

# AFFAIR RECOVERY TIMES

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## THE FOUNDER'S CORNER

### When to Save a Marriage

At the Affair Recovery Center we are committed to helping people to reconcile marriages, but how does one know if it's worth the effort, pain and commitment? We are often asked when is it worth the effort of working things out and when is it best just to move on?

Dr. Laura Schlessinger talks about the three A's as reasons to end a marriage: Abuse, Addiction, and Affairs. In these circumstances the betrayer has chosen something other than the marriage, and I fully agree with that concept. The betrayal of a marriage is no small matter. In fact, for many, the pain caused by unfaithfulness is the most devastating and painful event in their life. However, leaving a marriage to escape the pain and the loss of self-respect is not always the answer. It is possible that in a strange way the crisis created by the unfaithfulness may actually provide the necessary environment for healthy change. We invite couples, before abandoning their relationship, to honestly explore what went wrong.

The old saying, "those who fail to learn from their past mistakes are destined to repeat them" is certainly true. There is no action that either spouse could have



Founder Rick Reynolds

committed which could justify any of the "three A's," but at the same time, no person is guiltless (don't take what I've just said and go and beat your spouse with it- this is about looking at your personal failures, not at your mate's). My mate is not my problem, but my mate most certainly reveals the problems in me. All of us arrive in marriage with our own personal baggage and, unlike the airlines, our personal baggage will never get lost in transit. It will always arrive at our next relationship. Before abandoning ship, we recommend discovering the nature of your personal baggage and how it has contributed to

the problems in the marriage. That does not mean that you are the reason for the infidelity. The answers that each of you discovers may well provide motivations for reconciling your marriage.

One of the first problems in determining whether or not you should reconcile a marriage is the initial response of the unfaithful spouse. The unfaithful spouse needs to display a strong willingness to do whatever it takes to move toward health and recovery. If there is not a willingness to be honest and to stop the hurtful behaviors or inappropriate relationships, then saving the marriage becomes questionable. We suggest that the hurt spouse give the unfaithful spouse a short season to see if they will come back, but if they don't then it's time to move on. A partner needs to be truly grieved over what they've done to their mate and the pain they've caused. Without remorse it may still not be hopeless, but it becomes more difficult.

Another thing to consider is timing. It's difficult to make sound decisions at times when we are so emo-

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### Special points of interest:

- To Stay or Not to Stay Married- That is the Question
- Raymond's Story

## HARBORING HOPE

*Each month, we feature the true story of a couple and their journey to recovery, and this month, we are pleased to begin the story of Raymond and Julia.*

*Raymond and Julia had been married for twenty-seven years when they separated. Raymond is an attorney, and the couple has grown children. After Raymond's affair, they separated and began divorce proceedings. Now they are back together, leading marriage seminars in their church and teaching a divorce prevention course. Here is what Raymond had to say:*

### Raymond's Story

Julia and I married when I was in law school but we were not very close. So I began looking outside the marriage for that emotional connection within the first year. I would become friends with somebody of the opposite sex. I felt that as long I never did anything inappropriate with them that I could be friends with them.

I became entangled with a lot of different women through the years. So when it happened with my law partner, it was just the same thing that I had done a number of times before. In the meantime, my marriage continued to get worse and worse and my unhappiness accumulated.

My recollection of the day we separated is different from Julia's. I thought she was the one who made the decision that we were getting a divorce. She's the one who told her family, "Don't come. We're getting a divorce." She called me and told me that she was divorcing me and that she

would have my bags packed when I got home. So when I got home, they were packed. I picked them up and walked out the door.

I had a great deal of anger at Julia. So the separation, for me, was a feeling that she was getting what she deserved. On another level I felt that I was now free to pursue a relationship with my partner. After Julia and I separated, my partner and I began to see more and more of each other, spending more and more time together. Ultimately, what began as an emotional affair, became a physical affair.

The physical part of the relationship only lasted about two months. That was because we are both Christians and we both knew



it was wrong. But even after we stopped the physical relationship, we continued to see each other for another year.

My partner was in a leadership position in her church. Her pastor found out about our affair and confronted her with it so everything was in turmoil. She called me and suggested that I go in and talk to her pastor. When I did, he confronted me with the fact that she had accused me of being a sexual harasser and that I had

pursued her against her will. That's when I got my first clue that something was wrong with our relationship. When her pastor confronted her, she stabbed me in the back and claimed that it wasn't her fault.

When my relationship with my partner blew up, I decided that I was still going to divorce Julia, and that my decision to terminate the marriage was independent of what had happened with my partner.

In our marriage, Julia had always insisted on being in control. Our struggle for control was at the very heart of the problem in our marriage. When we separated, two things happened. One was that I made up my mind that I would never allow her to control me again. The other part is that she relinquished control. In the area of control, both of us changed at a very fundamental level.

Still, I had no plans to see or talk to Julia until the divorce occurred. Then my daughter, who lives in Chicago, called and said she was very concerned about me. She was so concerned, that she flew down to be here with me and she stayed with Julia. I went over there to give her a car for her to use during her stay. When I walked into the house, Julia was sitting at the breakfast table and I could tell she was extremely tense about the situation. I know she expected me to be very angry with her.

But something completely different occurred. When I walked in that front door, I had absolutely no intention of reconciling with her. Then suddenly we were talking and I never left to return to my apartment. Everything just hap-

## THE FOUNDER'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

tional. At the initial impact of the revelation of a betrayal, it's difficult to know if it's worth the effort of saving and it certainly may not feel like it's worth it. The pain and trauma for both partners override reason. In addition, it's impossible to tell how one's mate is going to respond over the first 12 months. The hurt spouse may find themselves on an emotional rollercoaster for as long as 18 months. While 18 months is not that long, it feels like an eternity to the couple going through the ups and downs. It is true that the ride gets less intense as the process goes on, but in the beginning it can feel like it goes on forever. The more time you allow for emotions to subside and reason to rule, the better your chances of making a sound decision.

One of the simple factors in deciding to reconcile a marriage is past history. If at least 10% of the marital history was positive, then the probabilities of a positive outcome to the reconciliation increase significantly. It may be difficult however to be honest about the marital history. The pain of the betrayal may cloud judgment when considering the positives in the past. Often, all the hurt spouse can see are the failures, not the

successes. At the same time, it's not uncommon for the unfaithful spouse to rewrite the marital history and eliminate all the good times in order to justify their actions. I would encourage both parties to honestly try to look at reality. If at some point it was good in the past then it's possible for it to be good again in the future.

*When God tells you the path you need to take then it doesn't need to make sense*

There are also some more common reasons for trying to salvage a marriage, such as finances, children, and shared history. In reality, one of the main reasons for saving a marriage is because it's worth it, not only for self, but also for others. At the point of revelation, there is often little or no perceived value in the marriage, but it is worth it. Whether or not you see it, there is value in saving your marriage.

But there is one reason that trumps all others. When God tells you the path you need to take then it doesn't need to make sense. It's our belief at the Affair Recovery Center that if there is a clear sense from God to work on the marriage then you must work on the marriage. We frequently ask our clients, "what is God telling you?" Interestingly, many of them have a clear sense of what they are being told. In those situations we believe following that path is most important. If you don't have a clear answer wait until you do.

I realize even trying to suggest the ins and outs of determining whether or not to salvage a marriage in two pages of text is difficult at best. I've only begun to touch on some of the issues of when to consider saving a marriage. If you are struggling with whether or not to continue then please give us a call. One of our staff counselors or even one of our mentorship couples (who have been through this themselves) would love to walk with you through this difficult time. If you would like to talk then please email us at [info@hope-now.com](mailto:info@hope-now.com).

Yours in Christ...

Rick

## HARBORING HOPE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

pened and it was something I never expected to happen. I recognize it as being nothing less than the Holy Spirit working in our lives at that point.

What's so amazing is that my whole life has changed. My thirty-year career in law has changed completely. I'm no longer with the law firm working as a trial lawyer. I work as a mediator now. I do mediations for couples considering divorce and I call it, "Divorce Reconciliation Mediation" and that's a term that doesn't exist in the mediation field. I'm using mediation as a vehicle to take what Julia and

I have learned through our experience and use it to help other couples.

I was never active in church so now it's really ironic that Julia and I actually lead the marriage seminar in our church. We also teach the divorce prevention course.

One thing I have learned is that as long as someone is seeing the other woman, it makes it incredibly hard for him to see things clearly with his wife. Most people in that situation think that working

on the marriage is really not an option. They think it's easier to go with somebody else who can give you what you weren't getting in your marriage.

They need to understand that reconciliation is worth working for. It takes effort and work to resolve the problems in the marriage. But in the long run reconciliation is better than seeking what seems like a quick fix and the easy way out.

*Compiled by Leslie Hardie*

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**Affair Recovery  
Center**

*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

It is hard for me to believe that summer is upon us already! This has been a busy year for us at the Affair Recovery Center, and the remainder of the year promises to be even more eventful. Our community is growing rapidly, and we are attracting members from all over the U.S. and some foreign countries as well.

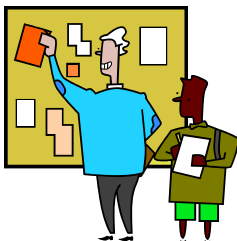
While we are growing in size, our ministry is still committed to individuals and couples like you, and we never want to lose sight of that. As such, please feel free to contact us at any times with feedback or questions. We are here to serve you.



Dr. John Mark Haney

There are still a few spaces available for our next EMS weekend in July, which will take place in Austin, Texas, and we'd love to have you join us. Registration information is available on our website, and we would be happy to answer any questions that you have.

## THE BULLETIN BOARD



The Affair Recovery Center is pleased to announce our next EMS (Emergency Marital Services) 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 to our website 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.