

## Restoring Trust

Modified from *After the Affair*, by Abrams-Springs

Below is a list of low-and high-cost, trust-enhancing behaviors that you may want from your partner. Some of them your partner may already do, others they may rarely or never do. Using these behaviors as a starting point, make your own list of what you want from your partner, and write them in the center column of the Trust-Enhancing Chart on the next page.

### Low Cost Behaviors (p.149)

(Low Cost Behaviors continued)

“Provide me with an accurate itinerary when you travel.”	“Read and discuss a book with me about making our relationship better.”
“Spend more time in foreplay – kissing and touching.”	“Ask me how I feel; don’t interpret my behavior or assume you know how I feel.”
“Tell me when you run into or hear from your lover.”	“Hold me and show understanding when I’m upset; don’t give up on me.”
“Tell me if you’re planning to contact your lover.”	“Make weekend plans for us.”
“Show me what pleases you sexually.”	“Tell me when you feel I’ve let you down.”
“Tell me when you feel proud of me, and why.”	“Tell me when you feel insecure about us, rather than assume I’m deceiving you.”
“Call me during the day.”	“Don’t use humor or sarcasm to make your point.”
“Tell me how you feel – share your intimate thoughts with me.”	<b>High Cost Behaviors</b>
“Tell me when you like the way I look.”	“Find another job.”
“Tell me when you feel happy or more optimistic about our future together.”	“Don’t contact or associate with your lover’s circle of friends or relatives.”
“Come home from work in time to have dinner with the family.”	“Quit the club or association to which your lover belongs.”
“Talk to me directly about your feelings. Don’t clam up and withdraw or attack me.”	“Transfer some of your assets into my name.” “Put some of your money into a joint account.”
“Limit your overnight travel.”	“Move to another town with me.”
“Tell me what upset / pleased you during the day.”	“Register the house in my name.”
“Plan time to be alone with me.”	“Go on a romantic vacation with me.”
“Focus on what I’m saying, and don’t be distracted when we talk.”	“Answer all my questions about the lover in front of a therapist.”
“Buy new furniture for the bedroom (where you brought your lover).”	“Show me your monthly bank statements, credit card statements, and phone bills.”
“Work on letting your anger go and getting back on track with me.”	“Get into therapy and discuss starting a family with me.”
“Show me affection that doesn’t lead to sex.”	“Do whatever it take to give up your substance abuse.”

In putting together your own wish lists, be sure to:

- Be as positive and specific as possible
- Respect your partner’s requests
- Respond to different requests on different days
- Put your lists in a visible place
- Check the date on your Trust-Enhancing Chart each time your partner follows through.
- Do what your partner requests, whether or not you feel hopeful about the future
- Add new requests to your list and discuss them as you learn more about yourself and about what you need to feel loved and secure.



## **Restoring / Healing Through the Five Love Languages**

### **Words of Affirmation**

Introduce me as your wife / husband  
Let me express myself without agreeing or punishing  
Let me know about your daily schedule  
Tell me about when you feel proud of me and why  
Tell me how you feel, your intimate thoughts  
Tell me when you like the way I look.  
Tell me when you feel optimistic about us  
Talk directly to me about your feelings – don't clam up  
Compliment me in front of others  
Tell me I'm doing a good job.  
Tell me something you appreciate about me.  
Say you're sorry.  
Picture something positive about our future together.

### **Quality Time**

Come home for dinner together  
Plan time to be alone with me  
Focus on what I'm saying – rather than being distracted when I talk  
Read a relationship book with me  
Make weekend plans with me  
Be protective of our time together

### **Giving / Receiving Gifts**

Flowers  
Small surprise gifts  
Buy me my favorite magazine

### **Acts of Service**

Groom yourself in preparing for time together  
Do one of my regular household chores  
Do tasks around the home

### **Nurturing Touch**

Spend more with being affectionate  
Tell me more about what pleases you sexually  
Show me affection that doesn't lead to sex  
Hold me when I'm upset  
Give me a back rub  
Give me a foot massage  
Comb my hair

## Restoring Trust for Couples

Patrick Carnes offers the following advice in *Facing the Shadow*:

Give it a lot of time. Most recovering people say this is the most difficult, but also the most important, thing they learned. Phrases like patience, go slow, and a day at a time were very useful. This reflects the old Al-Anon adage, nothing major the first year.

Be willing to lose it in order to get it. Both partners must resolve not to give up parts of themselves in order to keep the other from leaving. If you can be fully who you are and your partner does not leave, you have something truly valuable. Fidelity to self is the ultimate act of faithfulness to the other.

Restore self first. If you do the repair work that you yourself need, your perceptions of the relationship will change dramatically. Most people's unhappiness in their relationship is about themselves and not about their partners. You have to trust yourself before you can trust the other.

Accept the illness in the other. Start by acknowledging at the deepest level of yourself that you both are powerless and fully involved in the illness. This will be as difficult for your partner as it will be for you.

Admit mistakes promptly. Avoid blame. Work to be honest and accurate, not to prove who is right. Self-righteousness inevitably kills intimacy.

Share spirituality. Explore ways to be spiritual together. You have to find the meaning in your suffering, and doing so together can dramatically shift your perspective as a couple.

Use the amends steps. Steps Eight and Nine of the Twelve Steps teach us to make amends by expressing regret for what we have done and doing something to make up for it. Use this approach as a model for daily living. Reverse the blame dynamic by taking responsibility for pain you have inflicted on the other. Do what you can to make up for it.

Remember, it's never going to be perfect. Just as the ultimate partner does not exist, neither does the ultimate relationship. Accepting human limits in ourselves helps us in being generous with our loved ones.

Be with other recovering couples. Attend open meetings together. Join fellowships of couples such as Recovering Couples Anonymous. Go on couple's retreats and workshops. Support other couples and socialize with them.

Have fun together. All work (on recovery) with no play makes for intensity, not intimacy. Closeness comes from shared common experiences – especially the fun ones. Remember, play is, in its own way, an act of trust.