

Affair- Proof Your Marriage



Here's how to safeguard what's most important.

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Affair- Proofing Your Marriage

When was the last time you checked for hazards?

by Janine Petry

After the birth of our first child, my husband and I went through a process that all new parents go through: “child-proofing” our home. Entrusted with a precious little life that we wanted to protect, our minds were constantly scanning and evaluating our environment for everything and anything that could potentially cause harm to our little bundle.

Perceived hazards were dealt with quickly and effectively. While things like uncovered outlets, cleaning supplies, and plastic bags were no threat to Steve and I, they could have been matters of life and death for our child. So we dutifully covered and rearranged and disposed of all risks. And there’s no length we wouldn’t have gone to in order to ensure our little one’s safety and health.

When it comes to the life and health of our loved ones, I’m certain we all feel the same way. Or do we? While I daily consider the health and safety of my children and do everything in my power to protect them, I can’t recall taking the same precautions for another one of God’s precious gifts to me: *my husband*.

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So I'll admit it: I haven't been as proactive in caring for my husband's life—mentally, physically, spiritually, or emotionally. While I've made sure my home is child-proof, I haven't checked to see if my marriage is “affair-proof.” While he is a mature adult, as his wife and a fellow believer, I'm also his “keeper.” When it comes to his life and health, as well as that of our marriage and family, it's worth taking the time to scan and eliminate potential hazards and risks before the worst happens.

As you seek to be a good steward of the marriage you've been entrusted with, this resource will help guide you. In it you'll find the biblical wisdom and practical insights you're looking for, from authors who understand what you need. You'll also find plenty of other resources packed inside for you to go even farther in affair-proofing. And you'll be glad you took the time to safeguard your marriage—for years to come.

Blessings,

Janine Petry
Contributing Editor, Gifted For Leadership
Christianity Today International

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THE HEART OF THE ISSUE

Why Affairs Happen

And what you need to know about prevention and recovery.

by Cindy Crosby

As many as 65 percent of men and 55 percent of women will have an extramarital affair by the time they are forty, according to the *Journal of Psychology and Christianity*. A *Christianity Today* survey found that 23 percent of the 300 pastors who responded admitted to sexually inappropriate behavior with someone other than their wives while in the ministry.

In Dave Carder's and Duncan Jaenicke's book, *Torn Asunder: Recovering from Extramarital Affairs* (Moody), Carder notes that adultery and divorce rates in the evangelical population are nearly the same as the general population in the United States. Being a Christian does not lessen our chances of having an affair. Through his counseling experiences, however, Carder has found several "shared threads" woven throughout the experiences of married couples who become tangled in an affair. These patterns can serve as warning signals that married couples should be alert to.

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Forewarned is forearmed. So Marriage Partnership talked to Dave Carder about what to do whether you are contemplating an affair, have experienced an affair, or even if you never expect an affair to impact your own marriage.

What types of affairs do Christians tend to fall into?

All types. There's the "Class One" affair, which is the one-night stand. Then, there is the "Class Two" affair, which is a love relationship that starts as a friendship and grows primarily because of a deficit in the marriage. These often have a powerful emotional connection and involve a shared task or orientation, such as a common ministry or a shared passion. And there is the "Class Three" affair, which involves sexual addiction. Other addictions often go along with it, and many times there is a history of molestation or sexual activity on the part of the person before puberty.

What about the classic "mid-life crisis" people joke about?

We're finding that these types of affairs are happening when men and women are in their late thirties and forties. There's a pattern to them. Usually they happen in a marriage where there is little spousal interaction. Maybe the couple does everything as a family. When the children in the family grow older, the spouses become vulnerable.

Tell us more about emotional affairs. If there's no sex, just the emotional attachment, is it as serious as a sexual affair?

An emotional affair without sex occurs when two parties share their feelings for each other. These affairs are supercharged with emotion. The sound of her voice, the style of his e-mail—they are all loaded. But if you confront them, they'll insist they've done nothing wrong. These secret emotional affairs are powerful influences in the individuals' lives. They often live in a fantasy world, where they imagine what the other party is doing, even while appearing to watch sports on TV or doing some other task.

These individuals rob their marriages of emotional energy. They will save topics of conversation to talk over with the people they are having the emotional affair with, rather than their spouses. They also struggle with feelings of betrayal when they have sex with their spouse. But a lot of these emotional affairs remain non-sexual. They are the hardest affairs to recover from, because there is often no guilt.

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Should you always tell your spouse if you've had an affair?

Almost always. Remember, marriage is a covenant and you transgressed it. The other party has a right to know. The only exception to this is if there is a history of violence on the part of the spouse: if she has a gun or if he has been abusive when he drinks. In this case, you will need a professional to help you know what to disclose.

The same goes for emotional affairs?

I still think you need to tell. Anything that is a secret for you can be enjoyed in private, and this is what we are trying to do away with. And it is very important that there is absolutely no contact between the two people who have had the emotional affair. It is very difficult to break them off.

What kind of things should married couples be aware of that can lead to an affair?

The fastest growing rate of infidelity is among young married women. Many of them have been molested or are the adult children of divorce. They are looking for marriage to make up a deficit that comes from their childhood. "Intimacy deficits" stem from your family of origin. They may be from a lack of touching or hugging, from a need for a lot of admiration, affirmation, and adoration, or from another vacuum that a spouse wants satisfied. Everybody has deficits.

How does a cheating spouse handle his or her emotions?

He or she is usually overwhelmed with guilt. They are sure that revealing the affair to their spouse will absolutely kill him or her. And they don't want to ruin the image of family they've built.

How can you tell if someone is tempting you to cheat?

If someone tells you things that you know are much better than they really are about yourself, then run. If someone admires you at a level beyond what you know to be true, it can get dangerous.

What are some other risky situations?

If a couple doesn't share a ministry, one spouse may get into a ministry with another individual and boom! They're in trouble. Or perhaps one spouse has a hobby that they share with someone of the opposite sex.

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Think about this: What don't I have in my marriage that I have the urgent need to share with someone?

How difficult is it to trust your spouse after an affair?

Trust is the big question. You have to forgive your spouse before you can trust him or her again. The repentant spouse must be careful to keep his or her word. No matter how small or unimportant a promise may seem, he or she can't afford to make promises that won't be kept anymore.

What about sex?

First you have to rebuild non-sexual touch. If you don't have good touch, you don't have anything special. It's also important to have the cheating spouse cleared by a physician before you have sex again. There should be no unprotected sex between you until he or she is checked for sexually transmitted diseases.

If there wasn't much sex in the marriage before, it will be difficult to initiate sexual activity after the affair. But in many cases, there is often a lot of sex between the spouses after an affair. Women will think, "I'll show my husband that I'm better than this other woman."

A husband might wonder, "Am I as good as the person whom she was with?" Then, the wronged spouse becomes disgusted again, and anger and withdrawal follow. Communication is key here. This is a topic you will have to talk about.

How does anger factor into all this?

It's different for everyone. If the wife has an affair, the guy's rage is often never resolved. It just doesn't take much to bring the affair back to his mind. Women seem to be able to let go of their anger more easily.

Anger can play a positive role. I encourage the wives I counsel who have been cheated on to try to find and enlarge pictures of the husband and the other woman, lay the pictures on a bed, then beat the snot out of them. I tell her not to stop beating until she is sobbing and exhausted. If she doesn't get angry about the affair, the anger will eventually leak out all over the relationship in a variety of ways.

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Um, that sounds a bit extreme ...

When Jesus was in the garden before the crucifixion, he was bloody, teary, messy, and sweaty. He was working through emotional upheaval. Betrayal and abandonment are two of the most painful emotions known to man.

What do you tell the kids?

Children are your first priority here. Both spouses need to sit down together with the child or the children, and both need to take responsibility for whatever you have contributed to the experience—not to the affair, necessarily, but for the tension that exists in the family environment.

Does age impact this?

If your children are under eight years old, they've already made up their own story. They are egocentric and will think they have caused the tension. If your children are teenagers, the kids probably already suspect the affair. Tell them the whole story: Dad had a girlfriend; Mom got involved with someone at work. Sharing the truth allows them to process the issue with Mom and Dad instead of guessing and keeps them from expending emotional energy checking on how well Mom and Dad are doing.

That's a lot of honesty.

The issues for your kids are, "Will Mom and Dad make it? Will we stay together as a family?" Do not lie. If you are not sure your marriage can be saved, tell them to pray; tell them you are seeing a counselor. Then, give lots and lots of touching and hugging and eye contact to your child. They need that reassurance.

Whom else should we tell?

Each person going through recovery from an affair needs a same-sex friend. The key here is that the person is available twenty-four/seven. You need to be able to talk with them anytime. Don't tough it out on your own. If you do, you'll prolong the recovery process, and spend a lot more money on your therapist. Save that money for a vacation.

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After an affair, how long can it take for a couple to put their marriage back together?

Think about adolescence, when you put your identity together. It took a long time—maybe six or seven years. This is the same kind of process of shaping your identities, to redo and reform them. Two years is a good point of reference to use. And I don't mean that you will be in crisis for the whole time; the emotions will still be near the surface. Healing takes time, whether you are wounded physically or emotionally.

If a couple decides to find a therapist or counselor to help, what should they look for?

Look for someone who will give you structure and hold you on course. A counselor should give you follow-up work to complete, things to work on every day. You need to find a counselor who will help you work on the marriage, not just the affair. Pastors are actually quite good at providing structure and helping couples work through this.

Cindy Crosby is the author of *Waiting for Morning: Hearing God's Voice in the Darkness* (Baker Book House). *This article first appeared in the Spring 2001 issue of* MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

Thought Provokers

- *Dave Carder says, “‘Intimacy deficits’ stem from your family of origin. They may be from a lack of touching or hugging, from a need for a lot of admiration, affirmation, and adoration, or from another vacuum that a spouse wants satisfied. Everybody has deficits.” What deficits do you have and how do they affect your marriage? What can you do to protect your marriage in light of these?*
- *How have you been tempted to be unfaithful to your spouse? What safeguards do you have in place to help you resist temptations?*





PRACTICALLY SPEAKING

Strategies to Keep From Falling

Start taking precautions to keep sexual immorality from happening to you.

by Randy Alcorn

For every well-known Christian television personality or author whose impropriety is widely publicized, there are any number of lesser-known pastors, Bible teachers, leaders, and para-church workers who quietly resign or are fired for sexual immorality. Most of us can name several. Even those of us who haven't fallen know how fierce is the struggle with temptation.

Furthermore, ministry brings with it serious built-in hazards, moral land mines that can destroy us, our families, and our churches. Among them: our position of influence and that strange blend of ego-feeding flattery and debilitating criticism, which can fill us with either pride or despair. As a result, our perspective can be warped, our resistance to temptation diminished. In addition, our endless tasks and the consequent disorienting fatigue can make us oblivious to what's really happening to us.

I recall with embarrassment my naiveté as a young pastor. Every time I heard the stories of Christian leaders falling into sexual sin,





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I thought, *It could never happen to me*. What level of pride is required to believe that sexual sin could overtake Samson, David (“a man after God’s own heart”), Solomon, and a host of modern Christian leaders, but not *me*? Paul’s warning in 1 Corinthians 10 deserves a prominent place on our dashboards, desks, or Day-Timers: “If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall.”

Fortunately, I wised up. The person who believes he will never be burglarized leaves his doors and windows open, and cash on the top of his dresser. Likewise, the one who thinks the danger isn’t real invariably takes risks that wind up proving costly. I now live with the frightening but powerfully motivating knowledge that I *could* commit sexual immorality. I started taking precautions to keep it from happening to me.

Practical Guidelines for Sexual Purity

Monitoring my spiritual pulse. Often those who fall into sexual sin can point back to lapses in their practices of meditation, worship, prayer, and the healthy self-examination such disciplines foster. All of us know this, but in the busyness of giving out, we easily can neglect the replenishing of our spiritual reservoirs.

I periodically take overnight retreats by myself or with my wife. In times of greater need I’ve been away a week, usually in a cabin on the Oregon coast. This is not a vacation but a time in which the lack of immediate demands and the absence of noise give clarity to the still, small voice of God that is too easily drowned in the busyness of my daily life.

Guarding my marriage. I find I must regularly evaluate my relationship with my wife. In particular, I watch for the red flags of discontentment, poor communication, and poor sexual relationship. We try to spend regular, uninterrupted time together to renew our spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and physical closeness.

Many Christian leaders move so freely and deeply in the world of great spiritual truths and activities that unless they take pains to communicate daily, their spouses get left out. This development of two separate worlds leads to two separate lives and is often the first step toward an adulterous affair with “someone who understands me and

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my world.” Communication is key because every adultery begins with a deception, and most deceptions begin with seemingly innocent secrets, things “she doesn’t need to know.”

Taking precautions. One pastor found his thoughts were continually drawn to a co-worker, more so than to his own wife. After months of rationalizing, he finally admitted to himself that he was looking for reasons to spend time with her. Then his rule of thumb became: I will meet with her only when necessary, only as long as necessary, only at the office, and with others present as much as possible. In time, his relationship with her returned to its original, healthy, coworker status.

The questions with which I check myself: *Do I look forward in a special way to my appointments with this person? Would I rather see her than my wife? Do I seek to meet with her away from my office in a more casual environment? Do I prefer that my co-workers not know I’m meeting with her again?* An affirmative answer to any of these questions is, for me, a warning light.

Dealing with the subtle signs of sexual attraction. There’s a mystique about ministry that some women find attractive. Their attitude toward the pastor can border on infatuation. It’s flattering for the pastor, who perhaps is nursing fresh wounds from the last board meeting, to receive attention from an attractive woman who obviously admires him and hangs on his every word. (The deacons *jumped* on his every word.)

Lust isn’t just unbridled passion. Even when it’s “bridled” it may lead us down a path that our conscience could not have condoned had we experienced it in a more obvious, wanton way. Thus, our enemies are not only lascivious thoughts of sex but “innocuous” feelings of infatuation as well.

Backing off early. When meeting a woman for our third counseling appointment, I became aware that she was interested in me personally. What was more frightening was that I realized I subconsciously had sensed this before but had enjoyed her attraction too much to address the problem. Though I wasn’t *yet* emotionally involved or giving her inappropriate attention, I wasn’t deflecting hers toward me, either, and was thereby inviting it.

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I felt tempted to dismiss the matter as unimportant, “knowing” I would never get involved with her. Fortunately, when God prompted me, I knew I was no longer the right person to meet with her. I made other counseling arrangements for her.

Clearing cloudy thoughts. Often we justify our flirtations with logical, even spiritual, rationalizations. One pastor didn’t tell his wife about his frequent meetings with a particular woman on the grounds he shouldn’t violate confidentiality, even to his wife. Besides, he sensed his wife would be jealous (without good reason, of course), so why upset her? Under the cloak of professionalism and sensitivity to his wife, he proceeded to meet with this woman secretly. The result was predictable.

Another pastor had been struggling with lustful thoughts toward a college girl in his church. Rather than dealing with his struggles alone with the Lord, with a mature brother, or with his wife, he took the girl out to lunch to talk with *her*. Citing the biblical mandate to confess our sins and make things right with the person we’ve wronged, he told her, “I’ve been having lustful thoughts about you, and I felt I needed to confess them to you.” Embarrassed but flattered, the girl began to entertain her own thoughts toward him, and finally they became sexually involved. All this came from what the pastor told himself was a spiritual and obedient decision to meet with the girl. To misuse Scripture in this way and violate rules of wisdom and common sense shows how cloudy and undependable our thinking can become.

Holding myself accountable. Perhaps nowhere is more said and less done than in the area of accountability. From talking with Christian leaders, I’ve come to understand that the more prominent they become, the more they need accountability and the less they get it. As a church grows, often the pastors come to know many people but on a shallower level, and those around them think, *Who am I to ask him if this is a wise choice he’s making?*

Many pastors in small churches also feel isolated, and even those in large churches with multiple staff members are usually Lone Rangers (without a Tonto) when it comes to facing their moral struggles. In a church with several pastors, one tried to discuss “something personal” three weeks in a row at staff meeting, but each time he was preempted because of a busy agenda. The fourth week his fellow pastors listened — three days *after* he had committed adultery.

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Guarding my mind. A battering ram may hit a fortress gate a thousand times, and no one time seems to have an effect, yet finally the gate caves in. Likewise, immorality is the cumulative product of small mental indulgences and minuscule compromises, the immediate consequences of which were, at the time, indiscernible.

Our thoughts are the fabric with which we weave our character and destiny. No, we can't avoid all sexual stimuli, but in Martin Luther's terms, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from making a nest in your hair." I like to put it another way: "If you're on a diet, don't go into a doughnut shop." For me this means such practical things as staying away from the magazine racks, video stores, advertisements, programs, images, people, and places that tempt me to lust.

Regularly rehearsing the consequences. I met with a man who had been a leader in a Christian organization until he fell into immorality. I asked him, "What could have been done to prevent this?" He paused for only a moment, then said with haunting pain and precision, "If only I had really known, really thought through, what it would cost me and my family and my Lord, I honestly believe I never would have done it."

In the wake of several Christian leaders' falling into immorality, a co-pastor and I developed a list of specific consequences that would result from our immorality. The list was devastating, and to us it spoke more powerfully than any sermon or article on the subject. Periodically, especially when traveling or in a time of weakness, we read through the list. In a tangible and personal way, it brings home God's inviolate law of choice and consequence, cutting through the fog of rationalization and filling our hearts with the healthy, motivating fear of God. Consider the gravity of these items on our list:

- Grieving the Lord who redeemed me.
- One day having to look Jesus, the Righteous Judge, in the face and give an account of my actions.
- Inflicting untold hurt on Nanci, my best friend and loyal wife.
- Losing Nanci's respect and trust.
- Hurting my beloved daughters, Karina and Angie.

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- Destroying my example and credibility with my children, and nullifying both present and future efforts to teach them to obey God (“Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?”).
- Creating a form of guilt awfully hard to shake. Even though God would forgive me, would I forgive myself?
- Wasting years of ministry training and experience for a long time, maybe permanently.
- Heaping judgment and endless difficulty on the person with whom I committed adultery.
- Possibly bearing the physical consequences of such diseases as gonorrhea, syphilis, chlamydia, herpes, and AIDS; perhaps infecting Nancy or, in the case of AIDS, even causing her death.
- Possibly causing pregnancy, with the personal and financial implications, including a lifelong reminder of my sin.
- Bringing shame and hurt to these fellow pastors and elders: (list names)
- Invoking shame and life-long embarrassment upon myself.

Winning the Battle

In J.R.R. Tolkien’s book *The Hobbit*, there was no one seemingly more invincible than Smaug, the mighty dragon. But then that unlikely hero, Bilbo Baggins, found one small weak spot in Smaug’s underbelly. That information, in the hands of a skilled marksman, was all it took to seal the doom of the presumptuous dragon. Unaware of his weakness and underestimating his opponents, Smaug failed to protect himself. An arrow pierced his heart, and the dragon was felled.

An exciting story with a happy ending. But when it’s a Christian leader felled, the ending is not so happy. It’s tragic. The Evil One knows only too well the weak spots of the most mighty Christian warriors, not to mention the rest of us. He isn’t one to waste his arrows, bouncing them harmlessly off the strongest plates of our spiritual armor. His aim is deadly, and it is at our points of greatest vulnerability that he will most certainly attack.

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We are in battle — a battle far more fierce and strategic than any Alexander, Hannibal, or Napoleon ever fought. We must realize that no one prepares for a battle of which he is unaware, and no one wins a battle for which he doesn't prepare.

As we more and more hear of Christian leaders succumbing to immorality, we must not say merely, “There, but for the grace of God, I might have gone,” but rather, “There, but for the grace of God—and but for my alertness and diligence in the spiritual battle—I may still *yet* go.”

Randy Alcorn is the founder and director of Eternal Perspective Ministries and author of Heaven (Tyndale) and Deception (Multnomah/RandomHouse). This article first appeared in Sins of the Body, a LEADERSHIPBOOKS, 1989.

Thought Provokers

- *The author writes about some of the built-in hazards associated with leadership positions: “Among them: our position of influence and that strange blend of ego-feeding flattery and debilitating criticism, which can fill us with either pride or despair. As a result, our perspective can be warped, our resistance to temptation diminished. In addition, our endless tasks and the consequent disorienting fatigue can make us oblivious to what’s really happening to us.” How has this been true for you as a leader? How can you protect against these hazards? Be specific.*
- *Do you live with the “frightening but powerfully motivating knowledge” that you could commit sexual immorality? What precautions has it motivated you to take?*
- *What are the possible consequences of sexual immorality in your life, relationships, and leadership roles? How can this list help you face temptations?*





GETTING DEEPER

Reality Check

Don't let false assumptions drag your marriage down. Get a fresh start with these six truths.

by Gary Chapman

If you're feeling dissatisfied with the love in your marriage, give your life a reality check. It could be you've been buying into these four common myths:

1. *My state of mind is determined by my environment.*
2. *People can't change.*
3. *When you're in a bad marriage, you'll either have to resign yourself to a life of misery or get out.*
4. *Some situations are hopeless.*

If you read these four statements with a niggling sense that, yes, these falsehoods have crept into your own thinking, get ready to clear your mind with reality.

Exposing Four Myths

First, your environment certainly affects who you are, but it does not control you. If you believe myth #1, you've got a victim mentality.





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The second myth fails to reckon with the reality of human freedom. Your local library is filled with accounts of people who've made radical changes. Consider Charles Colson, the Watergate criminal who later began an international agency to offer prisoners spiritual help. People can and do change—sometimes dramatically.

As for the third myth, why limit your horizons to two devastating alternatives? I've seen couples come to counseling, convinced they'll end up divorced, only to amaze themselves and each other by building love between them again. You're only a prisoner by your own choice; you can dismantle a prison without leaving your spouse.

The fourth myth flies in the face of God's truth, which insists that there is always hope because he is all-powerful.

It's time to throw out the myths and get ready to accept these six positive realities.

Reality 1: I am responsible for my own attitude.

Trouble is inevitable, but misery is optional. Sometimes when two people are in a troubled marriage, one curses while the other prays. The difference is attitude.

Focus on how terrible the situation is and it'll get worse. Focus on one positive thing and another will appear. In the darkest night of a troubled marriage, a light always flickers. Zero in on that light and it will eventually flood the room.

Wendy's husband hasn't had a full-time job in three years—not that she's whining about it. “Now that we can't afford cable TV, we've done a lot more talking at night,” she says. “We've learned a lot. It's amazing how many things we can do without what everybody else thinks they have to have. It's been a challenge, but we're making the most of it.”

Three weeks after I met Wendy, I encountered Lisa, whose husband had been out of work for ten months. Lisa had been frantic with worry the whole time and had reached a point of mental and physical exhaustion. She was certain they'd lose everything. She moaned about having to drop cable TV and not being able to have a second car. She lived on the edge of despair.

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Similar problems, completely different attitudes.

A “positive mental attitude” might sound like pop psychology, but the injunction to pursue “the bright side” is as old as Paul’s letter to the Philippians: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things” (Phil. 4:6-8).

Reality 2: Attitudes affect actions.

You may not be able to control your environment (sickness, irresponsible or addicted spouse, teen on drugs, an abusive or absent parent), but you choose what you’ll do within your environment. Your attitude will greatly influence your behavior. If you’ve got a pessimistic, defeatist attitude it’ll be expressed in negative words and behavior.

Wendy *built* her marriage during the stressful years of her husband’s unemployment. She affirmed him when he got discouraged and assured him they’d make it until he got a full-time job. They both got part-time jobs. She came up with an idea to collect aluminum cans so they’d have “fun” money. They got so creative—from picking up pop cans on their evening walk to collecting regularly from local businesses and restaurants—that soon they were able to eat out and go to the movies every week. Wendy’s positive attitude led to positive action.

Meanwhile, Lisa criticized her husband for ten months, telling all her friends—while her husband could hear her—how disappointed she was in him. She refused to work herself, and she spent most of her time sleeping or watching TV. No wonder their marriage was in serious trouble. Her negative attitudes and actions compounded the original problem.

Reality 3: I can’t change others, but I can influence others.

It’s widely assumed that you can’t change your spouse. But don’t overlook the less obvious truth: that you still have great influence over him or her. Because we’re relational creatures, we’re influenced

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through our relationships. I don't mean manipulation. That never works, because the moment your spouse realizes you're trying to exert control, there'll be rebellion. Nobody wants to be controlled.

But all married couples influence each other every day. When a guy comes home, kisses his wife and says, "I missed you today," he's influencing her in a positive way. But when a guy comes home and walks straight to his computer room without acknowledging his wife's presence, he's influencing her negatively. A woman would respond differently to those two different approaches.

This radical reality can bring about amazing changes in a spouse when one partner is willing to choose a positive attitude that leads to positive actions. One woman told me, "I can't believe what's happened to my husband. I never dreamed he could be so loving and kind."

Reality 4: My actions are not controlled by my emotions.

Pop psychology pushes the myths that "you are what you feel" and that authentic living is being "true to your feelings." It's a short leap from that kind of thinking to "If I don't love my spouse, I might as well get out. It would be hypocritical to stay married."

People are more than their emotions. Human beings respond to life in four ways: with thoughts, feelings, desires and actions.

Thoughts interpret experience. You see dirty dishes in the sink at 10:30 p.m. and interpret that your wife is lazy. You see and hear your husband mowing the grass and interpret that he is a responsible individual.

Emotions accompany thoughts. If you think your wife is lazy, you might feel disappointment, anger or frustration. If you think your husband is responsible, you might feel grateful, encouraged or happy.

Your desires respond to your thoughts and feelings. Those dirty dishes may create a desire to give your wife a lecture. Seeing your husband hard at work on the lawn may give you a desire to take him lemonade or to express your thanks when he's done.

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Either way, eventually you take action. If you let your negative emotions and desires control your actions, you'll make the situation worse with a negative action—and that stimulates a negative response in your spouse.

But you've got a brain. You can reason, "What's the best thing to do?" How about washing the dishes yourself and saying, "I love you. I didn't want you to have to face those dishes in the morning"? How about handing your husband a glass of lemonade with a word of thanks instead of "It's about time you mowed that jungle!"

Ultimately, your actions are far more important than your emotions. In fact, your actions will affect your emotions. If you're depressed and a friend calls to ask you out for a root beer float, you could deny your desire to mope and instead choose an action that will get you out where you can experience other, more positive emotions. Don't buy the myth that your emotions dictate your actions. You're in charge of what you do, and positive actions hold the potential to bring healing to your relationship.

Reality 5: Admitting my imperfections doesn't mean I'm a failure.

You know what I hear from most couples when they come in for counseling? He says, "She's critical of my job. She puts me down in front of the kids." She offers, "He's married to his job and has no time for me. He expects me to be a slave." Each points a finger at what the other has done to make the marriage miserable. Over the years, their blame habit has built up a stone wall between them, a monument to self-centered living and a barrier to marital intimacy.

The wall can be demolished, but it requires both partners to admit that they've failed each other. Many times, one spouse is more at fault than the other, but neither is perfect. Your spouse knows you've failed, and you know it. Acknowledging your imperfections is simply admitting you're human.

Then get free. Asking for forgiveness of past failures is one of the most liberating of all human experiences. Even if you're the only one acknowledging your imperfection, you begin to tear down that wall. Hang in there. If you've hurt your spouse deeply, he or she may

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question the sincerity of your plea for forgiveness. He or she may not express forgiveness at first, but you've done the best thing you can do with a failure of the past and you've planted the idea that the future is going to be different.

Admitting your past actions doesn't mean you're accepting all the responsibility for your troubled marriage. It means you're no longer using your spouse's failures as an excuse for your own. You're taking responsibility for your own actions and you're paving the road of hope for a new future.

Reality 6: Love is the most powerful weapon for good.

French novelist Victor Hugo wrote, "The supreme happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved." Sigmund Freud said, "Love is the first requirement of mental health." Everyone agrees that love holds a central place in our search for meaning. But somehow we've ended up focusing more on receiving love than on giving it.

Folks who come to me for counseling say things like, "If she'd just be a little more affectionate, then I could be more responsive to her." See how this husband waits for love before he'll give it? In a relationship, someone's got to take the initiative. Why do we always expect it to be the other person?

To put love to work as the most powerful weapon for good, you've got to stop thinking of love as an emotion. Love is an attitude followed by appropriate behavior. Love says, "I choose to look out for your interests. How may I help you?" Then love is expressed in actions.

And the good news is that, because it's not an emotion, love can be *chosen* and *learned*. The apostle Paul wrote to husbands, "Love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). In another letter, Paul challenged the older women to "train the younger women to love their husbands" (Titus 2:4).

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Reality Living, Reality Loving

When you throw out the four myths and get real, love has a chance to flourish. Your attitudes and actions can stimulate positive emotions and even actions in your spouse. As you behave with real love and your spouse responds, you'll find your love growing—in both actions and emotions.

So even for a marriage that has grown cold, there's always hope—because there's always the option of reality love.

*Gary Chapman is a pastor and counselor based in North Carolina. He is the author of several books, including *Toward a Growing Marriage* (Moody). This article first appeared in the Winter 1999 issue of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.*

Thought Provokers

- *Which of the author's four myths do you struggle with the most? How does this play out in your marriage? How does acting on this myth leave you open and vulnerable to attack?*
- *Which of the six positive realities, if you embraced it, would change your marriage? How would it help guard your marriage against affairs?*





How To

Prevent Marital Drift

Want to be more in love tomorrow than you are today? The answer might be found in your past.

by Tim Gardner

When I was in fourth grade, my teacher made us color a map of the world, cut out each continent and then, like a puzzle, figure out how all seven pieces could have once existed as one solid land mass. It was easy to see how some of them fit together, but others made no sense at all.

After several minutes, my teacher put a map on the wall showing how geologists believe the continents fit together before breaking off and moving apart. According to those who study Continental Drift, the great landmasses are still drifting at a rate of about one inch per year—which doesn't seem like much until you realize how far they are from where they began.

Marital Drift seems as inevitable as the continental variety. A creeping separateness between spouses often begins on the day they return from their honeymoon and sometimes doesn't stop until one or both end up in a counselor's office, a lawyer's office or somebody else's bed. Many believe nothing can be done to prevent Marital Drift. Comments like, "I just don't love her anymore," "We've grown apart," and "I can't imagine what I ever saw in him" are common.

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Counseling couples is sometimes as difficult as solving that fourth-grade puzzle. It's hard to see how these two angry, often bitter, people in my office used to fit together in a way that made them want to get married. Most of them weren't aware of the gradual drift, they just know they're a long way from where they started.

Dodge the Drift

Not only am I convinced that drifting can be avoided, I believe the opposite can occur. As the years sail by, you can actually grow closer, more intimate and more deeply in love. But you've got to make it happen.

Take a quick quiz. What were things like when you first fell in love? Wives, when your boyfriend (now husband) picked you up, was he showered, freshly shaven and wearing clean clothes? Did he bring you presents, take you places and treat you with courtesy and honor?

Husbands, did your girlfriend (now wife) care about her appearance? Did she let you know she was happy to see you? Did she appreciate your gifts, do special things for you and treat you with respect?

Did both of you feel that you mattered and know that you were thinking about each other when you were apart (as evidenced by notes and phone calls)? Did you share hopes, dreams, fears and a common vision of a shared future?

This may sound as corny as an Indiana farm, but those small courtesies, simple thrills and optimistic hopes for the future are the forces that draw couples together and help them fall in love. In those intoxicating days of new love, we never dream that Marital Drift could ever affect us.

Then it happens, but we don't recognize the effects until it has left an emotional gulf between us. When couples describe their drift, they usually attribute it to one or both of them changing. That's when I ask: "When did you and your partner quit courting?"

Too many people view marriage as a destination rather than a journey. We graduate, get a job, get married, have kids, build a career and a retirement account and then retire. At each of those stages, we apply

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our energies and accumulated knowledge to achieve the next goal. When the goal is marriage, we know enough to court our mate-to-be in a way that will create a stronger attraction between us. We win the heart of our beloved and get married. Then, with that behind us, we move on to the next big goal.

But that isn't how God intended marriage to work. Getting married is only one point in time. *Staying* married—in a way that is exciting and fun—is a process. I have a plaque in my office that says, “Getting married is easy; staying married is more difficult; staying happily married for a lifetime should rank among the fine arts.” As in all fine arts, to master a technique you must be disciplined, you must sacrifice and always keep the goal of success in mind. If you desire a satisfying marriage, you must continue—or perhaps return to—doing the things that helped you fall in love the first time.

In the sometimes confusing New Testament book of Revelation, there is an unambiguous statement about love. In addressing the church in the town of Ephesus, Jesus states that they had forsaken their first love (him) and because of that were no longer acting as if they truly loved him. The solution he presents is simple: stop doing the things you're doing now and go back to doing the things you did when your love was new.

Couples start drifting because they forget what first caused them to feel close. They want the continued benefits of their early closeness, but they fail to invest the hours of talking, playing and sharing together. Relational closeness doesn't have a life of its own. To stay intimate you must continue to do the things you did when you first grew to love each other.

Reclaim Lost Love

If you want to avoid Marital Drift (and who doesn't?), start by identifying what drew you close in the first place. Then work together to design a plan that will encourage courting and dating. Go on at least one date every month. Read a book or devotional together, preferably one with questions to discuss. Practice praying together. Make plans for a night away—without the kids. Go for a hand-in-hand walk a couple of nights a week. Reclaim the activities you enjoyed while you were dating, and revisit the places that brought joy and excitement to your relationship.

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Like all marriages, your relationship will hit its share of rough spots. But as long as you're careful to do the things that keep you close, you'll face the future—both good and bad—from a stable foundation of togetherness built on God's truth.

The Marital Drift Check-Up

The intense emotions that characterized your early days of love can return more frequently when you work at creating intimacy. Take this quiz to gauge your emotional closeness.

In the last month, have you and your spouse:		
Kissed passionately without making love?	YES	NO
Gone out on a date without friends or the kids?	YES	NO
Held hands?	YES	NO
Talked at length about something other than the kids, money, schedules, household needs or conflicts?	YES	NO
Done something special for each other?	YES	NO
Prayed together (other than at mealtime)?	YES	NO

In the six months, have you and your spouse:		
Gone for a long walk?	YES	NO
Laughed together until your sides hurt?	YES	NO
Discussed your marital strengths and weaknesses?	YES	NO
Written a love note to each other?	YES	NO
Varied your love-making?	YES	NO

In the year, have you and your spouse:		
Gotten away for at least one night without kids?	YES	NO
Shared a spiritual-growth experience?	YES	NO
Shared hopes and fears concerning your marriage and family over the next five years? Ten years?	YES	NO
Verbally renewed your commitment to each other to honor, love, cherish and remain faithful until death?	YES	NO

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Your Drift Score:

If you answered yes to 12 or more of these, you probably feel emotionally connected and “in love.” Crank it up to 15 and you’ll feel closer still.

If you answered yes to between five and eleven of the questions, you may have begun settling for an “average” marriage. Start making changes today.

If you answered yes to fewer than five questions, your marriage is in serious drift mode. Both of you should invest heart and soul into reconnecting. Start practicing the things on this list. The rewards are worth your efforts.

Dr. Tim A. Gardner is author of Sacred Sex (WaterBrook) and Director of The Marriage Education and Policy Center at the Indiana Family Institute (an affiliate of Focus on the Family). This article first appeared in the Summer 1999 issue of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

Thought Provokers

- *How have you experienced “marital drift”?*
- *The author writes, “Not only am I convinced that drifting can be avoided, I believe the opposite can occur. As the years sail by, you can actually grow closer, more intimate and more deeply in love. But you’ve got to make it happen.” Which of the author’s suggestions can you begin putting into practice in order to protect against drifting?*
- *What new insights did your “Drift Score” provide for you? What will you do with this information?*

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BRINGING IT HOME

I Had an Affair

My husband wasn't making me happy. So why not look elsewhere for intimacy?

by Lyn Mackenzie

I don't know exactly when my affair started. My marriage of eight years had brought me three wonderful children and a beautiful home. While I'd like to say it brought me happiness, too, I couldn't. I questioned the direction of my career, I felt guilty leaving my children with a babysitter, and I believed my husband, Allen,* wasn't doing everything he could to make me happy.

I focused on what Allen did that I didn't like. Petty things such as making noises when he ate, telling annoying jokes, or not putting something away became the stepping-stones to what I thought were bigger problems. I thought, *He never listens to me, he doesn't support anything I do, he rarely hugs me.* By focusing on what he wasn't doing, I overlooked the things he did do: working hard to support us, helping around the house, encouraging me to take a break from my job, reading stories to the kids each night. He loved me, even when I wasn't loving toward him.

Still, I grew impatient and emotionally distant. I blamed my unhappiness on Allen. Soon, he put more energy into his work. When he came home after a long day, I complained about the long hours he worked. Eventually, I avoided talking to him unless I had





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to. He then started working Saturdays, which added fuel to the fire. I turned to Paul, a coworker. He was easy to talk to, and I enjoyed his company. Thinking I found someone who truly understood me, we spent more time together.

One evening after work a group of us went out for drinks. Paul and I were the last to leave, and as he walked me to my car, he kissed me. While I was surprised at first, I convinced myself there was nothing wrong with it because I didn't love Allen anymore.

Paul and I met often and I told him about my marital "problems." The more I shared how awful my marriage was the more my heart opened to Paul. I thought he possessed all the qualities Allen lacked. I thought he was the one I was meant to be with. I thought I was in love. Our relationship grew physically and emotionally, and eventually we also became sexually intimate.

At first, our relationship didn't bother me. I justified it by blaming Allen. After a few months though, guilt filtered in. The more I pushed it away, the more it consumed me.

Finally after a year, I told Paul we couldn't continue our physical relationship. But I was still emotionally attached to him. I thought I loved him and even though he never said it, I was convinced he loved me. I mentally created this perfect life with this other man. Over the next year, I pushed Allen further away. I hardly talked to him, and although we still shared the same bed, I shunned sex or affection.

Three months later I started to look for an apartment; I figured if I continued to act so badly, he would leave. Then I wouldn't have to accept responsibility for my actions. It almost worked.

"I Don't Love You"

On Valentine's Day 2000, right after I found an apartment, I was ready to tell Allen our marriage was over. Allen took me to a nice restaurant, then we drove to a beautiful place where stars lit the sky. Coldly, I informed Allen I didn't love him anymore. He broke down in tears saying this wasn't what he wanted, that he still loved me.

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I wasn't expecting his heartbroken reaction. How could he still care for me after all I'd done? He was supposed to say he didn't love me either. Then we could separate.

But he didn't.

Neither of us spoke about what to do next. In the middle of the night after Allen tossed and turned in bed, he touched my arm and asked, "Is there someone else?" I didn't answer, so he asked again. I told him there was someone, but I'd broken off the relationship. In my heart, though, I knew that was only partially true. That's when the yelling started. He questioned how I could do this to him and the kids. What was I thinking? Didn't our vows mean anything? I listened as all the hurt poured from him.

When he could yell no more, he went for a walk while I laid in bed and cried. All the yelling and pain snapped me back to reality. The consequences of my actions were settling in, and it became clear what I'd done. To save my marriage, I was determined to end the other relationship at work the next day.

The next couple days were an emotional roller coaster filled with anger, confusion, sadness, and shock. I apologized over and over and told Allen this would never happen again. At this point I was at a loss; I needed help. My family didn't go to church much when I was growing up. While I always knew there was a God, he wasn't part of my life. But I needed God now.

Cry for Help

While Allen was at work, I went into the living room, got on my knees, and begged God to forgive me, to come into my life and help me. I knew this was my last chance to save my marriage. I cried and prayed as I never had before, and soon a calm came over me. I felt if I trusted God, my marriage would survive. But I also needed my husband's forgiveness—and my own.

That evening, armed with hope, I asked Allen again for forgiveness and asked if we should try to work out our marriage or separate. With conviction he said, "I made a commitment to this marriage and I'm not going anywhere. If you want to leave, go ahead, but I'm not giving up." I was stunned that he wanted to stay. I told him I was willing to





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work it out as well. Then Allen said, “You’re a great person. I guess I didn’t think you had moral flaws. You made a mistake and I forgive you.”

I stood listening to his grace and began to weep. At that moment I felt renewed love toward Allen and I wrapped my arms around him. “I’ll work hard to earn back your trust. I promise.”

Change Begins

We agreed we needed God to be part of our family, so we found a church and attended weekly. With the help of my newly found faith, I adjusted my attitude and began to focus on all my blessings. I made sure Allen knew where I was at all times and when he could expect me home. I went out of my way to prove he could trust me. His attitude changed as well. He stopped putting in long hours at work, and I could see he was really trying to move past the affair.

Yet even with all the positive changes, our relationship was strained. The wound was still new and deep. Everything would go smoothly, then Allen would think about what I’d done and his anger and hurt would surface. If the kids weren’t around, he’d confront me about it or would just ignore me. I grew tired of giving a detailed itinerary every time I left the house, and my guilt continued to weigh on me as I tried to maintain a positive attitude.

After a few months, I questioned whether or not I could deal with it anymore. I was weary of reliving what had happened. I wanted Allen to forget so we could move on. One Sunday when I was feeling especially depressed about our marriage, I found a brochure at church announcing an upcoming Marriage Encounter Weekend. I showed it to Allen and we signed up, hoping this would be the needed balm for our marriage.

On Friday we drove into the Rocky Mountains to a small retreat center. With our hopes high and our hearts still aching, we entered the weekend eager to heal. The days included group meetings where volunteer couples modeled good communication skills, then gave us a topic to discuss. Throughout the weekend Allen and I rehashed recent events, talked about the kids, money, forgiveness, and our future. We were able to break through some walls of hardness and spent a lot of time crying, laughing, and holding each other.

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On Sunday afternoon, true healing came. Following a short church service, all the couples gathered in a circle and faced their spouses. We were going to renew our vows. The men went first. With tear-filled eyes, Allen renewed his vows to me. While he spoke I felt my heart open completely to him.

When my turn came, I swallowed hard and looked deep into his eyes as I vowed to love him for the rest of my life, in good times and bad. I knew at that moment my marriage would last. We left behind the crumpled pieces of a troubled marriage determined to rebuild a stronger foundation—this time with God at the center.

Happy at Last

It's been four years since that Valentine's Day, and we're now happily married. The road to this point hasn't been easy. For two years Allen's emotions continued to go up and down. While many times I wished he would just let it go, I knew it was important to let him work through his emotions in his own time.

I discovered Allen isn't responsible for my happiness. I have to choose to be happy. And when I feel bothered that our marriage isn't perfect, I ask God to help me focus on the good things in our relationship. I'm finally committed to my marriage and with the passing of each day, we grow closer to moving beyond my wrong actions.

Eventually we reached the point when we both decided to leave the past behind us and not bring it up anymore. Since then, life has been wonderful. We still have disagreements about money and the house, just like any couple. But in light of everything we've experienced, I figure those just come with the territory and I'm happy to face them. I wonder sometimes how we made it through these past four years. But as I look back, I see it was patience, trust, communication, love, forgiveness, and above all, God's grace.

Lyn Mackenzie is a pseudonym for an author living in Colorado. This article first appeared in the Spring 2004 issue of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

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Thought Provokers

- *How can you relate to the author's decision to focus on what she didn't like in her marriage? What consequences has that led to in your marriage? How could focusing on your blessings in marriage change your perspective toward your spouse?*
- *The author writes, "when I feel bothered that our marriage isn't perfect, I ask God to help me focus on the good things in our relationship. I'm finally committed to my marriage and with the passing of each day, we grow closer to moving beyond my wrong actions." Are you committed to your marriage? How does that affect your daily decisions?*

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33 Ways to Love Your Spouse

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LEADERSHIP TOOLS

33 Ways to Love Your Spouse

MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP *editors and readers share secrets for revving up the romance.*

1. At the movies, share the armrest.
2. Save the last cookie or last piece of cake for your spouse.
3. Don't hog all the Jeopardy questions on TV.
—*Jim and Candace Walters; El Cajon, California*
4. Squeeze toothpaste on your partner's toothbrush when you're doing your own.
5. Get your spouse's pajamas out and lay them on the bed.
—*Jodie, Joel and baby Caleb Haberstock; Vernon, British Columbia*
6. Leave a favorite snack on the seat of your spouse's car.
7. Compliment your mate in front of friends or family.
8. Light a candle in the bedroom.
—*Michele Smither; Rochester, Michigan*
9. Put down everything to greet your spouse at the end of the day.

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33 Ways to Love Your Spouse

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10. Fill the gas tank in your mate's car—as a surprise.
11. Light candles with dinner.
—*Julie Jones and Greg Rohde; St. Louis, Missouri*
12. Make a snack for both of you before bedtime.
13. Turn your socks right-side out before throwing them in the hamper.
—*Betty Arthurs; Tempe, Arizona*
14. Be adventurous—meet for lunch at an ethnic restaurant you've never tried.
15. Choose a novel, then read it out loud to each other in the evenings.
16. Rent a movie you watched during your courtship days.
—*Donna and Ernie Siefert; Winfield, Illinois*
17. Buy an “I Love You” card and mail it to your spouse at work.
18. Make plans to re-create your first date.
19. When the dryer buzzes, instead of looking at your mate, volunteer to fold the clothes.
—*Wayne Goff; Kansas City, Missouri*
20. When one of you is indoors and the other outside, knock on the window and blow a kiss.
21. Don't put away stuff your spouse might want left out.
22. When you're finished driving, put the seat back to your mate's preferred position.
—*Amanda Brailsford-Urbina and Gerardo Urbina; Dearborn, Michigan*
23. Hold hands instead of holding the remote control.
—*Conley J. Mercer; via e-mail*
24. On cold mornings, go ahead and bring in the newspaper.
25. Kiss at stoplights.
—*Mike and Lesley Steenbergen; Garden Grove, California*
26. Hide love notes around the house where your spouse will find them.

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33 Ways to Love Your Spouse

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27. When you disagree, always acknowledge the possibility that you could be wrong.
28. When stopping for gas while traveling, buy a treat for your partner without buying anything for yourself.
—*Russell and Cynthia Atherton; via e-mail*
29. Next time you shop for clothes, let your spouse vote on an outfit.
30. Get involved in a new ministry together.
—*Karen and Bruce Anderson; Spokane, Washington*
31. Shower together and wash your spouse's back.
32. When your mate lies down on the couch, get him or her a pillow.
33. Get to know your in-laws.
—*Rietta Hingston; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan*

This article first appeared in the Fall 1999 issue of MARRIAGE PARTNERSHIP.

Features





Resources

Additional help to help you further

Accountability, a downloadable resource from **GiftedforLeadership.com**. Are you getting the support you need? This downloadable packet from Gifted for Leadership gives you practical advice and godly wisdom as you reach out for support.

Guarding Against an Affair, a downloadable resource from the **TodaysChristianWomanStore.com**. Marriage can be one of the greatest blessings in life, but what happens when a spouse is unfaithful? Healing from the heartbreak and broken trust can be extremely strenuous. This guide offers practical advice for establishing boundaries, plus how-to tips and more. Let it nurture your marriage for a lifetime and keep from the devastation of an affair.

His Needs, Her Needs—15th Anniversary Edition, by Willard F. Harley Jr. (Baker, 2001). It's no surprise—men and women have radically different priorities. Describing the ten most important needs of men and women, Dr. Harley teaches you how to “affair-proof” your marriage. Learn how to sustain romance, increase intimacy, and deepen your awareness year after year. This 15th anniversary edition features a new preface, plus personal questionnaires and inventories.

Learning to Forgive, a downloadable resource from the **TodaysChristianWomanStore.com**. Learning what forgiveness means—and what it doesn't is difficult. If you struggle with this issue in your life, you'll love the articles in this download. You'll find great practical advice on the how to's of forgiveness as well as stories of the transforming power of forgiving someone.





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Marriage: From Surviving to Thriving: Practical Advice on Making Your Marriage Strong, by Charles R. Swindoll (Thomas Nelson, 2008).

Need a little marital advice? Ask Chuck Swindoll, one of today's most trusted pastors, authors, Bible teachers, and happy husband of 50 years! Blending warmth and humor with solid scriptural advice, he offers a clear-eyed look at God's design for marriage and practical tips for building a loving lifetime relationship. Includes study questions.

Men and Porn, a downloadable resource from the **TodaysChristianWomanStore.com**. If your husband struggles with pornography, you probably are filled with confusion, shame, and loneliness. You may not know how to react and probably don't feel like you have a place to turn. You should know, though, that you're not alone. Porn is prevalent, even in the Christian community. This guide helps you to see the pain others have experienced, and gives you a sense of hope because God has taken their bad times and turned them into good for their families

Men and Women Working Together, a downloadable resource from **GiftedforLeadership.com**. What women need to know about maintaining healthy, productive relationships with the men they work or minister with. Working with people of the opposite sex requires skills, maturity, and a sense of humor. These articles will help orient you to the attitudes and actions that form the foundation of healthy mixed-gender teams.

The State of Affairs: Why They Happen & How Love Can Be Restored, by Todd K. Mulliken and David Stark (Winepress Publishing, 1998). This book will show what America's most common affairs are. You will learn what kind of personality you are and how it impacts your relationship with others. You will also learn specific tools for keeping your marriage strong and affair-proof.

When Husbands Cheat, a downloadable resource from the **TodaysChristianWomanStore.com**. Dealing with marital infidelity is an emotional experience potentially filled with shame, embarrassment, and confusion. It is a painful struggle to understand how a Christian man could so deliberately blow apart his marriage and dismantle his family. In this guide, you might not find answers to everything you're wondering, but you will find guidance, encouragement, and understanding in many of the issues that surround a husband's infidelity.

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Why Modesty Matters, a downloadable resource from **GiftedforLeadership.com**. Here's what you need to know. In this downloadable packet from Gifted for Leadership you'll find the wisdom and practical insights you need to gain a better understanding of what modesty is and how it empowers women with newfound freedoms.

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Do You Feel **Alone** as a Woman Leader?

IF you're a capable, called, and gifted Christian woman in leadership, join the conversation at **GiftedForLeadership.com**. This blog, along with downloadable resources, will help you safely converse with other women about the issues you face. You'll walk away feeling encouraged, supported, challenged, and definitely not alone!



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