

AFFAIR RECOVERY TIMES

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THE FOUNDER'S CORNER

POWERLESSNESS AND UNMANAGEABILITY

Last month we began to explore the concept of "powerlessness." In the last article I proposed that the antidote to powerlessness was acceptance- acceptance of my circumstances, acceptance that my best efforts have brought me to this place, acceptance of my inability to affect change in myself as well as others, and the acceptance of who and what I really am. This may sound a bit negative, but in reality it is the beginning of hope. Until I can accept my powerlessness, I will be destined to continue in my strivings to change that which I have never successfully managed to change. I will continue to live in the problem as I try to improve the situation (which is what I've tried to do so many times before, unsuccessfully) rather than accepting my powerlessness and moving on to a new approach. Powerlessness is not an excuse, rather it's a reality, and it's the denial of that reality which keeps me in a cycle of perpetual failure.

All of this brings us to the concept of unmanageability. After we come to a place of accepting our powerlessness, it's not uncommon for those in difficult circumstances or with seemingly unstoppable behaviors to cry out to God for help. We want to be delivered from our hell on earth. For the hurt spouse, a sense of hopelessness seems to set in. They may ask, "If it's not about me, and if I can't affect change in my mate, then how can I ever be safe, and how can I ever trust again?" For the unfaithful mate, despair also reigns supreme. They may tell themselves, "If I can't stop, and if I'm truly powerless in the face of my behavior, then it's only a matter of time until life as I know it comes to a screaming halt." What do you do? By the way, if that is not how you feel, and if you still believe you can change, then please go back to last month's article and read about powerlessness (you can find it at <http://www.affairrecovery.com/newsletters/newsletter-v2-4.pdf>).

If you find that your best

efforts at stopping hurtful or self-destructive behaviors



Founder Rick Reynolds

(even perhaps after a significant amount of therapy and self-help) have resulted in a continued pattern of more of the same, then I'd invite you to consider the possibility that maybe your life is unmanageable. Unmanageability, though, is not a concept about a single pattern of self-defeating behavior; rather, it is a concept that addresses every aspect of one's life. Our problem as human beings is pride. We believe that we can do it, or at least that we ought to be able to get it right and certainly our mate ought to be able to get it right. We want to believe that there has to be something that I'm good at, and something I can overcome, when in reality, I just live in a world of denial,

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- Heather's Tale
- Back to School Accountability
- Please be Praying for our Next Group of EMS Attendees!

HARBORING HOPE

In our continuing series of true firsthand stories of couples and their journey to recovery, we are proud to conclude the story of Don and Heather.

Don and Heather are in their early thirties and have been married thirteen years. They have three children. Don is a manager at an electronics firm while Heather is a stay-at-home mom. Don did not have any religious upbringing whereas Heather came from a Christian background. When they first met, Don claimed to be a Christian even to the point of being baptized but later said it was just a front to hide his double life.

Heather's Story

Compiled by Leslie Hardie

When I got married I thought it would be like what every little girl dreams it will be. Life would be good and we'd have kids and live happily ever after. During our marriage, I constantly thought something was going on and he would say that I was just suspicious, and that it was all in my mind.

When I came home and discovered him masturbating while he was watching pornography, I thought that was the end of it. I read *An Affair of the Mind* and I started asking him more and more questions and was persistent with the questions. I asked, "Have you slept with prostitutes?" When

he said "yes," I fell apart. I couldn't breathe. I thought I was having a heart attack. I never knew I could be that low. I remember throwing things at him and telling him to leave. Don said he had accepted Christ but I didn't believe him. I really thought he was just telling me what I wanted to hear so he could stay and I kicked him out. I didn't want to hear any more lies.

We began going to the meetings with Rick Reynolds. After all the years of deception,



I didn't feel I could believe anything my husband said. So Don 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 "Affair Recovery Group" at the Affair Recovery Center and Rick told me that I'd be better in just three months. At the time, I thought

he was a liar, but I did get better. It seemed impossible, but I did.

However, I was still suspicious. As a result, Don has become 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 landline so that I know where he is because we have caller ID. 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 and to throw in the towel. Things can be better. They 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.

THE PARENT'S PLACE

By Dr. John Mark Haney

While walking the other morning, I heard the echo of band drums from the high school more than a mile away, and I knew that Autumn is really here. Kids are back in school, and the more carefree days of summer are past.

With the fall often comes a flurry of activity, particularly for older kids. Those of you who have parented children through school athletics, band, dance, or even debate or drama know how time-consuming those activities can be. Sometimes, your sons and daughters are expected to be at the school early and stay well into the evening.

Unfortunately, school also presents a new opportunity for our kids to reconnect with peers who may not have the best intentions, and as I have mentioned before, even those children who are in private schools are not totally insulated from temptation or questionable influences.

In the midst of all of the activity, it is sometimes easy to lose track of where your kids are and what they are doing. For the parents of those whose extra-curricular activities keep them at school



during odd hours, it is especially easy to get complacent and assume your kids are where they are telling you. For many of the teenagers I work with, school is one of their favorite alibis when they want to go get into trouble.

Good parenting means remaining vigilant at all times and keeping tabs on where your kids are, even when they are supposed to be at safe places like school or church youth groups. It is not a bad practice to have them check in every time they go somewhere new and report where they are and who they are with. Some teens will balk at this and claim that you are being unreasonable or don't trust them, but the bottom line is that you are doing the most loving thing by keeping them safe to the best of your ability, and even if they complain, deep down they will know that you love them and care enough about them to make the effort.

Once teens are in the habit of calling you every time they end up some place new, it can become second-nature for them. Also, as we adults are coming to learn, additional levels of accountability can be a really good thing, and may make all the difference for somebody who is treading the fine line between what is tempting and what is right.

THE FOUNDER'S CORNER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

believing that my mate and I have all we need within to overcome life's little obstacles.

The antidote to unmanageability has always been and will always be unconditional surrender, and not more self-effort, more therapy, or more insight. If I am unable to see the unmanageability of my circumstance then I will never be willing to consider the possibility that there really is a "Higher Power" that may be bigger than me. If I really accept my powerlessness over my behavior and circumstances, and my inability to manage my life or the life of my mate, then there had better be a God who is bigger than me or I'm up the proverbial creek without a paddle. If I'm left to my own ability and I've never gotten it right, what makes me think that I'm going to improve sometime in the future? There had better be a God

who can do better than I or we're all going down.

The source of continued relapse always comes down to an inability to surrender. I will never be willing to do whatever it is going to take to recover if I believe that my latest course of self-effort, or that a fresh understanding of my motives, will somehow propel me to a new way of acting and relating. It may, for a short season, result in temporary change, but even that change only reinforces the lies that I can change, that I can do it, and that I don't have to fully surrender to a Power that is greater than I. I believe if you honestly review the course of your life, you will notice a perpetual pattern of never-ending failures to get it right. You will always be able to find an excuse as to why the latest attempt to get it right failed. That excuse will usually fall at

the feet of a family member or a loved one, but in the long run the only common denominator is you. The inability to accept the unmanageability of my life only postpones what I need most, which is absolute surrender to a loving God who can do that which I have never, or will never, be able to do.

I realize the concept of unconditional surrender to a God you don't fully understand may be difficult for some. In fact, I understand that for many, the concept of God, due to spiritual abuse or unloving authority figures while growing up, may even be repulsive, but I implore you to consider the possibility that there is a God and that your existing God concept may be distorted. If there really is a powerful and loving God, wouldn't you like some help to do the impossible?

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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

We are a little over a week away from our next EMS weekend. For those of you who are prayerfully considering joining us, there is still time, and we can help you with the hotel arrangements. For those in our growing community who are not attending, we humbly request that you begin praying for those couples who will be there.

One of the most powerful aspects of a community of healing is the ability to focus prayer on those who are trying hard to surrender and let God affect change in their lives. Being surrounded by a nation-wide network of supporters who are praying for them is of incalculable

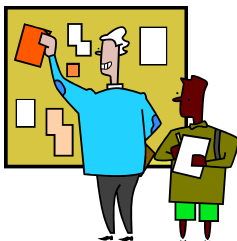


Dr. John Mark Haney

value, both spiritually and psychologically.

Perhaps the most satisfying experiences I have had while working here is to see how God has transformed people's healing into ministry for others, and we would love your help as well. God bless....

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 September 16-18. 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.