

Ways to Avoid Affairs

If you've only reached the point of temptation, but you haven't acted on it yet, make changes in your life so that it doesn't go any farther. Some ideas:

- **Avoid spending time alone with people of the opposite sex.** If you struggle with fantasizing about a sexual relationship with a particular person, stay away from the temptation by staying away from that person.
- **Refuse to act on (or even reveal) feelings of attraction to someone other than your spouse.** Don't share details of your marriage relationship — particularly problems — with a member of the opposite sex.
- **Avoid outside influences and environments** — such as business parties and private lunches, especially where drinking is involved — that could encourage infidelity.
- **Make your spouse your top priority.** Talk about problems and concerns and work through them together. Get joint counseling to help if necessary. If your spouse is angry or won't go to counseling, go by yourself. As he or she sees changes in you, your spouse might soften.
- **Change your attitude about your marriage.** See it as a commitment that can't be broken. Love flourishes in a relationship where there is complete trust, respect, and acceptance. Have fun with your spouse. Date each other again. How would you treat that person differently if you were trying to win his or her affections for the first time?

If You're in an Affair and Want Out

While it won't be easy, your marriage may be able to survive an affair if you work at it.

- **Ask for forgiveness from your spouse.** Keep in mind that when you confess your affair to your spouse, it might be a big relief to you, but it will be just the beginning of the heartache, pain and distrust for him or her. It may take years of counseling and work to regain that person's trust. While you'll want to move on, seeking forgiveness is more than a one-time act; for your spouse to grant you forgiveness is certainly a long process. You can't try to rush through the emotional healing process.
- **Don't be afraid to seek help and support.** Get counseling from a minister or a professional counselor who can help you work through issues of lying, betrayal, mistrust, etc.
- **Change your environment if necessary.** If the affair happened at work, as hard as it is to take this step, maybe you need to find a different job. If it happened with a neighbor, maybe you need to move.

The good news is that infidelity doesn't have to be a marriage-killer. When couples are determined to work through the pain of adultery, to end the affair, to forgive and to seek counseling, their unions can often be restored.

— David Sanford and Brad Lewis