

## **Unfaithful and in Recovery: What Will You Surrender?**

By Amanda Asproni

Recovery will cost you, and depending how deeply you lived life as an unfaithful spouse, and for how long, recovery can cost you a lot. Surrender is a word you become familiar with in affair recovery. Chances are it was only after infidelity was discovered that you really were confronted with the concept of surrender.

Whether you are new in recovery or have some time under your belt, the reality of surrender can be an elusive and frustrating concept. Aristotle says we basically become what we repeatedly do. Who I became after committing adultery was a dark shadowy facade of who I was prior to having an affair. Infidelity healing is just as important for an unfaithful spouse as it is for the betrayed.

A natural byproduct of playing the infidelity game is extreme loss of self-respect, loss of spirit or soul and a lack of self-integration (a freaky duality that develops between the personality you present to the moral world, your family and spouse and the personality that engages in the double life of having an affair). Healing infidelity for an unfaithful spouse means a journey back to self-respect, a healing of your soul and an integration of your identity (you learn to become congruent, or genuine, across all social environments). Surrender is one of the key elements an unfaithful spouse needs if they want to heal and become whole after an affair.

### **So what exactly do you surrender in affair recovery?**

**Your previous lifestyle.** Let's see, previous lifestyle. Night clubs, lounges, bars. Lunches and dinners alone with other men who were not my husband. Text messages, emails, Facebook messages that were questionable, I deleted them because I didn't want my husband to read them. Moral fence riding, which is when your moral compass is relative and unreliable and totally self-serving. Justifying and rationalizing your behavior because your own self-deception has you convinced it's "really not that bad". Splitting, or compartmentalizing – when you act contrary to love and then wrap up the action in a neat little box, lock it away and pretend it didn't really happen. The consequence of the above is a massive emotional and spiritual divide between you and your spouse, and all intimate relationships. Basically, emotional isolation.

**Your time.** Take away something negative and replace it with something positive. Deciding on what or who is exactly positive can take some trial and error. Stay aware that it's possible to still do some moral fence riding. You are still, and to a certain degree always, fighting against your own self-deception and the habit of living a dual-life. So your environment, your circle of close friends, and the activities you engage in need to be recovery focused. In order to heal, to change your jacked up behaviors and thought-patterns, you need those who model healthy emotional, spiritual and physical behavior and living. They cope in healthy ways to the stress of life. Participating in healthy activities also will help you change into the person you desire to become: recovery meetings, church, bible studies, meditation, therapy, yoga and regular exercise. Your close relationships should not remotely pull you in the direction you are trying to avoid, it's counterproductive and dangerous for you, your family and your recovery.

Your primary relationships should be with other morally, emotionally and spiritually grounded people. No one is perfect, but it's easy enough to discern if someone is committed to living a life of personal growth and integrity. Observe for a short while and you can sense or witness whether someone's personality is congruent and integrated. You can observe if they are self-aware, self-correcting, humble and respectful towards you, and your recovery. When you yourself have lived so long in unhealthy ways, it's relatively easy to see if others are doing the same. Do not be deceived, you will slide down the slope quickly if you're not in safe company. Seek out relationships with others who understand your limits and can meet you where you are, without demanding or asking more than you can reasonably give. Self-care is of utmost importance in recovery, lack of self-care is directly correlated to relapse.

**Your autonomy.** An unfaithful spouse is a master secret keeper. We answer to no one but our self-centered, delusional, insane selves. When you enter recovery you surrender your secrets and commit to living your present and future life with transparency. It can be extraordinarily difficult for an unfaithful spouse who has a long history of infidelity and secret keeping to begin relating in transparent ways to their spouse and other loved ones. Transparent living requires you to stop self-protecting and instead become vulnerable and known. The humility it takes can be painful, because recovery requires a boat load of accountability and infidelity support. When your norm is to not tell a single soul what's really going on in your head, or worse, your actual life, becoming authentic and honest initially can cause

a lot of stress. Over time the new behaviors, thought patterns and healing will come to fruition. It's at this point when you will experience the intimacy, peace and comfort with your spouse and yourself that was previously lacking. An added benefit is the way healing and restoration also will begin to impact other relationships and areas of your life.