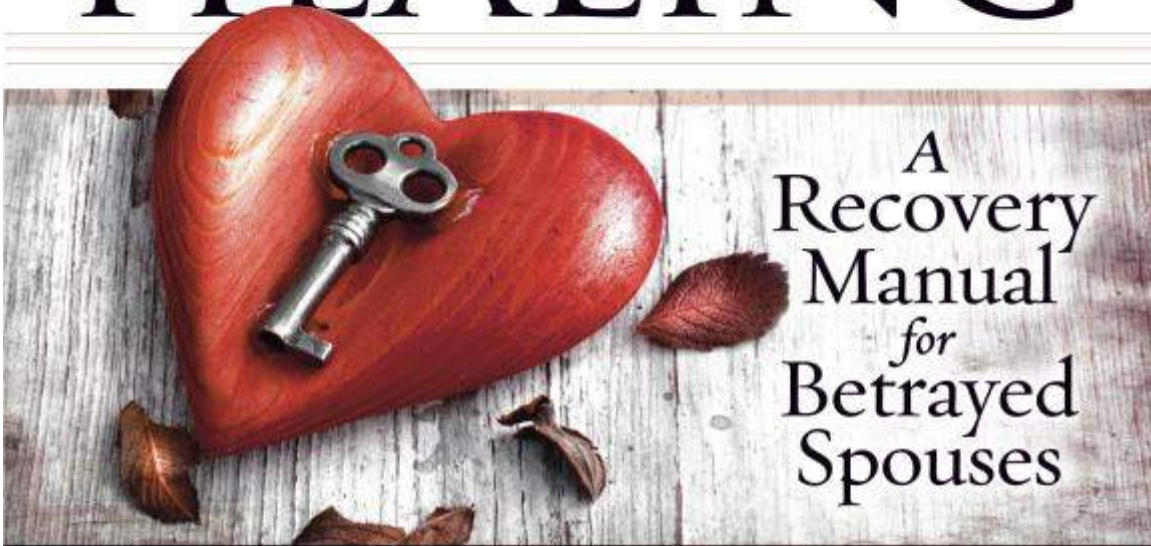


AFFAIR HEALING



A
Recovery
Manual
for
Betrayed
Spouses

*Includes Workbook for Individuals with
Bonus Download: Guide & Exercises for Couples*

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD,
LIVE & LOVE WELL

Tim Tedder, LMHC, NCC

Counselor & Founder of AffairHealing.com

AFFAIR HEALING

A RECOVERY MANUAL
FOR BETRAYED SPOUSES



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Affair Healing-A Recovery Manual for Betrayed Spouses
(How to Move Forward, Live & Love Well) By Tim Tedder, LMHC, NCC

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How To Use This Manual

If you have been betrayed by a spouse, this manual will provide direction in moving you toward healing and wellbeing. It will also give you confidence in making choices that are best for you. If you feel overwhelmed by pain and confusion, this book will guide you in the steps to take during the next weeks and months, leading you to greater comfort and clarity.

Use Alone Or With Your Spouse

This manual is written in a unique style that allows it to be easily used as a guide for individuals or for couples, if possible. The workbook is divided into two parts: (1) exercises at the end of each chapter and (2) worksheets provided in a separate section of the book. (Worksheets can also be downloaded and printed separately. See the worksheet section for more information.)

Although the chapters are progressive, feel free to jump ahead to those of most interest to you right now. The companion manual, *Affair Healing: A Recovery Manual for Unfaithful Spouses*, which addresses the same issues from the unfaithful spouse's point of view, is being written and will be published soon.

A third book, *Affair Healing: A Recovery Guide for Couple*, provides help for moving through the 5 Stages of Relationship Renewal and can be used in cooperation with this manual. **The couples guide is included as a free download with the purchase of this manual.**

Introduction

You would rather not be reading this book. I know that. You're here because someone else made a choice and this is just one of its many consequences.

Betrayal inflicted a deep wound. I know that, too. I witness it every day as I talk with people like you, trapped in the pain and confusion of a spouse's affair. They long for healing but wonder if it will ever come.

Are you afraid you may never feel "normal" again? Never trust again? Never get the pain out of your heart or the thoughts out of your head? Do you worry about being alone? Being stuck in a broken marriage? Or do you want your marriage to be fixed but doubt that it's possible?

This manual will answer all those questions and more. It will guide you through the specific steps you need to take during the next weeks and months. And whether you are doing this work alone or with your spouse, this book will show you how to navigate the choices you have to make.

Yes, there can be healing after an affair. Powerful healing. My counseling work is dedicated to helping people discover it. And I'm excited to help you find it, too.

Tim Tedder, LMHC, NCC
AffairHealing.com

1. Consider Your Options, Schedule Your Decision

Forum post by Jodlamy:

“I just keep asking myself, why would I stay with someone who isn't sure he wants to be with me? Why would I give him time to figure out who he wants to be with? I always thought that if I was cheated on, I would most definitely leave him in an instant. Now that it has really happened, why am I still here? Am I the weak one? Am I just asking to be hurt again? It's so hard to throw away 13 years together, all the great memories we have. Can it ever come back?”

Julia, after her husband confessed his affairs:

“I woke up the next morning exhausted, sick, still crying uncontrollably. I had to go to work but didn't speak to him when I left the house. I wanted a divorce. I couldn't even look at him; the sight of him made me sick. But at the same time, I knew I still loved him and this thought terrified me.”

On a brisk April afternoon, 27-year-old Rebekah and her boyfriend made their way through crowded sidewalks, heading to Boston's Copely Square. They had already enjoyed a day full of activity as they found a spot where they could stand and cheer for his mother, who would soon cross the marathon's finish line. Then, at 2:49 PM, the first of two homemade bombs exploded into the crowd, tearing and tossing the bodies of spectators who had been celebrating just seconds before.

At 2:48, Rebekah had a pretty good idea of what the next hours, days, and years might be like. In an instant, that reality shifted. “In a matter of minutes, my entire world changed. Everything I knew was literally blown to pieces...” she later wrote. She endured 17 surgeries, relentless pain, and the eventual loss of her left leg.

Victims of an affair experience sudden trauma, too. It is different than the agony of a bomb explosion, but still deeply devastating in its own way. In the middle of normal life experiences, the bomb of betrayal explodes, sending painful shrapnel into the heart of the betrayed spouse. The initial numbness of confusion turns to anguish, then anger, then grief or despair as the wounded partner realizes that, without their consent, their life and marriage have been forever altered.

**AN IRREFUTABLE
CONSEQUENCE OF
YOUR SPOUSE'S AFFAIR
IS THE LOSS OF AN
ANTICIPATED FUTURE.**

You may be reading this book right now because you are trying to make sense of what happened. Perhaps you are still in a state of shock, or maybe you have started to feel the powerful emotions that roll over those who encounter this devastating experience. Regardless of your current condition, let me assure you of two things:

1. What you are feeling, as bad as it is, is a normal reaction that others have survived.
2. You can survive, too, and this manual will help.

An irrefutable consequence of your spouse's affair is the loss of an anticipated future. Even if your marriage survives, it will be different than the one you previously expected. You have experienced betrayal. Innocent trust has been lost. The expected story of your relationship has been erased without your consent. It is a terrible loss.

But here's the truth that every betrayed partner needs to understand: an affair only steals away one future. Just because it was the only one you ever considered does not mean it is the only good one you can ever experience.

Your new future will be different. It may be better in some ways, worse in other ways, but it can be a satisfying one. In fact, it *will* be good if you decide to make it so. However, one question you have to consider now is whether or not this new future includes marriage to your unfaithful partner.

The answer may not be as straightforward as you once thought it might be. If others know about the affair, their contradictory opinions (you need to be strong enough to leave; you need to be strong enough to stay) likely add to your confusion.

YOUR FIRST REACTION IS OFTEN NOT THE ONE YOU WOULD MAKE AFTER YOUR FEELINGS STABILIZE.

The advice of family and friends may be helpful, but nobody else can make this choice for you. You should not allow anyone, including your spouse, to determine what you will do. You will regain a sense of control by reaching your own confident conclusions.

[CHAPTER CONTINUED IN PURCHASED VERSION]

Chapter 1 Exercises

1. Are there too many voices offering their opinion about what you should do? Take time to consider what message you need to communicate in a letter. Express appreciation for their support, but let them know you are not going to make an immediate choice. Ask them to respect your need for time and space in this matter. Write it out, set it aside, then look at it later and make whatever changes you want. Then take the difficult but vital step of finding a way to send it and/or say it to *everyone*. If someone pressures you to make this-or-that choice, respond with, “I am considering every option and taking time to make sure I make the right choice for me and my marriage. Thank you for your input. Please let me take the time I need to think about it.”

2. There is a good chance that you know about other marriages that faced tremendous trouble or conflict, perhaps even due to infidelity. Think back and consider these various stories, especially those that were part of your family or circle of friends. From what you know, what hardship was experienced? What choices were made? What were the outcomes? How were others affected? How were you affected?

3. If there has been any infidelity in your family tree, consider finding out more information by interviewing a family member who has more knowledge of the incident. These conversations can sometimes feel awkward at first, but can lead to valuable insights. Your family's stories provide a wider context for you to consider your own choices.

4. Complete *Worksheet 1: Stay, Go, or Wait?*

5. Help Your Spouse Understand Your Pain

Anonymous forum post:

“There were very few times (I’m talking nanoseconds) when my spouse showed real remorse without any defensiveness. And you know what? In those nanoseconds, my anger melted away...”

Forum post by Jodlamy:

“I’ve tried to explain to him, ‘What if the tables were turned, and you found out all this about me? What if you read those texts and had those lies told to you? How would that make you feel? Would you take me back if I did that to you? If I lied to you over and over?’

“He said probably not. Is he able to see and understand how much pain I’m in when I cry every time he tries to hold me? The pain is unexplainable. It is deep inside of me, like he stabbed my heart and soul.”

I imagine a room with a special property: it allows anyone in it to acquire another person’s perspective for one minute. With the push of a button, they experience the full measure of another person’s thoughts and emotions, free from the normal filters and distance created by our usual removed point of view.

Picture you and your spouse in this room, seated in comfortable chairs, facing each other, attempting to have a conversation about how the affair made you feel.

The red button is located on the arm of the chair, but you have not pushed it yet. Look at your spouse. What do you see? What is their posture like? What is the expression on their face after you share your heart? What are they communicating to you, if anything?

YOU DESPERATELY WANT THEM TO RECOGNIZE THE DAMAGE DONE TO YOUR HEART, BUT YOU ARE CONSTANTLY DISAPPOINTED BY THEIR INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO DO SO.

Now, push the button. Instantly, your spouse perceives and feels everything just as you do. Although they maintain their identity, they see your experience of the affair and feel every part of your pain. What changes in that minute? Does their posture shift? What expressions move across their face? What do they say, if anything?

In most cases, the change would be profound. Empathy is a strong emotional force. If unfaithful spouses could be moved to a genuinely empathetic response, resistance to recovery would diminish and affair healing would begin to occur naturally. In fact, an empathetic response from an unfaithful spouse is one of the clearest indicators of successful affair recovery.

If your spouse is like most, however, they may have failed to genuinely acknowledge your pain. You desperately want them to recognize the damage done to your heart, but you are constantly disappointed by their inability or unwillingness to do so.

Why is empathy so elusive? Because we all, to one degree or another, struggle in this regard. When we are in peaceful agreement with someone, we are willing to empathize. But when face to face with a person who has a different perspective or experience, we refuse to be vulnerable enough to truly listen. While acutely aware of our longing to be understood, we resist the humility required to consider the other's point of view.

Beyond this common condition, there may be other reasons why your spouse seems unable or unwilling to empathize with you. Perhaps they are simply acting consistently, never finding it easy to be emotionally open to you, even before the affair. Maybe they resist being vulnerable to anything that makes them feel shameful. They might avoid intense negative feelings because they become overwhelmed, not knowing what to do in the face of so much pain. Regardless of the reason, they fail to provide what you desperately need.

If I could give you the button to push, I would. You would probably make quick use of it, too! Unfortunately, as you have already realized, you cannot control your spouse's emotions. And the harder you try, the more resistant they become.

However, you are not powerless. You can make choices that will encourage a more satisfying response from your husband or wife. It may not be easy, but you can help your spouse understand your pain by following these five steps.

[CHAPTER CONTINUED IN PURCHASED VERSION]

Worksheet 5: Sharing Your Story

This worksheet includes 2 pages. Please read chapter 5 before completing this exercise.

This exercise will help you present a clear narrative of the emotional impact your spouse's affair has had on you. Your story will offer a way for them to gain a better understanding of your pain without feeling blamed.

Step One: Identify the first moment of acute pain.

For most betrayed spouses, this is usually "D-day," the day of affair discovery or disclosure. Others, however, experience more severe pain some time later when they first realize the extent of the affair. Chances are, you can easily identify the moment you felt the deepest pain. Let this be the story you share.

Step Two: Create your story.

Write out the story of this event, following these guidelines:

1. Give the story some context by describing what was happening "before" (what you were thinking, feeling, and doing prior to being struck by the pain).
2. Try to remember the exact thing you saw or heard that caused your world to turn. Briefly describe it.
3. Describe your pain in terms of how it affected you mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually.
4. Focus on describing your reactions more than the cause of them. Emphasizing the cause of pain will feel like accusation to your spouse. Avoid a defensive response (which will kill any chance for empathy) by turning attention to an honest explanation of what happened to you.
 - a. Example of a focus on the cause: "When I read the email, you talked about loving _____ and wanting to be with ___ and wanting to make love to _____. I felt sick."
 - b. Example of a focus on your reaction: "When I read the email you wrote to _____, I remember nothing making sense for a while. I felt confused, hardly able to understand what I was reading. But when I finally understood, my body went cold. I started shaking, not so much in panic, but in realizing my life was going to change forever and things were totally out of control."

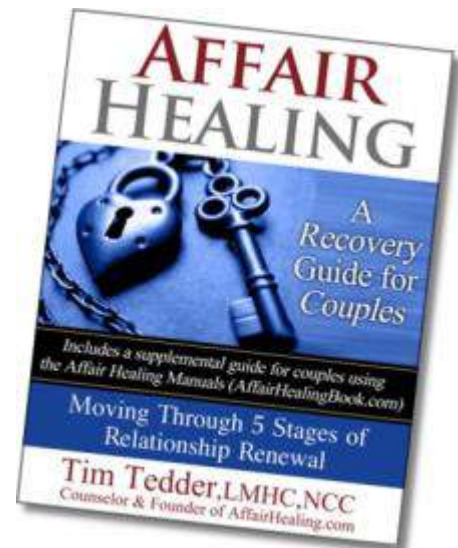
[EXERCISE CONTINUED IN PURCHASED VERSION]

A Study Guide for Couples

Although this manual is written as a guide for the betrayed spouse, it may also be used in combination with the companion manual, *Affair Healing: A Recovery Manual for Unfaithful Spouses*, as a healing resource for couples. The chapters in both manuals cover the same themes, but address the issues from each spouse's point of view.

A third book, *Affair Healing: A Recovery Guide for Couples*, applies the principles presented in the two spouses' manuals in guiding couples through the five stages of relationship renewal. It may be used as an independent resource, or as a supplement to the individual spouses' manuals.

A complimentary copy is available for your download. You and your spouse may use it freely, but please do not share it with others. (It may be purchased separately by those who do not own the individual manuals. See the purchase information provided with this sample.)



**A FREE copy of the Couples Guide
is included with every purchase
of this manual.**

About the Author

Tim Tedder is a licensed counselor who specializes in helping individuals and couples heal from the wounds of infidelity. He and his wife, Sharon (also a counselor), are the owners of Currents Counseling Services in Winter Park, Florida. When they're not counseling, you may find them in a co-op game on Xbox saving the world from raging dragons or zombie hordes.

In 2009, Tim created AffairHealing.com which has become a popular online resource and community for anyone in search for help in their recovery from the wounds of infidelity.

