

AFFAIR RECOVERY TIMES

Volume 2, Issue 5
May, 2005

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER

TO TELL OR NOT TO TELL-

THAT IS THE QUESTION

"Why should I tell?" is one of the questions most frequently asked by the betrayer, and for them, this question presents a frightening dilemma. The arguments are universal: Why should my mate be hurt because of my bad behavior? What they don't know won't hurt them. They'll never be able to handle the truth. It would be the end of my marriage. How could I do that to the other party and their marriage? Why should I dump my stuff on them just to get rid of my guilt? And the list goes on. At first glance these arguments seem logical, but they fail to address the larger issues.

In reality, most arguments against telling are self-serving and don't address the best interest of one's mate or the best interest of recovery. Maybe a better question would be, "Would my mate want to know?"

The vast majority of the time, the primary motivation for not telling is fear. We're afraid of what would happen if our mate were to find out. How will they react? What will it cost me? Telling all is about surrendering a secret life, as well as choosing truth instead of deceitful lies, and health over pathology. It is about surrender not control, about letting go rather than hanging on.

Recovery is not about maintaining the status quo, and it is not about business as usual. Rather, it is about a changed life, a new beginning, and true intimacy. The final verse in Genesis Chapter 2 states, "And the two were naked and not ashamed". This doesn't mean that they had their own little nudist colony; rather, it means they were able to fully share their lives, to be fully known, including all of their secrets, fears, dreams, failures, and successes. Nothing was hid-

den from the eyes of their mate and at the same



Founder Rick Reynolds

time they felt totally accepted. That state is a far cry from the condition of those trapped in a secret life. In fact, those individuals find themselves hidden and ashamed. Recovery is about new beginnings and the old baggage needs to be discarded. To do that, the truth has to be removed from its hiding places and exposed to the light.

The most disturbing aspect about not sharing the whole truth, and nothing but the truth with our mate is the control and manipulation. Information is control and the unwillingness to share the truth robs one's mate of being able to

Inside this issue:

The Founder's Corner	1
Harboring Hope	2
The Bulletin Board	2
American Idols	3
From the Editor's Desk	4

Special points of interest:

- The Question of Whether or not to Tell
- What are your idols?
- Just what is E.M.S.?

HARBORING HOPE

Each month, we feature the true story of a couple and their journey to recovery. This month, we conclude the story of Samuel and Deborah's experience.

Deborah's Story

Compiled by Leslie Hardie

During our marriage, I constantly thought something was going on and he would say that I was just being suspicious, and that it was all in my mind. So when I found out, I thought that was the end of it. I read *An Affair of the Moment* and I started asking him more and more questions and I was really persistent. I asked him, "Have you slept with prostitutes?" and he admitted that he had. I fell apart. I couldn't breathe. Samuel said he had accepted Christ but I didn't believe him. I really thought he was just telling me that so he could stay and so I kicked him out. I never knew I could be that low. I remember throwing things at him, thinking he was lying and I didn't want to hear any more lies.

We began going to the meetings with Rick Reynolds. Samuel took a

lie detector test and that helped. That was my thing. I said, "You pass it or it's over", so we got through that and we kept going to counseling.

We went to the couples group and you told me, "By February you'll be better." I thought you



were a liar. But I did get better. It seemed impossible, but I did.

However, I was still suspicious. So Samuel has gotten real good about explaining things to me. There will always be times when something doesn't sound right and I need an explanation. If he says

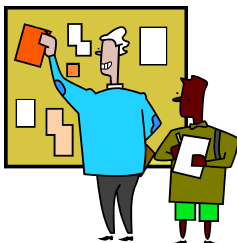
he's going to work late he's good about calling me - not from his cell phone, but from a land line so I know where he is because we have caller identification. That helps because now I don't find myself wondering any more.

It's very amazing because I never would have believed someone if they said you could get past this. I never would have believed that you could get over it but I did.

I would advise somebody not to give up, not to just throw in the towel because it can be better. It truly can be better. When we'd been married just about a year, I started praying for our home. Then all this happened and I remember saying, "God, I don't know what prayer you were listening to, but this is not what I asked for!" Now I see it working full circle to have created something totally different in a way that I would have never thought. Just don't give up. Don't think you can't get over something because you might be surprised. You really might be surprised at what you can live through.

Next Month: Another narrative of healing and forgiveness

THE BULLETIN BOARD



The Affair Recovery Center wants to announce our next EMS (Emergency Marriage Seminar) weekend. It is an intensive couple's seminar that has helped countless marriages. It is scheduled for July 22-24. Call us or log on for more information, to register, or to request a brochure. Weekend lodging information is available.

THE PROFESSIONALS AT THE AFFAIR RECOVERY CENTER OFFER NUMEROUS SEMINARS FOR GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS. CALL US OR VISIT US ONLINE FOR A LIST OF LENGTHS AND TOPICS. WE CAN ALSO TAILOR A SEMINAR OR RETREAT TO YOUR NEEDS.

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER (CONTINUED)

make an informed decision. It ruins the betrayer's opportunity to truly be chosen. You can never be loved unconditionally if you only conditionally allow your mate to know who you are.

Decisions regarding "telling" don't need to be based upon what a spouse has stated regarding what they will do if their mate betrays them. No one knows how their spouse will respond. In the majority of couples we've treated, the betrayed spouse has previously made the threat that if their mate ever cheats on them, then they're gone, but they can never know how they're going to react before they actually find themselves in that situation. Our experience shows that God frequently gives the grace to the betrayed spouse to give the relationship a chance as long as their mate is broken and grieved

over what they've done to their spouse.

Some of you may be saying at this point, "You don't know my spouse", and you'd be right, but at the same time maybe you don't know how they'll respond. In the

You can never be loved unconditionally if you only conditionally allow your mate to know who you are.

past 20 years of working with marriages impacted by unfaithfulness, I can only think of a handful of cases where I didn't believe it best to tell the truth. If you didn't want to hurt them then you shouldn't have done the deed. To keep them in the dark is almost always in your short-term

best interest, and not in theirs.

In many ways the most important issue of recovery isn't about the behavior. If all we try to do is stop bad and hurtful behavior, then all we will have done is swept cobwebs. In my mind we need to kill the spider and that work can never be done in secret. It requires eliminating shame, which is done by revealing our dark side and receiving the grace of God. It's learning how to embrace what I've done and to take personal responsibility so I can begin to address the problem. This sort of work can never be done for one's mate- it can only be done out of my own desperation to get a life. It's about facing the consequences of what I've done rather than avoiding the consequences by keeping my behavior secret. It's about growing up.

AMERICAN IDOLS

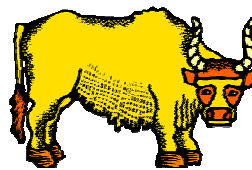
By Dr. John Mark Haney

Just like the hundreds of clay and metal statues our ancestors once worshipped, modern idols come in many shapes and sizes. Numerous writers and religious leaders have bemoaned the fact that America is a very idolatrous culture, even if we have traded in the small statues for more modern equivalents. Some U.S. idols are obvious, like money, sex, position, and popular culture and athletic icons. But I want to write about a more subtle type of idol, and that is the kind that on the surface does not look like an idol at all, but rather looks like a healthy and positive thing.

For example, marriage is generally regarded as a positive and

godly institution, and I certainly don't want to discourage that idea. However, some people put so much emphasis on achieving happiness or satisfaction from their marriage or spouse that they fail to look to God for their needs. When this happens, marriage has become their idol.

Children can be another hidden idol. While it is a wonderful thing to raise children, some parents create a life that revolves around their children to the point where they are looking to their kids to vicariously meet their own needs. When this happens, God is pushed to the side, and your own children can become your idols.



The list goes on— work, academic titles, pets, homes, and even church can become an idol when people look to involvement with the institution rather than the relationship with God to meet their needs.

The challenge, then, is to look at our own lives and prayerfully identify those things that we have allowed to achieve idol status. Basically, if parts of your life are more central than your relationship with God, you are allowing idols in your life. Again, none of the things I have mentioned is bad, but they simply cannot replace a relationship with the God who provided these blessing in the first place.

AFFAIR RECOVERY CENTER

4131 Spicewood Springs Rd.
Building Q-1
Austin, Texas 78759

Phone: 512-346-9299
Fax: 512-345-3139
E-mail: believenow@sbcglobal.net

A Community of Hope and Healing

We're On the Web!
www.affairrecovery.com



**Affair Recovery
Center**

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Here at the Affair Recovery Center we have been getting increasing numbers of inquiries from all over the United States (and some from other countries) about our E.M.S. weekends, so I thought I would take a moment and answer some of the more common questions people are asking.

E.M.S. stands for Emergency Marriage Seminar, and it is designed for couples recovering from infidelity and betrayal. It is an intensive weekend program that boils down our entire 12-week couple's recovery group into three days (so be sure and eat your Wheaties if you decide to join us!). All of our staff counselors are present for the weekend, and bring their unique areas of expertise.

This program has been honed

over many years, and has helped the recovery processes of hundreds of couples recovering from all types of betrayals including affairs, prostitution, and pornography. We limit the size of each weekend seminar to be able to provide personal attention to each couple present, and to really focus on the healing of each attendee.

The weekend addresses the needs of both the betrayer, the betrayed, and the marriage itself, and covers a wide variety of topics which we feel are crucial to the recovery effort and process. Every E.M.S. weekend is conducted in a safe and confidential atmosphere with other couples who are going through many of the same issues

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.

you might be facing.

Sometimes we are asked if we do these weekends in other states. As of now, we are conducting all of our E.M.S. weekend seminars in our home office town of Austin, Texas,

but hopefully we will be starting some regional E.M.S. weekends in the future, so keep logging onto our web site for announcements of future dates and locations.

I hope that you will prayerfully consider joining us for one of these weekends. If you are interested in finding out more, please call or e-mail us at any time, and we would be happy to visit with you and answer any more questions that you might have.



Dr. John Mark Haney