

How to Stop an Affair

By Barrington H. Brennen, May 8, 2014

QUESTION: I have been married for more than fifteen years and for the past two years I have been having a sexual relationship with someone else. Actually, I have been involved with a total of five persons since I've been married. Although initially these relationships feel exciting, I am not happy with what I am doing to myself and my wife. How can I stop having an affair? Please help me.

ANSWER: Dear friend, you can stop this affair and find inner peace and happiness. Here are a few suggestions of what to do:

1. You are to stop the affair because YOU want to stop it. It must not be because your wife found out or she wants you to stop. It must be for you first, then for your spouse. If you are ending the relationship because your wife found out or just to keep your marriage then when things go wrong again the chances of having another affair are just as great as they were before.
2. Inform your wife of your unfaithfulness. If she is not aware of your secret lover, then telling her about it might be painful for her. Seek professional help in doing this. Do not lie or cover up. If you had multiple affairs do not lie, she will find out one way or another. It is best to be open and honest.
3. Inform someone else. It might be wise that you inform other important people (not many) in your life about your affair(s). For example your parents, pastors, close friend. You need people around you on whom you can depend and trust and hold you accountable. If you keep them out of the circle, you might also increase your chances of continuing in the relationship or having other affairs.
4. To end the relationship you are to use non-negotiable language. In other words, leave no strings attached. Do not say to the lover "I was thinking . . ." or "My wife found out, so I . . ." The message you will be giving your lover is that all she needs to do is give you some time and then later try another way so that your wife will not find out. What you say to your former lover must be clear and straightforward. Here is an example: "I am informing you that our relationship is over. Do not contact me in any way again. I have decided that this is best for me as a person and I am sticking to my marriage. Goodbye for ever." I often recommend that such endings are done, where practical, in the presence of the spouse, either on the telephone or in person. After that has been done and you answer an incoming phone call not being aware that it is your former lover, what you say first will either be negotiable or non-negotiable. If you say "I am fine. How are you?" that is negotiable language. You need not be nice or courteous on the phone. Just hang up or first say "Do not call this number again," then hang up right away. Or you may warn the person that if she continues to call, you will call the police.
5. Refuse to answer all future calls from your previous lover. If the person calls (identify through your Caller ID), you MUST inform your spouse each time, even though you do not answer the call. Note that if you never tell your spouse when calls come in and you were successful keeping it a secret from your spouse, one

day you will be tempted to answer and the relationship WILL start again. Your spouse is your accountability partner.

6. Get rid of (return or destroy) all email addresses, text messages, pictures, gifts, tokens, letters, cards, and phone numbers you received from the person. It does not matter how valuable the gifts may be; even it is a car or motorcycle. Sell them and use the money or return it, but do not keep the gifts that came between you and your spouse.
7. Take a good look inside your heart. Try to understand the dynamics in your life that impact your decision to have affairs. Think about these questions: Do you find it difficult to share your feelings with your spouse? Did your own father or mother have affairs? Are your close friends cheating on their spouses? Is your marriage starved of affection and love? Are you hooked on pornography? Do you flirt with other women? Are you attracted to your wife? Is she sexy enough for you? Although any or all of these might influence you to have an affair; none are an excuse to have one. You can choose to make your own marriage hot and spicy.
8. Cease all extra-curricular activities. If the extra lover really damaged your marriage, you are to spend the time repairing it. In the past if you spent lots of time away from home, even if the time was a wholesome social occasion or you were out with friends, I recommend you cease all of these activities during the repairing time. It may take weeks, months or even years. Come home right after work. Go on dates with your spouse. Learn how to laugh again. Watch movies together. Go places together but not apart.
9. If you have a child with this lover and your wife agrees to stay with you, it is important to discuss with your wife the way forward regarding all communication with, and the kind of relationship you will have with the former lover. It is advisable that you never be in the presence of the “extra lover” without your spouse. Remember, it may be best that the relationship be professional-like and not friendship-like, at least at first. If the baby was just born around the time your spouse found out, you may need to hold your gut in and refuse to see the baby while the marriage heals.
10. Go to professional marriage therapy. It may be wise that you do not try to heal your marriage alone. Seek professional help. A trained third party may do wonders for the future of your relationship. You may also go to a marriage retreat or seminar. Read a book. Watch a video.

Dear friends, these are only a few things to help you put a permanent end to having affairs. It is going to call for lots of hard work, sweat, and tears. It is not going to be easy or natural. You must make it happen. Start now.

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