

Stop! Just Stop! You're Having an Emotional Affair!



After we posted the article [Rationalizing the Emotional Affair as 'Just Friends'](#) we were inundated with emails from people who were facing the challenge of a spouse who is denying that their emotional affair is an affair at all.

The main reason that they are justifying this stance is naturally because there

was no sex involved.

Most of the people we communicated with were at their wits end because they cannot seem to make their spouse understand that what they are doing equates to an EA and that their actions are hurtful, deceptive and a betrayal.

The betrayed spouses are tired of hearing that they are being jealous or controlling, and that their demands for their spouses to end their relationship with their “friend” are unfair and unreasonable.

So, we thought we'd put together a little kick in the pants for the person who is denying that their EA is an affair – or at the very least an inappropriate relationship.

Remember [Jeff Foxworthy's old comedy bit "You Might Be a Redneck If..."](#)? Well, this is our version... “You Know You're Having an Emotional Affair If...”

First of all, what is an emotional affair?

Judith Orloff MD, in her book *“The Ecstasy of Surrender”* describes an emotional affair as when you turn to a friend or co-worker for emotional (not physical) intimacy. The seduction is that this person gives you what you feel your mate doesn't: support, ego boosts, empathy, playfulness, an undercurrent of flirting or attraction. Initially, this can seem innocent but you may begin to share more with this “safe” person than with your mate.

M. Gary Neuman, psychotherapist and author of *“Emotional Infidelity”* says, “An emotional affair happens when you put the bulk of your emotions into the hands of somebody outside of your marriage.”

So here are some signs; some questions to ask yourself to determine that you might be having an emotional affair (since you are currently denying it).

You Know You’re Having an Emotional Affair If...

- You withdraw from your spouse but confide in your “friend.”
- You confide in or share secrets with this person that maybe your spouse doesn’t even know.
- You seem to enjoy the company of your “friend” more so than with your spouse.
- It’s difficult to talk to your spouse about conflicts.
- You believe your “friend” understands you better than your spouse.
- You keep your friendship a secret from your spouse or lie about how often you interact.
- When you’re confronted with the emotional affair, you deny it.
- Your “friend” is the first thing you think about when you wake up and the last thing you think about before you fall asleep. And pretty much all the times in between.
- This person is the first person you want to share good news with.
- You text, Instagram, Facebook, email or call him/her A LOT.
- You would have a hard time sharing these emails, texts, etc, with your spouse, so you keep them secret.
- You start wishing your partner were more like him/her and begin listing why your spouse doesn’t add up.

- You plan what you're going to wear, say and do around him/her. After all, it matters more what he/she thinks of you than what others do.
- You feel that this person, just "gets" you. You feel you have a lot in common.
- You share details and secrets about your spouse and/or your marriage.
- You start to fantasize about this person.
- You feel a greater emotional intimacy with him/her than you do with your spouse.
- You start changing your normal routine or duties to spend more time with him/her.
- You spend significant time alone with him/her.
- You feel a sense of thrill of the forbidden without crossing any physical lines.
- *You feel that not* having sex may make the connection seem all the more powerful. It feels genuine, romantic even, and isn't easy to let go of because it's so "safe."
- You would be embarrassed for your spouse to witness your interactions or to know what you are thinking about when you're with this other person.
- You're feeling guilty and increasingly aware of how your time and energy spent on this other person was taking away from your family – but you can't seem to help yourself.
- You touch your "friend" in "legal" ways, like straightening his tie or putting your hands on her shoulders.
- You think crush-like thoughts like, *She'd love this song!*
- You no longer feel comfortable telling your spouse about this person and begin to cover up your relationship.

- You experience increasing sexual tension; you admit your attraction to him/her but also insist to yourself that you would never act on it.
- You find yourself feeling vulnerable and turn to the other man/woman for support rather than to your spouse or a trusted relative or friend.
- You accelerate the level of intimacy through sexual or suggestive talk over e-mail or the phone.

We think it's fair to say that if you answer yes to several (any??) of these, you are certainly involved in an emotional affair. So stop denying it.

Instead of allowing the emotional affair to sap so much emotional energy and core values away from your relationship, focus your attention on your current relationship/marriage and put the work in that's necessary to improve it.