

FACTS ON AFFAIRS

*an excerpt from *Affair-Proof your Marriage*-by Lana Staheli, Ph.D.*

There are 2 primary types of affairs-sex affairs and love affairs. Sex affairs don't end marriages, love affairs do. Extramarital relationships exist in every world culture throughout human history.

Estimates on the percentage of marriages touched by an affair ranges from 25% - 70%. The best predictor of an affair is opportunity. Those who travel, those who work, and, of course, those desperate housewives.

Upper middle-income men and women have the highest number of sexual partners.

Women are now just as likely as men to have an affair.

The "in love" feeling is a primary biological process. We are built to mate and mate again. These drives are among the most powerful in our biological makeup.

During the "in love" stage of a relationship, there is a highly elevated amphetamine level triggered by the brain's instinctive drives.

The 'in love' stage lasts from weeks to a maximum of 2-3 years, then the brain triggers the release of an endorphin called oxytocin, a cuddle chemical. Oxytocin is pleasant, but it does not offer the thrills of the amphetamines.

When biological forces are triggered they trump reason. Looking at recent functional MRI's of the brain, during periods of acute desires, like an affair, the brain signals bypass the neo-cortex (thinking part) of the brain. So if you ask your spouse what they were thinking and they say "Nothing or I don't know," it is probably true. They were not thinking.

Nearly 80% of people we interview who divorced during an affair were sorry later.

Only 10% of those who married the person with whom they had the affair were still married 20 years later. Most divorced in the first 10 years.

Most people do not plan on being in a love affair, it just happens, they say. Most feel bad (guilty) about it.

Most spouses know when an affair is beginning but don't want to believe it.

Affairs can make a marriage stronger, if the man has the affair, women work harder to repair the marriage.

Love affairs usually spell the end of the marriage if the woman has the affair.

Signs of an affair

- Weight loss
- Change in hairstyle
- New clothing
- New smells-Perfume, soaps, cologne
- Fresh shower smell-most people don't shower twice a day
- Clean car-inside and out
- Repeat number on phone
- Time away to run errands
- Excuses not to spend time with you
- Bringing up someone else name frequently
- Mundane complaints about you or about life

Aftermath of an Affair

- If you want to know if your spouse is in an affair: Ask! Nicely.
- Don't try to catch them or trap them-people lie
- Show your sadness or hurt but don't start a litany of criticism and rage or they won't tell you any more.
 - If your partner wants to 'save your marriage' do it. It is far easier than starting over.
 - Step parenting rarely works out well and takes a tremendous toll on a new marriage. Kids don't want or need more than 2 parents.
 - If the new stepparent was the extramarital lover, don't lie. Kids know, and it will never be OK with them if you try to hide it.
 - When children are involved, nature prioritizes the welfare of the children more than the survival of the new marriage.
 - Most women begin stepparenting with a positive attitude, five years later only 10% are glad they did it.