

# Cheater, Cheater,



## Affair Repeater

By Dr. Robert Huizenga, CSW, LMFT

Affairs are messy. They are always selfish and very painful. There is a high possibility that someone close to you is, or soon will be, involved in an extramarital affair. Recent statistics suggest that 40% of women and 60% of men, at one point, indulge in extramarital affairs. Put those numbers together and it is estimated that 80% of marriages will have one spouse, at one point or another, involved in marital infidelity. That's 8 out of every 10 marriages!

If your spouse is having an affair; maybe you will know, or maybe you won't. You will see telltale signs. You will notice changes in the person's habits and behavioral patterns as well as a detachment, lack of focus and reduced productivity. Maybe you will sense something "out of character", but be unable to pinpoint what it is.

It is not a given that he/she will tell you. Those hiding the affair will continue to hide. The "victim" of the extramarital affair often, at least initially, is racked with anger, hurt, embarrassment and thoughts of failing that preclude divulging the crisis. It might be important to confront the person with your

observations, depending on the status of your relationship with the person.

### Why They Do It

It is important to understand that extramarital affairs are different and serve different purposes. Out of my study and experience with hundreds of couples, I've identified 7 different kinds of infidelity:

1. Some extramarital affairs are reactivity to a perceived lack of intimacy in the marriage.
2. Some arise out of addictive tendencies or a history of sexual confusion or trauma.
3. Some play out issues of entitlement and power by becoming "trophy chasers." This "boys will be boys" mentality is subtly encouraged in some contexts.
4. Some become involved in marital infidelity because of a high need for drama and excitement and are enthralled with the idea of "being in love" and having that "loving feeling."
5. An extramarital affair might be for

revenge either because the spouse did or did not do something. The revenge may stem from rage. Although revenge is the motive for both, they look and feel very different.

6. Another form of infidelity serves the purpose of affirming personal desirability. A nagging question of being "OK" may lead to usually a short-term and one-person affair.

7. Some affairs are a dance that attempts to balance needs for distance and intimacy in the marriage, often with collusion from the spouse.

### How to Uncover it:

#### 46 Clues Your Partner is Having an Affair

Some of these signs of a cheating spouse are "tongue in cheek" while others are tell tale signs that commonly appear with a cheating husband or cheating wife.

1. You find birth control pills in her medicine cabinet, and you've had a vasectomy.
2. Mutual friends start acting strangely

toward you. (They either know about the cheating or have been told stories about what a horrible wife or girlfriend you are.)

**3.** Your cheating husband or wife stops confiding in you and seeking advice from you.

**4.** Sets up a new e-mail account and doesn't tell you about it.

**5.** He leaves the house in the morning smelling like Irish Spring and returns in the evening smelling like Safeguard.

**6.** She joins the gym and begins a rigorous workout program.

**7.** She buys a cell phone and doesn't let you know.

**8.** He sets up a separate cell phone account that is billed to his office.

**9.** Your husband carries condoms, and you are on the pill.

**10.** Begins to delete all incoming phone calls from the caller ID.

**11.** Deletes all incoming e-mails when they used to accumulate.

**12.** He becomes "accusatory," asking if you are being true to him, usually out of guilt.

**13.** Raises hypothetical questions such as, "Do you think it's possible to love more than one person at a time?"

**14.** He buys himself new underwear.

**15.** He insists the child seat, toys, etc., are kept out of his car.

**16.** Stops wearing wedding ring.

**17.** Husband has a sudden desire to be helpful with the laundry.

**18.** Has unexplained scratches or bruises on his or her neck or back.

**19.** Suddenly wants to try new love techniques.

**20.** He/she suddenly stops having sex with you.

**21.** He/she suddenly wants more sex, more often.

**22.** Supposedly works a lot of overtime, but it never shows up on the pay stub.

**23.** Picks fights in order to stomp out of the house.

**24.** You find out by accident he or she took vacation day or personal time off from work - but you never knew it.

**25.** Shows a sudden interest in a different type of music.

**26.** Spouse's co-workers are uncomfortable in your presence.

**27.** Has a sudden preoccupation with his or her appearance.

**28.** Spends an excessive amount of time on the computer, especially after you have gone to bed.

**29.** He throws up a lot because he just ate at his mistress's house and had to eat the dinner you prepared when he got home.

**30.** Your spouse is away from home, either nights or on trips, more than previously.

**31.** His/her clothes smell of an unfamiliar perfume or after-shave. You see lipstick on your husband's shirt.

**32.** The amount of money being deposited into your checking account drops off.

**33.** You find items of intimate apparel or other small gift-type items that you did not give your spouse.

**34.** Your spouse seems less comfortable around you and is "touchy" and easily moved to anger.

**35.** You get calls where the caller hangs up when he or she hears your voice.

**36.** He/she loses attention in the activities in the home.

**37.** Your intuition (gut feeling) tells you that something is not right.

**38.** He/she has a definite change in attitude towards everyone in the home.

**39.** She uses a low voice or whisper on the phone or hangs up quickly.

**40.** She has a "glow" about her.

**41.** Atypical erratic behavior.

**42.** He sneaks out of the house.

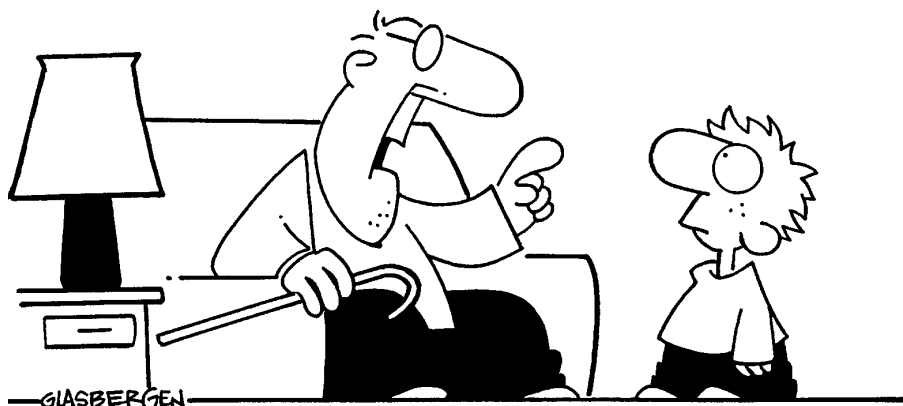
**43.** She sleeps with her purse by the bed.

**44.** She goes to the store for groceries and comes home 5 hours later.

**45.** He tells you that you can reach him at a different telephone number.

**46.** The telltale sign of a cheating spouse? Having to ask that question in the first place.

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**"You can live a perfectly normal life if you accept the fact that your life will never be perfectly normal."**

**GB**  
**BONKERISM**  
Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty.

## What to do when you Discover it!

### 10 Ways to Calm Your Powerful Feelings

When you find out about the affair, the first few hours, days and weeks can be emotionally wrenching to say the least. Or, if someone you deeply care about begins "pulling away" you may also experience intense feelings. Read through this list and pick out a couple of things you can do to help yourself during these times.

**1.** Walk. Run. Work out. Get the blood flowing. Physical exercise drains off the adrenaline and physically you feel better. You also think better of yourself because you are caring for you.

**2.** Talk. If you typically handle problems by talking them out, find someone who will listen as you pour your heart out. Give them explicit instructions: "I need to talk, vent, cry, rage, and question. Just look me in the eye, nod your head and listen."

**3.** Write. Get a kitchen timer. Set it for 5 minutes. Spend that time writing...anything, everything that comes to your mind. Don't censor. When the bell goes off say to yourself, "OK, there it is. Now I need to get on to other things. I will come back later and write more." Put the writing in a safe place or destroy it.

**4.** Find a safe place and spend some time there. Do you have a favorite lake, wooded area, park, room, chair where you feel safe and can get away? Intentionally spend some time there.

**5.** Use good "self talk." Tell yourself, "You are ok. You will be ok. This too shall pass. What you are feeling is normal and will not destroy you." Develop that "observing part" that can speak to your turmoil.

**6.** Pray. Meditate. Use your spiritual resources, if you have them. If you don't have them, it can be a good time to develop them. Spirituality often affirms your worth and enables you to see the larger picture.

**7.** Be aware. Notice what you are think-

ing, how you are feeling and what you are doing. Pay close attention to these chunks of your life. Just noticing often creates distance from the emotional pain.

**8.** Encourage the rhythm of your feelings. Your feelings will come and go often as waves. There will be lulls and sometimes they crash. Notice the intensity and frequency of the waves.

**9.** Get professional help. Supportive therapy might be helpful. Personal and professional coaching, often via telephone, is a helpful phenomenon that is increasingly popular as a way to find support and direction for specific problems.

**10.** Gather resources. Start reading, exploring the internet and talking to people about your situation. Believe me, you are not alone. Many people have walked your path and they are there to offer their understanding. They can help point out the bends and turns of your road.

### Infidelity: Why the Need to Know is So Strong

When you discover that your partner is having an affair, you may have a powerful need to know details. Maybe ALL the details. When? Where? How? How Often? What was it like? No, there is nothing wrong with you. The need to know is very common. Here are reasons why you might want to know.

**1.** The need for validation. If you tend to be intuitive, soak in the signals from

others around you and try to make sense of them, you may have this powerful urge to go back and find out what really happened. Your partner says, "Yes, I was with him/her on that day." You think, "Oh yes, I remember having a feeling at that time, an awful feeling. Now I know what that was about."

**2.** You question your adequacy and a part of you wants to heal/change those thoughts and feelings. Therefore, you venture into the comparative game and ask/think: "What did they do? Was he/she better? What was he/she better at? What didn't I do or give?"

**3.** How bad is it? You want to know what you are up against. What is the extent of the boundary violation? How deeply embedded is my partner in this web? Do I throw in the towel? Will it be possible for me to forgive? How long will this take? How long will I hang in there?

**4.** You are trying to re-connect. There may be a great deal of distance between you and your spouse. Conversations may be minimal. The affair, however, is front and center and becomes a focal point. You ask questions, probe and want to know because it is perhaps the only point of connection. Something is better than nothing.

**5.** You want to care for yourself. You may have concerns about STDs. You need to know the extent of the behavior and protection used, if there was sexual activity, for your own physical well-being.

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## How to manage big life changes

Have you had a life-changing event that requires reorganizing in your life?

One of the best things you can do during one of these difficult periods is to go easy on yourself. Not everything has to be done today. Start off slowly.

When you are feeling up to it, sit down and make a list of everything that needs to be done. Eliminate all extraneous steps. This is not the time to be a perfectionist. Ask for help. Quickly discuss what needs to be done and who

will do it. It will take the feeling of total chaos away and tasks will get done. You might want to keep a journal during this period to help you deal with your emotions.

Treat yourself like you would your best friend if she were going through what you are going through. Don't criticize yourself or tell yourself that you need to get more done. You'll just feel worse and diminish your energy to take care of what needs to be done.

-adapted from [www.OrganizedForever.com](http://www.OrganizedForever.com)

The need to know is very powerful for some people in the midst of an affair. Examine carefully your situation and see if any of the above circumstances fit you.

### Options for Getting Past It

The prognosis for the marriage surviving is different for each. Some affairs are the best thing that can happen to a marriage. Others serve a death blow. Different extramarital affairs demand different strategies on the part of the spouse or others. Some demand toughness and movement. Others demand patience and understanding.

There is a lot of information out there about the skills you need to rebuild a relationship after infidelity. Although, before you begin thinking about rebuilding, there's a prior concern: How do you and your partner get on the same page after the ton of hurt and distance you have experienced? If you can begin sharing the personal impact of the crisis with your partner, you might experience less tension and begin seeing progress.

Extramarital affairs are powerful. Affairs are costly. They affect family, friends, colleagues and employers. As painful as infidelity is, it is also an opportunity to redesign one's life and love relationships in ways that create honor, joy and true intimacy. **GB**

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ANSWERS: 1. COP MISSING BOTTOM PART OF TIE. 2. NURSE HAS EXTRA RED CROSS ON HER DRESS. 3. BUSINESS MAN'S PUMPKIN MISSING FACE. 4. COWBOY'S SCARF IS WHITE. 5. ANGEL MISSING GOLD WINGS. 6. BATMAN'S BOOTS ARE BLACK. 7. MONSTER MISSING YELLOW TEETH. 8. CAT MAN EARS ARE DIFFERENT SHAPE.

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