or fall into a victim response, and you can waste your time and efforts on self-pity and loathing; however, those notions won't carry any weight in the grand scheme of things. That is guilt in control.

The solution is simple; do what you have to do! Leave emotions out of the equation and the decision making process. Accept responsibility for your actions and do what you know is right. Deal with your feelings of guilt only after you have applied the logic. Guilt and regret hold no logic, benefit no one, and therefore are a waste of your time and effort. If you have cheated, there is a reason. If you can't make the reason go away there can be no resolve; the relationship is done. Although that sounds simple enough, it isn't, but it may be the only logical recourse and the only rational solution.

For many, guilt becomes a manipulative tool, used to prey on the intense emotions of their partners. It is used as leverage to convince the partner to stay, to remain unhappy and discontent. In reality, it is merely an attempt to satisfy what one partner 'thinks' *he/she* needs. As much as they want others to believe it is for the good of all, it merely addresses their own self-serving desires. Words, and promises made in desperation are not sustainable and offer no solution to an unhappy state of being. Neither does staying in an unfulfilling relationship and choosing to cheat.

Guilt has many faces, which can embrace the mild annoyance and reach to the debilitating extreme. It can be used as a tool to cause pain or to control, an instrument of torment, and comes as a side effect of questionable deeds. Its power is determined by the amount of control we allow it, and by our actions. Cheating is one of those actions that show two faces of guilt in one event. One is born of the act itself and the other provides ammunition for another to use as a weapon. By your own deeds, you bring down a powerful enemy on yourself. How do you make it go away?

One obvious solution; Don't cheat. The other cure involves not giving another person the power to control your life, thoughts, and feelings. Only you know what's best for you, no one else can make those determinations. If you find yourself caught in the guilt trap, you must summon the strength and courage to cut the cord that binds you there. Say NO. No therapist, family, friend or clergy can show you the way. You know what to do, and will find the right way to get it done. Pain heals with time and redirection to unknown paths is not a negative. Don't let guilt in any form dictate any aspect of your life. Cheating is a breeding ground for guilt and an open invitation for it to control your thoughts and actions.

When you choose to cheat you not only affect your life but also involve others, innocents like children and family. You include the other partner who may or may not be an innocent, but will inevitably be trapped in the drama and your pain. Unfortunately, this scenario has become part of the societal norm. The old adage about reaping what you sow applies here. You have choices. What you do with that freedom belongs to you and can't be dictated by others. You alone are responsible for those choices and must consider all aspects and the repercussions before making them.

Regret, like guilt can bring a heavy burden. Together they can create a life of misery. However, if you are confident in your choices, then regret holds no place and will carry no weight. That does not mean your choices were the right ones, only that they felt right for you at the time. The consequences of wrong choices are the hurt and damage they may cause others. No, there is no need to regret choosing to satisfy your needs or allow guilt to define you for making a mistake. It is human. That being said, carefully considering the consequences of your actions is a responsibility. Maybe there is a better way. A thorough assessment of a commitment before making it and the choices you make in that regard, will alleviate the need for cheating, regret, and guilt.

So, where does love go when it dies? Is there cause for guilt and regret when it's gone? Most commonly, when love *dies*, it is a demonstrative display of reality. *Love* in its truest sense, didn't really ever exist. Something that mimicked love was present in its stead. Interpreted as love, choices were made and the future was planned, before the discovery of the imitator. That mistake prompted a sequence of bad decisions and many more mistakes, which provoked cheating, guilt, and regret.

Oftentimes, we find that love was alive, but was not strong enough to carry the heavy load expected of it. The weight diminished the love and replaced it with stress and a want of relief. Regret and guilt still result as will the need of the release found in cheating. There is true relief in being honest about your situation. Tell your partner you are struggling and need their help in finding a fix or you need the freedom to seek happiness elsewhere. The pain will be less for all and recovery time shorter. Honesty is the best course and moving on could spare everyone a lot of pain.

Cheating, feeling guilty and living with regret won't solve your problems. They will only add to the existing issues. If it can be fixed, then fix it. If there is no fix, give one last kiss and say goodbye. It doesn't get any simpler than that. It is the right solution for you, your partner, and the children who suffer as you do and need relief.

## Deal Breakers

The must haves, the deal breakers, things we can't possibly live with or without, our requirements that can become major contributors to cheating and relationship failure. We all have them, but are not all willing to compromise the chance for a relationship to say them aloud. We hold them in check to avoid losing out on *happiness*. We live in hope we can lend to compromise or learn to ignore their existence. Can that hope transform itself into reality? Are we able to erase our requirements in the name of love? No.

A deal breaker might be a fetish, and intense craving, a fear (real or imagined), a perception of comfort or pain. They differ from needs, which can be negotiated, modified, or held over. You may need a break from work, however, that need can wait and the details modified. Requirements are non-negotiable, commanding and at times life altering. For some, living in the city when they require the serenity of a rural setting becomes excruciatingly painful, impossible. It eventually becomes a deal breaker. An incident from the past can create certain requirements or a need to avoid certain personality types and the slightest mimic of that incident or personality can create a deal breaker.

We can put those must haves away in a metaphoric trunk, sit on them and pretend they have disappeared. In reality, while stored away they grow and fester; build pressure and will eventually burst through and blast you from your post as guardian. No, they don't go anywhere and don't magically disappear because we hope they will, for the sake of our happiness. Eventually the pressure builds to a point of explosion and with a screaming burst of agony; we must emphatically proclaim our inability to cope.

It isn't that the deal breakers are things we shout about, often they are seemingly little things that no one else would notice. They are specific to us, to our needs and do demand our attention. Susan does not want children and can't explain why. She hoped that the want of her partner for a child would eventually fade in their blissful life as a couple or that she might change her mind as time passed. Neither was the case and it became a deal breaker. The relationship failed because it was based in a hope rather than in fact.

Oral sex is a deal breaker for Bob, something he feels is necessary to his wellbeing. It satisfies physical and emotional requirements for him. He didn't express that need in the beginning, out of fear of upsetting his partner. He thought he could bring it up later and his partner would readily agree due to their intense bond, or that he might be able to overcome his craving. Neither was the case and cheating ensued. Bob couldn't explain the craving and couldn't erase its lack of appeal for his partner. It eventually overwhelmed his sense of duty to his partner and the relationship.

However menial or outrageous one's requirements may appear to others, they will eventually affect the relationship. Wishing, hoping and ignoring those realities won't change the outcome. Our deal breakers are what they are. We have to have what we have to have. It isn't a case of right or wrong, good or bad, it just is what it is. And, it is okay. It is vital however, to find someone who can accept those requirements rather than try to hide or ignore them in the namesake of being *happy*. In the end, no one will be happy. You will have defeated your purpose and it will have all been a waste.

Relationships can endure many challenges and bear the burden of overwhelming obstacles. Our individual requirements, if ignored, have the power to destroy even the strongest commitment. Due to the constant inner struggle, both partners and the integrity of the relationship suffer. We have no choice but to give into it in one form or fashion.

It demands recognition and satisfaction. Unfortunately, we don't always understand or have an explanation for our requirements. They just are. Too often, we assume there will be a fix, like magic our need will fade. Maybe our partner will arrive as the savior or that we can move past its stronghold, however that is not the case. In reality, it will grow into an intolerable monster, which is beyond our control and we must find a solution. Cheating offers that relief; the magic. Relationship failure is imminent.

When attempting to repair a relationship, commitment or marriage, the deal breakers can no longer be ignored, left tucked away in that old trunk. They have to be presented and consideration must be given to the consequences of pretending they don't exist. The cheating won't stop if the reason for the cheating is still present. You have to take away the underlying cause. Attending to the deal breakers is vital and an issue that cannot be ignored or passed over. If you suspect your deal breaker is behind your relationship issues, you have no choice but to accept its existence and deal with its influence in your life and relationship. Its interference will only continue until you do.

As you can see, fixing what's broken is complex and challenging. It is not for the faint of heart. Study your options carefully and make your decision based in reality rather than hopes and dreams. Never be led by emotion but with confident rationale about what is in the best interest of all who are involved.

## Chapter Six

### Why We Stay in Bad Relationships

Far too many couples choose to stay in relationships that cannot satisfy their needs or lead to true happiness. Although it leaves both partners struggling emotionally and physically, they are compelled to cling to a relationship or marriage they know is not working. Why would they intentionally torture themselves? They all come with a rationale that satisfies all complaints and covers a multitude of judgments, however none are valid. When dreams of eternal bliss turn to discontent, and despair becomes the norm, the wise course is to consider the alternatives and options, rather than stay and offer yourself up as a sacrifice.

Instead, most rationalize their decision to stay with excuses that satisfy a sense of guilt, and which are most likely to stave off judgment or argument from the outside world. In reality, the rationale for their decision lacks substance and truth. The facts will most often differ from any intellectual considerations they can conjure. There is much more than a sense of duty and chivalry that keeps them bound to misery. Their rationalizations merely provide a place of comfort where they can hide from reality and avoid facing their mistakes and the truth.

What do you do when the myriad of excuses for staying no longer compensates or erases the negatives that create unhappiness? Must you maintain a strong commitment to duty, self-sacrifice and loneliness in the namesake of love? That type of rationale presents love as a negative event. How unhappy should we allow ourselves to become before we throw out the excuses and have the confidence and character to call it a day?

What are the answers and why do we use excuses in their place? Why are we compelled to deny our realities? Most often it is fear, shame, guilt and our own insecurities that binds us in despair.

Most unhappy participants have the standard justifications at the ready for anyone who might challenge their decision to remain steadfast in their misery. They stay for love, financial concerns or *for the sake of the children*. Those are the standard excuses, which our society accepts as viable. Is it better for children to continually feel and hear the discontent and unhappiness? Is it for their sake or yours and is it good parenting knowing your issues will affect how they deal with their own life relationships in the future? It would be wise to consider the long-term consequences of your choice.

Yes, you could make a strong case for money issues. It is the more difficult issue to argue, but there are usually solutions to be found with careful consideration and compromise. In reality, the many excuses merely help bury the truth and save face. The *truths* actually lie in the partner's own fears and insecurities. The answers can be found there, rather than in any courageous icon, they might present. Is it a sense of duty, which binds us? Maybe it is the anxieties that come with acknowledging the truth and the pain of a break up that hold us hostage?

Even though the partners are miserable, they are driven by their fear; afraid of what family, friends and work associates will think of them if they give up, leave. The majority are afraid of being alone. They are insecure about their future and afraid to let go of their security blanket. Let's face it, relationships do promote dependencies, and breaking that cycle is not an easy task. However, is fear a viable reason to stay and are they being fair to their partner if they do? Maybe their partner is equally discontent and deserves the right to find happiness as well. The children might find comfort and peace in the contentment of a separation.

Many of my clients come to me in a state of desperation, seeking help with their dysfunctional relationships or marriages. They want approval and verification from an outside source that they deserve the punishment that comes with staying in a bad relationship, or think that staying and cheating is a viable solution. While they offer many reasons (excuses) for their conclusions, their realities are visible in their eyes, body language and voice tone. They are unhappy and looking for a way out or affirmation of their sacrifice.

There is never a reason or an excuse good enough to warrant staying in a bad relationship. Staying and cheating may seem easier than dealing with the drama of a breakup and is certainly preferable to facing your own insecurities, but it is not a cure. Cheating is merely a temporary fix. Liken it to a doctor putting a Band-Aid on a cancer and expecting a cure. Exactly. It is an absurd notion. The fact is that some relationships are simply not meant to be. The cure is to admit the mistake, find the courage let go and move on.

In reality, most people who come to me seeking help secretly hope to hear arguments for why they should leave their partner. They want permission to be happy and hope I will validate their reasons for wanting out. Having confirmation and approval for their feelings, eases the guilt, helps alleviate the pain and punishment of their mistake, and allows them to confront their partner with a clear conscience. Validation goes a long way to offering up the confidence and motivation needed to walk away.

Many couples eventually seek therapeutic intervention. It is a last ditch effort to save the relationship; an admirable gesture, if their show of effort is based in reality. The hope is to have *their* issues validated while their partner is shown as the one with the burdensome problems. Fixing the complaints would be the best resolve, but why beat yourself up if there is no fix for what's broken? Maybe it just wasn't meant to be, and decisions were made in haste or under the influence of lust.

Why prolong the inevitable if it just isn't going to work? Compromise and alternatives can often be found, but would those fixes grasp the root of the problem or simply prove to Band-Aid the real issues?

Determining the cause of the deterioration and demise of the relationship is important. If it can't resolve the breakdown of the current relationship, it might help avoid repeating patterns in any subsequent relationships. Finding a cure will involve understanding how the role of growth, poor planning, complacency, sexual incompatibility, daily life frustrations, and individual needs contributed to relationship failure. Ideally, every couple would plan for these problems and know how to deal with them when they arise, but unfortunately, that is not usually the case. Couples avoid that aspect of planning and ignore the realities of human nature.

Once the mistake is realized, fear dictates the partner's response. A sense of duty and guilt begin to consume them. Insecurity and doubt play a major role in controlling their reactions. Then, they find a way to rationalize the situation and make it become their partner's issue. This new mindset gives a green light for resentment and cheating. While the risks of getting caught at cheating are great, the short term fix satisfies and holds the inevitable horror of facing reality and a breakup at bay. The fix is easy. However, a cycle is born. Guilt and duty, anger and blaming alternate control and the cycle continues. Everyone remains miserable.

Ultimately, staying in a bad relationship, without resolution, can be damaging to everyone involved, and ignoring the issues will not make them go away, nor will it bring inner peace. Eventually the partners have to confront the realities of their situation and are forced to deal with the power and affects it holds in their lives. Being lead by fear and insecurity can never be a positive. It is vital to both partners that they regain their power and be in control of their destiny.

If your relationship is broken, fix it. If it can't be fixed, then call it done and move on. Life is a risk; dare to take it, for exciting new adventures await on every new path.

## Chapter Seven

### When Love and Dreams Die

Where does love go when it dies? What happens to our dreams when we aren't paying attention? Unfortunately, the dreams we share when love is new, can change with time and circumstance. Regrettably, love and many of those once cherished dreams become buried among the ruins of reality. Oftentimes, couples get busy and forget why they fell in love and lose sight of their wondrous visions. Some perhaps simply lose interest. Far too many inevitably discover the once cherished images of bliss weren't theirs after all. If we should fall victim to these realities, are we expected to remain discontent and unhappy in the namesake of commitment? How do you know when it's time to let go and how can you say goodbye?

Mistakes are difficult to admit; however continuing to live a lie creates only misery for all who are involved. Fear not, you are not alone. Far too many are driven by lust and the newness of love and commit in hope, in haste, to a relationship, which cannot contain their dreams. They awaken from the spell to find they have committed in error. Being human, we are unable to achieve perfection and it's okay to admit that and ask for a reprieve. When the love, which once held two souls melded ends, and cheating becomes a viable option, it is past time to demand a fix or call it a day. It's time to lay the dreams aside for another day and time, maybe to be shared with another when the time is right.

Any attempted fix or separation will only be found in honesty. The difficulty is not in being honest, but comes with the shame of having made a mistake. Still, it must be done. Your partner must be made aware of your feelings, struggles, needs, and the realities of the relationship.

*Together*, you decide if there is merit in trying to fix what's broken or if calling it a day is the more appropriate course. There is no sin or crime in saying goodbye to a life, which has become painful for either one or both partners. Calling it quits is sometimes the only right solution for a relationship, which continues to present an unhealthy environment and requires that you have your needs met outside of the relationship.

Cheating is never an acceptable solution for relationship woes. It is merely a Band-Aid, which masks painful sores. It is an illogical choice, which serves to create more pain for all who are involved. You and your partner will each have your issues and the third party's feelings must be added to the list of considerations. What will be done about the cheaters companion and the pain they might suffer? Your children will feel and/or hear the tensions and need to understand they are not the cause. So many lives affected when there are other solutions. Saying goodbye allows the hurt to heal and provides a path to a new dream and the prospect of true happiness. Get out and begin the journey.

Calling it quits is a painful and emotional experience. There is no way to avoid hurt feelings and the grief that comes with the death of love and our dreams. All too frequently, anger, hate, and blaming are also a part of that process. However, that type of emotional response merely serves to create more pain. The key to an amicable separation is the willingness of both partners to accept responsibility for their role in the fate of the relationship. Each would be eager to take credit for its success and each one must realistically address the part they played in its demise.

The many reasons /excuses to stay will rise to the forefront now, as guilt, fear, and shame become the driving emotions. Allowing those feelings and thoughts to be in control will not serve your long-term goal for happiness. They are a normal part of the process and serve only the moment. Some fall victim to these short-term anxieties and agree to stay together while both cheat.

They believe it will solve all manner of sins and judgments, leaving little chance for potential future relationships to blossom in that environment. While it may work for some, it is not a viable answer for the long-term. Avoiding the realities does not provide for a wholesome happy future, nor does hiding behind excuses.

The reason people give most often for avoiding the inevitable break-up is “for the sake of the children”. That excuse also covers a multitude of sins and judgments and is a great place to hide their fear of calling it quits. What kind of lesson do you teach your children if you stay in misery? Is it what you want them to learn, to sacrifice their happiness in the namesake of love or out of fear? Would you be able to watch your son or daughter live what you have lived? Your mistakes are what they will learn. Children are best served with happy and content parents. They know of the discontent, can feel the tension and stress, at any age, and suffer as much as you do because of it. “For the sake of the children” is not your sacrifice; it is a torment for them. Do your children a favor; let go and move on.

If not for the children’s sake, there is the issue of hurt feelings. No one wants to have his or her partner hurt. Cheating, when discovered will cause more damage than separation. Either resolution is going to cause pain. There is no way to avoid it. In fairness to both partners, the third partner and the children, there has to be a resolve. In any case, there will be hurt feelings. Whatever the reason for the discontent and unhappiness everyone involved deserves a solution. No reason is good enough to stay in a bad situation.

Saying goodbye is never easy. Bonds and feelings get in the way and they won’t magically disappear because you have agreed to call it quits. However, if you approach the separation with honesty and respect, even though it is hard, you are likely to be spared the harsh anxieties and remain friends. You will be able to move on with less baggage to carry forward into the next relationship.

Love dies, dreams fade, we make mistakes, and that is our reality. Love eventually presents itself anew and dreams never really die. Love and dreams are easily resurrected at the appropriate time. Carry your dreams with you and love will find you again. Cheating won't change your truths nor will staying in a bad situation, for all the wrong reasons.

## Chapter Eight

### Saying Goodbye with Dignity

While admittedly challenging, it is possible to walk away from a relationship without destructive displays of rage and the demolition of fine china. Saying goodbye can be accomplished without a loss of dignity and the creation of gross anxieties, which will require years of therapy to heal. No, it isn't easy to achieve this feat as emotions are most often in control of our behavior and decision making processes. However, it can be achieved and should be a priority. Your future relationship endeavors will depend on it, as will the future relationships of the children who witness these dramatic events.

An objective analysis of an emotionally charged separation shows us that rage and a vengeful display of emotion offers us little solace and changes nothing except our blood pressure and stress levels. What's more, it demonstrates to those of an impressionable age that this is what love looks like. This is what relationships are. It often promotes generations of those same behaviors and relationship dysfunction. Unfortunately, it has become a society norm.

Our despair and responses to failed relationships also provides material for writers and novelists who will poetically address the sagas we create for them. The story always predictably begins with two people desperately in love and vowing to live as one for all time. Their feelings so compelling, so strong then, and eventually ends with their forever dream turned to disillusion and pain. Their love a faint memory, swallowed up by anger and resentment, they say goodbye with hatred and contempt as their guiding force.

The all too common malady that has plagued our society for decades becomes the story line of millions who once believed in the fairy tale. The happily ever after dreams becomes passage for those who write about their plight. Human error turns into the great romance novel.

Humans are prone to making mistakes and on occasion, we do rather well. In our relationships for example, we often accept what doesn't fit while secretly holding on to the 'ultimate dream'. The sad fact is that when the disappointment of reality strikes we eventually end up having to sweep up the broken pieces of our lives and venture to another path. Often unwittingly, we continue our search for that which our spirit, heart and soul craves. It's human nature. When we discover that our needs are not satisfied with what we have settled for, we become angry with ourselves and turn the blame to our partner. That validates our cheating episodes and offers a reason to move on.

Whether it is a consensually derived goodbye or one partner's burst of anger-filled shock, a separation or dissolution isn't an easy solution, but most always the correct one. Cheating makes the loudest statement of misery. Once that desperate action is taken to achieve relief, the logical course is saying goodbye. The trick is to do it with dignity, understanding the human element in relationships. Getting mad doesn't fix the problem nor does it compensate for the lack of forethought.

While anger commands the greater presence, a cheating event often calls to another emotionally charged source of harm. Guilt is summoned, and brings great power to the mix. The pain created by the breach of trust transforms into an impassioned agent of control and pointed misery. As emotions take precedence over rationale, guilt is born. It leads the charge and becomes a capable enemy.

Guilt is often used as a tool to manipulate a partner to stay in a relationship that will never be right for either partner.

Most often, it becomes a weapon of emotional torture and validates all manner of wrongful deeds. It can turn leaving into a more catastrophic pain than the original cheating event. Anger creates issues that can eventually heal, but the scars of guilt often last a lifetime.

Volatile emotions can get in the way of success and will most always provoke additional drama. They can damage ego and self-esteem and promote confusion and bad decisions. The ones hurt most by a dramatic and hateful goodbye are the children who witness these displays of negative emotion. The children suffer *your* pain. It is vital that parents never speak badly of their partner in front of the children. Allow them to form their opinions as time passes. They need your solidarity, understanding, and reassurance.

‘For the sake of the children’, the separation needs to appear amicable. An explanation of how and why humans are prone to making mistakes would be a good starting point. Further discussion regarding your decision to correct those mistakes would be in order. Kids need to know there is a right way to handle relationships. They also need to know they are not the cause; they played no role in this drama. Talk to them; let them see the two of you happy and at peace with your decision. Allow them peace.

For most, it is difficult to move past the emotions and pain to hold on to their dignity. However, the drama and scarring that comes with anger and guilt is a pointless venture, which holds no value. It is a waste of your time and energies to spend time on that, which will produce no reward. The act of betrayal that results from cheating will come with a grieving process. It will prompt rational thought from your emotions once sorted and processed. They will find an appropriate place and allow for understanding of why and how this came to be.

There will be lingering questions that won't have answers. It allows your emotions to remain alive and you vulnerable. You are left wondering how you can erase the time shared and bonds created. You can't. Say goodbye with dignity while you cherish the positives and learn from the negatives so that you don't make the same mistakes a second time. No excuses, no games, just kiss and say goodbye. Another life adventure awaits.

## Part Three

### Prevention & Cure

Preventing a cheating event is the easiest thing you'll ever do. It begins *before* the formal commitment. Properly addressing the must haves, needs, wants and desires of both partners in all aspects of life and the relationship is key. And if you skip that essential component, there may still be chance for a cure. It requires effort and the willingness of both partners to be honest regarding their feelings and the situation. There are ways to meet with success in your relationships, and although it requires looking into the possibility of negative events and the inclusion of some formalities, it has proven to be worth the effort and time spent. Planning ahead, rather than playing catch-up in the midst of chaos is the better solution.

Most people aren't fond of formalities and planning when it comes to their relationships. They prefer spontaneity, to let things simply happen. As romantic as that may sound, it isn't practical in a world where lust is our driving force. We are best served by devising a strategy, a plan to cover the 'what ifs'. If your choices and decisions are made with intent and carefully attended to, you stand a better chance for a positive outcome when problems arise. Not addressing the possibilities, leaves you open to a more serious lack of communication and the breakdown of the relationship.

Relationships don't always stay at peak. There are the valleys, the difficult times, and knowing what to expect and what to do helps keep us well-balanced when we are on the down side. Planning, even for the simple things like dishes and trash will make life much easier. Knowing how you will handle outside influences and work schedules will make a difference in stress levels.

A little time out to tend the formalities can mean the difference between success and failure. It helps to know your partner, to know if you are ready for a relationship and are compatible *before* you commit.

Yes, sex counts, but is only one of many serious issues involving the future, that a couple must be prepared to address. Is marriage the right choice for you? Would you be best served maintaining your own living space? Can you balance your time at work and at home? What will it take to keep you interested and craving sex for years to come? The issues needing to be addressed would cover several pages and take weeks to negotiate. It isn't as easy as people often assume. A lack of attention to the details will create cause and rationale for cheating. Don't open that door, make sure it remains locked. Cheating can be prevented!

A cheating scenario can easily be anticipated and circumvented, however a cure is much more difficult to achieve after the fact. Once your partner discovers that his/her needs can be met with another in cheating, it becomes easier to keep doing it rather than confront your lack of attention to his/her needs. Don't give your partner a reason to cheat. Erasing the need, stopping it before it starts is the only way to prevent it. Do you know your partner's needs? Are you able to meet those needs? Does he/she know what it takes to keep you happy and content?

Cheating happens when we don't know there are problems or are afraid to talk about them if we do. It happens when honesty is replaced with silence. Communication is everything! Yes, it is even more important in the grand scheme of things than sexuality. You need to be able to talk about anything and everything and understand what is being said, that which is implied, and what your partner may have neglected to say. It requires paying attention. The lack of communication destroys relationships more than money and sex. Talk. Follow through with ideas and promises. Communicate your needs before you commit, not after the fact.

It is important to know your needs wants, requirements and desires so that you can relay those to your partner. If you don't know what it takes to make you happy, you can't expect him/her to know how to do that. If they can't accept you and your realities then it would be time to reconsider your choice. Tell it like it is; all of it. More importantly make sure you can meet their needs as well. It is just as horrible to be in the position of not being able to please your partner as it is for you to have your needs neglected.

Knowing your risk factor for a cheating scenario before you commit is wise. Checking regularly to see if the environment you offer is conducive to cheating is also wise. Never assume. If you have doubts, ask. Pay attention to the words, tone and body language when they give you an answer. It helps to be aware, and says a lot about your level of consideration for your partner and the relationship. If you don't care, why would you expect them to? Stop the cheating *before* it starts. Don't give them a reason.

If by chance or intent, you have missed the signals and cheating results, a cure is possible. Statistics do show that most men and women who cheat will repeat it, however. The reason is that the issue that caused the cheating event has not been addressed and needs are still not met. Getting over the act of betrayal and fixing what is broken is a long and difficult journey. For most it is easier to call it quits. Some try therapeutic intervention but the relationship has suffered too much damage or it wasn't a good match from the beginning and no one paid attention. Cheating speaks volumes, its message quite emphatic. The cheating partner is grossly unhappy and discontent. It's time to call it a day. Kiss and say goodbye.

This section will offer questionnaires that are meant to provoke thought about your relationship and its healthy or unhealthy realities. Answer the questions with honest intent.

Be open to the possibilities and the truth of your situation. Are you cheating your partner? Are you being cheated out of your happiness? Is there a fix, or is it time to call it a day? Questioning your situation will help in gaining a proper perspective and could prevent a cheating scenario in your relationship.

## Chapter Nine

### Communication 101

Our communication skills are our greatest gift, talent, and responsibility. Our first meetings do leave lasting impressions and hold a major impact. What we say and how we say it, become representative of who we are as our character, qualities, and flaws display themselves in verbal exchange. A few minutes of conversation are usually enough for an analysis of our person, allows us to be stereotyped, and cataloged. If our impression is lacking, the listener will be more inclined to tune us out and have little desire for any further conversation. This most basic skill can determine the success level of our closest relationships as well as our careers. These aspects highlight the need to keep our skills well-honed.

Many people believe that communicating as the speaker gives us status and control, when in fact, it is the listener who is empowered. While talking, we are involved in self and our own concepts and images. That limits our vision and scope of learning. The listener gains insight, important information, and valuable clues as the one talking provokes thoughts and ideas. The mind is active and engaged.

No matter our position, communication comes with responsibilities and holds great power. Being courteous and conscientious as the listener and speaker is important to successful communication in every aspect of life. We have all experienced the frustration of being interrupted while trying to convey our thoughts. Monopolizing the conversation does not afford us any rank or power. That type of demonstrative demand for attention merely serves to present a poor image and discourage a want of further communication. Conversations are meant to be a dialogue rather than a monologue.

There is no cure for the common word. Once spoken, they are imprinted in an indelible substance on our 'Who's who' card. Words are commanding tools and can become powerful weapons. They cannot be retracted or erased, and if used inappropriately can damage the speaker's credibility or wound and scar a listener. Presentation then becomes the critical aspect of communication. *How* we say, what we say is the key to positive, productive, and successful results. Our words should create interest, encourage enthusiasm, stimulate, or motivate. They should promote a call to action rather than provoke a reaction. Carefully choosing the words that best express our thoughts will offer a positive flow and end result. These aspects are especially true in our personal relationships.

Our ability to communicate well is our greatest asset. It is vital in conveying our wants and needs and when used wisely and appropriately, it is the key to success in any venue. A lack of regard or misuse can create a gross liability. It is to our benefit to keep our skills fine-tuned and functioning well so that we do not leave behind a negative impression or worse, warrant a loss of respect and trust.

Below are a few simple procedures, which can make the difference in our communication success.

- 1- Listen with intent and curiosity
- 2- Listen from a neutral place without walls and blockers, which will distort the incoming information
- 3- Ask questions for clarity
- 4- Be courteous and conscientious in your communications
- 5- Show support and understanding by relaying to the speaker that he is being heard and his concerns, fears and needs are valid
- 6- Use the power that comes with your skills wisely and fairly
- 7- Never close doors or avenues of opportunity and compromise

## Being the Listener

Being a good listener holds responsibility as well as power. As listeners, we are partially liable for the outcome of our communications and held accountable for our conduct. Our commitment to that end can make the difference in the level of success. Many promote speaking as the more significant role in communication. Listening actually takes the greater skill and lends itself to privilege. A good listener is always learning and gaining insight. His powers of perception are broadened. Being the listener offers knowledge, and knowledge is power.

A receptive listening attitude helps promote favorable communication. Our body language alone can set a negative or positive tone. People who are talking have something to say and to them, it is important. If we listen with interest and intent, we validate that importance while gaining the trust of the speaker. Asking questions for clarity and understanding give credibility to both the listener and the speaker. Questions also allow us to control the conversation by directing or redirecting its path. Paying close attention to the spoken, as well as the unspoken words increases our awareness and understanding.

It is important to ascertain what the speaker wants us to gain from the conversation. We need to understand what he is asking of us personally and determine any *real* or unspoken issue. Issues are most often concerns, fears, and/or needs that have not been addressed or met. By definition, they demand an escalated level of importance. Our concentration becomes vital for the understanding and sorting processes. Listening through our own thoughts would limit vital insight. This is especially true for couples in relationships.

We sometimes listen with blockers in place. Any walls or barriers in the way detract from our ability to hear what is really being said. It leaves room to misinterpret intent. Those blockers or walls make it difficult for words and intent to penetrate. If we listen from a place of judgment, we immediately strike out words due to prejudice or fear. To avoid any pain they might cause, we put on defensive armor so the words will not break through to our softer, more vulnerable self. Our communication is then tainted and becomes ineffectual.

Since we all perceive life from a separate place, our understanding may hold a different meaning than the speaker's intent. Misunderstanding can prompt us to construct walls, which create a breach in context and affect the end result. It becomes even more imperative to clarify and pay attention. Listening takes great skill and a sincere want of understanding. Listen well and learn.

## How to Talk So People Will Listen

Our ability to communicate well as the speaker is a great asset. It presents as our most challenging, consequential and influential responsibility. While it is true that the listener holds an advantage, the speaker has the power to create change and alter lives. The speaker sets the tone for the conversation and empowers the listener. He can create an atmosphere of love or hate, fear or calm and holds the authority to destroy or enhance. It is truly a powerful position.

Presentation is the most critical aspect of any communication. How we present the information holds more importance than the content. Our words need to accurately relay information and encourage listening. They should promote a positive response rather than provoke a negative reaction. These skills are often a major factor in our business associations and in our quest to reach the top of the corporate ladder. They can determine the status of our relationships and hold the key to their success or failure.

Being a conscientious speaker will have a major impact on the outcome. Some abuse the rights and authority that come with our liberal voice. Words are often used as weapons and cause harm or as a tool for control or coercion. The freedom to say what is on your mind, without fear of reprisals, is a grand gift protected by law. That stands as a clear indicator of its value and importance in our society. However, it does not come with the right to emotionally batter the listener nor obligate them in any form. The primary goal of any speaker is to entice the listener, to provoke interest and understanding, and encourage positive results. The intent in that regard calls for recognizing the listener's rights and considering the speaker's true objective.

Monopolizing the conversation will not offer any particular power and will not encourage others to heed your words.

It merely shows the speaker as needy or self-imposing and will divert the listener's attention.

Interactive conversation and respect will provoke positive results. The voice of authority also carries little weight and often shows a lack of respect for the listener. It can tear away the credibility of the speaker as well. Making a request will take you farther than giving an order. Conversations render positive responses if they are non-threatening and do not offer a demeaning tone. Word choice and tone count.

Our past often plays a role in our present communication. All too often, our speaking and listening roles are affected by past experiences. It will inevitably affect how we express ourselves and can set the tone without any intent. How we react or respond to any situation will often have no direct bearing on the present matter. Because the mind carries old tapes from our past on file, the door is open for leftover negative feelings to influence our choice of words and veil how we interpret them. Dealing with past issues will help eliminate this pattern of behavior. Using a direct approach, keeping the conversation relative to the present can be of great benefit. Showing sincere intent and having respect for your listener will give your words the power you would want them to carry.

When confronting difficult issues it helps to personalize your presentation by using *I* in place of *you* to begin the dialogue. This helps avoid giving the impression that your statements are meant to be a personal attack and would require the listener to don defensive shields. When faced with a confrontational dialogue, we begin immediately building barriers and walls or adorn protective armor. Subtle is well received in any arena. A whisper holds a greater vantage than an unrestrained call for attention. We are more apt to solicit a positive response by proposing a request rather than making a complaint. Complaints state a negative and are likely to provoke an unsatisfactory reaction. Requests seek to improve or gain constructive resolution and are usually met with positive acknowledgment.

Selecting a suitable format can help alleviate unpleasant consequences and avoid activating defense mechanisms in the listener. Choosing the most appropriate and effective method is not always an easy task, but can make the difference in how our concepts are received and processed. Simple modifications in posture and tone can bring about considerable changes in atmosphere. Carefully choosing the words that best express our thoughts, steering clear of words, which might offend cultural or environmental sensitivities and avoiding confrontational language and tone, will render the positive flow and outcome we desire. Use the power of your voice wisely, sincerely, with accuracy and respect, and people will listen.

## Your Writing Voice

Whether it be a letter of love, feelings you find it difficult to verbally express, an online chat with your partner, an office memo, or a simple explanation, the same issues that come with verbal communication can occur in a written conversation. The speaker and listener merely transform into the writer and reader and all the rules still apply. Although written communication adds a greater risk of distortion due to the lack of body language and tone to aid in the interpretation process.

The listening and speaking components are accentuated and more relevant in your written communications. The rule regarding what you say not being as crucial to the outcome of your conversation as *how* you say it holds more substance in writing. It means getting the words right and avoiding the use of words that will set a negative tone or present an unintended message. Using emoticons in internet, text and social media conversations will help with enhancing your meaning and setting the tone.

As it is with verbal communication, the greatest benefit is given to the listener/reader. The reader also has the more difficult task of interpretation. The advantages are equal, but because we all perceive words differently, there is opportunity for misinterpretation. Online listening requires sharper skills, but will offer more positive benefits in a 'getting to know you' situation.

A good listener or reader will do so with an open, clear mind and from a place of neutrality. They will also hone their skills in the interpretation of the writer's intent, paying attention to the unspoken words. Listening/reading is not to be taken for granted, nor should it be done haphazardly. Maintaining sound listening etiquette will provide positive results no matter the format.

If you are talking with your partner in a written format, you will need to take care with wording and tone. If the speaker/writer creates misunderstandings, it can shut communication down completely. Creating friction with poorly chosen word usage in text, while on a business trip, would not be of benefit to either partner. Communication 101 rules will always apply even to the written word.

Today's technology allows us to communicate more efficiently through text, email, IM (Instant Messaging) and the more popular social media platform. Our phones are used more as a resource for those venues and less for their original purpose of making phone calls. Texting allows an abbreviated version of the 'personal conversations' we once cherished. It is considered the more effective, less bothersome way to 'talk'.

Texting has become the preferred venue for conversation. In some circles, it is an art form. Most people without the time to talk will make time for a short text. However, hearing the elation in someone's voice is lost as is the capability to share his or her true feelings. Grasping the impact of fear, pain, and anger is also lost. You can't feel emotion in a text as you can from facial expression, voice tone and body language. LOL is not the same as *hearing* laughter. Texting alleviates the closeness shared in more personal forms of communication.

With this new written communication comes risks due to the shortened format and abbreviated words. There is an even greater possibility of misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Exercise care, save important issues for in person contact, and ask for clarity. Listen/read with intent. The written word carries weight; pay attention.

## The Language of Love

One of the first things to assess *before* committing to a relationship is the ability of both partners to express themselves freely; to be comfortable addressing their needs, wants, desires, feelings, and complaints without any hesitation or fear of how it will be received. Since communication is the key to a lasting relationship, it cannot be ignored in the compatibility assessment.

Using what you have learned about the basics of communication, talking to your partner about any subject that is important to you should be a venture free of stress and contempt. Without open and honest communication, a relationship will not endure. Cheating may become an option or a need. Listen be aware. Learn to hear the words between the lines and the words unspoken or implied. Listening involves the totality of your partner, the wholeness of the relationship.

A few issues/subjects *require* conversation and possibly negotiation. Sex and finances are at the top of that list. And yes, feelings are of major concern as well. You may not see the necessity for talking about such things as feelings and may hesitate to discuss the more embarrassing aspects of sex, but those topics are mandatory for the bond and happiness experienced as a couple. There really is a need for reminders of how much we are loved. Some will disagree and claim there is no need for the constant verbalization. Their partner already knows he/she is loved. However, your beliefs on the subject may not match your partner's needs, which is the reason a discussion about feelings *before* commitment is so vital.

Any discussion of sex can be provocative, insightful, and may lead to a night of fabulous sexual adventures. Sex is not a taboo subject. You do not have to feel guilty or embarrassed to discuss your needs and desires. Enduring relationships require it!

Start the discussion before you commit! The consequence for a lack of open communication about your sexual needs is an invitation for cheating or failed relationships. It can be prevented.

Communicating with your partner involves not only verbal exchanges but includes actions and behaviors. Touching is a form of communication with great healing powers. Smiling, eye contact as well as considerate thinking and behaviors all speak in loud volumes of love, respect, and sensuality. Not a lot of effort is required to be a grand communicator; however, the rewards are immeasurable. Try it.

Tell your partner how much they are loved, every day. Let your partner know they are important to you. Share your feelings. Tell them how sensuous they are and how much you desire and appreciate your sexual experiences. Show them. Communicate these important aspects to your partner and they will help prevent a cheating event. Talk. Touch.

## Chapter Ten

### How Ready Are You For a Commitment?

Most everyone wants to share life with someone special, to be a part of a loving, enduring relationship. Wanting it however requires that you be capable of that level of intimacy, that you be emotionally self-sufficient and most importantly that you be aware of your partner's needs. You must first question your capability, readiness for the responsibility and requirements that come with commitment. The effort put into preparation and planning will be of little benefit if you aren't prepared to be a partner in a relationship and are not able to meet your partner's needs.

Unfortunately, not everyone is endowed with the skills and self-awareness necessary for a relationship. Many have issues to attend to before attempting to share themselves in that fashion. There are questions to ask, time to spend problem solving and knowledge to gain so that being a partner doesn't equate to a liability for either partner. Having solutions for possible hindrances will help avoid a succession of dysfunctional or failed relationships.

First, you will need to consider what type of relationship best suits you *before* you begin your search. The results of that assessment will help alleviate mistakes, which might hurt everyone involved. If you are in search of a long-term commitment, it is wise to ask a few questions concerning your readiness for such an arrangement. These questions will involve emotional and sexual needs. They will include financial arrangements and past issues, which might affect your future as a couple. Would it be asking too much of your partner to carry your burdens and baggage from the past?

Yes. Addressing aspects of you, which might create a dysfunction in your relationship, is where you begin. You will find success there.

Many of us desire a long term committed relationship. It is a society norm and most strive to attain societal standards, that which is deemed 'normal'. However, wanting it and being capable of obtaining and sustaining that type of commitment are different. Sometimes our desires are out of our reach. Maybe we are not sure of what we want, or there may be serious issues that require attention first.

To avoid frustration and drama, you will need to evaluate your assets as a partner. Clean up any messes that might send a potential prospect running in the other direction. Ask a lot of why questions of yourself and answer them in earnest. Why do I want to be in a relationship? What is there that might get in my way or turn away a potential partner?

Entering into a relationship carrying baggage from the past or past relationships is one sure way to sabotage its success before it begins. Expecting your partner to bear those burdens is unthinkable. It would not be in their best interest or yours to distress the relationship with negatives from the start. You may find a potential partner who will claim they can handle it. Once confronted with the realities, it becomes too taxing and they eventually have to call it quits.

Relationships take a lot of work and come with responsibilities. Assess your capabilities to meet that end and see what you might discover. Answer the questions below honestly and objectively. The results will offer a better perspective of your situation and help assess how prepared you are for the responsibilities that accompany being a partner in a relationship. Any problem areas or unresolved issues would have to be addressed before you commit yourself.

1- Is your knowledge of the basics intact?

\*Have you discovered your true self?

\*Are you satisfied with the results of your self-assessment?

\*Is there a need for change? Can you realistically make those changes?

\*Have you recently gotten in touch with your inner guide?

2- Do you know exactly what you want?

\*What are your personal dreams & goals?

\*Can you characterize your ideal partner?

\*Have you clearly defined what you have to offer as a partner in a relationship?

\*Can you describe what a day in a relationship would be like? Is it based in reality?

3- What are your requirements and needs?

\*Are you aware of what you truly need and require to be content and happy in your life and relationships?

\*Do you know your limits and boundaries?

\*Can you clearly state your needs and requirements to others?

\*Are you able to say NO?

4- Is your life all you would like it be?

\*Do you hold a clear vision of your future?

\*Is your life rewarding & fulfilling? What is missing?

\*Are your choices and decisions influenced by others? Can you make them on your own?

\*Do you believe that you can live your dreams?

5- Are there outside influences in your life that would strain a relationship?

\*Would career, children, family and/or friends restrict or stress your relationship commitment?

\*Are you able to prioritize and balance your responsibilities and social life?

\*Are you impulsive? Do you make decisions in haste?

\*Are you prepared for the unexpected events life might send your way?

\*Could you handle the disapproval of others? Possibly your partner's family or friends?

6- Do you have unresolved financial or legal matters?

\*Would they negatively affect a potential partner?

\*Should those issues be resolved before you begin your search?

\*Would you disclose legal issues to your partner after they have been resolved?

7- Are there health related issues or concerns?

\*Does your physical or mental health alter or interfere with your life and relationship goals?

\*How would they affect a potential partner?

\*Are you emotionally self-sufficient? Do you 'need' a partner to make you happy?

8- Do you hold a healthy respect for all people?

\*Do you harbor any anger or animosity towards the opposite sex that may live deep within?

\*Do you carry past relationship issues that have not been resolved?

\*If gay, lesbian or transgender, do you have issues with family, friends, co-workers or others that would need to be resolved before you begin your search?

\*Are you prepared for the possibility that you may find yourself attracted to someone your family and friends might shun you for loving?

\*How would those you care for feel about your attraction to someone of another race, from a foreign country or of the same sex perhaps?

\*How would you deal with an affection for someone out of your comfort zone?

9- Do you have effective communication and social skills?

\*Are you able to assert your needs?

\*Are you able to say 'No'?

\*Do you have a positive outlook and attitude in regards to life and relationships?

\*Do you get along well with others?

\*Are you approachable?

\*Do you prefer being alone to attending social events?

\*Are you able to openly express your feelings to others?

10- Do you have appropriate relationship skills?

\*Do you have a working knowledge and understanding of the type of relationship you seek?

\*Are you prepared for *dedicated* sexual intimacy?

\*Would you be an asset in your relationship or pose a liability?

\*Can you outwardly show your feelings?

\*Are you open to compromise without settling?

\*Are you able to deal with anger and negative emotion in an appropriate manner?

Know that you are ready to be a partner before you commit to becoming one. Spare your potential partner months or years of anguish. If you can't offer yourself as an asset then wait until you can.

Knowledge and acceptance of self, emotional self-sufficiency, commitment, effort, fortitude, dedication, planning and good communication skills promote successful relationships. Planning for success will command success.

## Is Marriage the Right Choice for You?

Our world has come a long way from its early traditions. Both male and female roles are continually evolving and the male/female dynamic is vastly different from what it was even 10 years ago. Women are becoming more assertive in their quest to find happiness and are no longer settling for the standards set for them by Patriarchal governance. Men are not as eager to enter into a lifelong contract, which restricts their growth and potential or offer themselves up as the 'sacrificial lamb' in the namesake of tradition.

The 'old traditions' or societal dictates suggest that we, as women have one goal in life and that is to find a man to marry and spend our lives dedicated to his happiness. Men are the designated 'bread winner', the head of the family and are expected to find a wife, procreate and carry the burden of offering their wives and children the 'ideal' life'. Aside from marriage being a tradition, which has been passed down from generation to generation, a symbolic ritual of ownership and a way to deal with taxes, what purpose does it really serve? Does it hold a place in today's world? Is it really necessary?

Some would quote religious precepts and argue they are bound by the church to marry if their desire is to share life and raise a family. However, there are no 'marriages' mentioned in early times. The Christian bible makes no note of any 'marriage' ceremony. Adam 'took' Lilith and Eve as his wives without the benefit of rings and bridesmaids and 'divorced' Lilith without court papers or other formal rituals. So where did marriages come from? Who made the rule that marriage is necessary to solidify a relationship that we 'hope' will last forever? Is it still needed to prove legitimacy of family? Does the paper contract enhance the relationship or does it merely serve to inhibit and enslave its participants?

The fact is that the 'institution' of marriage is approximately 4,500 years old. Originally, its primary purpose was to bind women to men as property and guarantee family legitimacy. Hidden within the hypnotic veil of romance, those reasons still exist. However, some countries have begun to disallow marriage in the name of human rights. The enslavement of woman is a major consideration in this change. Those actions make a premier statement and reflect the reality of the marriage contract.

The idea of marriage, as we know it today, is romantic ideology. In today's society, this legal rite of ownership is alleged to be based in love rather than property registration. Marriage is not meant to enslave its participants, but is a promise to share life in love. However, when asked why marriage is so important, the majority answer that it's because they want their partner to *belong* to them, so no one else can have him/her. That really isn't about love, it's still about ownership. We have simply changed the words to sound appropriate for the times. It is ownership covered in fancy wrappings.

Weddings have changed to keep up with the times. We now have more elaborate ceremonies. The bride and groom have the thrill of dressing up in fantasy-like fashion and going through the formal ritual of *giving themselves* to the one, they love. The fan fair is dreamy, but is it really necessary? Will the love shared diminish without the ceremonial presentation? Does it prevent cheating? Can marriage truly guarantee legitimacy of family? Is legal registration, proof of ownership required for longevity? What purpose does marriage really serve?

The rate of divorce is currently over 50% and rising. Those high percentages indicate that more than half of those, who chose the marriage option, have figured out that they made a mistake. Marriage was clearly not the appropriate choice for them. More than half of the number of divorces and relationship failures are due to sexual incompatibility and cheating.

Is it worth the effort, cost and emotional drama and pain to marry and risk divorce? Can we promote it given the evidence of the limited benefits? Is it yet another outdated decree, which needs revision or dismissal?

While we have made great strides in our struggle to lose the hindrances of marriage and recognize the value of human rights, we are still weighed down by ancient Patriarchal rule. Unfortunately, the right to marry has not always been afforded to all people of the world. Same sex marriages have been forbidden in many states in our country and in many countries worldwide. However, marrying someone of the same sex was not always outlawed. There was a time in recorded history when same sex marriages were not considered evil and were legal. This type of relationship and marriage is not a new concept. Our programming and views were simply altered by societal and religious dictates and laws were put in place to prohibit the practice.

Same sex marriages actually date back many centuries. The first *recorded* homosexual marriage was that of Nero, who openly married at least two men in his lifetime and was rumored to have married more in secret. The forbidden was once acceptable. Over time, our society has been committed to turning it ugly and shameful. After many struggles and a long fight for rights, they are once again accepted and legal in much of the world.

Some view the institution of marriage as a serious hindrance and choose not to participate. The number of those who have chosen to cohabitate rather than marry is growing daily and worldwide. Maybe in subtle fashion we are moving towards a better alternative. Outdated religious dogma may be on its way out. People are considering their options and choosing personal preference and individual need rather than abiding by the ancient rules made to govern the masses.

Given the many negatives associated with marriage and the risks involved, we are left to question the need. Is marriage the right choice for you? Will the legal contract hold any value? Does it positively come with guarantees of bliss and contentment? Would your partner leave without the contract in place? It is time to consider our choices and options, assess our needs and future interests before making that commitment. Take away the glamor and glitter of the ceremony, the hopes and dreams for the fairytale future and you are left with the realities. Marriage is simply an age old tradition that gives your partner a right of ownership with lots of bells and whistles to mask the deed of title.

## Chapter Eleven

### Relationship Success by Design

One of the greatest happenings in the human experience comes when love is new. It presents us an exciting occasion in life, bringing the hope and faith of new beginnings and the air of a fresh start in life. Love is the enabler and allows us to experience a grandiose display of the powers of the universe. The fireworks, intoxication, the grand state of being in love, take precedence over all other reasoning. Unfortunately, romance eventually comes to meet the realities of life. It is at that point you need a strategy, a plan in place for this inevitable awakening. There needs to be discussion of the issues, which might cause a cheating event or a failed relationship and how to prevent it.

Planning seems such an ugly task, the thought of stepping away from that glorious bubble of bliss sounds extreme and waters down the romantic component. However, intentionally choosing to allow your thought processes to be veiled by romance and promote it as the stabilizing force in your relationship offers little substance for endurance and will not promote success. It is likely you will find your relationship among the growing number of divorces and relationship failure.

Our high tech society promotes quick and easy, however love and romance are of an old-fashioned process that cannot successfully meet the requirements of our new fast-paced world. However, there is a way to ensure balance and harmony when those two forces meet; the old and the new partner to create the perfect design. Below is a four-step process, a place to begin. It will help put your designs in perspective and better ensure a successful venture. Omitting one of those steps could leave you at risk for making a mistake and facing a cheating scenario.

## Four Steps to Relationship Success

### Step 1- The Search

The most important aspect in the search for your ideal partner or soul mate is making sure you are in the right frame of mind. Do not look when you are depressed or feeling lonely, and definitely not if you perceive yourself a *desperate* single. Search out of want rather than need. It is imperative that you are acutely focused on your goals and not in a needy state of mind. Be certain you have tended to the basics. Do you know who you are and what it is you seek? You should have completed a thorough self-assessment and an unrestricted analysis of your search criteria. Giving attention to the details will help avoid mistakes.

Seeking someone with closely aligned life and relationship goals will better ensure success. Your search should also be focused in the appropriate direction and in the correct format. Choosing settings, which offer the opportunity to meet those whose interests mirror your own, is a good place to start. This can be done online as well as with in person meetings.

Organizational functions or activity-based programs will provide an established common interest and lessen the need to fumble for conversation topics. It is a safe environment for meeting like-minded people and for a first in-person date, if you meet online. Local single's gatherings, pet shows, sporting events, hobby related activities and other social functions can open many windows of opportunity. Remember to include finding friendships as part of your search.

It is important to note that when we seek the same types of partners we have always had, in the same venues and with the same mindset; we will get the same results. The cycle of unsatisfactory relationships continues.

A new direction and focus, as well as a positive outlook, will offer greater advantages for a productive and rewarding experience. Do not hesitate to step outside the box or your comfort zone. Take a risk try something new and different.

In addition, it is important to understand that self-imposed time constraints and a sense of desperation are not conducive to good decision making. Hurried and desperate inevitably bring regrettable results. Keep your search basic in reality rather than hope and never when you are in a desperate place. Decisions made for the wrong reasons promote disappointment and failure. Your search should be born in patience and with intent, and the formalities tended to. You will then be ready to meet success.

## Step 2- The Sorting Process

That first interview or date is the most critical. Most often, enough information can be gained within the first five minutes of conversation to determine where the new acquaintance might best fit in your life, if at all. Not everyone you meet will be a potential partner; however, a friend is always a great asset. Not all friends are candidates for the role as your ideal partner and being able to separate the two is vital. The love we share with friends is different from the love we have for our partner and you have to be able to recognize that difference.

Neither desperation nor an enchanting conversation should get in the way of the sorting process. It is important to pay close attention to statements that raise questions, doubts or send up “red flags”. If you do not have confidence and patience, you may miss a vital piece of information. In some cases, it is best not to ask many questions. Normal conversation will render a wealth of information without being intrusive. Unwittingly, people offer up pieces of themselves and give clues that tell of their truths and realities while chatting.

If your conversation is limited and little information is offered in chatting, it would then be important to ask questions. Even the simple seemingly silly questions offer up important information. Remember color preferences and music choices tell a tale of personality, need, and energy levels.

After you have made the decision to continue talking and dating, you are able to relax and begin the getting to know you process. Your well-honed listening skills will offer a great advantage in this regard. As the listener, you will be able to sort and separate with ease. Listening and giving attention to key words will help you make the appropriate determinations. Having a clear vision of your ideals and set goals will enable you to maintain focus and make good choices and decisions regarding where people will best fit in your life. You will be better qualified to weed out the junk and categorize with greater accuracy.

Any fear or uncertainty you present in your conversation can be detected, even in an online meeting. A sense of desperation or being overzealous will put you off track and impair your judgment. It will give your prospective partner the upper hand and allow him/her to be in control. You will need time to adjust to the sorting process, but it soon becomes second nature. Starting with the right frame of mind and practice gives you the ability to read people easily and avoid spending time with those who are inappropriate matches for you. The key to success lies in listening well, paying attention and in being able to say NO.

### Step 3- The Analysis

Information gathering and a close analysis of the results will help determine if a prospective partner can meet your requirements, wants, needs, and desires. Since requirements are usually deal breakers, it is important to address all of them in detail.

Asking the right questions, listening with intent to the responses and remaining true to your visions and goals help avoid making the wrong choices. The details are important. Meekly skimming over a few important questions does not offer much in the way of an accurate assessment. Open ended and detailed questions provoke thought. First responses give the best picture. Questions, which require a yes or no answer, will offer little information. There is not much to share and there is no opportunity to get the precise information needed. Do not be afraid to ask the hard questions. Why waste time dating for months only to discover you have made a mistake. Be assertive in your quest to get to the truth.

We have all felt the embarrassment that comes with displaying our inner selves in question and answer sessions. Holding an online conversation eases that risk. You have time to think about your answers before typing them or you may discover as you type that you have misstated yourself and can rewrite. Moving past your anxieties about saying the wrong thing and using a direct approach in your questioning will offer a positive solution and outcome. You might consider adding a little shock value to your questions. Give them something to think about. You will find it will weigh in your favor.

Your Information gathering does not have to come in the way of a formal interviewing session. It can be obtained through normal discussion over the telephone, by e-mail, over coffee, or while taking a walk. It is important however, to get all of the necessary information *before* considering commitment and getting involved. You are worth the time and effort it takes to have the right answers.

#### Step 4- The Final Exam

Test and verify the information you have collected about your prospective partner. It is important to gain the experience as well as knowledge and obtain proof that your requirements will be met. Words mean little without the actions to back them up. If your partner tells you that he/she has no temper issues; test it and see what happens when buttons are pushed.

Anything and everything that is important to you or is a requirement should be tried and put to the test. If it turns out badly, better to know now than later.

It is easy to become caught up in the feelings of an infatuation or lust and forget those things, which are important in long lasting relationships. No one in the beginning of a relationship wants to consider any possibility of negatives. However, leaving out the “what ifs” and the “what happens when” issues can lead to discontentment and cheating or failed relationships. Appropriate preparations can avoid future drama.

Your analysis should include both aspects of a possible relationship. It is not enough to find out whether or not your needs will be met. It is also vital to ensure that you will be able to meet your prospective partner’s needs. How disappointing it would be to make that discovery after you are involved. Relationships take two people committed, dedicated and eager to make it work. That means that the two need to be happy and content. Not being able to hold up your end leads to failure just as quickly as your unhappiness will. Making sure a relationship works before becoming exclusive is the wise choice. If all is well at this point, it would be a good time for more in depth planning for the future.

Love will not be diminished by doing it right. Knowing what you want and need in a relationship helps you get it. You will greatly decrease the risk of cheating and relationship failure by taking a few extra steps in the beginning.

# Reality Check

## Relationship Checklist & Negotiations Schedule

Each partner should fill out the checklist according his/her own needs, wants and requirements.

Trade with your partner for review. Your partner can determine if he/she can meet those needs, wants and requirements. At this point the negotiations begin. Keep in mind as you do this that compromise is always an option, but settling is not.

### Section One

Personal Limits, Boundaries, Requirements, Needs, Wants

I Agree

I Disagree

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Section Two

### Section Two

Relationship Requirements, Needs, Wants, Goals

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Section Three

Sexual Limits, Boundaries, Requirements, Needs, Wants

### Section Three

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Section One

## Making Choices with Intent

No, we don't normally get to choose who we fall in love with. It is one of those events in life, over which we have little control. However, we do have a say regarding the course and outcome of our relationships in that regard. We determine their success or failure, they are what we allow them to become. We get to choose the quantity and quality of energy we expend to ensure their success. It involves the pre-commitment efforts and decision-making as well as continuing endeavors to gain your desired results.

The notion of taking any time away from the 'fun' to do prep work doesn't strike many of us as exciting, but is an important part of the process and will enhance our relationships. The formalities, planning, testing compatibilities, are vital elements in determining endurance and overall contentment. Validating your choices, knowing they are the right ones will give you the advantage in achieving the success and happiness you seek.

The following pre-commitment negotiation process is designed to provide a realistic and accurate picture of your potential for relationship success. The right design and strategies will better ensure a deeply committed, long lasting relationship. This does not have to be a formal event; however, the important topics need to be addressed. Requirements and needs first and then desires and fantasies. Yes, fantasies are an important component. Let your partner know what they are. It is vital to be honest and precise with your responses. Avoiding details or offering inaccurate information for fear of upsetting your partner or of judgments will render your time and efforts worthless.

This open discussion planning is not meant to be an arena for upsets, but is designed to create understanding and avoid misconceptions that could eventually lead to relationship failure.

The goal is to assist in strengthening bonds and building trust. A clearly defined design will better ensure a successful relationship venture. Have fun with your discussion and it could produce some interesting results.

#### 1- Prepare & Discuss a Relationship Checklist

A-List & clearly define requirements, needs, wants and desires with regard to individual, relationship & sexual interests. Yes, sex is vital to overall compatibility and needs to be included.

B-Set limits & boundaries with regard to those interests

C-Determine solvable and unsolvable issues

D-Determine any areas of compromise

#### 2- Set Relationship Goals

A- Define individual goals and visions as a partner in the relationship

B- Set relationship goals and visions, incorporating both partners' interests

#### 3- Plan Conflict Management/Resolutions

A-Plan and prepare how to handle disagreements and upsets.

B-Address how to manage conflicts concerning children, family & friends

C- Couples who intend to live together would do well to discuss the issue of managing the household.

Simple things such as who will do the dishes and take out the trash can cause upsets that could likely be avoided with pre-planning.

#### 4- Clearly Define Financial Commitments

A-Address financial commitments and responsibilities (individual/joint)

B-Address any future bank accounts, investments and/or property purchases (individual/joint) Don't be afraid to keep your monies separate. In some instances, it is a wise choice.

C- Discuss and plan for unforeseen events, which might affect your finances

#### 5- Set Guidelines for External Influences

A-Set guidelines for the inclusion of friends and family within the framework of a healthy relationship.

B-Schedule individual private time and space

C-Allow time for the boys and girls night out.

#### 6- Address Special Needs & Specific Commitment Issues

A- Discuss important commitment issues and potential deal breakers. Include guidelines for contact and relationships with those of the opposite sex.

B- Address special needs or requests that would enhance the relationship

C- Address any medical needs and concerns. Discuss how they might affect the relationship now and in the future

D- Discuss the issue of online communication with friends (old & new).

E- Is cheating really cheating if it is through the written word and not through physical contact?

#### 7- Negotiations

A- Summarize and finalize the results of your efforts in steps 1-6.

B- Keep your wishes, wants, dreams, goals and expectations based in a reality that is comfortable and attainable for both partners. Include the possibility of renegotiation in the future.

C- Are the differences and problems solvable?

D- Are the unsolvable problems and differences deal breakers or is there a point of compromise without having to settle for what you know you can't handle?

## 8- Cheating

A- What would give cause for you to cheat?

B- How would you deal with a cheating event in your relationship?

C- Would the cheating partner be expected to hold the blame alone?

## 9- The Benefit of a Contract &/or Ceremony

For some couples putting these results in contract form offers a way to solidify their commitment. It may also provide for a deeper sense of belonging. Some couples are not ready for marriage, but find that an intimate ceremony designed and performed by the two of them, for each other, adds an intensity and intimacy we all crave when love is 'new'. For some there is simply a need to formalize their commitment.

When planning, add those things, which are important to you and your partner. Discuss possibilities, which might be relevant in the future. "What ifs" are important. This is a personal process and should be designed to your unique specifications. This planning process is designed to minimize misunderstandings and misconceptions to strengthen bonds and build trust. All of which are needed to sustain a deeply committed, long lasting relationship. It is NOT meant to be an arena for arguments. It is meant to be an open and honest assessment of the basics, as well as what is real and true for both partners. "A clearly defined design will better insure your goal for a successful relationship venture.

## Chapter Twelve

### Are You at Risk?

Have you considered the possibility that your relationship is not as solid as you perceive it to be? Keep in mind when answering that question that assuming is never a wise practice. Does your partner show signs of discontent or boredom? Would he/she seek relief outside of the relationship? Whether you are in a relationship, or contemplating a commitment, the risk of cheating needs to be addressed. It will require careful consideration of the partners' past issues, the growth factor, personalities, needs and compatibilities. Each of those components is essential in the design of your future happiness. Without thought for the possibilities, the 'what ifs' you don't address now could provoke cheating later.

One vital issue to assess involves your *true* feelings. Is it possible you are settling in fear of not having someone in your life? Are you in love or lust? Is your decision to commit based on feelings of the 'moment', which have silenced the voice of reason, or are you truly in love? Love lasts forever and weathers all storms. Would you and your partner be able to sustain your relationship if the worst of all possible scenarios came to be? Are the must-haves of both partners appropriately being attended to? Is it possible you or your partner could find cause to cheat?

The most significant issues in any relationship involve needs and compatibilities. Are those concerns being appropriately addressed? Is your partner truly ready to be a partner in a relationship? Does your partner know of your needs? More importantly are you being honest or merely hopeful regarding your ability to satisfy your partner's needs? Can you keep him/her happy for years to come? When the essentials are neglected, cheating and relationship failure are imminent.

It might be time to scrutinize, analyze and fix what may be broken before a cheating event occurs. If there is no fix then kiss and say goodbye. Mistakes happen, but there is no need to spend years suffering or make your partner suffer in the namesake of love or sense of duty. Admit your mistake and move on. Don't waste time and energy cheating as a way to stay the inevitable.

Compatibilities are major issues! The fact is, we cannot ignore or erase this aspect of our relationship simply because it is easier to do so. "If the sex is good, who cares about the rest". Why complicate the matter? That's assuming the sex is satisfying and meets the needs of *both* partners. Yes, ugly realities can wither the bright blossoms of love and create negative vibes in a perfect state of bliss. Because being compatible is so vital to a relationship's endurance, we must focus here and give attention to the possibilities and what ifs.

Included in the array of compatibility issues are those requirements, which might eventually become deal breakers. Liking the same movies is the least of your worries but can prove to be a sore spot for some. How you view your role as partner or how you spend money can provoke a huge divide and if not given the attention it deserves in the beginning, will leave the door open for constant struggles and short lived romance. Relationships have been torn apart for simple things such as taking out the trash and Sunday afternoon football. The subject of 'who is going to wear the pants' can cause great turmoil. Nothing is out of the realm of possible causes for conflict.

Sex plays a significant role in the endurance of most every relationship. It lives in silent conflict in more than half of all relationships and marriages. It is important to know your partner's needs and the realities of human nature before agreeing to a commitment. Sexual issues give cause for cheating and relationship failure. The divorce rate is higher than 50% and far too many of that number are related to sexual incompatibilities. Know the facts before you say yes.

Taking time to evaluate your relationship possibilities is imperative. A lifetime is a long time to be unhappy and discontent. Divorce is an unpleasant and messy affair, which none of us wants to experience. Find the problems, fix them, or call it a day.

## Self-Assessment

Mirror, Mirror on the wall, reveal the likeness of me. The wicked queen, of Snow White fame, was a faithful advocate of routine self-assessment through mirror imaging. Verifying her status with the mirror did render a distinct advantage in her situation. Having the wise man as her reflection to give advice and direction was truly an asset. Although her reasons were sinister in nature, the basic concept of routine self-appraisal was a prudent notion.

It is through those regular check-ups that we have the opportunity to assess our status and proficiency as individuals and partners in a relationship. Unfortunately, we are left without the benefit of the sage offering advice. We do need to keep abreast of who we are, where our present path is leading and be sure we are content with our findings. It is important that we keep in touch with ourselves as a partner. Are we holding up our end? Is the relationship still in a good place and flourishing? Growth is an important factor in our quest for truth.

Our partner shows as our reflection and fortunately, for us, they will offer wisdom and sound counsel, if we give attention to their performance. Can you tell that your partner is happy and content? Through those reflective images, we can receive an exemplary education. Both the negative and positive images displayed offer us a startling vision in self-awareness. The images reflected hold monumental significance to us as partners. Watching and listening to our partner, friends and family will relay back to us what we give to them. These lessons allow us to take a serious look and assess our performance.

Our position as a partner holds great significance and requires frequent monitoring. We would be remiss in our duties to assume we are performing at the peak of perfection, as a matter of course.

People don't always tell us when we are lacking, they are afraid of hurt feelings and won't openly discuss the negatives. It is up to us to pay attention to the signs and the unspoken words. We are responsible for regularly assessing our own status and making corrections when needed

It is up to us to be sure we are still content with who we are and that our wants, need and requirements haven't changed. Are they different from what they were 6 months or a year ago? Are your needs being met? Do you continue to meet the needs of your partner? It is not good to let time pass and communication lapse without periodically verifying your status. It is a healthy choice for you and kind to your partner.

Take a moment to assess your positives and negatives. Do the positives shine for all to see? Are the negatives reflecting back through your level of happiness or in your partner's?

Positives as an individual and a partner

My assets. How they enhance my life and relationships.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

### Negatives

Things I need to change as an individual and a partner and why. How will I make these changes?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

6 \_\_\_\_\_

7 \_\_\_\_\_

8 \_\_\_\_\_

9 \_\_\_\_\_

10 \_\_\_\_\_

Did you find the answers and figure out the good and bad aspects of your life? There is more to you than positives and negatives. Do you know who you really are? Are you on the right path? Self-assessments should be holistic and include all of you, the real you, with no answers left to chance.

You have completed the assessment needed to address yourself as a partner and avoid a cheating scenario in your life. The individual that is you must also be assessed in detail to be sure you are not living someone else's script, living by rote each day to satisfy others. Take a good look at the reflection in the mirror and question your status in all aspects of life.

## Relationship Analysis

Relationships take commitment, effort, fortitude, dedication, planning and good communication skills. Ideally, we would plan for problems that might arise as well as a solution, but unfortunately, that is not always the case. In the beginning, we don't want to admit that there will be problems, so we avoid that aspect of planning for the future. A lack of attention to the realities of human nature can prove costly. To ignore the possibilities, no matter their position, could leave an opening for cheating or relationship failure.

Communication is vital to maintaining a flourishing relationship. When there is a breakdown in communication, issues grow out of proportion. Getting back to a place of harmony becomes difficult, but not impossible. Fixing the problem is the preferred choice; however making repairs requires talking about the issues and arriving at a viable solution. Staying in a bad relationship without resolution can be damaging to all. Addressing the issues at the time they occur would avoid a crisis.

When problems do arise, or you no longer feel comfortable and content in your relationship, you have already entered a state of crisis. There are no stereotypical, one solution fits all, answers. Each relationship is unique to the individuals involved and to their commitment and agreements. Only you know what is best for you. Sharing the personal analysis below, with your partner, and discussing the results is a good starting place. Ask your partner to compare notes and try to reach an agreement about how you feel.

What you do with the thoughts and conclusions this analysis might provoke is your choice. Ignoring the issues will not come with inner peace.

Ask yourself the hard questions and if you find problem areas, share your findings with your partner.

But before getting into negatives, it's important to focus on the positives.

Are there positives in your relationship?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Have there been recent changes in the way you feel about your relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_

2 Are there critical issues, solvable or unsolvable problems? Is there room for compromise?

\_\_\_\_\_

3 Have you and your partner had open and honest discussions about your concerns?

\_\_\_\_\_

4 Are you able to communicate without negative, reactive emotions getting in the way?

\_\_\_\_\_

5 Do you feel that you and your partner have grown apart?

\_\_\_\_\_

6 Does your partner meet your needs?

---

7 Do you have dreams and desires for someone else? Do you act on those desires?

---

8 Do you feel your partner is to blame for the problems in your relationship?

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9 What do you think your partner would say about your efforts in this relationship?

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10 What could you do to improve the relationship?

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11 Do you honestly feel that the problems within the relationship can be repaired?

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12 Do you still have feelings of genuine love for your partner?

---

13 Do you WANT to stay in this relationship?

---

14 What reasons do you have to stay if neither of you is happy? Are they valid reasons or simply excuses to hide insecurities and/or guilt?

---

What are the positives in your relationship? What makes you work well together?

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_

These are just a few of the questions you can ask yourself about the condition of your relationship and your true feelings. They are not meant to offer a solution, rather to provoke thought about your own realities. Relationships require work and attention as does avoiding the want or need to cheat.

## In Closing

Relationships are not simply a fun way to pass the time and when you become weary of their lack of benefits discard them for something better. They are meant to be a committed venture involving two people believing in their feelings and sharing the promise of a monogamous relationship. Yes, that might sound mushy and old school but is reality for most couples. If you feel that your relationship is going nowhere and offering little reward, making you miserable; the answer cannot be found in cheating. At best cheating is merely a Band-Aid, a temporary fix to meet immediate needs. It can offer no long-term solutions to the real issues.

There are relationships of convenience to accommodate every need. The coveted rules for defining a relationship no longer hold credence. Relationships in today's society are not bound by the margins of societal dictates and address the specific needs of the people involved. Still, many couples decide to stay in bad relationships for any number of different reasons and offer 'excuses' that appear rational to avoid the judgment of others. They cheat as a way to get their fix to have their needs met instead of choosing the more appropriate solution of moving on. No matter the circumstance, cheating will not replace the longing for a sustainable, loving relationship. It is simply a means to an end, temporary relief. Having the confidence to do the 'right' thing will lead to a more permanent solution.

Don't cheat. Get out of the wrong relationship and find what you really want and need. Do not let fear or a lack of confidence keep you bound in agony. Cheating causes stress, adds to your discontent, and leaves little energy or desire to find the true fulfillment that comes with love and sex.

Neither partner's needs are served by hanging on to a relationship that isn't working, or settling for a relationship that you know cannot be sustained, to simply answer the call. There is no satisfaction and contentment in being with the wrong person or seeking fixes to accommodate immediate needs. If it isn't working let it go. If you have doubts it could work, wait for the one that will.

Choose the right type of relationship for you, whether it be the standard mass accepted version or one, which does not fit any mold, is away from the norm and better suits your needs. The partner you choose should be compatible with your needs and requirements and one whose needs fall into the realm of your capabilities and desires. If you need someone who is comfortable with expressing feelings or one who shares your need for oral sex then you must hold out for 'that' one, or cheating may be the future result of unattended needs. Plan well and take time in your search, NEVER settle and do not attempt to search if you are feeling desperate, down or lonely. Get what you really want and there won't be a need to cheat. .

## About the author



Judy Spain Barton is a writer, life coach, mediator, instructor, and wedding officiant. Her home is near Denver, Colorado where she has a personal and professional coaching practice. Her passion is in music, reading, writing and hockey. She lives for the opportunity to help other's reach their full potential and to realize that who they are will always be good enough. Judy currently has a children's book on the market with Prometheus Books, entitled *Little Feelings* and has earned awards for her poetry through private publications. She has also written articles for online magazines such as Examiner.com; a Walden Media publication, and has written several e-books that relate to classes she teaches. They may be purchased here on her website or on Amazon, Kindle and Nook.

Judy's class list includes: The Art of Internet Dating, Learning to love yourself, Living single and loving it, Become a Wedding Officiant, Spice up your sex life, It's all about sex and Surviving adolescence for parents. She is a Coach, Counselor, Mediator, Educator and Writer. Her credits and credentials include; Personal Professional Coach 34yrs, Family & Workplace Mediator 6yrs, Nurse 15yrs., Published Author 19yrs., Color Consultant 16yrs., Wedding Officiant 11yrs, .Adult Education & Career Instructor 5yrs. And Tarot Consultant 10yrs.

Judy is a member of the IAC and ATA

Thank you for your interest in my thoughts.

*JSB*