

Smart Marriages Conference

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San Francisco, California

#608 Beyond Affairs: Prevention & Recovery

Learn how to not only recover from infidelity, but to make your marriage even stronger, from a couple that's been there.

Also, learn how to give back by leading BAN recovery support groups in your community.

By

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The Beyond Affairs Network (BAN)

Mission Statement

To provide an opportunity for people who are dealing with the devastating impact of a spouse's affair to come together face-to-face, for strength, insight, and mutual support.

To provide a safe place to share the painful emotions that interfere with recovery and a place to gain perspective and understanding, aimed at thinking more clearly and acting more effectively, in order to proactively move forward, make more informed personal decisions and recover from this experience.

To reinforce people's own efforts toward recovery, working in conjunction with and not in place of other support they are seeking such as therapy, counseling or marriage healing and strengthening seminars.

To help people reach a point where they are fully healed from the experience and no longer need support.

To become as commonly known about and available worldwide as other major support groups such as Al-Anon, so that no betrayed spouse needs to suffer in isolation.

BAN is for the betrayed spouse only.

BAN is open to people of all religious beliefs or none.

BAN is free to attend.

BAN is open to both men and women struggling with a spouse's affair.

BAN is for both those staying married or facing divorce.

BAN is not open to those who've had affairs themselves.

BAN is a volunteer grassroots organization.

For more information visit the BAN website: www.beyondaffairs.com

Currently there are total of 96 BAN groups in 37 states in the USA and 12 countries around the world.

If there is no BAN group in your area, please consider becoming a coordinator for your area if you qualify or sponsoring a client in becoming a coordinator. There is a lot of support to help you establish and manage a group.

A Framework for Recovery

Creating an environment where healing can take place

1. **Instill Hope**
2. **Break all ties with the 3rd party.**
 - a. Be aware of the fact that the unfaithful spouse goes through a period of grieving the loss of the affair.
3. **Adequate Support.** Don't suffer in isolation.
4. **The offending spouse must accept full responsibility for their actions.**
5. **Talk, Talk, Talk.** Research proves that couples who talked about the affair a lot had much higher percentages of not only healing, but reporting happier and stronger marriages at the other side of the difficult healing journey.
6. **Read books about affairs.**
7. **The offending spouse needs to answer all of the injured spouse's questions honestly and consistently.**
8. **Injured spouses need to create a "safe" environment for the truth to be disclosed.**
9. **Patience** with each other. The injured spouse will go through periods of great pain and anger.
10. **Fun.** Everything cannot be about healing. Take time to create positive new experiences together, and take a break from all the hard work of healing the marriage.

7 Key Elements in Recovery

1. **Improve communication** and credibility by learning to understand differences and embrace those differences.
2. **Learn how to fight right.** Develop skills to discuss the difficult issues in a way that will build understanding and intimacy.
3. **Discover Why the Affair happened.** (covered in next section)
4. **Both spouses need to accept ownership of their parts in the marriage, and what could've been better.** That being said, the injured spouse should not be asked to look at their side too early, while they are surviving the initial trauma. When couples do look at the injured spouse's side, it should be clearly separated from the affair. The faithful spouse is not responsible for the affair.
5. **Understand the behaviors that rebuild trust.**
6. **Forgiveness.** Both the faithful and the unfaithful spouse need to forgive each other and themselves. The faithful spouse can forgive if three important elements are present:
 - a. Their decision
 - b. They have read and talked enough both with their spouse and others that they have been able to understand the affair.
 - c. Enough time has past.
 - d. The unfaithful spouse has taken ownership of the affair, sincerely apologized and asked for the forgiveness.
7. **Re-establish your sexual connection.**

Generally, a combination of factors contribute to affair/s. Both husband and wife should complete the following lists separately (both checking factors that apply to the offending spouse), compare notes later and use it as a spring board into the important discussions you need to have in order to better understand each other, why the affair happened in your marriage, and to identify safeguards/changes you can put into place to protect your marriage from future affairs. This list is not all-inclusive. Space is provided to add your own reasons. It serves to create awareness of the many different issues that contribute to affair vulnerability, and helps people to avoid over simplistic answers.

Vulnerability Factors	Unfaithful Spouse	Faithful Spouse
Personal		
Financial Setbacks		
Stress		
Job Changes		
Moving		
Change: church, social circle etc.		
Problems with children		
Feeling trapped – in job, family, finances		
Grief or loss (recent death in the family)		
Illness in the family (spouse/child)		
Personal illness		
Lack of exercise		
Lack of proper nutrition		
Depression		
Negative thinking		
Negative thinking towards spouse		
Mid-life		
Un-met goals, disappointments		
Low self-esteem		
Feeling small/unimportant		
Feeling unloved		
Lack of Self-Awareness		
Thinking it couldn't happen to you		
Thinking your faith alone will protect you		
Being too busy –too much responsibility		
Being overworked/workaholic		
Lack of purpose in life		
Life is boring: settling for in ...		
Lack of close same-sex friendships		
Unresolved childhood issues/painful past		
Unresolved past relationship issues		
sexual abuse		
Compulsive behaviors/tendencies		
A feeling/belief of entitlement		
Feeling sorry for yourself		

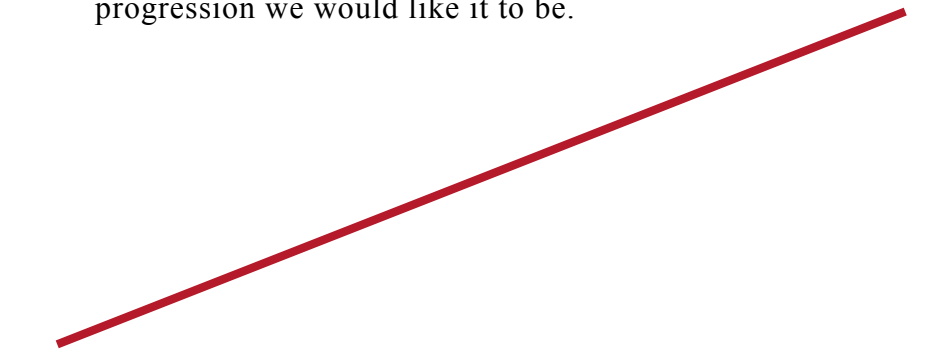
Marriage Vulnerabilities – Unmet Needs	Unfaithful Spouse	Faithful Spouse
Feeling disrespected		
Resentment towards spouse		
Feeling unloved		
Lack of admiration		
Lack of nurturance		
Feeling 2 nd rate “I’m not #1 to my spouse” – either in comparison to other people, or children, job, television, hobby, in-laws, friends etc.		
Spouse has “let themselves go” – doesn’t maintain a pleasant outward appearance		
Lack of communication		
Not able to be honest with spouse about difficult issues		
Dishonesty/habit of lying in the marriage		
Lack of openness		
Feels unheard “my spouse doesn’t listen”		
Usually bad talks spouse		
Finds spouse intellectually unstimulating		
Lack of ability to discuss sex as a couple		
Being sexually dishonest with spouse		
Lack of time together		
Loneliness		
Lack of recreational companionship		
Inadequate parental contribution/responsibility		
Spouse doesn’t work (contribute adequately to finances)		
Lack of affection, physical and other expressions, gifts, thoughtfulness		
Lack of domestic support		
Stopped putting effort into marriage		
Lack of fun		
Lack of laughter		
Dismissing, hurts, pains, successes		
Conflict avoiding- not dealing with feelings or difficult issues		
Parallel lives, not really connecting		
Keeping up appearances, feeling a need to appear as though “we have it together” to church or friends		
Feeling trapped in the marriage		
Feeling controlled		

Cultural/Environment Factors	Unfaithful Spouse	Faithful Spouse
Workplace promotes affairs – “everyone’s doing it, just don’t get caught”		
Friends are having affairs		
Bad association: Friends have low morals		
Other Vulnerability Factors		
Opportunity Factors		
Work with members of the opposite sex		
Business travel		
Work Team-building committee’s (non-work times)		
Clubs, hobbies, sports, church ministries excluding spouse		
Positions of authority		
Military, airline pilots, firemen, police		
Volunteering at children’s events		
Volunteering at children’s school		
Coaching kids events		
Being idolized by people (fame)		
Financial resources		
Men’s/ Women’s night out		
One on one situations with the opposite sex; lunch, dinner, commute etc.		
Flirtatious behavior		
Frequent non-accompanied social events		
Workplace gossip		
Acting as a confidant/counselor to the opposite sex		
Internet – private chat groups, etc.		

Affair Recovery Graph

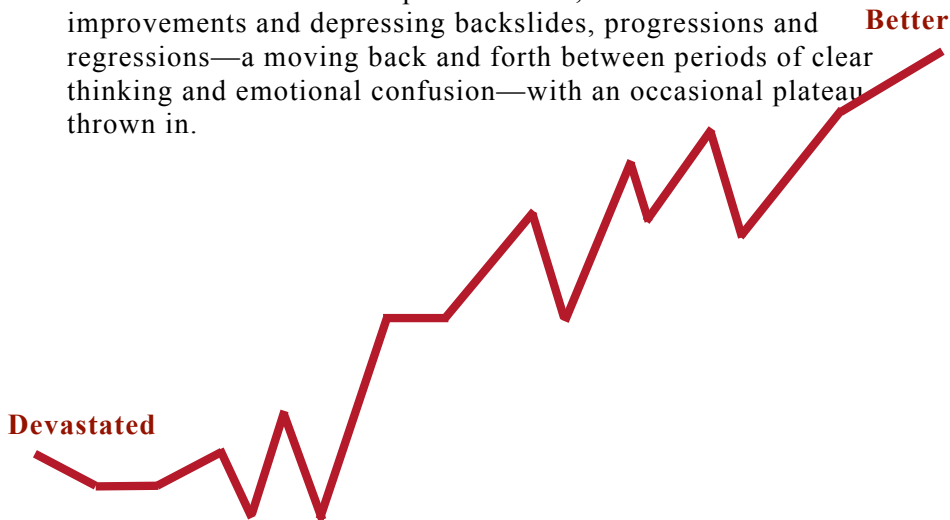
The Way *Beyond* the Emotional Turmoil of Affairs Is *Through*— *NOT Over or Around*

3. The process of healing and growth is not the steady, smooth progression we would like it to be.



Devastated

3. It's more often a series of ups and downs, dramatic improvements and depressing backslides, progressions and regressions—a moving back and forth between periods of clear thinking and emotional confusion—with an occasional plateau thrown in.



3. The moral is persistence will pay off. Allow for down periods, and view each one as a fork in the road. One path leads to further decline, the other to continued change for the better.

(This graph is from "Recovering from Affairs" by James and Peggy Vaughan)

Recommended Books for Understanding and Healing From Affairs

Personal Accounts of Healing From Affairs

My Husband's Affair Became the Best Thing That Ever Happened to Me by Anne Bercht

Beyond Affairs by James and Peggy Vaughan

Avoiding the Greener Grass Syndrome: How to Grow Affair Proof Hedges Around Your Marriage by Nancy Anderson

Unfaithful: Rebuilding Trust After Infidelity by Gary & Mona Shriver

Marriage Undercover: Thriving in a Culture of Quiet Desperation by Bob and Audrey Miesner

How-to Guides for Recovering from Affairs

The Monogamy Myth: A Personal Handbook for Dealing with Affairs by Peggy Vaughan

NOT "Just Friends": Rebuilding Trust and Recovering Your Sanity After Infidelity by Shirley Glass

Torn Asunder: Recovering From Extramarital Affairs by Dave Carder

Torn Asunder Workbook: Recovering From Extramarital Affairs by Dave Carder

Other Helpful Books for Recovering From Affairs

Love Must Be Tough: New Hope for Families in Crisis by James Dobson

Feeling Good: The New Mood Therapy by Dr. David Burns

Love is A Choice: The Definitive Book on Letting Go of Unhealthy Relationships by Minirth, Hemfelt and Meier

Healing for Damaged Emotions by David A. Seamands

Love and Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

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HEALING FROM AFFAIRS WEEKEND
With Brian and Anne Bercht

Our Healing from Affairs Weekend is specifically designed for couples struggling to heal from the trauma of an affair.

Unfortunately many couples never really heal, because they never deal with the affair, why it happened and what will be different in the future to ensure it doesn't happen again.

"Thank you Brian for talking so candidly and frankly about why things like this happen and for giving us a view into your brain. You have helped me to understand my husband and helped to explain how and why this terrible thing could have happened to us." – J.M., Coquitlam, British Columbia

During this weekend you'll learn how to ...

- Talk about painful issues without hurting each other
- Understand why your spouse acts the way they do
- Understand why you act the way you do
- Forgive
- Overcome obsessive thoughts
- Process anger in healthy ways
- Rebuild trust
- Rebuild self-esteem
- Get past the incredible sadness
- Build a renewed relationship based on openness and honesty
- Break negative cycles
- Reestablish love, intimacy, honor and respect
- Discover the number one key to incredible sex
- Ensure an affair never happens in your marriage again

"The only reason I agreed to attend the Healing From Affairs Weekend with my wife was the fact that Brian Bercht had worked in construction, and even then I was pretty skeptical. I'm not into therapy, seminars, counseling or long drawn out touchy feely stuff. Just give me the bottom line. The weekend experience was positive and different from what I expected. One of the most valuable parts was being able to hear from others who'd had affairs and talk about the challenges we face trying to put this whole thing behind us. If you need to heal your marriage after an affair, don't waste your time dragging this whole thing out. Just get to the Healing From Affairs weekend, get the issues dealt with, and reap the rewards of reconnecting with your spouse, being respected and trusted again, and keeping your family together."

- T.A., Construction Contractor, Monroe, Washington

For more information: phone 604.859.9393 or email info@beyondaffairs.com