

What to Do if Your Spouse is Having an Affair

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Marriage Expert Outlines 4 Ways to Reconcile Your Relationship (If You're Still Interested)

For many, the response to a cheating spouse is a no-brainer—kick ‘em to the curb. But others want to reconcile despite being betrayed. They’re willing to forgive and believe they can mend the marriage, says global marriage expert Mort Fertel.

“Some people just can’t accept the idea of forgiving a cheating spouse, but you never know how you’ll react to that situation until it happens to you,” says Fertel, creator of the Marriage Fitness Tele-Boot Camp and author of “Marriage Fitness,” (MarriageMax.com).

“It’s easy to say that cheating is unacceptable. And of course, it is. But when you’re faced with the consequences of ending a marriage—like weekends without the kids, less money, a smaller house, a lower standard of living, the prospect of dating again, and tearing up years of photos—many people can’t go there. As unacceptable as cheating is, for many people it’s worth it to try to reconcile rather than divorce and face that nightmare too. In other words, you shouldn’t assume that someone who sticks with a cheating partner is a mentally deranged masochist.”

If you’re fed up, lawyer up—but if you want to save your marriage and reconcile your relationship, here’s some advice:

- **Don’t spy.** If your spouse is having an affair, then your marriage needs a leader, not a follower. Spying is another form of betrayal; it’s a violation of trust. Don’t go there. You’ll just add to the distrust in the marriage and make matters worse. Instead, take the high road. Maintain your decency and integrity. Be a leader, not a follower.
- **Hang in there.** The vast majority of affairs end within a year. Your spouse may think that he or she will be the exception, but affairs are relationships built on deceit and immorality, and things planted in polluted soil don’t grow well. The affair will die. Don’t make an impulsive decision. Hang in there until the affair runs its natural course. At that you and your spouse might see your marriage and your future differently.
- **Kill ‘em with kindness.** He doesn’t deserve it? No kidding! But if you want to spoil his (or her) affair and turn your marriage around, don’t treat your spouse the way he treats you; treat your spouse the way you want him to treat you. Adulterers want their spouse to leave them alone, give them space, that way they can feel emotionally free to philander. But when you extend kindness, it tugs on their conscience and ruins their justification for betraying you.

- **Seduce ‘em.** No one should ever do anything sexually they don’t want to do, but if you desire your spouse then go for it. You’re not doing anything wrong. The other man/woman is the mistress/mister; you’re the wife/husband! And to turn this around it’s helpful to rev up the sexual part of your relationship. Your friend may have told you, “Don’t let him have his cake and eat it too.” Yeah, you’ll feel vindicated withholding sex. But what will that accomplish? It’s punitive; it’s not healing. Show her (or him) what she (or he) be missing if he takes his business elsewhere.

About Mort Fertel

Mort Fertel is a world authority on the psychology of relationships. He has been featured as an expert on ABC, NBC, CBS, PBS and Fox television networks. His Marriage Fitness System is endorsed by a wide variety of mental-health professionals, and he has helped save thousands of marriages. Fertel graduated from the University of Pennsylvania, was the CEO of an international nonprofit organization, and is a former marathon runner. He lives with his wife and five children (including triplets!) in Baltimore.