

AFFAIR RECOVERY TIMES

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THE FOUNDER'S CORNER

HOW TO HELP

Enraged, he grabbed her arm, flinging her to the ground. There was a sickening snap as her forearm hung at a grotesque angle. Terrorized she slid against the floor, pushing herself with her feet and one good arm until her back was against the wall. Her cry of pain, as well as the sight of the broken arm, caused him to freeze. In that instant he shifted and became something else. The husband left and the doctor inside of him suddenly arrived. With a strong air of confidence he knelt by her side and told her to give him her arm. "I'm going to have to set this" he informed her. "This is going to hurt, but I've done it thousands of times, you don't have anything to worry about."

As Sarah relayed her story I felt a knot in the pit of my stomach. I asked her how she felt about his quick metamorphosis from raging bull to doctor. "I couldn't believe it," she replied, "but that's not the worst of it. Can you understand how crazy-making it is to have a person literally break your arm and then in the next instant ask me to trust him,

letting the hands that just abused me become the healing hands? It was more than I could handle. I was in such shock, I couldn't even get my mind around it.

Sarah's situation isn't uncommon. The same scenario happens daily in relationships rocked by unfaithfulness. The unfaithful partner frequently delivers a horrifying blow to their mate, leaving them both wounded and disoriented. The sudden realization of the impact their actions have on their mate shocks the unfaithful partner into action. This certainly is not the case in all situations, but it happens frequently. At that moment the unfaithful spouse shifts from their role as the one creating the pain and becomes the one trying to remedy the situation.

If you're the unfaithful partner reading this article, I don't want to leave the impression that it's useless to attempt to help your hurting spouse, but I do want to communicate the difficulty this situation creates. You may, with all good intent, try to approach your spouse to make restitution and amends for your hurtful actions, only to be rebuffed or

even attacked. This isn't unusual. In fact, it's more the norm than the exception. Like Sarah, the very fact that you're attempting



Founder Rick Reynolds

to help the hurt you've created by your actions causes further confusion. To your mate it may even be crazy-making as they struggle to determine who you really are. All I'm suggesting is to be patient and allow your mate to have their response. Don't be frustrated by how they may respond. Time and consistency on your part are a necessity in your mate's healing. It will take time before your mate comes to the point where they can feel you are safe. We recommend that you take a non-defensive stance with your mate. Never defend yourself. To do so only prolongs their healing.

When I was entering
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Special points of interest:

- Advice for Mending a Broken Heart
- Raymond and Julia's Story
- Happy Independence Day!

HARBORING HOPE

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

Julia's Story

I thought we were happily married because Raymond didn't reveal his unhappiness to me. He was always a conflict avoider. Then one summer evening, after a really hard day at the office, he began to talk about his past. He revealed that before we were married, he had fathered a child out of wedlock. Then he began to tell me about his law partner.

I had realized in the months leading up to this fateful evening that something was going on between them. Raymond was very admiring of her and alarm bells were going off, but I wasn't paying attention. So when the truth came out, I began to realize that we were in real trouble.

Raymond's partner was the one who recommended that we get Christian counseling. I was very hesitant to go to a Christian counselor because I didn't want that "holy spirit" kind of talk for the marriage. So I pooh-poohed the idea. But we didn't know any other counselor, so we came to Rick Reynolds and began to confront the symptoms. We were looking at the affair partner and some other issues and I began to unleash my anger at Raymond. I thought I was the person who was wronged and I felt very virtuous. I'm the kind who always follows the rules and wouldn't even think of getting involved with someone else. I really prided myself on being very moral. I didn't have a spiritual life at all but I was very

moral. So all I looked at was my anger toward Raymond.

When I began unleashing my anger, Raymond would just take it because he thought this way I could work through it and the marriage would go on. In retrospect, I realize that it was the worst thing that we could have done. Unbeknownst to me, Raymond was already half way out the door. He didn't feel loved, so the more I kept hammering him, the more damage I was doing to the marriage. So the next few months were really bad at our house.

The day before we separated, I thought Raymond was at the office. However, he was actually at Wild Basin Preserve, a local wilderness park, with his partner. They were walking and talking. I realized during our months of counseling that Raymond was still emotionally entangled with her and it was killing me. My anger was coming out of my heart because Raymond was connecting with this other woman.

The next day, Raymond told me that he had been at Wild Basin with his partner and I didn't take it well at all. We were at the site where our new house was being built and Raymond said, "I will stay in the house until after Christmas, but I can't make any guarantees after that." Well, I needed to know right then. Are you staying? Are you going? What's going on? I assumed Raymond meant he was divorcing me and that he was leaving after Christmas. I didn't think I could live a charade for the next couple of months.

Later that day I called my relatives who were planning to visit at Christmas, and told them Ray-

mond was divorcing me. When Raymond found out what I had said to them, he became very angry with me. This is what precipitated the final separation, but this had been building up for a long time. We were heading for destruction.

The blow-up and subsequent separation served to completely break me. My life was spinning out of control and I had lost everything. I remember thinking that everything was so black and that there was nothing left. I felt totally empty. I asked Rick if I was going to be okay and he just smiled and said, "Oh, Julia, you're going to be better." That was just like life again for me to hear that and to know that I was going to be okay. I didn't know if we'd reconcile but I needed to hear that week after week from Rick because I was very depressed and I needed to know that I would get better.

All those months that we were separated, I had this really quiet time with God. I sat alone listening to preachers on the radio and reading my Bible. The only peace and feeling of normalcy in my life was when I was in Rick's office. Rick kept telling me that I was going to be okay and that God did have a plan for me. I began to get to know God, depend on Him, and trust that He was working His plan in my life. So many times I'd come into Rick's office and give him the blow-by-blow of what was going on between Raymond and me. It looked so black to me. Rick would just lean back in his chair and say, "Well, Julia, God's still in control, and I'll let you know when He's not." That was much-needed comic relief but at the same time he was reassuring

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER (CONTINUED)

recovery, a friend was kind enough to give me some great advice. He asked, "Rick what is the consequence of sin?" "Death," I replied. "You're right, so just remember anything she does short of killing you is really mercy." It was great advice. Just remembering that I was getting less than what I deserved when my wife was reacting out of her pain. If I had defended myself or my actions, my wife would have just felt that I didn't get it and would have responded by turning up the volume in an attempt to get me to understand. This was her time to try to help me understand, not my time to help her understand. That time does come, but it is much later. Understand that healing takes time, just like it takes time for a broken bone to

set. Broken hearts take a bit longer than bones. So be patient and continue to be present to your mate as they heal. I am well aware that there are probably other problems in your marriage beside the affair, but until the hurt from the affair has been addressed it will be difficult if not impossible to explore those problems. Be patient and participate, to the extent that your mate is able and will allow, in the process of healing.

If you're the hurt spouse, your pain may seem more than you can bear. Bewildered and disoriented, you don't know how you can trust your broken heart to the stranger who is offering to walk with you. You may believe that the only way you would ever commit such an offense is if you hated your

mate. For you it would be an act of vengeance, therefore it's difficult to consider the possibility that it's not about you. In this time I implore you to be slow to action. There are many things to be explored before a rational decision can be made. The emotions need to subside before the two of you can understand the how, why and what of this hurtful situation. Take the time to heal and as you are able. If your mate has shown that they can be safe, then allow them to be a part of your healing. Even if you don't stay together it will facilitate your healing and the lessons you learn from the answers to the how, why and what, will serve you well for the rest of your life.

Rick

HARBORING HOPE (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

me that God knew what He was doing and that I could trust Him.

It was during the next few months that I began a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I began to talk to Him and I realized that He is with me all the time. This gave me great, great hope. Even though it was a black, depressing and hard time, I was beginning to feel at peace with myself. I began to allow God more and more control over my life and this also brought me a great feeling of peace. I realized that I had no control over Raymond. You see, I thought I controlled him for twenty-seven years, but I didn't.

During this time I felt so virtuous and thought that Raymond was the one doing me wrong. I wanted to be a victim but Rick wouldn't let me be a victim. Week after week, he wouldn't let me go there. I realize now that when God works in our lives, He goes right to the wound, where the pain is. In those dark weeks, I began

to realize my own limitations as a wife. This was really painful for me because I began to realize how very much I had hurt Raymond.

I began to go to Raymond from time to time and I'd say, "Raymond, I can't believe I did this to you." He would just listen to me, and I think that for the first time in our lives we began to really connect. For the first time I wasn't criticizing him or nagging him. It was in stark contrast to the old Julia. I tried to be pleasant when he came around. I tried to make the house a haven for him by being pleasant. I'd even have a fire in the fireplace and food in the refrigerator. Raymond kept coming around.

We went through legal proceedings. I tried to be very tender when I was with Raymond but at the same time I knew I needed legal counsel. I did get a lawyer and it got tense.

A year later we tried to reconcile but it was way too soon. We

separated after six weeks. It was horrible and worse than the first separation. We had no verbal contact at all after that. Then three weeks before the mediation and divorce was scheduled, there was a divine miracle. In a heartbeat Raymond decided to move home. We began the reconciliation process and it has lasted for 4-1/2 years. And let me tell you, reconciliation is really hard. It's hard because you have so much baggage and you're walking around on eggshells. Raymond was still practicing law with his partner when he came back. So his attitude wasn't, "Whatever it takes, I'm coming back." For at least the first couple of years every time we'd have a little argument, I'd think, "Oh my gosh, he's leaving." So it was very hard but it was so beautiful. Because now I see that God was using Raymond during that time to continue polishing me.

Compiled by Leslie Hardie

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A Community of Hope and Healing

We're On the Web!
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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

When talking to out-of-town clients, I sometimes get asked for advice about when a couple should consider an intensive marital intervention like our EMS weekend.

Studies show that the overwhelming majority of couples who seek counseling after a betrayal have the marital issues addressed in counseling, but not

the betrayal. If the betrayal is still an issue between the couple, our EMS is the solution.

Sometimes, the thought of traveling to another town to bare your souls about a sensitive subject can be pretty intimidating on its own, but rest assured, should you decide to

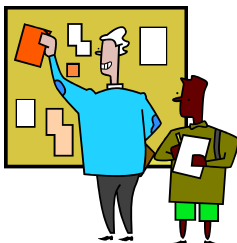


Dr. John Mark Haney

come, you will find an environment of safety and warmth, and you will be surrounded by others in similar circumstances.

If you would like to talk to one of our counselors about whether or not the EMS weekend is right for you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

THE BULLETIN BOARD



The Affair Recovery Center wants 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 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.