

There are two popular, but incorrect myths about affairs:

Myth 1: An affair marks the end of the marriage. The parties should divorce quickly and “build a new life.” This fails to take into account the power of forgiveness and healing.

Myth 2: Affairs are very common these days so don't take it too seriously. This is like saying “cancer is common, so don't take it too seriously”! Friends, family and even counselors may make these false assumptions.

Truth: An affair is devastating. It is difficult to overstate the pain it causes. It kills trust and creates overwhelming emotions. It is difficult to heal following an affair, but it is not impossible.

If you partner has an affair:

- Take your time deciding what you want and continue in the The Third Option
- Talk to a trusted pastor or friend who can be objective
- Pray for God's guidance and help
- Find a good Christian counselor who neither over nor underestimates an affair
- Read books:
 - Torn Asunder by Dave Carden
 - Men in Midlife Crisis by Jim Conway
 - Private Lies by Frank Pitmann
 - Surviving Infidelity by Rona Subotnik & Gloria Harris
 - The Monogamy Myth by Peggy Vaughan

If you had an affair and want to reconcile:

- Cut off the affair/relationship completely
- Take full responsibility for the affair (no excuses)
- Apologize from the heart; acknowledging that receiving your spouse's forgiveness would be a gift. You have no “right” to expect it.
- Be totally open and honest in answering your partner's questions about when, where and how many times you hid it, etc. This may be painful but it's the only way to move beyond it.
- Listen, listen, listen to your spouse's pain, anger, and mistrust and acknowledge your part in causing it.
- Be patient. Pushing your partner to heal is denying the magnitude of the pain they feel.
- Pray for God's guidance and help.
- Find a Christian counselor with expertise in marriage and affairs.
- Continue in the The Third Option during all this. Healing after an affair takes courage, honesty, forgiveness and humility. It cannot be rushed or faked, but couples have recovered from affairs and gone on to have even stronger marriages.

Websites:

www.vaughan-vaughan.com - offers “BAN” Beyond Affairs Network
www.smartmarriages.com www.smalley.gospelcom.net