

Understanding Why You Had an Affair: A Personal Reflection Worksheet

How to Use This Worksheet

- You can complete it all at once or a little at a time.
 - Revisit your answers later to see how your insights evolve.
 - Consider bringing it to a therapist if you're working with one.
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Section 1: Naming What Happened

When did the affair begin, and how did it unfold?

(Briefly describe the timeline and context)

What emotions did you feel at the start of the affair?

- ☐ Excitement
- ☐ Loneliness
- ☐ Guilt
- ☐ Relief
- ☐ Validation
- ☐ Other: _____

Section 2: Exploring the Underlying Needs

What did the affair give you that you felt you weren't getting elsewhere?

- Emotional connection?
- Physical intimacy?
- Feeling seen or desired?
- Escape from stress or responsibility?
- A sense of novelty or aliveness?

Write in your own words what the affair seemed to “solve” at the time:

What were you feeling or avoiding in your primary relationship?

e.g., boredom, resentment, lack of intimacy, fear of confrontation, loneliness etc.

Section 3: Looking Inward

When have you felt these same needs or patterns in the past?

- Think about your upbringing, early relationships, or other moments when you felt emotionally disconnected or sought something outside yourself.
- Do I tend to seek attention or intimacy outside when I feel vulnerable?
- Have I struggled with boundaries before?
- What messages did I learn about love, loyalty, or sex growing up?
- Do I have a tendency to avoid difficult or painful thoughts, feelings or conversations?

What did you believe about yourself before the affair? After?

(e.g., “I’m a loyal partner,” “I’m not worthy of love,” “I ruin everything”)

How did I justify what I was doing to myself?

Section 4: Taking Responsibility

What choices did you make that led to the affair?

Be honest, but compassionate with yourself. This isn’t about blame—it’s about truth:

What would taking responsibility—without shame—look like for you now?

How could you show up differently, starting today?

Section 5: The Path Forward

What do you want to learn from this experience?

What support do you need to heal and grow?

- ☐ Therapy
- ☐ Honest conversations
- ☐ Setting new boundaries
- ☐ Self-compassion practices
- ☐ Making a repair attempt
- ☐ Other: _____

Closing Prompt

Write a letter to yourself, not from guilt—but from understanding.

What would you say to the part of you that made this choice?
(Use a separate page if needed)