

31 Reasons to Stop an Affair

AFFAIR RECOVERY CENTER

Rick Reynolds LCSW



Thanks to my wife who loved me when I was unlovable
Who forgave the unforgivable
And displayed God's redeeming love
But most of all I want to thank my Lord Jesus
Who has given me new life.

All Rights Reserved.

Copyright 2004 by Rick Reynolds.

0-9770958-4-3

Published in the United States of America.

Contents

Forward5

Introduction6

1. Your baggage never gets lost in transit — it always shows up at your new destination ...8

2. I don't think we're in Kansas anymore, Toto8

3. Emotional decisions are never our best decisions10

4. People almost always "affair down"10

5. You'll stunt your growth10

6. No man is an island.....11

7. It is a trap.....11

8. Don't call it love.....11

9. Field of dreams.....12

10. Romance can be hazardous to your health12

11. What about integrity?.....12

12. Affairs result in less intimacy, not more13

13. It is just a drug14

14. Dream weaver14

15. Your actions will not result in long-term happiness, love, or acceptance15

16. Think again16

17. If God says it, why does it have to make sense to you?17

18. The problem isn't your spouse17

19. Confusion fusion18

20. The truth will set you free18

21. History stays intact19

22. You can be a better parent from inside your existing marriage19

23. It takes a lot of energy to live a dual life20

24. You will never have the opportunity to experience true love20

25. Your feelings can come back, and they will21

26. "I deserve to be happy?"21

27. It will waste all you have to give in life21

28. It is far better to live by faith than to live and learn.....22

29. You will end up hurting the majority of people in your life.....22

30. Broken relationships = financial problems.....22

31. For heaven's sake22

Conclusion: After all is said and done there is usually a lot more said than done.....25

About the Author26

Forward

The purpose of this book is to provide reasons to stop an affair or sexual addiction. It is not a manual on how to stop, nor is it intended to address the issues of why an affair or sexual addiction has occurred. The goal is simply to help you come to the point where you will become willing to do something about your situation. I hope the fact that you're reading this is an indication you might be willing to consider a change. If so, resources are available to guide you through the process.

Twenty percent of people come to the decision to stop their sexual addiction or affair by epiphany. They are confronted by an event and instantly the decision is made. For the remaining eighty percent, however, it is a slow process during which they wrestle with what to do. This book is designed for people within that eighty percent. You are not alone. Countless others throughout the ages have been where you are and have survived the ordeal. In fact, many of their marriages not only survived, but have miraculously ended up better than before. At the Affair Recovery Center, we are associated with many such people. Their stories and contact information can be found at affairrecovery.com. Please visit this site to read their stories and connect with others who have successfully navigated through these difficult circumstances.

This book is written to the person who has committed the betrayal. If that's not you then please pass this on to your mate, but do not read it. If you are the betrayed spouse, you will have no difficulty thinking of multiple reasons why your mate should stop the affair, and most likely, you can generate far more reasons than listed in this book. The danger of reading on is twofold: first, it will potentially intensify the pain you are already experiencing as you dwell on issues you cannot change; and second, you might be tempted to use the following reasons to harm your spouse. Neither will be helpful, so I recommend you give this to the betrayer and resist the temptation to read on. Another e-book is being written to speak to the reasons why you should stay with your mate, so stay tuned.

Introduction

Several years ago, a client named Harry, who had achieved six months of sobriety from cocaine, entered my office and announced that this was the day he was going to use. I first met Harry one year earlier after his wife had coerced him into entering treatment by threatening divorce. The first six months of treatment were frustrating for Harry as discovered his powerlessness. It was particularly difficult for Harry to surrender his pride, and desperation finally persuaded him to let go and take a new approach. At first, this new life was filled with excitement and hope, but the days grew more difficult with the passing of time. Even after Harry completed his work, he still felt undone. He felt pretty sure that no matter how much he changed, he'd never be good enough. Discouragement began to creep in, and his old feelings of hopelessness returned. Harry decided he was finished with abstinence. He was tired of trying to do the right thing and always pleasing others. Now it was his turn.

I drew a simple matrix on the board and asked Harry what his motivations were for wanting to use cocaine. He quickly replied, "To be free, to be with friends, because it was fun, to feel better, and because I'm tired of doing the right thing and I want to let loose." When I queried the advantages of not using, he stated an improved relationship with his wife, but he couldn't identify any others. When I asked the disadvantages of not using, he replied, "Increased conflict with my wife, a dull life, increased boredom, missing my friends, missing being high, and feeling trapped."

My only reply to his list was that it looked like he was going to use today, and if it were my list, I'd do the same. Puzzled, he asked why I wasn't trying to stop him. I began to ask some important questions, Did he really want to be talked out of following through with his desires? Can someone be talked out of something they have already decided to do? The answer is yes, but the solution to Harry's dilemma had nothing to do with deciding whether to use again or not. He had great reasons for both choices. We know right from wrong, but at times seem incapable of making good choices. We often spend hours wrestling with the dilemma of what to do in certain situations. We struggle with the battle between conflicting desires within ourselves, with thoughts such as, "Is this who I am or isn't it?" and "Maybe I should stop or maybe not," and, "I know this is wrong, but I don't think I can ever be happy if I have to give it up," and finally, "Is life worth living without this?"

In reality, individuals trapped in affairs or sexual addictions are ambivalent about their actions. Part of them wants to leave the marriage, while the other part feels badly about leaving. These two sides effectively cancel each other out. It's not a matter of not caring;

instead, it is a matter of caring a great deal about two mutually exclusive things. Harry's problem wasn't a lack of cocaine, but rather a loss of vision. He was focused on the wrong thing. Harry either lost sight of what had motivated him to quit in the first place, or he never established solid reasons for not using. I reminded him of his original motivations, which were just as valid as they had been on the day he entered recovery. It was just in that particular moment that his emotions were overriding both his good judgment as well as his ability to recall his motivations. When trapped in the two-pronged dilemma of the "wants" and the "oughts," there has to be a majority of motivators on one side or the other if you are ever going to break free. Our dark side will always be capable of providing plenty of reasons for the "wants," but it's difficult in the heat of emotion to think of reasons we know are good and right.

My goal in this document is to provide a list of sound reasons for ending these destructive behaviors. Once consumed by the emotions of an affair or sexual addiction, your ability to identify positive motivators will naturally be impaired. Here are a number of items that have been helpful for my clients throughout the years. As you wrestle with what to do, you'll find it helpful to keep these, as well as other personal motivators, available for review at those times when emotions are in danger of overriding reason. You may want to write some of them down and keep them handy.

THE 31 REASONS

1. Your baggage never gets lost in transit- it always shows up at your new destination.

This fact is sad, but true. The myth that the grass is always greener on the other side is just that—a myth. The belief that a geographic fix will cure your misery is only an indication of deluded victim thinking. Your mate isn't your problem. Rather, your mate only reveals the problems in you. If you eliminate your mate, all you've done is temporarily remove the spotlight illuminating your own defects of character. Once in a new long-term relationship, the light will once again shine on your weaknesses. Why choose a solution that doesn't address the problem? That is the same as putting gas in your car, when the engine is out of oil. The action doesn't address the problem. Why don't you start by trying to discover what is driving your life, as well as why you keep making harmful and destructive choices? There is a solution, but it's not in an affair.

2. I don't think we're in Kansas anymore, Toto. When it comes to extramarital affairs or sexual addiction, this statement couldn't be more true. Dorothy's life was one of mediocrity. There was little or no color to her existence at the homestead, and she felt constrained by life's hardships and by those who controlled her life. She believed that no one understood her. In frustration, she tried to leave, only to find herself directly in the path of an ominous tornado that sent her helplessly spinning into a strange new land of fantasy. Unlike her old life, this new life was painted with vibrant colors and was full of song. Furthermore, Dorothy was no longer alone. She found a strange troop of friends leading the way: a scarecrow that lacked brains, a tin man missing his heart, and a lion with no courage. This motley crew committed their lives to assisting young Dorothy and her dog Toto in her search for the Wizard of Oz. Interestingly, flying monkeys, wicked witches, and deception left Dorothy pining away for the very thing from which she had tried to run. She just wanted to be home again where she belonged.

I wonder if the author of the *Wizard of Oz* might not have been writing about some pitiful person trapped in an affair? How often do these indiscretions begin with feelings of mediocrity, or a desire to feel alive and understood, free from the constraints of life's responsibilities and no longer alone? People often find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time because of the ambivalence generated by life's circumstances and frustrations. Catapulted into a strange new fantasyland, the individual is left to wrestle with what to do. Only then do they end up operating with a series of handicaps like Dorothy's team—no brain, no heart, and no courage.

What do you decide to do when somebody has lost their brain? If you've ever observed someone in an affair, it is apparent they are operating a few cards short of a full deck. They lose the ability to make even the simplest decisions. I have seen successful men and women in extremely influential positions transformed into inept and incompetent individuals who cannot make a rational decision. They become willing to jeopardize career, family, and future for this momentary pleasure. If the behavior of being “in love” were not socially acceptable, they would be certifiably insane. Instead, they are allowed to stumble through life like the emperor with no clothes. Everyone else can see they have no brain, and that reason and common sense are gone, but often they are too polite to say anything.

The loss of heart is also apparent. There is an illusion that if one is in love, they are finally in touch with their heart, when in reality they've just lost what little heart they had. The selfish pursuits of personal gratification and self-glorification have nothing to do with heart; rather they are based on self-centeredness. The total lack of consideration of how the betrayer's actions will impact others is one of the most astounding aspects of an affair. Like the tin man, the person involved in an affair has no heart and no empathy. Contrary to this, people with heart are actually able to feel the impact their actions have on those who are connected to them. They care about the pain they are inflicting upon those they love. The path out of this dark morass requires that they acquire a heart, not only to begin to experience awareness of the pain that's been inflicted, but also to learn how to truly love.

Finally, courage is certainly not a term used to describe those indulging in affairs. In fact, their betrayal seems to rob them of courage. Instead of exercising the necessary courage to acknowledge and own their feelings and actions, they hide behind a veil of secrecy, afraid of discovery and the consequences of their actions. Rather than having the courage to face the reality of the deficits in their marriage or address the issues resulting from their betrayal, they attempt to avoid conflict and hide their feelings and actions. Ironically, it is this lack of courage that keeps them hopelessly trapped in the life they claim to want to escape. The only way they can stay immobilized in this state is by the continued avoidance of life's realities. Instead, why not be honest and stand up and own what has been done? This simple solution creates immediate change as well as a loss of control. It requires courage to take personal responsibility for their life and actions. Frequently, those lacking the courage to stand up will hide behind the rationalization that they don't want to hurt their mate, claiming they are acting in their mate's best interest by keeping secrets. In reality, however, they are controlling and robbing their mate of the information necessary to take responsibility for their own life, to make informed decisions, and to address the issues in the marriage. It takes courage to be authentic in a marriage, but like the lion of Oz, courage is a trait that is often missing.

Interestingly enough, this trip to affair fantasyland usually culminates in a longing for home. Like Dorothy, they often realize that “there's no place like home.” But how do they return? It would be nice if they could click their heels together and repeat, “There's no place like home,” but more is required. The journey back is more exciting, and ultimately more rewarding than the fantasyland, but it takes time and effort. It is, however, one's best hope for growth and happiness. Come back to reality. Rediscover your brain, heart and courage, and you'll find there truly is no place like home.

3. Emotional decisions are never our best decisions. If you don't believe that emotional decisions are never our best decisions, consider the times you've made a purchase based on emotion. Have you ever been caught up in the moment and the excitement or bought something to feel better? How many of those decisions have been your best? If you're like me, the majority of those choices have been serious mistakes because when we get lost in emotions, we lose the ability to be rational. Who can deny the power of the emotions experienced in an affair or sexual addiction? I have seen wise grown men, who I greatly respect, do things that are totally insane. In fact, in society, we make excuses for those who are "in love" and label their insane behavior as "romantic," when in reality, family and fortune are being sacrificed for this make believe "true love." Interestingly enough, we laugh pityingly at people caught in the snare of greed who fall prey to the wiles of a con artist. We commit to never allow ourselves to be so duped as to lose large sums of money on obvious scams; however, the same emotional forces that seduce those vulnerable individuals are the very ones that ensnare those involved in affairs and addictions. In the midst of an affair, sane and logical individuals begin to experience feelings that far exceed normal emotional states. And in such states, we make radical and irrational decisions about the future, decisions that affect not only our lives, but also the lives of those who are connected to us. It's frightening to have to live with the consequences of decisions made in a state of virtual insanity.

4. People almost always "affair down". This is an axiom I have observed over the past twenty years of studying and working with affairs. I have never seen a situation where I felt an individual "affaired up"—meaning that they end up with a better person. It may seem like a better decision at the time, but it will prove it to be a step down. A dear friend of mine once shared a close call he had with a woman in his study group at church. He said that he had been aware of the spark between the two of them for some time, but had pushed away the reality of their synergy until one night when they found themselves alone. He told me, "Rick, she was so beautiful, and she truly cared about me and wanted me. It was the moment of truth. I looked at her, took a deep breath and told her I didn't know what she thought was going to happen, but this was going nowhere, and I walked away. It was one of the hardest things I've ever done, but there's one thing that had confused me—you'd always talked about the fact that people affair down. Now I understand. I can finally see how I would have been 'affairing down' if I had chosen her, because although she may have been more physically beautiful than my wife, in terms of maturity, character, integrity, intelligence, loyalty, spirituality, and those types of character traits, she was no match for Carol." Open your eyes, there is no such thing as a move up when it comes to an affair.

5. You'll stunt your growth. Marriage is God's primary tool for growing people. It is the marital relationship in which a person stands to gain and lose the most. It is where someone has the most opportunity to grow in their capacity to love, and to be loved. It is true that amidst an affair, you may be receiving an abundance of accommodation, appreciation, adoration, affection and affirmation, but getting your needs for nurturance met through an illicit affair isn't going to produce maturity (or a successful long-term relationship). In fact, the love generated in an affair is not love at all, though it may feel like it. It is an illusion. It is built around how that person makes you feel, not about how you truly feel about

them. It consists of the belief that another holds the answer to your felt needs. True love, on the other hand, is the love you receive after your mate learns of your betrayal and chooses to love you anyway. Growth comes from embracing the difficult situations in your life and having both the courage and fortitude to face them, but not by avoiding a challenging situation.

6. No man is an island. I am astounded by the rationalization used by many involved in affairs that their mate won't care, or that their mate will be better off if the marriage is abandoned. What makes you think you're so insignificant? The reality is, what you do will literally alter the course of their remaining years. Among other things, your affair affects their ability to trust, it destroys dreams of a life with you, it forces them into decisions they never wanted to make, and it robs them of the opportunity of learning how to be in relationship with you and how to grow beyond themselves by loving you. It strips them of their choices. Ultimately, it will literally stunt their growth as well as your own. And that's just the effect it has on your spouse! It will also profoundly impact your family and friends, and will create any number of difficult situations for them to navigate. Are you being so selfish because you think only of your misery without considering the misery you are about to create in the lives of those who care about you?

7. It is a trap. What the world tells us regarding the wonderful outcome of affairs is a lie, pure and simple. If you look at the research done on affairs, you will see there is seldom a successful outcome, and people who so eagerly rush into affairs more often than not get trapped in a situation from which they have a hard time getting away (remember the movie, *Fatal Attraction!*). What looked enticing and exciting at the beginning can become a web that drains the life energy away from you and the people you love. For example, second marriages are more likely to end in divorce and statistically, it is probable they will end sooner.

8. Don't call it love. Affairs are based on romanticism, not real love. Romanticism always consists of the dynamic of two individuals longing to be together, but who are kept separate by life's circumstances. Romanticism can only apply to love outside of marriage and the ingredients always consist of secrecy and mystery (such as the secret glances or stolen opportunities). Romanticized relationships, therefore, have a premarital or extra-marital association. Poets rarely write of the romantic love of marriage, the care required for children, or the mutuality of love in old age. Romanticized love by its own definition is something "beyond" or "out of this world" which cannot be contained in the defined walls of a marriage. The theme never differs; it is always the same song with a different verse. Consider the great romantic plots through the ages, such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Wuthering Heights*, or movies like *You've got Mail* or *Pretty Woman*. There are endless examples, all with the same theme of two individuals searching for the fulfillment of love, longing to be together, but whose efforts are tragically foiled by circumstances. Even more telling is what happens at the end of these stories, when they finally manage to come together. The curtain falls, the movie ends and the sitcom goes off the air. Such is the outcome of the vast majority of affairs.

9. Field of dreams. Unfortunately, certain types of passion have the tendency to spend themselves quickly. Romanticized love and holding out for the possibility of perpetual passion raises unrealistic expectations. When little or no passion is experienced and the embers have cooled, many people think their marriage has failed and begin to look for the exit sign. The advent of the fading embers is not the indicator of a failed marriage but rather the beginning of the transition to the next stage of the relationship, a place where true unselfish love and real passion can begin to develop.

10. Romance can be hazardous to your health. There is no high more potent than the feeling generated by an affair. The reunion of affair partners after a season of absence produces overwhelming feelings. The sky is bluer, the sun shines brighter, the birds sing louder, and all seems well in life. You and your partner are cloaked in ecstasy and the world, as you know it, ceases to exist. All that is real in that moment is you and your partner. Gone are the worries of the world and the pressures of life, for in that brief moment of time there are no concerns, only bliss. Who doesn't want to experience that type of high? But it never lasts! Reality sets in, and the temporary escape from life's problems ends. Just like a heroin addict, the next day comes and all of life's problems not only come flooding back, but get worse, or at least more complicated. One of the interesting dynamics of addictive behavior is the bubble effect. There is a tremendous high that comes from the drug of choice, but that feeling is temporary and leaves you wanting more. As time passes, you become obsessed with the thought of your next opportunity to escape. In fact, that obsession can become so intense that it is all you can think about. There seems to be relief from the anticipation itself, but as the process plays out, you actually lose the ability to experience life in the moment. You become so oriented in the future, you lose the ability to enjoy what is around you now. In fact, the life you are living is now filled with misery because you cannot be with the one you want. You end up living in a bubble of misery until you can once again experience your drug of choice. You can lose all of the joy of living as a result of craving the high.

A client I'll call Joe once paged me at 6:30 in the evening. He stated he was in front of his computer, and just had one more button to push before he entered the porn site. Joe reminded me of his promise to call before he used again, and said the thought of calling seemed to ease his guilt. I asked how long his affair with porn normally lasted, and he responded about one hour. I then asked how long he would be miserable as a result of what he was doing. Joe said about 72 hours. I asked if it was worth 72 hours of misery for 1 hour of ecstasy. He quickly responded yes, so I asked how many hours he had spent obsessing about using the porn. Joe said he had been obsessing since about 10:00 that morning. I stated it might be difficult to talk him out of something about which he had been obsessing for 8 hours. Joe was in the bubble. All life apart from the porn had lost meaning, and there were no motivating factors at that moment to stop Joe. The source of Joe's happiness had been reduced to an addictive behavior. Without getting to experience what he craved, there could be no happiness. The fate of those trapped in affairs is the same. Your drug of choice becomes your only hope for escape and happiness.

11. What about Integrity? The American College Dictionary defines integrity as "soundness of moral principle and character; uprightness; honesty." Infidelity is not about

integrity, it is about compromising what we know to be right. Most likely, I cannot tell you anything you don't already know. All I can do is speak to the truth you already know. We don't need someone telling us right from wrong because we already know it. What we know to be right lies in the very core of our being, and it feels unacceptable. We are afraid if we follow that standard we'll never be happy. So instead of following what we know to be right, we begin to search for ways to get around that which stands between us and what we want to do. Denial is one of the most powerful ways to get around what we know is right. We create an illusion that "we are god," and therefore we are the ones who get to determine good and evil. If we can rationalize and convince ourselves of that lie, then what we want and what happens to us become all that is important. At the same time, our double standard is exposed by our efforts to convince ourselves that what we want is of paramount importance. We reveal the existence of truth by hiding our actions. Why else do we keep our actions secret? If we truly believed what we are doing is right and good, then why do we fear exposure? Integrity is about doing the right thing and following what we know to be true. Anything short of doing what we know is right never works. The self-centeredness at the core of that compromise is not about the love of others, but is based on selfishness and pride, and is a force that will destroy us and those we love. The course of personal compromise for the sake of our own comfort and happiness ultimately leads to self-obsession. Integrity, on the other hand, leads to a blessing, not only for us, but for others in our lives as well. Doing the right thing may not resolve all the problems in our lives, but it leads to inner peace.

12. Affairs result in less intimacy, not more. Most people who are involved in an affair claim it is easier to be intimate with their affair partner than with their mate, but in reality it's a comparison of apples and oranges. Intimacy is the ability to be totally transparent—to be known fully by another. In Genesis 2:25, the closing verse states, "the two were naked and they felt no shame." This is a great definition of intimacy, for it is about man and woman being able to fully share all of who they are—their dreams, their hopes, their fears, their love, and their positives as well as their negatives. The intimacy experienced outside a marital relationship, however, is different than intimacy in a marriage. The intimacy of an affair or of a couple dating is an "other's validated intimacy." In those relationships, as one begins to reveal themselves to another, they are almost always rewarded by the other person revealing certain aspects of their life in return. They are literally validated for their attempts at intimacy and the result is a newfound feeling of closeness, and of finally being understood by another. Even as one shares the worse parts of him or herself, the other person generally will respond by validating them or by sharing the worse parts of who they are. In a relationship based on validation, partners feel it is safe to share what they think and what's important because they agree on almost all of the important issues and even if they can't agree, they are at least able to come to a point where they can agree to disagree without much effort. Outside of a marriage, it is easier to embrace differences.

Marriage, however, radically changes the dynamic. Once we cross into a marital relationship there is a paradigm shift. Now, instead of two individuals searching for the ways their differences complement one another, they feel the pressure to become one. Most married people begin to define the quality of their relationship with their ability to be on the same page, to agree on issues, to see things the same way, and to be who their mate needs them to be. When there is a difference, instead of it drawing a couple closer, it creates

tension and pushes them apart. It is in this paradigm that intimacy takes an interesting twist, for instead of creating closeness and validation, it now creates short-term instability. Each time someone reveals who they are, if it is different than their mate believes them to be, it creates a tension. Each time they disagree on an important issue, they are threatened and afraid they will never have life the way they wanted it to be. Inside marriage, intimacy becomes self-validated, and it takes integrity and personal strength to share fully who you are; to be authentic even when the other may not approve. For example, I've always believed the most intimate thing a person can do in their marriage is to share with their mate they are having an affair. With that statement, you are exposing yourself, revealing something they may not know (and most likely will not be happy about), but at the same time, you are exercising the integrity to be real. Paradoxically, intimacy in marriage generally does not create immediate closeness. However, in the long run, it can lead to growth, maturity, love, true intimacy, and a strong connection.

As you can see, intimacy in the marriage differs from that in an affair. Validated intimacy is easy and carries little or no risk, but intimacy in a marriage requires integrity, while providing the soil for personal and marital growth. Marriage becomes the place where a person develops character and personal strength. The intimacy of an affair isn't intimacy at all; it's just the longings of two individuals caught up in romanticism and infatuation. True intimacy can never be experienced until the paradigm of two being one is set in place by a marriage; then, and only then, can a person begin experiencing true intimacy.

13. It is just a drug. When I have a headache, I take aspirin. I hate to feel bad and I do all I can to avoid pain. In fact, one of the core values of our culture is comfort. We consume drugs to avoid both physical and emotional pain. To us, that feels as normal as breathing. We strive to make our jobs and lives more comfortable with better homes, designer furniture, luxury cars, and ergonomic design. In our lives we want comfort, and as a result, we lose the notion of how to live life with a little discomfort. Once, while visiting with a fellow therapist, I asked how successful he had been in working with opiate addicts. He asked, "Do you know what I've found true about that addiction? They are all wimps! They've lost the ability to tolerate pain." Similarly, in some aspects, those involved in sexual addiction and affairs use their behavior as a sedative. Sexual addiction creates a powerful bio-chemical rush that in many ways is similar to controlled substances and becomes a drug of choice.

14. Dream weaver. People rationalize an affair with ideas like, "my family doesn't deserve to have to put up with me," or "I'm too dangerous, so I'm better off having the affair." It's not your place to make that call for others. Happiness is not the only goal of a marriage, it is also about commitment, growing up, and the promises we made to our spouse. If your mate were to leave and go with another, he or she may or may not be better off. And consequently, how do you evaluate "better off" anyway? Maybe a lifetime of marriage with you might help develop grace and mercy in your spouse. Maybe it is just the right environment for growth— both yours and theirs. Besides, what makes you think you are so great at fortune telling? If you were, you probably would have already made it big at the horse races. You never can tell how things may or may not turn out, so don't deceive yourself into believing you can.

15. Your actions will not result in long-term happiness, love, or acceptance. One of the core beliefs of those involved in affairs is that they deserve to be loved, and that they deserve to be loved perfectly, and that somehow this "right" justifies betrayal. The truth, however, is that we are all imperfect beings, and no matter how good we or another think we are, it's never good enough. Consequently, in the imperfect state of others, they will always fail to respond perfectly to us in their love. Just as we ask ourselves these questions, so do they. What do other people want from us? Don't they also want love and acceptance? How long can either party go before the pressures of life squeeze us and cause us both to fail in our expression of love? At that moment, do they deserve to be loved, and are they easy to love? And if not, are they able to sense your frustration with them and do they begin to feel inadequate and unloved? And if you fail at loving them perfectly, are they likely to begin to withdraw from you, only to leave you feeling alone and unacceptable?

I firmly believe that the pursuit of personal happiness, love or acceptance in a marriage will end up at the same place— frustration and failure. At the core of the problem are the faulty beliefs of "I deserve to be loved," and "I deserve to be loved perfectly." We fail to realize how difficult it is to just love ourselves, and if we can't even truly love ourselves, how can we expect others to love us? We need to recognize the falsehood of pursuing love based on what we deserve (if your actions have been like mine you deserve death not love). Our pursuit of love is actually driven by the void that is at the core of each of us. The solution to this problem isn't to find someone who can love you better, or find someone who is easier to love, but instead to look to a more stable source for love.

David Wilcox wrote a song titled "A Break in the Cup" that addresses this problem:

I try so hard to please you. To be the love that fills you up.

I try to put on sweet affection, but I think that you've got a broken cup.

Because you can't believe I love you, I try to tell you that there's no doubt.

But as soon as I fill you with all I've got, that little break will let it run right out.

I cannot make you happy; I'm learning love and money never do,

But I can pour myself out until I'm empty trying to be just who you want me to.

But I cannot make you happy, even though our love is true

For there is a break in the cup that holds love inside of you.

Now I begin to understand you, as you explain this fear you feel.

It's when you see me fall into that sorrow; it makes you doubt the love is real.

Because the lonely wind still blows through me I turn away so you can't see.

But now how could I still be so empty, with all this love you pour out on me?

*I guess you cannot make me happy, that's a money back guarantee.
But you can pour yourself out 'til you're empty, trying to be just who I want you to be.
You cannot make me happy; it's just the law of gravity
In that break in the cup that holds love inside of me.*

*So if you're tempted to rescue me from drowning in this quick sand up to my neck
Before you grab my hand to save me why don't you ask me if I'm finished yet.
Because you cannot make me happy, not when I'm empty inside of me
But you can pull yourself right in here with me,
My misery would love to have your company.*

Here's the main point:

*We cannot trade empty for empty. We must go to the waterfall
For there is a break in the cup that holds love inside us all.*

My suggestion is quit looking for the wrong source and discover what it means to go to the waterfall.

16. Think again. Several years ago I spoke with a woman who came in specifically to see if I could talk her out of what she was about to do. She had a fifteen-year marriage and three kids, and had met a man in another state with whom she had fallen in love. Her husband knew nothing of the long distance affair, but he was certainly aware of their marital problems. Her husband had also been unfaithful throughout their marriage with the use of pornography and prostitutes. When she discovered his infidelity 18 months earlier, she had been devastated, and lost all hope for their marriage and all feelings of affection. He, on the other hand, had gone through a radical transformation. He entered therapy, attended 12-step groups, and had seemingly turned his life around. She acknowledged he had changed, but was still too bitter over his betrayal to reconnect with him. At the same time, she didn't want to divorce him because of their children and history together. Now she was about to give up her marriage for someone she was sure was her soul mate, her other, her perfect match. Her affair partner was a married man with children who had also been trapped in an unhappy marriage for a number of years. The two had met online and nurtured their “perfect relationship” via the internet, calling cards, and an occasional weekend rendezvous. Now after two months of the “perfect relationship,” she was ready to leave her marriage and marry the “perfect man.” She was asking if I could see any reasons why she shouldn't carry out her plan. I asked how she knew this person was the perfect man.

In reality, it is impossible to know who a person is in just two months, and it is certainly difficult to determine what a person will be like in a marriage, based on how they act during courtship when they are putting their best self forward. But the bigger question in my mind is whether this is the person you would choose given different circumstances.

Affairs are often fueled by miserable marriages where the marital deficits are used as a justification for infidelity. They are a reaction to the desire to convince ourselves that our mate will never meet our needs. That makes the majority of affairs reactive in nature. After I asked Cathy if she was sure this was the one, I painted a different scenario. What if she divorced her husband, grew her business, bought her own house, and built a new life with pride; is this the man she'd choose? When she wasn't in a state of need, why choose a man who was willing to betray his wife, and who had his own baggage? I told her I found it ironic that she had managed to find another man who, like her husband, was willing to cheat on his wife to get his needs met. Is that what she wanted, to be with a man who exhibited the same pattern as her husband, but had yet to enter recovery? Was she doing better with her new choice? Does the phrase “out of the frying pan and into the fire” mean anything to you? Who we have an affair with is never an independent, rational decision, but rather a reaction to being squeezed by life and circumstances. In an affair, your lover is not the one you would choose if you were on your own and single.

17. If God says it, why does it have to make sense to you? This particular reason is one of my personal favorites. One of the primary reasons I began to work with affairs stemmed from my own marital unfaithfulness. I was haunted for months by what I was doing, but was totally unable to pull the plug on my extramarital affair. I had even made multiple attempts to end the relationship, only to discover I couldn't exist without my drug of choice. I was living in the bubble and living in misery as I waited for the next rendezvous. Then in the blink of an eye, God broke into my world filling me with the love I had so desperately been seeking. While that was the most incredible experience of my life, I was still involved in a relationship I felt I was powerless to stop. I went to a trusted friend and inquired as to what he thought I should do. He asked, “What is God telling you?” “To come clean and let my wife know what I've done,” I replied, “But that doesn't make sense to me because why should my wife be hurt because of my failure?” My friend asked, “If God said it, why does it need to make sense to you?” Why does it need to make sense to me if God is the one directing me? Is there a chance He might be smarter than I? Could it be He already knows the outcome of all of this? I told my wife, and the rest is a wonderful history. It didn't need to make sense. So I challenge you, if haven't already heard what God is saying, then ask, and keep asking until you do.

18. The problem isn't your spouse. It's funny how we deal with moral failure. We spend a lifetime trying to impress others so we can gain their recognition and approval. In fact, that drive to perform and achieve often emanates from the negative identity messages we received as children, messages that we're worthless or undesirable, or that we're not as good or valuable as others. Those messages create feelings of guilt and hopelessness. They cause us to feel unworthy and helpless. Our response to those negative feelings results in our best attempts to disprove the messages so the negative feelings will go away. We strive to achieve. We want to prove we can indeed be acceptable, and that we are not a waste of space; however, our best efforts still end in failure, and we still feel the rejection. No matter what we accomplish, we still feel the void, which in turn makes us feel angry and frustrated. This is because what we do, no matter how impressive it is, will ultimately never make us feel better about who we are. So, after we are frustrated by our failure to resolve our image problems (people still don't see us the way we want), we turn to the

negative ways of coping, such as drugs, alcohol, sex, money, food, gambling, control, anger, and on and on. The biggest problem with our negative approaches to dealing with life is the fallout that occurs as those in our life begin to discover our betrayal of our relationship with them. Once exposed, we're faced with the hard, cold reality that the initial messages we received growing up must be true. We are worthless, self-centered, and stupid, and we have successfully proven those negative identity messages to be true. So in order to salvage a little self-respect, we begin to use our best defense mechanisms to protect ourselves. In Genesis chapter 3, when Adam and Eve are discovered having busted God's rules, they try to protect their image by blaming. Adam blamed the woman and Eve blamed the serpent. They felt that if they could pass the blame, they could push away the bad feelings. As it was no longer about their own failure, they believed they would subsequently be able to avoid judgment and condemnation. I find that one of the most common responses to infidelity is blaming, and like Adam, the closest and easiest person to blame is one's mate. So we attempt to push away our own guilt and avoid taking responsibility by focusing on our mate and their failures, and not on ourselves.

19. Confusion fusion. If you are doing things you don't want to do, it's not you doing it. It's not that you aren't responsible for your actions but that other forces are driving you, - forces that are compelling you to actions that will destroy you and your family. Some of you reading this may not understand, but for those of you who do; you need to take action. The very nature of the problem will prevent you from being able to stop the affair even if you apply your full will power. However, all is not lost. You may be powerless to stop the process, but God is more than capable of addressing the problem. Don't continue, out of pride, to fight a battle you can never win. Instead, "let go and let God." You'll find you will actually receive what you have always been looking for.

20. The truth will set you free. In reality, the reward of affairs and sexually addictive behavior isn't freedom, but bondage. It is a trap that consumes your life and results in others getting to enjoy the fruits of your hard work and investments. There is no freedom in the lies generated by this behavior. Those lies keep you stuck in a situation where you can't move in or out of a relationship. I never cease to be amazed at the double messages generated by people involved in extramarital activities. The infidelity seems to indicate they want out of the marriage, but their efforts to hide the behavior indicate they want to protect the marriage. By maintaining lies, it is impossible to discover what is true. Consequently, we avoid confronting the issues in our marriage, we avoid discovering if our mate has enough love to still choose us after we betray them, and we avoid facing the truth about ourselves. However, when we begin to speak the truth, the pressure is finally lifted. We are free from image management, free from all the lies, free from pretenses, free to begin to face life on life's terms, and free to just be us. Others may or may not be able to accept us or what we've done, but when we begin to speak the truth, they are free to respond with the knowledge they've been given. We no longer have to carry the heavy burden of controlling their responses. Freedom will never come as the result of our betrayal, it can only come as we move into truth.

21. History stays intact. The few years we spend on this earth are too short to be wasted. To throw away five, ten, twenty, or thirty years of history for a short-lived affair is tragic, as is the loss of the identity stemming from the breakup of a marriage due to an affair. I believe there is a longing in each of us to finish life well and to be able to look back through our own history and see a life well-lived. It is a blessing to be able, at the end of our days, to still be surrounded by lifelong friends and family, not only for us, but also for those who have been blessed by the stability of that history. Affairs rob us of that opportunity. They fragment life and cause regret at the end of the day. It may seem to be a trivial reason to stop an affair, but in the end we will be judged by that history. A broken marriage that ends in divorce is a painful legacy to leave our children and grandchildren.

22. You can be a better parent from inside your existing marriage. One of the most difficult aspects of divorce is the impact it has on your ability to parent. Unless you have never had much of a relationship with your children, it is painful for them and for you to go to "standard visitations," where they only get to be with you every other weekend, one or two nights a week and every other holiday. You lose the ability to have input into the most important and individuals in your life that need you most. You may be thinking it's a cop-out to sacrifice yourself for the sake of the kids, and that it's a farce to stay in an unhappy marriage just for the sake of the kids, and I might agree if there was nothing but hate and animosity constantly emanating from the marriage. However, developing a healthy and cordial relationship with your spouse, one in which you both agree to maintain your commitment for the sake of the overall family, can be a noble and loving endeavor. Being willing to sacrifice the self for the greater good of the whole is actually part of what love is about. This may seem like a lousy option if you are entangled in an affair, but it's an option that many fail to consider. It is admirable to think about the well-being of others besides you. It is okay to honor commitment, to provide a safe place for your children to grow, and to ultimately provide a stable home for them to bring their children (your grandchildren!) home to. Our culture refers to that type of decision as "selling out" or being codependent, but that depends on motives. I once had a 34-year-old woman come into my office and announce she wanted to "divorce her mom." When asked why, she replied that her mom was codependent and would not leave her alcoholic father. When I asked how her mom responded to her husband's drinking, she replied that she just went on with her life and paid it little or no mind. When asked how his moods and behaviors affected her life, she stated her that mother still went to her Bible studies, did things with her friends, and enjoyed her life. I asked how she responded when he came to the end of his drinking and had to be nursed back to health? She replied that her mother cared for him, doted on him, and encouraged him. I told her if she wanted to get rid of her mom I'd gladly adopt her. Furthermore, I explained to her that her mom wasn't codependent; rather she was an angel. She was a woman who didn't need her mate to be a certain way or in a certain state for her to be okay. Instead she's just faithfully and joyfully fulfilled a commitment she made over forty years ago. She's living the promise of "for better or worse, in sickness and in health." A codependent's life is tied to their mate and their moods, and they are riding on the roller coaster of their spouse's life. One of the primary causes of affairs is codependency, which means an individual doesn't know how to be happy unless their spouse is responding in the right way, or is doing the right thing. There are other ways to relate to your mate if you will only make the effort to learn, while at the same time blessing your children by being present in their lives on a daily basis.

23. It takes a lot of energy to live a dual life. An affair requires the living of two lives. You have to be one person at home and another with the affair partner. When asked which of the two individuals they prefer portraying, most will say they prefer who they are when they are with the affair partner over who they are with their spouse. Sam described it as being caught between two worlds. In one, he was a responsible husband and father with three kids and a wife for whom he provided. He was the ultimate soccer dad— driving a mini van, going to work from eight to five, and sacrificing his life for the American dream. He was fulfilling what he had always imagined his life should be about, the responsible, dutiful husband with a great wife and beautiful children. He had the great job and the perfect house. Life was as it was supposed to be, but he had lost his joy. In the affair, however, he portrayed a totally different person. In the affair, he got to be "fun Sam." His affair partner loved all the stunts he pulled as "fun Sam" (these were the same things he used to do with his wife when he first knew her before the kids came), and it made him feel young again. What prevented Sam from being the same person he was with his affair partner when he was at home with wife? Why couldn't he be "fun Sam" when at home? You possess the ability to be either person, and contrary to popular belief, it is not the affair partner that makes the difference. It is within your control to be whomever you want. If that's not the case, the truth is that you have little or no ability to make a difference in your own life. If life is not fun at home, maybe it's because you're boring! The solution isn't a geographic fix where you leave your family, but rather being the person God intended you to be.

24. You will never have the opportunity to experience true love. Contrary to all the fairytale myths, true love doesn't happen in a romantic moment of "riding off into the sunset together." True love is forged in the fires of struggle and growth. You can never find true love in a romantic tryst. True love is experienced when your betrayed partner chooses to accept and value the relationship with you, even after they discover that you and your actions were not what they bargained for.

We pursue affairs out of our perception of feelings of love for another, but affairs are not the relationships where we have the most potential to be loved. At first it may seem so because we are receiving the five A's (accommodation, appreciation, adoration, affection, and affirmation) in spades. We feel so wanted and accepted. Nevertheless, we can never be loved unconditionally if we only conditionally let the other person know who we are. Now, if you're reading this and you're in an affair, you're probably thinking your affair partner is the only person who knows who you are, but are they? The very essence of an entangled relationship is romanticism. It's about desperately wanting what you don't have. It's about the tragedy of being trapped in a marriage that is not satisfying and makes you miserable, a marriage that feels lifeless and is full of pain and rejection. On the other hand, the affair partner offers hope of a fresh start, and the experience of feelings that have been absent for years. But is it love? In reality, what feels like love is nothing more than the feeling commonly generated by the dynamics of romanticism (some refer to it as infatuation). It is far better to want what you don't have, than to have what you don't want. At some point, if you end up with the affair partner, you will move beyond romanticism and experience reality; the reality in which you disappoint and are disappointed, where you are truly known by the other and they begin to realize you aren't who they thought you were. When this happens, the relationship once again becomes a marriage

of failed expectations and growing resentments, and you end up right back where you started.

If true love is what you want you have to take risks. Let your mate know what you've done and who you are. Reveal what a disappointment you are. If they continue to choose to love you, not because of who they want you to be, but rather in spite of who you are, then perhaps for the first time in your life you will receive true love— a love that isn't earned, one that's not based upon what you do for another, not based upon your having to be acceptable or on your performance, or your performance, or having to be acceptable, but a love that is full and rich. It is a real love where you can finally be accepted for who you are. This type of love can never be experienced in a romantic relationship because your affair partner can't truly know you until you are married to them, and because extra-marital relationships are based on temporary pleasures. Until a relationship comes to the point where it offers nothing but pain and rejection, where the liabilities far outweigh contributions (and all relationships come to this point), there is not an opportunity for the true test of love. If your mate, by God's grace, is able to truly love you in spite of the affair, you will finally get to experience the love you've always wanted.

You may believe that even if your mate offers you unconditional love, there is no way you can ever have feelings for them again. You might think you could never love them unconditionally and accept them as they are. This is truly a crossroads in life. It is at this point that you choose between life and death, between growth and stagnation, between love and self-centeredness, between maturity and comfort, and between God-given humility and pride. As hard as it may be to believe that desire for your mate can return, that you can love again, and your mate can love you again, I have seen it happen over and over. Deficits in a marriage can be addressed and God can give new life. He is the very source of life, but you have to stop what you're doing and give Him a chance. If you don't believe this, talk with others who have made that choice and see what they have to say.

25. Your feelings can come back, and they will. It is easy to bury your feelings for your partner when you are caught up in the intoxicating drug of an affair, a place where the world takes on a new glow. As previously stated, however, this idyllic feeling does not last, and your problems will come rushing back in on you. At the same time, it is possible to have feelings for your mate again, often after you have already abandoned them. After a while, you may begin to find yourself pining away for something wonderful that you threw on the trash heap; something you are afraid you cannot regain.

26. "I deserve to be happy." That's the same one Adam and Eve fell for! And it is no surprise that we believe this lie. After all, just about every television ad and media spot conveys the message that happiness is our birthright and will come if we just buy this or do that. Constantly surrounded by these messages, it is easy to convince ourselves we have a right to the affair or the sexual indulgences. However, no matter how many people are repeating it, a lie is still a lie.

27. It will waste all you have to give in life. Your pursuit of an emotion will cost you your strength as well as your years. In Proverbs 5: 7-11, the writer states:

"Now then my sons; listen to me and do not turn aside from what I say. Keep to a path far from her (this can also apply to the opposite gender), do not go near the door of his/her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another's man's house. At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent."

In the moment, what seems best is to escape from the difficult reality of a disappointing, if not downright painful marriage, but that is just in the moment. Wisdom throughout the ages speaks to the long-term results of these actions. Our tendency is to only focus on the present, and we seldom take the time to explore the realistic future. Years of an investment in a family will be lost, not to mention the financial losses that come from divorce. Attorneys will acquire your hard earned money. Retirement accounts will be split. Lifestyles will be forced to change. Children will be divided in their localities. Seeds of bitterness will be given fertile soil to take root and begin the process of hardening your heart. It will not only be hurtful to your ex, but that bitterness will also interfere with your ability to relate and connect with the new people in your life. Years may be spent trying to mend wounded relationships with adult children and friends from the past. In the long run, you will lose the ability to enjoy your dreams of how life ought to be. Your life will be wasted as you lose your best chance to finish well. Wisdom cries out for you to stop and turn back before it's too late.

28. It is far better to live by faith than to live and learn. After an affair, regrets are common, but it may be too late because you will have lived, and then learned, and perhaps already squandered what is precious to you. Countless people will testify to their regrets of the endless negative consequences of their affair(s). It is much better to get off the path now, before the affair or addiction costs you much of what you have toiled for in life.

29. You will end up hurting the majority of people in your life. The impact of your actions will go on for the remainder of your life. By leaving a marriage (even if you believe the other person deserves it), you not only change the course of their life, but the course of each and every person who touches your life as well. There is a ripple effect that can gain momentum over the years. Divorce is never really over.

30. Broken relationships = financial problems. I hate to end on a mercenary note, but it has to be said. The single greatest threat to long-term financial stability, both yours and your children's, is divorce. The nation is filled with once-secure individuals who lost a significant portion of their wealth because of their bad decisions. It is a simple matter of Home Economics 101: one house is cheaper to pay for than two, half of a retirement account is never as good as all of it, and zero spent in legal bills is preferable to perhaps tens of thousands spent on useless and sometimes vindictive litigation. Conversely, one of the top ways to become wealthy is to stay in a marriage.

31. For heaven's sake. You have probably guessed by now that I come from a Christian perspective. I have tried to stay strictly rational until this point, but now I need to share my final thoughts with those who want a spiritual perspective. For those who do not

share a life with Jesus, the following reasons may not make sense, so please do not feel compelled to read on. For those of you who do share a life with Jesus, I ask you to prayerfully consider what I am about to say. I do not claim to have all wisdom. In fact, I genuinely want to write only the truth that has been revealed to me. Please try to read this with an open mind. I don't think I can actually tell you anything you don't already know, but I desire to speak to the truth that is in you. I do not possess anything that you do not, since those of us who are in Christ share in the same life and in the same hope. So please read on.

Many of you reading this probably feel misunderstood as well as disappointed, if not downright bitter about the benefits of having led a "Christian Life." In fact, if I were to state that a great reason to stop an affair is the blessings you would receive, you might even question my understanding of your situation, or at least my integrity. A common reason for infidelity is disappointment in the way life has evolved. Those of us who have been involved in "Christian circles" have frequently been taught or promised the good life as a result of accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, only to find life became more difficult, not easier. We were told that the blessings of following God would exceed the pleasure of sin, but that reality holds true only when you are living a life filled with blessings—a life you enjoy and leaves you feeling satisfied. But it is that heretical teaching in today's evangelical church that leaves many feeling confused and bitter.

Indeed there are blessings that come from a life of following Jesus, but the fullness of those blessings doesn't necessarily come in this life. They may, and if they do that's great, but those who buy the teaching that the Christian life will always result in happiness, satisfaction, and comfort, have been sold a bill of goods. That false teaching is apparent in the example of just one life—the life of Christ. He certainly lived a great "Christian Life," but look what it got Him. So you may have already figured out that doing the "right thing" makes sense as long as life goes well, but at times the pleasure of sin may seem to outweigh the joy of following Jesus if those blessings are taken away, if for whatever reason you don't like your mate, or if maybe you are just terribly unhappy with your life.

You may feel caught between the two-choice dilemma: leaving behind and rejecting all you have believed right and true regarding God's will for your life in order to experience the extreme happiness you now are experiencing with you affair partner; or returning to a miserable marriage where you have no foreseeable hope of happiness in this life. The decision is more difficult if you bought the lie that the Christian life would bring the fullness of joy in this life. The reality, however, is that being born again and sharing a life with Jesus does not necessarily bring supreme happiness in this life. Some may experience this, but it is not the path for all of God's children.

The life of Christ in me is not a life that pursues the goal of fulfilling felt desires. Instead, it is a life that longs to worship and glorify the Father. It is not a life that uses God as a means to achieving the ultimate satisfaction in this life. God is not our tool to achieve our own happiness. As Larry Crabb points out, "If that were the case then satisfied desire would be the end and God would be the means. That in turn means that my ultimate pursuit in life is happiness and satisfied desire becomes my idol." God does not exist for the sake of helping me experience the fullness of a happy life; rather, I exist for His good pleasure, and I live to serve Him. I will indeed experience a supreme joy, but it is not guaranteed in this life. If I live for an experience of happiness, if my desire becomes

the primary goal of my life, and I live for nothing higher than its felt satisfaction, then I am no longer living by faith. I am an idolater worshipping desire. I am no longer living for God.

As I see it, this life is about experiencing the great mystery, and that is "Christ's life in me and the hope of glory". I live by faith, not for the experience of satisfied desire. My faith is based on Christ and the reality that His life is now my life. I actually have the very spirit of the supreme God of the universe at the center of my being. I was never intended to live for the short-term experience of a soul mate who is not my wife. Jesus tells us that there is no marriage in heaven, so we know this life is not about marriage. It is by faith that I wait for my fullness of joy, not in this life, but in the next. Faith is not about what I believe and receive in this life; rather, it is about how long I can believe and receive nothing. I live for that day when Christ will say, "Well done my good and faithful servant," and not for the day I have fulfilled my desire.

So for those of us who have tasted the sweet gift of the love and grace of God and know there is a life after this life; the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are calling you. Will you take time to listen to them? I don't presume to know what they might say to you. I only know what the Word of God reveals about Jesus' passion and compassion for those who are His, as well as His constant pursuit of "black sheep" to bring them back to the fold. I am aware of the Father's tolerance, patience, kindness, mercy, and love for those whom He has called. I know that by His very nature he is love, and there is nothing you can ever do to alter His love for you. I also know of the Holy Spirit's deep desire to glorify the Father and the Son through our lives, and of His amazing presence in our lives as He reveals the presence of God to us and in us. Don't squander the gift of God- the gift that cost Jesus his life. You are not your own, rather, you have been bought with a price. Take time to listen to the gentle loving voice of the Spirit within, and ultimately joy will be found in following His voice rather than in listening to your emotions and fears.

Conclusion

After all is said and done there is usually a lot more said than done.

I have tried to list some common reasons for stopping an affair. Experience has proven that it is not as easy as "just deciding to stop," but the first step is recognizing that decision. For many, identifying the decision that exists is the best they can do as they begin the journey. The decision to "save your marriage" is separate and apart from the decision to stop your behavior. If you are determined to stop, get help from those who have successfully done so. Find what has worked for those who have achieved the goal. We at the Affair Recovery Center would love to help.

We can be contacted at Affairrecovery.com or by phone at 512-346-9299.

About the Author

My name is Rick Reynolds. I am a marriage and family therapist in Austin, Texas, and I specialize in the treatment of affairs. My interest in affairs came as the result of my betrayal of my own wife over twenty years ago. Since that time, I have worked with over a thousand couples who have successfully kept their marriages intact after the devastating impact of betrayal. Assisting couples to stay together has great benefits, but not all individuals recommend that course of action. This, then, is the motivation for this book. I want to help couples save their marriages and receive all the benefits that can come from that course of action. For those of you who are interested, I've now been married twenty-six years and am grateful I made the decision to stop my affair and thankful that my wife made the decision to stay with me. Some of you may think my failed attempts at fidelity disqualify me from writing this book, but I believe it is the very thing that uniquely qualifies me to do so. I have been there and done that, and it's true that the majority of growth comes from failure and hardship. This book is an attempt to explain some of what I've learned over the past twenty years, in my own marriage and in my counseling others in similar situations. My desire is that my experience will provide hope for your own recovery.