



Psychologists, Marriage or Couples
Counseling Specialists:
Chuck Gray, Ph.D. & Associates
Serving the Houston Area since 1987

Why Counseling for Your Affair

Suppose you are a spouse who is having an affair. Maybe you think it is an inconsequential sexual outlet. Maybe you think you deserve it. Maybe you feel the affair is normal or best for the circumstances. Maybe you feel your spouse will never know. Maybe you don't care. Maybe you want something your spouse is not giving you.

Maybe you feel the relationship began innocently and evolved unintentionally into the most deeply satisfying and fulfilling love of your life. Maybe you feel the affair was meant to be. Maybe you feel your new partner is your true soulmate. Maybe you know what your lover is feeling and you can finish each other's sentences. Maybe you feel happier than you ever have in your life. Maybe just the thought of your lover makes you euphoric. Maybe you fantasize about your lover. Maybe you have discovered the thrills of enjoying life as never before: music is more moving, flowers smell better, food is tastier, and sex becomes indescribably gratifying lovemaking. Maybe you want to do more for your lover than you ever did for your spouse. Maybe your lover is doing more for you than your spouse ever did. Maybe you feel appreciated like never before, understood like never before, admired like never before. Maybe you feel special: desired, cherished, and adored like never before.

Maybe you feel this is the time to do something for you. Maybe you realize you won't live forever, and you want to fully enjoy all in life while you can. Maybe you feel reinvigorated and younger than you have felt in years. Maybe you have a new-found interest and pleasure in activities that had gone by the wayside before your affair. Maybe you feel more truly alive than ever.

The above characteristics of love affairs are highly correlated with passion, but none of them have been shown to be correlated with having a

lasting relationship with your new lover. You are at an extremely important crossroads in your life. Your decision may impact you, your spouse, any spouse of your lover, any children on all sides, extended family, friends, and sometimes even your career. Most experienced relationship professions estimate that at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the new relationships in which a spouse leaves the marriage for a lover do not last. Dr. Frank Pittman, one of the foremost pioneers in the study of extramarital affairs, has more recently estimated that over 90% of such relationships do not last. If you are like almost everyone I have worked with who was having a deep love affair and you are planning or contemplating leaving your spouse for your lover or to find yourself, you may likely feel with almost all of your heart that your love with your lover is one of the minority that will last. Hearts alone are notoriously inaccurate prognosticators when deciding whether a love affair will last.

The vast majority of the experienced professionals I know in the field consider leaving a spouse for a lover to be one of the most common if not the most common consequential mistakes that a spouse may make. My own experience is typical of other experienced professionals in the field in that less than 25% of extramarital love affairs do evolve as better and lasting relationships when the spouse left the marriage and ended up with the lover. Maybe you do have one of those lasting love affairs. How can you tell?

Use your head as well as your heart. Get help with a specialized, highly experienced marriage counseling psychologist to explore how to make the wisest, clearest, best-educated, most enlightened decisions possible. Learn to assess your extramarital love affair in numerous ways that are predictive of whether your extramarital love affair will last. Explore how to best estimate the likely effects of your decision on you and everyone else whom has been dear to you. Learn what naturally happens in the early romantic stage of a love relationship, and learn what is and is not predictive of a lasting love. Learn why and how love is blind and discover what ways you may be looking through rose-colored glasses.

If, as people commonly do, you blindly follow your heart regarding your affair without empowering your mind to get the information and perspective it needs to make wise decisions, you are most likely to realize too late that you made one of the stupidest consequential decisions of your lifetime. Learn from the experiences of others who have been where

you are today. Maybe your love affair will last, maybe it won't. Given the ramifications, how much is it worth to you in terms of time, energy, and resources to empower your mind and your heart to discover what you need to know to make wise decisions at this pivotal point of your life? Let a highly experienced, specialized marriage counseling psychologist help you get what you need to know. Talk with someone who has the knowledge, training, and experience to truly help you help yourself.

Suppose you regret your extramarital affair. Suppose you want to save your marriage, if possible. Suppose you want to save your marriage, but only if you and your spouse can improve it. Suppose you want to have an authentic, trustworthy relationship with your spouse. Suppose you at least want to explore if doing so is possible or wise with your spouse. What now?

A specialized, highly experienced marriage counseling psychologist can help in many ways during and after your extramarital affair. Learn how to best end the affair. Learn how to best help your spouse to heal the wounds and rekindle the desire. Explore and discover with your counselor and your spouse the factors that led to your affair. Learn to modify your behaviors, attitudes, and feelings that led to the affair. Learn to monitor your progress in a way that empowers you and your spouse to know the extent to which you are earning trust. Learn how to move on. Learn how to best enlist your spouse as an ally in making the most of your marriage.

Grow together with your spouse to make your marriage increasingly enjoyable, authentic, loving, and fulfilling. Most couples I have worked with during or after an affair eventually chose to explore what they could make of the marriage and reported when ending counseling that the marriage was stronger and better than ever. Learn more of what counseling can do to help you make the most of your marriage by reading "Why Marriage or Couples Counseling" from our website's menu of articles.

-Chuck Gray, Ph.D.

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