

[My Spouse had an Affair - Do I Need Counseling? From Barrington, Lake Zurich and Palatine](#)

If your spouse has been having an affair, you probably have read articles saying that you need to reflect and improve yourself. Even though you are not at fault for your partners affair, some advise that you should still commit to studying self-improvement materials to either cope with all the strife, win him or her back or make it on your own.

Should you really read magazine articles and books in order to become a better, more energetic, more exciting person? Right now, any work to make things better, on your part, probably feels next to impossible.

After all, the other person in your spouses life seems to get everything: Your spouses attention, companionship, sensitivity and all that excitement without having to work on anything. You probably hate thinking that you have to compete against him or her. It just does not seem right!

You probably cannot argue with the notion of self-improvement. Who can? However, you probably hate the feeling of having to do anything more, in order to eliminate the cascade of hurt falling on you because of your partners infidelity.

Some betrayed spouses even wonder if, instead of trying to improve themselves, they should act aloof - pretending they dont even care, in order to get their partners affection?

THE problem is: Do I really need to do something more to improve myself for the relationship? Or, How do I come across as confident, indifferent and strong and still care about my partner anyway?

Remember, an affair is a calculation, a game, initiated usually by someone who has been arrested in his or her psychological development, a person who loves games and manipulative gestures, struggles with addictions or suffers from the need to prove his or her own desirability or adequacy. Because your spouse plays the game does not mean that you must.

Of course, the affair is NOT your fault. Did you make mistakes? Well, probably. Everyone does! And remember, while you may be able to influence others; you do not carry the power to control them- your spouse included.

Unfortunately, the improvements you may try, gleaned from reading and talk shows, are subtly conveyed to your spouse as those things you need to do to win his or her game. And, of course, they usually dont work anyway, or if they do, you get him or her back and say, HmMMM, is this all there is!?

Do not forget: If you pursue these improvements to win him/her back, you are merely playing your spouses game.

The most authentic option is to not play the game, but, rather, engage in the very real exploratory and learning process of counseling.

Counseling results in standing back, acquiring perspective, learning about yourself, seeing your partners infidelity for what it REALLY is and then connecting to him or her by reflecting on the situation and yourself.

For example, you probably assume the third party is getting something special - and our media encourages this portrayal of romantic love as being nothing but an ocean of pleasure and joy. Even though it may appear so, relationships born of infidelity have a horrible record of success.

I consult with many clients engaged in affairs who feel as if they are trapped or are on an accelerating downward spiral of self-destruction. And, usually those relationships self-destruct in very messy ways.

Learning about yourself through counseling is very different from just making improvements to make your partner happy. You do not have to improve! You need not get better! You are ok.

But, you do want to grow and create a richer life for yourself and your kids. Here are some hard questions you will likely explore in counseling.

They will move you towards self awareness and away from the game playing that really is a No-Win for both of you:

1. What am I tolerating in my relationship? What am I willing to tolerate? What will I not tolerate?
2. Simplicity. How can I simplify my life? How can I eliminate or reduce my interpersonal or material clutter? How can I generate a peace of mind that lasts, in or out of the relationship?

3. What thoughts do I have of what I should have, could have or would have done? How do I permanently eliminate these thoughts from my mind?
4. How do I become authentic and genuine, living in a way which is right/healthy FOR ME whether I am in the relationship or not?
5. How do I express my needs in such a way that others naturally will want to help me? How do I start eliminating symptoms of neurotic neediness?
6. What do I need to do immediately to start managing my finances, school, body, relationships and career in a healthy way which could be a model for my kids?
7. How can I protect myself from the pain caused by toxic people and family members?
8. How can I triple my standards so that I can be more authentic, genuine and fully me?
9. How can I create reserves of time, space, money and love so that I can afford to be driven by purpose and not by fear?
10. How can I fully immerse myself in the moment so that I do not regret the past or fear for the future?
11. How can I nurture relationships with people who are good for me and me for them?
12. How do I enhance my integrity and authenticity as a person?
13. What goals should I pursue in order to feel truly fulfilled?

In counseling you will explore these questions deeply. As you do, express your thoughts and feelings to your spouse.

Start tolerating less, declare your boundaries, clearly express your values and authentically live them, day by day, in the presence of your spouse. And, feel free to express your observations about the way things are going-to yourself and your spouse.

Stay in counseling. Do not fight. Do not try to measure up to your partners expectations. Simply be authentic-be who you are. And, begin engaging your spouse with just genuine curiosity-with no axe to grind.

About the Author

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