

# Affair Recovery Times

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## The Founder's Corner

Being that this is the first edition of the Affair Recovery Times newsletter, it seems appropriate that I introduce myself as well as this concept. My name is Rick Reynolds and I am a marriage and family therapist who has a heart for those who have gone through or are going through the pain and turmoil caused by infidelity. My interest began 20 years ago after devastating my wife by my own unfaithfulness. Motivated by my indiscretion and the need for healing for my marriage, I began my journey in understanding the recovery process of affairs. Since that time I have been blessed to work with hundreds of couples who have been impacted by an affair and have had the privilege of watching them both recover and achieve a state of marital satisfaction that they never had believed possible. The vast majority of couples are able to not only make it, but to thrive.

One key to success is a

community of couples who have already traversed this difficult territory and are willing to support those who are currently going through the process. This is one of the primary motivators for the creation of the Affair Recovery Center web site. I wanted couples in the midst of this confusion to have the opportunity to connect with other couples who have been able to come out on the other side. Finding individuals who understand what you are going through as well as how you must feel is difficult at best, especially since this is a sensitive topic, but we have created a forum where you can find a safe place to share your hurt with others who understand.

Another key to success is



**Founder Rick Reynolds**

having a systematic plan which facilitates healing for couples in crisis. There is a path that both the betrayed and the betrayer can take that will help each other find peace. We make the resources available to implement these plans and help provide the road map too. I also want to provide a staff of competent professionals who understand the dynamics of affairs and how to provide proper treatment.

I want you to know that there is hope. I had the good fortune 20 years ago to come across those who had gone before and were willing to share what they had learned as well as support my wife and I in the process. It is good not to be alone. If you find yourself in this devastating situation, I hope you will allow us to help.

*Rick*

### Special points of interest:

- Inaugural Issue!
- Real stories from real individuals
- Tips on building a stronger, happier marriage
- Dispelling the lies
- Providing hope for those in pain

## The Bulletin Board

A hard copy version of the Affair Recovery Times is available for subscription. Please contact us for rates and information.

We are on the web! Come see us at [www.affairrecovery.com](http://www.affairrecovery.com)



The professionals at the Affair Recovery Center offer numerous seminars for groups and organizations. Call us or visit us online for a list topics. We can also tailor a seminar or retreat to your needs.

# Harboring Hope

*In this first installment of a running series, therapist Leslie Hardie shares success stories from the field. This month, we feature the story of Kay and Andrew.*

I knew my husband wasn't happy. I knew he had a huge sexual appetite... but I never could have imagined what valleys I was getting ready to travel. Yet, without these low places, I would not know the peaks that Andrew and I are now experiencing— the relationship that we now love and cherish. We are a couple who has weathered the storm of reclaiming a marriage poisoned by my husband's sex addiction.

It has been two years now since I made the shocking discovery of Andrew's secret life. We had been married for 14 years and had three beautiful daughters. Little did I know that throughout our marriage he had been participating in his addictive behavior. He covered his tracks for years, but one day he forgot and God revealed Andrew's repulsive lifestyle to me. It happened on February 4, 2002. I discovered naked pictures of myself on the Internet. I was not even aware of these pictures. Apparently, he had snapped digital photos of me and left them on his computer to send to other men in chat rooms.

Andrew confessed to me after I confronted him. Coincidentally, this was the very week he started seeking help. He had come to the point where he knew he had a serious problem and had become desperate for somewhere to turn. This was the beginning of a long, hard recovery for both of us. I saw God's graciousness to me in His waiting to reveal this life just as Andrew was desiring a way out of his hell.

That night what Andrew revealed was just the tip of the iceberg. He admitted to being involved with Internet pornography, chat rooms, and XXX theaters. Surprisingly, I turned from being angry to supporting him. I knew that God was working through me because that was a very atypical reaction from me. God gave me the willingness to step forward and go through the battlefield. Again, it is a good thing that God didn't reveal to me the whole journey ahead because I would have surely become overwhelmed and bailed. Instead, God took me by the hand and led me straight

through this emotional hell, protecting me and giving me strength. After admitting his unlovable actions, Andrew's wall slowly began to come down. Although, unbeknownst to me, the worst pain was still to come.

We found Rick Reynolds and started group and couples' therapy. Rick was just the man for this job. Being a Christian counselor and an expert in the field of sexual betrayal, Rick gave us both an understanding of the problem and the resulting behavior, as well as a plan for recovery.

Through the next months, Andrew slowly revealed more painful information about his secret life.

These revelations from him always took my breath away as if I were being punched in the gut. I learned about his many visits to massage parlors, peep shows, escort services, and yes, even some male interactions. Intercourse was not his choice of behavior; however, once it did take place with a prostitute. I think this was the most painful reality for me. The most degrading and embarrassing experience was when I had to get a physical exam from my doctor and had to explain why I needed to be checked for every possible STD including AIDS. I thank God for protecting me from these possibilities. When Andrew finally revealed everything, he experienced so much freedom but it left me feeling beaten up.

In June 2002, I caught Andrew on the Internet and told him to leave. We separated for a period of six weeks knowing that it was for the purpose of coming back together. He stayed with my mother, who loves him unconditionally. This was a time of growth for both of us. With the help of God and two other Christian men, Andrew fought harder to overcome his addiction. He applied Scripture to his life and began understanding how to use the Holy Spirit. Andrew moved back home in August and has been on a steady and stable road ever since. We have made major changes in our lives as a couple, continue maintenance counseling sessions, and he takes occasional polygraph tests to prove his honesty. Andrew still has struggles with his eyes

and thoughts but the previous lifestyle is drifting further and further away.

Through this painful experience, there have been so many blessings. Group therapy introduced me to a woman who has become my dearest friend. Andrew and I have become best friends, we have a healthy sex life, and have experienced unconditional love. We often tell each other that we love our life together. As I said, we are enjoying the peaks now. I would not have chosen to go through this ordeal, but now that I am coming out of it, I know that we have grown so much in God and with each other. We were able to witness a miracle from God. For without the battle, how would we know the victory? This was our road. Each one of us has a different road but the same answer— God!

There is hope. But in order for our marriage to recover, there had to be some necessary ingredients. First, we both had to seek God and focus on Him. Second, Andrew had to admit and acknowledge his problem, have the desire to change, have a true Godly sorrow, and repent. Third, I had to be willing to receive God's grace and forgiveness. And finally, we had to readjust the boundaries and priorities or our life and make changes. Recovery is a step-by-step process of moving forward. Trusting God and being obedient to Him is essential. If you asked me if I'd stay married to this man if his behavior was repeated, I would say to you that I don't know. I would have to look to God for that answer. My grace comes from Him, and He gives it as needed. If God continued to give me grace, then I would know my answer.

I hope those of you who read this article can find hope and comfort through my words. "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God" (2 Corinthians 3:4). We feel that God has taken our mess and given us a message to share with others.

**"That night what Andrew revealed to me was just the tip of the iceberg."**

## The Parent's Place

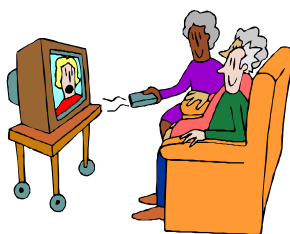
Unless you fell off the planet last month, chances are that you have already heard tremendous discussion about the disturbing halftime incident at the Super Bowl. If nothing else, it was a glaring reminder that television is not always a safe place for the healthy sexual development of our children.

Having worked with many children and teenagers over the years, many parents have asked me where to set the boundaries on television viewing in their homes, and what programming is safe. While I believe that each parent must ultimately make the decisions regarding what is best for their children, I might offer some suggestions.

To begin with, I recommend that TVs should not be placed in a child's bedroom, but rather in a public area of the house. Secondly, I would encourage you to make a prayerful decision about setting a daily limit on TV viewing

for your youngsters. Again, for each parent this limit will be different, but the important thing is to be consistent in enforcing the limit that you have set.

The programming question is more difficult. After all, the Super Bowl reminded us that what is touted as family fare is often anything but. And the programming information is getting blurrier all the time. For example, Viacom, who owns MTV (the creator of the halftime show), also owns Nickelodeon, a favorite network for children.



not to come across as judgmental, but, for example, if you see a teenage show that depicts girls as sexual objects, you can bring that up. You can also talk about some of the negative and destructive messages commercials are throwing at young people. While your kids will not always respond to what you say (any they may show annoyance with you) don't forget that kids often respect your opinions far more than they will admit.

Finally, remember that despite all the gloom and doom talk, all TV is not a wasteland. Wholesome and educational programming is still out there. If you can't find it, remember that nobody is forcing you to watch, and you can always just turn it off and pick up a good book. I recommend *Treasure Island*. Until next month...

## Marriage Builders

Here is a little activity that a couple can do that doesn't take too much effort, but can really help build communication within a relationship. Each night, the husband and wife can take turns sharing one feeling that they have experienced sometime during the day. It can be any feeling at all, and it doesn't have to relate specifically to their spouse or the marriage. Any feeling will do.

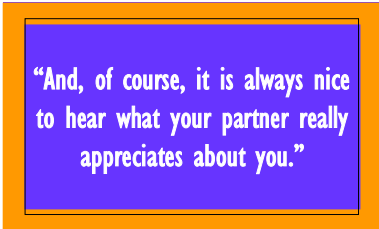
Once each person has done this, they then take turns sharing one time before when they felt the feeling they mentioned. Again, it doesn't matter

when they felt it and it doesn't have to be within the context of the marriage.

Finally, after the husband and wife have done this, they can finish the activity by sharing one thing that they appreciate about the other.

The primary purpose of this activity is not to learn tidbits about your spouse, but rather to get comfortable with

communicating with one another. By practicing simple communication skills like these, a couple will be more adept at communicating more difficult matters. And, of course, it is always nice to hear what your partner really appreciates about you. You can never take for granted that your spouse knows all the ways in which you appreciate them!



## Rick's Reality Check

In this series, Rick Reynolds exposes some of the myths, faulty rationales, and excuses people make for engaging in affairs.

### Reality Check #1: The Myth of the Grass Always Being Greener on the Other Side.

Somebody once said something to the extent of that wherever you go, there you are. This is definitely true when we think that our problems will be solved by getting involved with a new person.

The truth is, your baggage never gets lost in transit, and it always shows up at your new destination. The belief that a geographic or other change will cure your misery is only an indication of deluded victim thinking. Your mate isn't your problem, rather, your mate only reveals the problems in you. If you remove your

mate, then all you have really done is removed the spotlight that was illuminating your own defects of character. Once in a new marital relationship, the light will once again shine on your weaknesses.

Next Month, Reality Check #2: Emotional Decisions are Never Our Best Decisions.





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Times**

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*A Community of Hope and  
Healing*

**We're on the Web**

[www.affairrecovery.com](http://www.affairrecovery.com)



*Affair Recovery Center is a community of counseling professionals and couples. Our professional counselors are dedicated to the restoration of marriages crippled by infidelity. Our organization includes numerous couples who have experienced the abundant blessings of reconciliation and renewal.*

*Our mission is to offer hope, support, and recovery for couples and individuals who have suffered the pain resulting from infidelity, betrayal, or sexual addiction.*

## From the Editor's Desk

We hope that you have enjoyed the first edition of the Affair Recovery Times, the official newsletter of the Affair Recovery Center. We hope that this newsletter will be a source of inspiration to anyone who has been wounded by compulsive sexual behavior, either directly, or through the activities of somebody close to them. We are committed to the restoration of healthy sexuality within individuals, marriages, and families. To that end, we will feature articles on subjects that speak to everyone from those struggling with destructive habits to their spouses and children.

Most of our material will be written by professional therapists who have depth and experience in the field, and who may have even experienced some of the things you are going through now. While our offerings will change regularly, allow me to draw your attention to some of the kinds of articles you can expect. In addition to the hands-on counseling articles alluded to previously, we will regularly post fun activities that you can do with your spouse to strengthen your marriage (for we believe that even the healthiest marriages can al-

ways be improved).

Our Harboring Hope column will share real-life stories from individuals and couples who have passed through the ordeal of affairs and sexual addiction to find healing and restoration. You may find that your situation is not that different from many other people, and we hope that you will take courage in their successes, and realize that you are not alone in your struggles.

In our Parents' Corner, you will find tips and activities on how to help your children overcome the pain of family turmoil as well as information on how to raise children and teenagers with a healthy sexual identity in a dangerous age. Our Action Alert feature will provide information on how to fight back against those people and companies who are working to force-feed unhealthy sexuality to you and your family. These are but the tip of the iceberg, and our offerings will grow along with our readership.

What makes the community that we are building at The Affair Recovery Center so unique is that we can grow and find strength from the support and experiences

of others. That said, if there is anything that you can suggest that would make this newsletter better, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me using the contact information listed above.

I am truly excited to have the opportunity to edit this worthy project, and look forward to hearing from you if you have any feedback to share with us. God bless you, and happy reading.



**Dr. John Mark Haney, Editor**