

The Ultimate Betrayal

By Barrington H. Brennen, May 19, 2011

You thought it would never happen to you. You have been a committed lover and spouse for years and you came home unexpectedly and met your spouse making love with another man. That's shocking, numbing, stupefying, and enraging. In a split second, streams of videos of the loving rush through your head, the colorful reminders of your sacrificial love, the quadraphonic sounds of defying the odds of unfaithfulness, the dim lights of creative romantic encounters. Oh! The passion of just-me-and-her-alone love making! It is as though your whole married life flashes before you while your heart is beating with rage and anger. It is just a fleeting moment as you watch someone else sexually ravishing your spouse in a way you thought only you can do, and you thought all these years only you she would want it from. What happens next? Or what should happen next? How should you respond when you catch your spouse being unfaithful?

THEY NEARLY DID IT

Danine Manette, infidelity expert, states in her article on infidelity that "Infidelity is one of the most painful and emotionally draining experiences a person can endure. Whether it's the frustration or psychological torture associated with a suspected affair or the devastating emotional aftermath which follows discovery, the knowledge that one has been betrayed by their mate or partner can be simply overwhelming." When one realizes over time or suddenly that a spouse is having an affair, there are a number of responses. First there is the initial shock, then rage, and then desire for revenge. For many who find a spouse making love to another, these responses can be compounded as one response causing an irrational reaction that might be lethal our wounding to the partners involved. This is when reason sits on the back seat and revenge stands in the doorway. But not everyone resorts to attack, fight, or murder. Many wisely walk away, though painfully.

In the past year a number of men have told me of their own experiences of almost causing harm or possibly killing a spouse or lover they found having sex with another person. All of them confessed that there was instant anger, but something caused them to control a violent reaction. One man said in a seminar that as he looks back, he is happy he did not follow his first intent-to kill. Another man said he fought the man, wounding him as he ran out of the house. Why didn't these men allow the need for revenge lead to a lethal reaction? There is no real answer. However, all of these men had a few things in common. 1. Their strong childhood upbringing of faith and religion in their lives. 2. Their respect for the dignity of human life. 3. Their freedom from the need to control another person. They do not think of their partner as a property asset 4. A strong sense of self-control and discipline.

How would you respond if you found your spouse in a compromising position? If you are easily angered, quick tempered, obsessive, and controlling you might be at greater risk to responding in a dangerous way. The scary thing about these characteristics is that they are not always visible. When one is known to be manly and respectful, these characteristics can go undetected. Their ugly faces may only be revealed through extreme anger and revenge causing a gasoline-like combustion that is often lethal.

HOW TO PREVENT THE VIOLENT RESPONSE

Perhaps the best way to prevent revengeful, angry, lethal snaps is living a peaceful, well disciplined life. Tell yourself, before you get angry or enraged, that no good decision is ever made when one is enraged. Keep the mind clear of revengeful thoughts. If you constantly feed your mind with thoughts of vengeance, all it needs is the right place and time and the explosion will take place.

Avoid the fantasy trap. Fantasizing about what you will do if someone causes you great pain is dangerous. With the right time and opportunity the fantasy will turn into reality. Realize that we are not the owners or bosses of others, especially our spouses. Possessiveness is not healthy.

The bottom line is the way you live will determine how you will die. Also, how you deal with everyday stressors and if you possess a meek and quiet spirit will lower your risk of responding in a deadly way when the unexpected happens.

TWO KINDS OF ANGER IN MARRIAGE

Several years ago I wrote an article on managing conflict in marriage. I shared that there is hot and cold anger. "Hot anger can be described like this: In the first year of marriage, the husband speaks and the wife listens. In the second year of marriage, the wife speaks and the husband listens. In the third year of marriage, both speak and the neighbors listen!" (Caring for Marriage, 1990) This is hot anger; it is excited and often cruel. It is loud and frequently crushing. With hot anger you do have some idea what the other person is thinking. It isn't accurate, but there may be some consolation that we care enough to be angry. Cold anger, on the other hand, is like an iceberg. We can see only the tip of it, and we have no idea what's underneath. "It can be devastating silence, coldness, strangers living under the same roof. . . Cold anger can take another form. It can become what we like to call being "an angelic phony"--- a covered up courtesy that is full of pretense and deception. It says, "No dear . . . Yes dear . . . Anything you'd like dear." But behind the seemingly sweet words is the spirit of coldness, where feelings have been anesthetized or worse extinguished" (Ibid). What kind of anger do you have? Both are bad.

CONTROL YOUR ANGER

If you feel you anger is getting out of control here are a few tips, from various experts, to help prevent the explosion. 1. "**Practice deep breathing.** It is an anger control exercise that is practiced by many people and with a high degree of success. Whatever may be the reason for your anger, just close your eyes, relax your mind and breathe deeply. Do so for a mere sixty seconds and you'll instantly notice the impact that it has on your rage or anger." 2. **Walk away. Take a time out.** As you feel the rage coming, move away from the scene. Take time away from the environment where you can process reasonably before you return to the scene. 3. "**Relax and visualize.** Calm yourself down. Take a deep breath. As you exhale, imagine all the bottled-up fury comes out of your nose and mouth. Release it and be free. Repeat this step over and over until you feel peace inside. Then visualize being in a place where you feel most happy, calm, and relaxed. It may be a place like a beach, garden, scenic locations, or anywhere else you might think of. Just imagine being there and inhaling the essence of your serene environment. By doing this, you will not find it hard to attain inner peace." 4. "**Listen to soothing music.** It calms your soul. A 20-minute session of listening to relaxing music while resting comfortably could soothe the upset spirit. Take deep breaths often." 5. **Pray.** Deadly consequences arise when people cannot hold back their fury. Ask God for grace to control your temper. Prayer brings inner peace to those who ask for it.

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