

After the Affair

Derived from Janis Abrahms Spring's *After the Affair*

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE AFFAIR FOR THE HURT PARTNER

Rate each of the following statements according to how *emotionally/subjectively* real it is for you. "1" is hardly ever and "5" is much of the time. Try not to be cognitive ("*I agree or disagree with the statement.*")

Statement	Rating
Loss of identity: " <i>I no longer know who I am.</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of your sense of specialness: " <i>I thought I meant something to you. Now I realize I'm disposable.</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of self-respect for debasing yourself and forfeiting your basic values to win your partner back: " <i>I'll do anything to keep this relationship together.</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of self-respect for failing to acknowledge that you were wronged: " <i>Why didn't I draw the line?</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of control over mind and body: a) " <i>How do I turn my head off?</i> " b) " <i>How do I stop myself?</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of your fundamental sense of order and justice in the universe: " <i>The world no longer makes sense.</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of religious faith: " <i>Why has God forsaken me?</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of connection with others: " <i>Who can I confide in? Who's there for me?</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5
Loss of sense of purpose – even the will to live: " <i>Sometime when I'm driving at night I think it would be easier to swerve off the road and end this agony.</i> "	1---2---3---4--- 5

COMMON RESPONSES BY THE UNFAITHFUL PARTNER

Rate each of the following statements according to how *emotionally/subjectively* real it is for you. “1” is hardly ever and “5” is much of the time. Try not to be cognitive (“I agree or disagree with the statement.”)

Statement	Rating
Relief: <i>“I’m tired of lying.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Impatience: <i>“I’ve left my lover and told you everything. What more do you want from me?”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Chronic anxiety: <i>“As long as I keep busy, I’ll be okay.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Absence of guilt: <i>“I’m doing what I want to do, and it feels right.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
a) Anger at your partner	1---2---3---4--- 5
b) Euphoria over the affair	1---2---3---4--- 5
c) Core assumptions that justify infidelity (rate the statements in the next section)	1---2---3---4--- 5
Grieving the loss of the lover: <i>“I’ll never get over this person who made me feel so special.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Guilt over the children: <i>“What kind of role model am I?”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Isolation: <i>“No one’s there for me.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Hopelessness: <i>“There’s no way this relationship will ever work.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Paralysis: <i>“I don’t know which way to go.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
Self-disgust: <i>“I have nothing to say in my defense. I feel like a sleaze.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5

COMMON ASSUMPTIONS THAT JUSTIFY INFIDELITY

Rate each of the following statements according to how *emotionally/subjectively* real it is/was for you. “1” is hardly ever and “5” is much of the time. Try not to be cognitive (“I agree or disagree with the statement.”)

Statement	Rating
“My affair is permissible as long as I love the other person.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“My affair is permissible as long as I don’t love the other person.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“What my partner doesn’t know won’t hurt him/her.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“A one-night stand, a fling, doesn’t change our relationship.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“I only have one life to lead and deserve to be as happy as possible. It’s okay to get some of my needs met from my lover, and the rest from my spouse.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“My affair has made me a happier person and therefore a better partner.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“My affair lets me satisfy my needs without breaking up the family. I’m doing it for the kids.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“People aren’t meant to be monogamous.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“I have no impulse control.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“My biological instinct is to be adulterous.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“All men are wolves.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Every couple has its secrets.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“I’m entitled to keep a part of myself hidden and separate from my partner.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Since my partner probably knows about my affair but isn’t confronting me, it must be okay, as long as I don’t flaunt it.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“I shouldn’t have to sacrifice what I need to make my partner feel secure or happy.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“I never promised to be perfect.”	1---2---3---4--- 5
“If I commit myself fully to any person, I’m bound to get hurt.”	1---2---3---4--- 5

EXPECTATIONS THE UNFAITHFUL PARTNER MAY HAVE ABOUT HIS/HER MARRIAGE

Rate each of the following statements according to how *emotionally/subjectively* it has been real for you in the past. “1” is hardly ever and “5” is many times. Try not to be cognitive (“*I agree or disagree with the statement.*”)

Statement	Rating
<i>“My partner and I should feel a deep, unspoken bond at all times.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“My partner should be able to anticipate my needs.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“I shouldn’t have to work for love.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“I shouldn’t have to work to be trusted.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“I deserve to be loved.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“The chemistry is either right or wrong.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“My partner should love me unconditionally.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“My partner should be emotionally available to me whenever I need him/her.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“Love is a feeling that can’t be forced / manufactured. It exists or it doesn’t.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“A good marriage is free of conflict.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“If I’m not happy in my relationship, it’s my partner’s fault.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“We shouldn’t have to work at feeling sexual desire for each other, it should come naturally or not at all.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
<i>“When passion dies, so does the relationship.”</i>	1---2---3---4--- 5
You want your partner to be your friend, companion, protector, playmate, mentor, and lover – and, of course, to assume the proper role automatically and graciously, according to your needs of the moment.	1---2---3---4--- 5
You expect your partner to do exactly what you want to do, at the moment you want to do it, and to be happily occupied when you’re busy.	1---2---3---4--- 5
You expect your partner to enhance you in ways that take you beyond who you are – making you feel wiser, more loving, more competent, but never inferior.	1---2---3---4--- 5

<p>You want your partner to merge with you, be you, but not to suffocate you with enthusiasm or dependence and, certainly, never to bore you.</p>	<p>1---2---3---4--- 5</p>
<p>You expect your partner to know your needs and communicate them with complete clarity, even when you're being unreasonable.</p>	<p>1---2---3---4--- 5</p>
<p>You expect your partner to forgive your human limitations, even as you reject his/her imperfections.</p>	<p>1---2---3---4--- 5</p>

REVIEWING YOUR OPTIONS: “Should I Stay or Leave?”

Ten Common Concerns After the Affair

Each of you rate the following statements according to how *emotionally/subjectively* real it is for you personally. “1” is hardly ever and “5” is strong identification.

Statement	His Rating	Her Rating
“Once there’s been so much damage, can we ever get back together?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Now that you’ve been unfaithful, how can I trust you won’t stray again?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Can both of us change in ways that matter? Are we basically incompatible?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Yes, you’re making some changes to save our relationship, but are they permanent or sincere?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Do you want me, or just the package (financial security, an intact home, shared parenting)?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Are my reasons for staying good enough?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Should we stay together for the children?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Doing what you did, you couldn’t possibly love me, so what’s the point of going on?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Isn’t it wrong for me to be too affections, to spend too much time with you, before I’m positive I want to recommit?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5
“Won’t I be able to make a better decision about my lover if my lover and I spend more time together?”	1---2---3---4--- 5	1---2---3---4--- 5