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**Forgiving an Affair**

**By Alina Ruigrok – [www.love-sessions.com](http://www.love-sessions.com)**

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The discovery of an affair will attack you with shock, anger and numbness. No matter what way you choose to react, your surroundings will look the same afterwards because you have not yet started coping with what has transpired. You find that you are suddenly lost due to being caught off guard. You never thought this would happen to you. So when it does, what should you do when this painful truth is revealed and how can you forgive it?

The first thing to do when you find out that your partner has been cheating is to allow your emotions to flow out of your body. Holding your feelings in will only make you feel worse and cause a tremendous amount of stress both physically and mentally. Once you have expressed your instant reaction, you can start thinking more slowly and rationally. You will start examining your relationship, wondering where it went wrong and if it was ever as wonderful as you claimed it to be. You will create a chain of questions that have not yet been answered and will start feeling farther and farther away from getting any of them answered. Everything will be sorted out time, but first thing is first... and that is getting your emotions sorted out.

Once your emotions have been expressed and sorted out, it is important to remember to not give the affair more power over your life than it deserves, even though at the time being, it feels like the end of the world. The fact of the matter is, it is not the end of the world, but has changed your world and the way you look at it, which is understandable. Know that your partner's affair has nothing to do with his or her love for you, nor does it make you a failure in relationships. What the affair does tell you though, is that there are essential issues that need to be addressed. It is normal to be angry and unable to calmly discuss this with your partner, so let him or her know that (without getting violent or throwing them out of course). Let him or her know that you are deeply hurt and angry that they chose an affair as a way to deal with the issues in your relationship and you are not ready to talk about it just yet.

When you are ready, where do you start? It will be difficult to focus on the discussion if you are torturing yourself with visual thoughts of the cheating act. Make an effort to be strong and avoid the unnecessary painful thoughts that will in no way make you feel better or get your relationship back on track. You know what goes on when two people are intimate, so save yourself the details you already

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know and spare yourself the hurt. The focus is to find and establish the reasons for the affair and ways you can move on with your lives together, with a new and improved affair proof relationship. Good communication will be the key to your road to recovery, so be sure to ask the right questions, listen with undivided attention and understanding, as well as answering the questions you are asked and finding suitable solutions on how to prevent the same event in the future.

Anger, as well as other emotions, will arise while you and your partner attempt to make things right and better. You may blow up during discussions because your mind will re-fresh your memory of how your partner had the guts to betray you and how stupid, hurt and disrespected it made you feel. Your partner (the afairee) may also become upset because of your non-stop attacks on him or her, especially if they confessed and genuinely apologized. Before attempting any conversations regarding the affair, be sure that you and your partner agree to disagree and express anger. You both need to

have patience for each other's feelings, for it will take time to get past the emotional outbursts. If things start getting out of control and you find yourselves no longer talking, but only yelling and blaming instead, end the conversation and give each other some space. You may need to do this several times until you can talk without such interruptions. Take it one step at a time. After all, if you and your partner have made a decision to make things work, then there is no need to rush and panic.

After you and your partner get everything out in the open and understand the roots of the affair, you can then concentrate on re-building the trust and forgiving once and for all. Forgiving your partner does not mean you will forget what happened, but it will mean that you have accepted what transpired and are ready to move forward without bringing the past into your future as a couple. It will be difficult for you to blindly trust your partner again, but you must make an effort, as well as your partner. Your trust will strengthen as time goes by and through the convincing actions of your partner. You cannot put your partner on a leash and monitor him or her 24 hours a day, and you shouldn't want to. Do not expect things to magically improve, because you will be disappointed. Re-building the trust, passion and strength in your relationship will take a reasonable amount of time and could even require counseling if you feel you cannot make it on your own.

Re-building your self-esteem will help you forgive the affair as well. Being betrayed can do great damage to the way you feel about and look at yourself. You may feel less attractive physically and not worthy enough both mentally and spiritually. Get in touch with yourself and terminate your insecurities by finding ways to replenish the perspective you have on your being. Continue to tell yourself that an affair does not change the wonderful person you are and you are just as beautiful, desirable, intelligent and respectable as ever.

To avoid getting pulled back into the past, set your mind and heart on creating new memories together. Exploring new happiness will help your relationship mend and move on greatly. Go on dates, get romantic and become better friends than before! Make a permanent note in your mind that nobody is perfect but everyone deserve forgiveness for their mistakes. Try putting yourself in your partner's shoes and think about the pain and regret they are going through and how much they love you. He or she knew it was wrong to do before they did it, but probably felt it was their only way to cope with their troubles at the time. If you have been genuinely apologized to and promised that it will never happen again, then open your heart and give him or her a chance. You obviously love your partner and he or

she loves you, which is why you have decided to forgive and move on. So work as a team and be each other's strength in putting the past behind you, looking at it as a learning experience in which will assist you in making your love affair—proof from this point on.

Alina Ruigrok is an independent relationship expert for <http://www.love-sessions.com> helping those in need of dating, love, relationship, marital, sexual and other personal advice through e-sessions.

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### **Extramarital Affair: Should You Get A Divorce Just Because One Of You Had An Extramarital Affair?**

**By Karl Augustine**

Having to deal with an extramarital affair can be a life-changing event, regardless of whether you stay married or not. Inescapable feelings can come over both people that will never be forgotten by either of them. The person who actually had the extramarital affair can have feelings of guilt, loneliness, confusion and misdirection along with many other feelings. The 'partner' who did not have the extramarital affair can have these feelings as well, but the lack of confidence that can come as a result of the other person having an extramarital affair can be one of the toughest parts to deal with.

The feelings that come as a result of one or both parties having an extramarital affair are natural but can also be extensions of something much deeper. Of course, if someone has an extramarital affair, both people in that marriage will have feelings that will be "surface level" only at first. Arguments can occur, denial may set in, and/or tempers can flare due to the extramarital affair. While these things are only natural and to be expected, if your going to actually survive an extramarital affair, you must look at the deeper issues and get down to the real cause of the affair and what to do about it.

People in marriages don't often look at having extramarital affairs lightly, and they realize most times what affects their actions will have on their marriage. If someone has an extramarital affair and doesn't think that it will have an affect on their marriage, surely they are either in denial or their definition of marriage leans strongly towards the "open" side. For the rest of the married crowd who don't subscribe to an "open" marriage and who have to deal with an extramarital affair, things can get a bit more complex.

Complexity can be interesting no doubt, but it can also add to the confusion of someone having an extramarital affair, especially if the couple or one party in that couple wants to look deeper at the situation and figure out two very important things:

1. Why did the extramarital affair happen?
2. Does the fact that there was an extramarital affair in the marriage really warrant getting a divorce when both people agree upon the reason that the extramarital affair happened in the first place?

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If the couple really wants to save their marriage in spite of the extramarital affair, then finding out why the extramarital affair happened and agreeing on that reason is the first step in the healing process. If you are currently trying to save your marriage and one of you had an extramarital affair, try to limit your pain that you feel and talk things out with your spouse so you can clearly define and agree upon exactly why the extramarital affair took place. If you cannot do this, chances are you will never get over the extramarital affair and your marriage most likely won't survive...or at least you won't have a healthy marriage after the extramarital affair.

After you have defined and agreed upon the reason that the extramarital affair took place, you must

decide whether that reasons (or reasons) warrant actually going through a painful divorce. At this point you have 2 choices...either decide in your own or decide with your spouse. The latter is optimal for a variety of reasons but the main reason is that you may actually save your marriage if you decide together. Deciding together whether the real reason an extramarital affair took place indicates that you're both really reaching out for something, something you most likely didn't have prior to the extramarital affair...togetherness.

So, should you get a divorce just because one of you had an extramarital affair?

No, not necessarily. Depending on how collaborative you can be with your spouse, how 'detective-like' you can act, and how much soul searching you can do, you may just become stronger together because of an extramarital affair. It may sound odd, but that's the truth. Of course, it is entirely possible (and probable) that if you both don't define and agree on why the extramarital affair took place and work to address that reason or reasons, your marriage won't ever be healthy again and you'll never be able to healthily survive the extramarital affair.

Karl Augustine Author, "A Practical Guide To Deciding Whether Or Not To Get A Divorce". \*A resource recommended by marriage counselors to their clients.

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