

No More Fear!

Understand What an Emotional Affair Really Is

& Know for Sure If It's Happening to You

By the end of this ebook you will be able to:

- Answer a series of questions to assess your relationship and decide if you think there is, in fact, an emotional affair going on.
- We review what is an emotional affair.
- Explain how emotional affairs move into sexual affairs.
- We also talk about why emotional affairs are so hard.
- We share how all of this can be avoided.
- We walk you through the stages of recovery.
- Finally, we help you know what to do next.

Brad & Morgan

In this ebook we walk you through everything you need to know without a doubt whether you or your partner are experiencing an emotional affair. We will eliminate the mystery of what you'll experience as you move forward, either with your partner, or without them.

We dive into the more pertinent details that are relevant to those facing a definite or potential emotional affair. As you move through the recovery process you will likely need more information about the other stages of recovery as it becomes relevant...but we won't bombard you with too much information right now....just the information that's likely relevant at the moment.

You can find other recordings and ebooks surrounding the other affair recovery topics like "How to Talk About the Affair" and "How an Emotional Affair Becomes Physical". Many times knowledge is what keeps you from feeling crazy and can help you to be patient with yourself. Allow yourself to travel through the normal stages of recovery. If you try to ignore what your mind and body are saying to you, the harder it will be to fully recover and move on.

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING AN EMOTIONAL AFFAIR?

You know for sure there's something up. Maybe you've discovered suspicious text messages, late night phone calls, suspicious e-mails, or you just have a hunch that your partner is just not as committed to your relationship as you would like.

Maybe you suspect there's an emotional affair. Maybe you still question whether it is in fact an emotional affair. Review these questions to be certain. This list is not exhaustive and some must be considered in combination with other questions to make it an emotional affair. But they can certainly shed light on the likelihood that what your experiencing is in fact an emotional affair. Here they are:

1. Do they spend an inordinate amount of time on their phone at odd hours of the day or night? YES or NO
2. Do they keep secrets or seem distant? YES or NO
3. Do they erase their text history or seem to have no internet history on a computer they frequent? YES or NO
4. Do you receive strange calls and sometimes they hang up? YES or NO
5. Are there strange voicemails left on your partner's phone? YES or NO
6. Do they have a lot of friends of the opposite sex? YES or NO
7. Do they have friends they don't let you hang out with, you don't know, or they haven't introduced you to? YES or NO
8. When you ask or if it's appropriate, do they hesitate or refuse to bring you to their place of work or introduce you to their co-workers? YES or NO
9. Have they taken on new hobbies that you are not invited to participate in? YES or NO

10. Have they changed their appearance and are dressing or acting differently? YES or NO

11. Do they say “I love you, but I’m not IN love with you?” YES or NO

12. Do they frequent pubs, bars, or places that don’t seem appropriate for a person in a committed relationship to go without their partner? YES or NO

13. Have you seen them with another person flirting or giving off intentional signals that they are ‘available’? YES or NO

14. Do you feel like strangers emotionally? Maybe like roommates? YES or NO

15. Have they left you for someone else and then come back only to leave again? YES or NO

16. Do they say things like “I don’t deserve you” and then seem to get depressed and sort of punish themselves? YES or NO

17. Does anyone else suspect there’s something not right about your partner’s behavior? YES or NO

18. Do they become defensive when you ask them questions? YES or NO

If you answered YES to a significant number of these questions then they are likely having an affair. These questions are really only meant to get you thinking and it’s not an “official” test but these are things we hear in our office on a regular basis and we have successfully helped hundreds of couples survive and thrive after discovering an

emotional affair. Just to recap: an emotional affair is when our partner shares intimate or personal information with someone else that should be shared primarily and exclusively with you, their committed partner.

EMOTIONAL AFFAIRS CAN BE DECEIVING...BUT WE WILL HELP YOU SNIFF IT OUT AND KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH IT

Unfortunately, emotional affairs are one of the worst kinds of affairs because they can be deceiving. Many people don't realize they are engaged in an emotional affair until it naturally progresses into a physical or limmerent affair. The partner not involved in the emotional affair can't always put their finger on what it is that is bothering them but they just don't feel comfortable with what's happening between their partner and the other person.

So their partner (the one who is engaged in the outside relationship) often will think "well it's not like I'm having sex with them, I'm just talking with them about this hobby you've never been interested in" or they'll say things like, "I know I am spending a lot of one-on-one time with them but it's for school. I have to do my school work and they are the best at (fill in the blank) so I have to spend a few hours at the pub before coming home because that's where we study", sometimes we hear, "well, I was friends with them before we got married and we just chat on facebook".

They are sometimes dismissive because it doesn't seem harmful. Sometimes the person engaged in the outside relationship never hears that it bother's their partner and sometimes they only hear "complaining". They may not fully understand how much

their partner is hurting so they don't realize they need to do something different....and they may not know HOW to do things differently. So there are sometimes even logical reasons for being around the other person and it's not physical....yet.

HOW EMOTIONAL AFFAIRS DEVELOP INTO PHYSICAL AFFAIRS - TOM AND SARAH'S STORY.

So imagine this scenario with me between a hypothetical couple Tom and Sarah and Sarah's friend Sam...these three people are totally made up but the scenarios are actual scenarios we've heard or experienced. This will give you a good picture of how these things morph from something innocent to something much more hurtful.

Sarah met Sam at a ballroom dance class that Sarah drug her husband Tom to on a Friday night. Sarah was a great ballroom dancer in college and even danced semi-professionally. So this was such a treat for Sarah. Ever since she and Tom got married she had backed off dancing because of work and because she was pretty sure that Tom wouldn't really approve of her dancing with other guys. He has never been a dancer and has two left feet. But Sarah was so happy when Tom agreed to go along with her to participate in something she loves so much. So that night Sarah discovered that there were others who enjoyed dancing and would be good partners to compete with even, that is when she met Sam.

So Tom saw how happy she was and he felt guilty, he didn't want to be a control freak and didn't want to make her sad, and so he put away his fear about "what if" and put away his sadness that told himself, "I am not a good dancer and maybe she

deserves a better guy to make her happy besides I don't want her to say years from now that I destroyed her dreams of dancing" and he let her arrange for some extra practice time with one of the guys at the dance studio.

Sarah had zero thoughts of cheating on Tom. She loves him. She also loves dancing and loosing that broke her heart. So she was so excited that he let her do this. She found a friendly guy named Sam and naturally he needed her phone number to send her some helpful study dvds and then of course to schedule times to get together. Nothing crazy. It made total sense. He started by texting little greetings like "hope you're having a great day! Here is the link to the dvds we talked about."

They got together and started practicing once a week at the dance studio for two hours. Then realized they could practice at the free dance nights too. So now they were meeting on Tuesday night for choreography practice and Friday night for the free dance nights. After about 3 months of this they signed up for their very first dance competition. They were so excited! Finally, all of their hard work would pay off.

Meanwhile, Tom has tried to stuff his sadness, he begins to feel rejected, and lonely. At first he sat at home and waited for her to come back. As soon as she would walk through the door he would pretend to be busy and would give her the cold shoulder. He didn't know why this was his response, it wasn't like he planned on being a turd. He just didn't know what to say or how to show her how much she meant to him and the thought of loosing her was the worst kind of pain. He didn't know how to talk to her about how lonely he felt and how she occupies his mind all hours of the day and night. All he wants is to know that he matters to her, that she cares more about him

than Sam or dancing, that she sees him and really gets him, and wants him even though he can't dance.

The more he thought about her and the situation the more his sadness and hurt was pushed back and behind the anger. He began to tell himself that she wasn't thinking of him at all and she didn't care about him either. His pain was not important to her. So here he was sitting at home...alone...thinking about her and there she was not caring one bit about him. That was what went through his mind. He felt that he needed to defend himself against his heart being broken so he put up the defense. He needed to not let her hurt him. But he knew if he said anything he would push her away and that didn't feel good either so he just ignored her. He glared at the television and said absolutely nothing. He wasn't going to let her in, she wasn't going to see him hurt.

Sarah comes in and finds him glaring at the television. She says "hello" and begins to ask how his day was. Ignoring all her bids for connection, she becomes confused and hurt. She tries a few more times to talk with him and connect but he becomes irritable and lashes out with little hateful comments. She trips over his shoes in the hallway and immediately blurts out, "how many times do I have to ask you to put your shoes in the closet where they belong?" Her anger masks her hurt that he doesn't seem to care about her. He doesn't say anything but goes to bed without dinner. So she eats dinner alone.

Really deep down he just wanted to be close to her and didn't know how to tell her that her being gone so much and his imagining her dancing with some other guy killed him inside. But then he felt like an idiot because it wasn't like she was having sex

with him. He couldn't figure out why it was such a big deal. He just shut down and became quiet.

Sarah would ask what was wrong. She sensed that something was bothering him. Then she became impatient and would yell, "why are you always glued to the television? Why can't you just get up and do something productive for a change?" She pursued him to see if he really cares about her. But of course these conversations would lead to big fights, nothing would be resolved, and no one would be happy.

Sarah promised to cut back on dance but she had already promised to compete in this dance competition with Sam that was a couple of months away. She also felt torn because dance was her identity back in the day and now she felt a little lost. She found herself practicing more with Sam and talking to him about her fights with Tom. He was such a good listener and never seemed to judge her. It helped that they had so much in common.

One Tuesday night after practice Sarah broke down and began crying. She knew she would have to go home and experience Tom's cold shoulder and the thought of enduring one more fight seemed unbearable.

Sam, being the nice guy he was, asked what was wrong and if he could help. He ran to get tissues and wiped away her tears. She told him how she was feeling lost and hated how cold and distant Tom was being right now. He suggested that maybe they go for something to drink at the local diner next door and chat about it.

Sarah said yes and they spent the next two hours getting to know each other over pie and decaf coffee. This was the start of a bond between Sarah and Sam and it was the decline of Sarah and Tom's connection. The more time they spent together, and the more they learned about each other, the more close they became.

Things only progressed from there. Tom decided he was tired of waiting around for Sarah and went out with his friends to the bar. He stayed out quite a lot and then Sarah found herself at home waiting for him to come back. After a few nights of this she called Sam up and they went out dancing.

Do you see how vulnerable their relationship has become? Tom doesn't know how to ask for his needs. He doesn't know how to talk to Sarah about how on one hand he doesn't want to disappoint her and make her loose out on her dreams and on the other hand he senses that they are growing apart and he doesn't know how to stop the decline. Tom's concern for Sarah and their relationship, and Sarah wanting to pursue her passion and talents, turns into bitterness and resentment, which turns into fights, which morphs into them feeling burnt out, rejected, and tired, which creates more distance between them.

This distance creates vulnerabilities in the relationship and opens the door for other people, hobbies, work, you name it to step in between the couple. Like adding elephants on a tight wire between two crumbling structures, the outside forces pull down and snap the already frayed connection between them.

HOW ALL OF THIS COULD BE AVOIDED

In the end, it's all usually a big misunderstanding. If both people could feel safe to share the primary underlying hurts, sadness, fears, or feelings of unworthiness without feeling like their partner might leave them, or confirm their fears that they aren't good enough, or confirm that somehow they're deficient, or not worth keeping, then they would be drawn in closer.

What happens is something will trigger a primary feeling (i.e. hurt, sadness, fear, feelings of unworthiness). In the case of Tom and Sarah it could be his thought of her dancing with another guy or her thought of never being able to fulfill her dream of fully realizing her talents and abilities.

We sometimes don't feel safe, or know how to share the deep emotion, or sometimes we don't know how to share these primary feelings because, let's face it, we are not taught to be "emotional" and many of us are taught that expressing emotion is bad because then we are "emotional" and that equates to "weak" or "irrational". I will follow Tom's trigger here...so Tom's thought of her dancing with another guy brought up all kinds of primary feelings - hurt that she is with someone else and has left or is leaving him, he's afraid that it could become more than a friendship, sad that he couldn't be a better dancer, and not good enough because he couldn't be what he thought she needed.

Usually, we take the most heavily felt feeling in the moment. For Tom the thought of her with another guy and the hurt that she had left him alone is the most palpable

emotion in this moment - we can work with the other feelings once we process his hurt.

So the thought triggered the feeling of hurt after abandonment but does he share with her that he is hurt? No, we don't see that at all in the story above! What Sarah sees is defensiveness, shutting down, and pulling away.

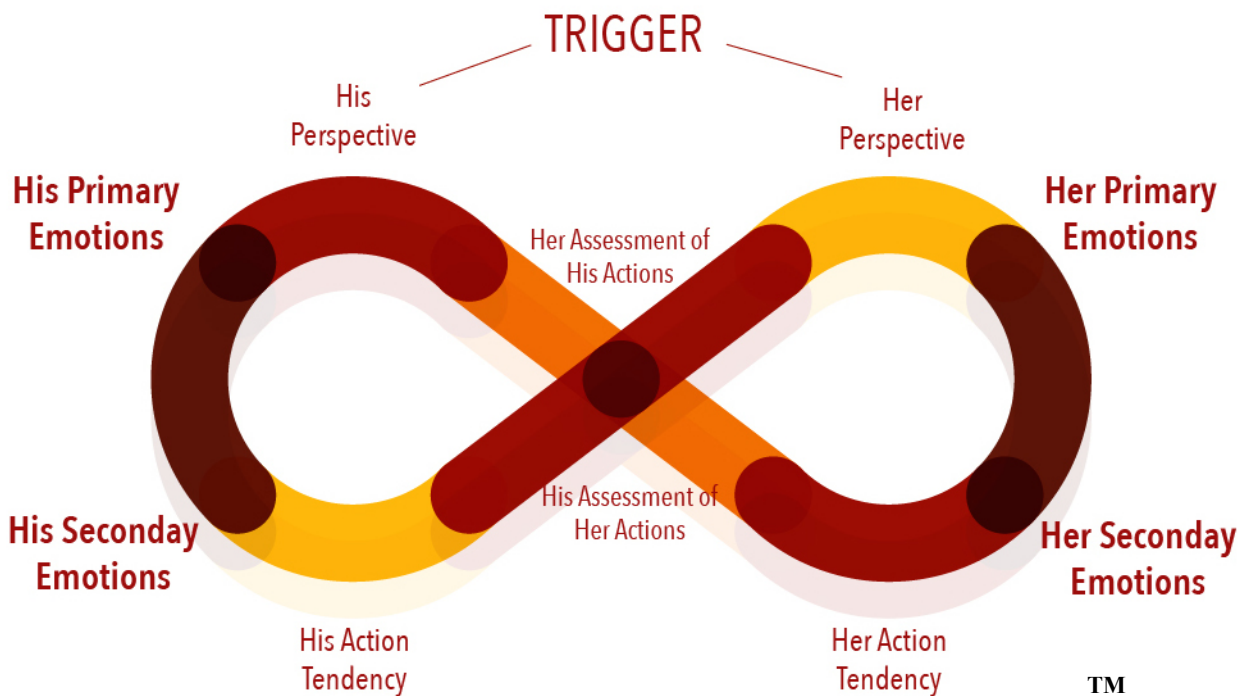
She might even think that she is not important or that she doesn't matter to him. So of course that left Sarah feeling hurt but sharing her secondary defense of anger is safer and in some ways more reliable. Even though she yelled about something trivial like his shoes being in the hallway, that really isn't the heart of the issue as you probably noticed. She also couldn't make sense of her feelings.

She just needed him to respond to her. Somehow she needed to know he had a pulse. That he cared and wanted to be with her. That she was important to him. How could she share her fear or hurt with someone who seems like a cold stone?

What you see here with Tom and Sarah is their negative cycle. There is a trigger, a primary emotion, a secondary defense emotion, which causes the other person to feel a primary emotion, then respond with their defense emotion. Couples go around and around relating to each other in this surface level secondary defensive way without ever experiencing each other any deeper or in a more meaningful way. It usually takes just one person to recognize the cycle and help end the fight or stop the emotional coldness. But sometimes we need some help doing that.

Here is a picture of the negative cycle. Can you identify the negative cycle in your relationship? Below the image there are questions for you to think about the

triggers, emotions, and action tendencies in your relationship. **Remember: the negative cycle is the real enemy here, not your partner.**



A **Trigger** is really anything that causes a person to feel a certain way. A lot of people say we fight over _____ (fill in the blank) _____ a lot. Whatever you put in the blank is your trigger. Sometimes the trigger is what you don't fight about but it really hurts you and it goes unsaid. There is a great myth that couples who do not fight are doing well. Sometimes the greatest hindrance a couple has is due to their inability to feel close. After a while people begin to say things like, "we feel like roommates" or "I love them, but I'm not IN LOVE with them". That is evidence of a connection break down and a couple can look fine on the outside but really deep down they are broken. It doesn't mean that fighting all the time is better...it just means that hurtful things don't go

unsaid talked about...it just means that those things are not likely being dealt with in a helpful way. So there is a balance.

A trigger can be something as simple as eyes rolling or a defensive posture or it can be seeing them look at another person just a little longer than seemed comfortable or it could be them looking at their phone while you're talking. Triggers can really be anything - an event, issue, or action - that starts a fight or hurts.

After the **trigger** appears, you make an **assessment** about that trigger aka the event, issue, or action. You might think something like, "there he goes getting on his phone again". Then immediately a **primary emotion** appears like hurt, sadness, fear, or feeling not good enough. But that is like a short blurb on the screen of your emotional world. For many people they jump right over that hurt and directly into the **secondary defense emotion**, which is coupled with an **action tendency** like anger, defensiveness, criticism, avoidance, shutting down, getting quiet, or we occupy ourselves with something else.

Sometimes these actions we take served us well in past situations like when we were younger and our anger helped us to keep bad people away. We often develop defense mechanisms to keep ourselves safe, but in our love relationship, those defense mechanisms just keep our partner at arms length and doesn't serve us well at all. Because ultimately we want to be accepted, loved, held close, and cherished...but it can be hard to let this sort of love in when we are so afraid of being hurt.

But of course we would want to be on guard. I mean, when we experience such treatment, and everyone who is “supposed to know more” doesn’t know anything at all like we thought and they did, are telling us and teaching us to not trust, or that to be vulnerable is to be weak, of course we would be on guard.

So the trigger gives us information, it causes us to attach a meaning to the event/action/issue, then we feel hurt/sad/afraid/or not good enough, then we cover it up with anger, defensiveness, criticism, avoidance, shutting down; and finally, our action tendency sends a message to our partner.

The message it sends causes them to go through the same cycle you just experienced and read about, and then *they* send an action tendency message back to you, which starts the process all over again. That is, in a nut shell, the negative cycle.

COMMON NEGATIVE CYCLES AND HOW THEY MORPH OVER TIME

It also helps to know what common cycles look like and how they morph over time. So because both people in the relationship really want to be close and to connect, we reach for connection in primarily two ways. We either Pursue or we Distance. A pursuer is more likely to criticize or demand for a response because their partner typically avoids or distances themselves.

People typically do this so they don’t make things worse or fly off the handle. Because the pursuer only sees the distancer as quiet, it is easy to think that they just don’t care or what the pursuer is saying is not important. This of course makes the pursuer want to pursue even more mostly because they need to know that their partner

sees them, wants them, needs them, hears them, and cares about them. But the pursuit only causes the distancer to distance more. Sometimes it's because the distancer is so flooded and overwhelmed they shut down.

The way the cycle morphs for the not so good, is the pursuer gets tired of pursuing. They become burnt out and then they begin to care less about the relationship. They morph into more of a distancer position. The original distancer usually perks up, and is like "where'd you go?" They usually step forward and become curious about where their partner went emotionally or physically.

This doesn't mean we have to change ourselves...it just means we have to change our dance. When the distancer becomes more engaged with their pursuing partner it can be hard for the pursuing partner to believe the previously disengaged partner is really going to change. But this is something we would talk more about if and when you come to this point in your relationship. It is simply worth mentioning but not as relevant to explore deeper at this point. If you are experiencing this sort of burn out, you can check out our healingfromanaffair.com program, or join us to work through this in greater depth with a personalized intensive.

HOW NEGATIVE CYCLES OPEN DOORS TO ALL KINDS OF SHENANIGANS

You may be wondering why this is important to understand now. You may wonder why or how it relates to emotional affairs. It relates because as couples stay stuck in negative cycles, over time they distance emotionally. This distance is harmful because we all need connection and when we don't feel connected to our partner it

makes us vulnerable to outside influences. Relationship injuries, like an affair, are much harder to heal from.

SO HOW DO PEOPLE BREAK OUT OF THE CYCLE?

Many times people will stop the cycle by saying, “do you see what’s happening here? We’re getting stuck in this blame game again.” You can take it further and say, “I realize our fight is not about the shoes you left in the hallway. I wonder how you are feeling right now? The last thing I want to do is hurt you. How can I help you feel better?” If you can take the risk to move into your partner’s experience you will find that you are redirecting the tone so they can open up, begin to drop their secondary defenses, and you are more likely to receive what you need from them emotionally.

As long as you both can drop the criticism, defensiveness, blaming tone, or tendency to push away the difficult emotion and shut down or withdraw the conversation will go so much smoother and easier. This can be very hard and a tedious process if one of you has had any trauma in your past.

TRAUMA CAN MAKE THE PROCESS SLOWER.

Trauma can cause a person to really hesitate in opening up - for very good reasons - they just have so much more to overcome in the fear department. They have been told, either in action or in word, that they cannot trust others to right by them so they hide. It will take more patience on your part. Be open and available emotionally. You can help them on their healing journey.

They may need to see a counselor who specializes in trauma while you both go to a qualified couples counselor. We suggest that you go to couples counseling or visit us for an intensive here in Tulsa, OK, because when you go together to someone who knows how to help couples, you are able to understand your partner in a way that you never thought possible.

When you leave the couples counselor you leave together, understanding how to connect with each other better, and can support each other in the process. Whereas when you go to individual counseling, which is very valuable, don't get me wrong, it's good, but you are there alone with this other person to work through the issues. When you leave their office you're alone to try to share your issues with your partner.

But that can be very challenging because you may not know how to share this with them and they may not be ready to hear what's happening for you. So while individual therapy is helpful, couples therapy can help work through much of the individual issues you're facing and you'll have the most important person in your life there ready and able to respond to your emotional needs.

SIMPLE BUT NOT EASY

The process you go through to move past the affair is simple but not easy. Typically, there is a **discovery** point where everything hits the fan. Once you are certain that there is an affair, then many people wonder if they should stay with their partner or not. We call this the **ambiguity** stage. Meanwhile, you are experiencing all kinds of traumatic symptoms so the **trauma** stage is the 3rd stage. There is also a

stage where people ask “why” a lot. The search for **meaning** is part of the affair recovery process. Then we have begin picking up the pieces and move through the **forgiveness** stage. Then when we take our lemons and make lemonade in **post-traumatic growth** stage. Throughout the healing process we must also work through our **negative cycles**. We can easily get stuck in a bad cycle where we fight and never get the answers we need and the reassurance that it will never happen again.

DISCOVERY IS SOMETIMES THRUST UPON US, SOMETIMES WE STUMBLE UPON IT, AND SOMETIMES YOU CAN SEE IT COMING A MILE AWAY....BUT IT'S NEVER FUN.

The discovery process is a very tricky time because there are so many things that happen all at once. On one hand you want to know all the information and get all the answers to your questions but on the other hand you know the truth will hurt. When you are deciding what you need to know do your best not to read love letters, e-mails between them, text messages, or just really any correspondence between them if you can. Sometimes this is how you find out about the affair...but try not to subject yourself to the torture of those types of details because it will make the traumatic symptoms unnecessarily worse and prolong the recovery time.

EVERYONE THINKS THEY WANT TO KNOW WHY? AND HOW? TO FEEL BETTER. REALLY THEY NEED TO KNOW WHY US? AND AM I LOVABLE?.

Finding meaning in the chaos of the pain is important but knowing that your partner really cares about you and hurts because you hurt is really where the wounds begin to heal. Many people ask why and how because they have put up a protective guard to make sure they don't allow themselves to be hurt again.

Naturally, you would do this because knowing the details feels like it would help you to fortify your relationship. You look for weaknesses in the foundations of your relationship and learning why this happened and how it could happen to you helps you to do that.

But we also want to move forward with questions that keep this from happening again and those questions relate to how your partner sees you and your relationship. That is why you really want to move into questions like the ones we outline in the report we offer on ***How to Ask the Right Questions that Get What You Need.***

HERE IS A CONVERSATION TO HELP YOU BREAK OUT OF THE NEGATIVE CYCLE THAT KEEPS YOU STUCK FIGHTING OR AVOIDING IMPORTANT ISSUES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

Fill in the blanks for yourself. First, let's take a moment and consider the ideal conversation. Imagine how it would be if it were just as you hoped. If everything went as you would like it to go what would it look like? How would your partner respond to your needs and hopes? What would they look like and what would they do? How would you feel when everything goes really well? What would your relationship look like after you have this conversation? Would you feel close or distant to each other? What would that feel like?

may not know whether you want to stay or leave...so we definitely walk you through the ambiguity stage.

It may blow your mind to realize that there are actually 10 different types of affairs. An emotional affair is really just one category of affairs. Since most people experience a hybrid of these types we walk you through the different types of affairs and how to deal with each one. Also, we help you with the trauma.

If you are at all interested in healing from the affair then [CLICK HERE to check out our 90 Days to Affair Recovery Program.](#)