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Counseling Solutions at SMI

Caught in Adultery, Part 1

Perhaps the death of a mate is more devastating than catching him in adultery. Or perhaps killing him for being an adulterer, but we can't do that. Darn.

Adultery does emotionally devastate both partners and perhaps the marriage and family. If there is a chance of saving the marriage it must be done immediately. Let us discuss the things **NOT** to do. Once again I will recognize that while either gender can be the offender I will use the male reference for this article.

The not to do list:

Do not go "postal." Yes, you are angry and deserve to be. You also need to show your anger but doing and saying drastic things will not help to recreate your marriage when it comes time to do that. If you want to destroy your marriage that is another thing. While most women might want to destroy the man at this moment they really do not want to destroy the marriage and family. Try to keep perspective. The affair does not represent your entire life or marriage.

Do not tell everyone about the affair. This may sound like great revenge but your family and friends will remember your problems and respond to you and your husband differently for years after you have put it behind you. This will reflect badly on both of you. Never tell people at work. Work can be your normal safe place until things get settled down at home.

Do not ask advice from untrained people. Everyone has an opinion and an agenda and their advice will be peppered with it. You will receive conflicting opinions and that will make things worse. See a professional counselor and trust in his direction.

Do not tell your children: Children are very perceptive. Their principle concern is receiving love and affection and their own personal safety. The affair is an adult problem. Children are not capable of processing it. By telling them you are giving them an undue burden. Try to keep the household "normal."

Do not talk with the other woman or her husband. Neither she or her husband are your friends and may well relish in your pain. Do not disparage the other woman. It makes you look bad. Personally, I believe that if we know about an affair we should tell that persons mate. You might be saving their marriage and perhaps their lives.

Do not ask a million questions. It is very common to want to know everything. It is a way of trying to work out of the shock and make sense of things. Often the questions will be constantly repeated. Who, what, where, why, when, any diseases, does anyone else know? The questions go on forever. I understand the need to ask but be careful. Once you know you will never forget. It would be better to ask for the reasons for the affair. Remember it is not your lack it is his.

Do not throw him out of the house. If you want the marriage to be reconciled sometime in the near future throwing him out will make matters worse and you could be throwing him into the arms of the other woman. Sleeping on the cold floor of the basement might be a fun thing to require but keep him inside, unless there is a dog house out back. You should not leave the house either. If either of you are violent then call the police and make an arrest.

Your best bet is to seek a professional marriage counselor.

For more information go to: www.MarriageCounseling.org.

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Caught in Adultery, Part 2

Adultery does emotionally devastate both partners and perhaps the marriage and family. If there is a chance of saving the marriage it must be done immediately. Let us continue to discuss the things **NOT** to do. Once again I will recognize that while either gender can be the offender I will use the male reference for this article.

In Part 1 we discussed the following do nots.

Do not go “postal.”

Do not tell everyone about the affair.

Do not ask advice from untrained people.

Do not tell your children.

Do not talk with the other woman or her husband.

Do not ask a million questions.

Do not throw him out of the house.

We will now continue the list in this second part of *Caught in Adultery* series.

Do not ask others to straighten him out. This is not the time to ask your big brother and his friends to beat up your husband. You might want to but don't. Nor ask your friends, and this might include your pastor, to fix him. Remember too many hands in the pot spoil the pot and will anger your husband. Not that you care really but what you do care about is eventually reconciling so don't put potential blocks in the way.

Do not apologize for not being good enough. Remember this affair was his choice. While you may not be perfect in every way you did not make him do anything. During your marriage counseling you will have a chance to examine how you might improve as a wife but now is not the time.

Do not become super dependent. Remember, worse case, you can live without him. There is life after divorce and you will do just fine. Do not call him every five minutes to check up on him or when he gets home grill him about every breath he takes. He should, however, be responsible to submit to inspections his computer, cell phone, and account for his time during the day.

Do not try to make over yourself. Some women will try to win their man back or compete with the other woman by changing their appearance or losing weight. You might want to take better care of yourself but not as a result of fear or competition. Your appearance, behavior, or lack of behaviors are not the real issues here.

Do not let him manipulate you. Often he will try to make you feel guilty. "It is your fault that I had an affair." This is simply not true. Let your counselor straighten him out on this one. If you defend yourself you are apt to fall into his trap.

Do not have sex with him. Before I go into this let me say upfront that some counselors and some clients disagree with me about this. Counselors may think of sex at this point as a vehicle for healing. Sometimes couples have sex like rabbits because this is what they know how to do and sometimes it does bring healing.

I am concerned if the sex is a healthy thing to do at this time? I think it is not healthy. Sex can be healing but good honest communication is most needed now. I am concerned that the wife may be trying to out-sex the lover, or manipulate the husband. If she doesn't want sex now but does it anyway what will that do to her esteem? Will it now create a sexual dysfunction with her?

Do not give ultimatums. Ultimatums are a lose lose situation. They create emotional lines to hide behind and close doors to communication.

Do see a professional counselor right away. That is your best bet for reconciliation. Most couples cannot repair their marriage by themselves.

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