

FOCUS

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Things You Don't Realize About Having an Affair

Chances are you didn't set out to be unfaithful. Maybe you were bored and lonely, or just vaguely unsatisfied. Perhaps you "reconnected" on Facebook, forged a friendship at work or started flirting with an acquaintance. At some point, the line between right and wrong got blurry...but in hindsight, all of the signs were there. **You won't consider the ramifications until it's too late.** It felt good or just different enough, and at the time you felt powerless to resist. When your hormones were raging and someone was there telling you that you were special and really listening to you, thoughts of broken families and hearts were a million miles away. It won't be until you've crossed that line that you realize everything you stood (or stand) to lose. **You'll try to justify.** Your spouse didn't pay attention to you. There was no passion. You married too young. You were roommates, not lovers. He/she was controlling, emotionally unavailable, a slob. Your spouse was cheating too—or maybe you just suspected he/she was. You'll come up with

ten thousand different ways to excuse your actions, and for a while at least, they'll seem convincing to you. **The excitement will fuel you for a while.** New lust is powerful stuff, and hiding an affair can be as exciting as the affair itself. For the first time in as long as you can remember, you have something that's all yours, and your little secret is more energizing than a case of Jolt. **You'll live in constant fear.** What if your lover calls? What if he/she doesn't? What if someone sees you together? Can you call him/her? When? Are you acting differently? Dressing differently? Do you smell differently? When you're not busy obsessing about these questions, you'll play over all of the possible outcomes in your head until it spins. **The guilt will be all-consuming.** You're someone's spouse, possibly a parent. You took vows and you were building a life and a family. You're living a lie, day in and day out. You'll cry in the shower, in the car, in the bathroom at work. You didn't want to be like this and sometimes you're not even sure how it hap-

pened. You used to talk with your friends about the cheaters you knew, and you were so sure they'd get what was coming to them. Now the cheater is you, and even if you think you're meant to be with this person, the shame never, ever goes away. **Affairs are expensive.** Fancy dinners, faraway hotel rooms, sexy lingerie, trusty babysitters, personal training sessions...a cheater's tab can get out of control in a flash. And because of that pesky paper trail business, most of it will have to be taken care of in cash. Be prepared to get intimately familiar with the term "creative financing." **You'll pull away from your friends.** In the beginning, the totally exclusive, utterly secretive nature of your affair will be one of its biggest appeals. It's the two of you against the world and you'll relish that bond. But eventually something will happen and you'll want to talk to someone about it, and you'll have nowhere to turn. You'll realize that even telling your best friend will put her in a bad position, and could possibly put the affair at risk. So you'll

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stew quietly and feel very much alone. **Kids make it eighty-jillion times more complicated.** Every minute you spend with your lover—even if the kids are in school or otherwise happily occupied—will feel like moments you're stealing from them. You'll worry about what they'd think if they found out, and how you'd feel if their future partners did the same thing to them. You'll cry yourself to sleep thinking about what it would do to them to rip apart the only family they've ever known. **Sleep will be something you used to do.** Your days will be a busy blur of juggling and secrecy, so you'd think that once everyone else is tucked neatly into bed, you'd pass right out. Except you won't. your mind will race through your day, retracing your steps and trying to be sure you haven't left any clues. And even when you're confident the you haven't, these evening hours will be filled with a tormenting torrent of whys and what-ifs. **You'll wonder how you could have fallen for a cheater.** (Irony!) The very nature of your relationship means that you can't reach out to your lover whenever the urge strikes. When that window finally presents itself and you can't reach him/her, your first thought will invariably be: Are they with someone else? (You'll try to shove this thought far from your conscience, but it will be there.) and every time he/she's distant, unavailable, moody or not in the mood, that terrifying thought will again rear its ugly head. **You'll discover that no relationship is perfect.** Just when you least expect it, your perfect lover—the one you risked life and limb to be with at every secretive turn—will do something to irritate, disillusion or disappoint you. The arms you sought solace in to escape your spouse's apathy will turn indifferent; the one

who drew you in with quiet confidence will turn needy. All relationships take sacrifice, work and compromise, you'll realize. This ah-ha moment will be as profound as it is painful. **Guarding you computer and cell phone will be a full-time job.** Even if you try to keep your communication to the bare minimum, you'll have to arrange those risqué rendezvous. Which means your computer and cell phone likely harbor all sorts of damaging evidence. You'll suffer regular panic attacks wondering if you actually left your laptop open, and when you forget your mobile you'll have to run home to retrieve it immediately, every single time. **You'll worry you'll say the wrong name at the wrong time.** Over coffee it will be a concern; in bed it will border on crippling. (Because if you're maintaining the façade of a "real" marriage at home, you're probably still getting intimate with your spouse. And when you are, you'll be thinking about your lover. Welcome to your new world.) Chances are you'll stop addressing both by their actual names and stick to something generic like "honey."

You'll appreciate things about your spouse that you never even noticed. Blame it on intense guilt (or maybe you're suffering a bit of buyer's remorse), but when your spouse brings you your coffee just the way you like it or remembers to send your stepmom a birthday card, your heart will break just a tiny bit. If the luster is starting to dull on your other, newer relationship, the ache will be intensified. **The new sex will get old, too.** As skilled as your new bedmate may be, the fact is that once the sheer novelty of

of sleeping with someone new wears off the temperature will dial down a bit. Maybe not way down, and nobody is saying it'll get anything close to boring—but what used to feel like an electric jolt may start to seem more like a tingle. **To conceal or confess? Both options have consequences.** At some point, a part of you will get tired of the lies and desperately want to come to come clean. And then you'll remember what's at stake and shudder to deeply. Fessing up might mean that end of your marriage (and obviously there are reasons to stay or you'd have bailed already). It would hurt and anger your partner and, if you have kids, upend their world if your marriage dissolves. You'd be branded with the scarlet A. your life would never be the same again. So you're back to the exhausting game of hide-and-lie. **Ending it may be disastrous.** The whole thing was a mistake. Or it's just too complicated. Or you're exhausted—or your lover is. Unfortunately, just because one of you wants out doesn't

mean the other does, too. If you try to end it, he/she may threaten to spill the beans to you spouse. If your lover wants out, you might make outlandish promises if they agree to stay. Whatever the circum-

stance, if you not on the same page, it can be a really turbulent ride. **You'll have regrets.** Even if the affair was the catalyst that ended a disastrous, miserable marriage, there will be things you wish you did differently. Hearts, promises and trust will be broken, and if you knew then what you know now, you'll wish you could go back and rewrite at least a few pages of your history.

Source:
www.iVillage.com Aug.2012

*Just when you least expect it,
your perfect lover...will do
something to irritate, disillusion
or disappoint you.*

What are Sparks?

The word "sparks" can have different meanings for different people. A simple Google search of the word "sparks" returns dozens of results -- anything from glowing images of fireworks to the official website for a women's professional basketball team.

Sparks [spa:rkz] noun 1. An individual's deepest passions and interests that give her or him meaning, focus, joy, and energy. Each of us, young or old or in-between, has or can have at least one spark. A few people seem to know their spark from an early age, but most of us discover our sparks over time, through multiple opportunities and experiences .

Did You Know?

When young people know their sparks and have several caring adults who know and support those sparks, they are more likely to:

- Be healthy physically
- Be good steward of the earth and its resources
- Volunteer to help others
- Be socially competent
- Have a sense of purpose

- Avoid violent behavior
- Have higher grades in school

The good news is: Approximately 69% of U.S. teenagers say they have a spark in their lives. That's wonderful!

But the bad news is: 31% of U.S. teenagers don't think they have a spark—that's about 12 million lives waiting for their spark to ignite.

A spark supporter is a person who knows and supports a young person's sparks. Only about 37% of young people surveyed had both an identified spark and three or more spark supporters. Many of the settings in which youth live their lives could be more attuned to learning and nurturing young people's sparks. Here are the percentages of youth we surveyed who said these settings help them develop their sparks:

- Schools 35%
- Congregations 23%
- Youth Organizations 21%
- Neighborhoods 6%

The best spark gift you can give your children is to provide them with lots of opportunities to try or experience new things; that way, each child has a good chance of finding his or her own special interests. The more he or she can try, the better!

An extensive discussion on the concept of sparks as well as a step-by-step approach to helping teens discover their unique gifts can be found in Dr. Peter Benson's book [*Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers*](#).

Source: Search Institute
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Mental Toughness

Head and heart—mental toughness— was one of Coach Lombardi's favorite topics. He believed that mental toughness was the single most important quality a leader needed to develop in themselves and in the people around them. Mental toughness is the ability to hold on to your goals in the face of pressure and stress of your current situation. It's the ability to hold on, and hold on to what you want in the face of what you've got. Mental

toughness is the glue that holds a team together when the heat is on and helps them persevere just a little longer—which in many cases is just long enough to outlast the competition. Coach Lombardi's brand of mental toughness stresses that in order to win, one must disregard the small hurts, ignore the pain and pressure that would be applied by opponents and supporters alike. Lombardi emphasized the necessity of staying the course when

things start to go wrong. He was talking about using failure to come back stronger than before. We learn perseverance by persevering. "Sometimes it's good to have an obstacle to overcome. When things go bad, we usually rise to the occasion."

Source: www.simpletruths.com
Simple Truths, LLC

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Positive Gossip

Homer Simpson once said, "If we aren't supposed to eat animals, why are they made of meat?" Today we will talk about gossip. We aren't supposed to gossip. If everyone knows gossiping is bad, why do people do it? The answer is simple. We humans spent most of our history in small tribes, and it is vital in a small group to know whom you can trust. We have an inner gossip-interest part of our brain and we like to hear about other people. Eleanor Roosevelt supposedly said that great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, and small minds discuss other people. But I heard she wasn't all that trustworthy. Alice Roosevelt, her husband's cousin, liked to say, "If you don't have something good to say, you come sit right here by me."

I am more like Alice than Eleanor. Unfortunately, bad is about three times more powerful and interesting than good. It is just how Mother Nature has made our brains. Knowing what was bad helped keep us alive in primitive times. So naturally most of our gossip is about people's shortcomings and failures. In the news business, bad news always leads, and so it is in our social groups. Bad grabs. Good gets ignored. I propose we outsmart Mother Nature

and gossip positively. Positive gossip will lift your own spirits, it will make other people like you more, and it will eventually get back to the person you gossiped about and inspire her or him. Everyone benefits from positive gossip. So how do you gossip positively? Try these three steps.

Step 1: Say nice things behind other people's backs. Give yourself a challenge to engage in positive gossip. Try it out. Make a point of saying nice things behind the backs of your friends, family and colleagues. How does it make you feel? When we do something nice, it is one of the most elevating experiences we can have. Saying positive things about others feels good.

Step 2: Shift conversations from negative to positive. Second, now experiment with shifting conversations from negative to positive. A colleague says, "Did you hear how Bob blew the Jones account? They hated his presentation and now we might not get bonuses because of him." What can you do here? Try positive gossip. You could say, "What a shock. Generally, Bob is quite good at these things. I have seen him do some very good work with clients, so I am confused. I know he did well with the Smith account. There

must be more to this story." Now you have shifted the tenor of the conversation. You might be able to say, "Let's stop by Bob's office and see if there is something we can do to help. After all, we can all benefit from turning this thing around." Be a leader, and determine to shift conversations.
Step 3: Wait for good to come back to you. Third, wait for it to come back to you. When you have been an instigator of positive gossip, you will become the subject of the same kind of positive gossip. You will be seen in a more positive light, and you will see people becoming more friendly and warm towards you.

In the Asian cultures, there is the principle of Karma, and in the west we call that the Law of the Harvest. As you sow, so shall you reap. Positive gossip creates an environment where people begin to look for the best in each other. Additionally, if you gossip about others positively, they will feel more trust in you. Ancient wisdom from all cultures teaches this. Try it out.

Source: Dr. Lyn Johnson, Positive Psychologist, Happiness Expert, Author.

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