

PART ONE

Why and How Men Cheat

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This Book Will Change Your Marriage

This book is for every wife who wants to know what she can do to create a solid marriage. My research will show you the inside perspective on all husbands—the ones who cheat and the ones who don't—in order to let you know what most men are incapable of expressing themselves. By reading this book, you can learn from the men I've studied what you can do to build a meaningful, committed marriage.

As a marriage counselor, I have spent much of the last two decades watching marriages unfold, but my impulse to write this book derived from one particular experience. During one of my appearances on *Oprah*, I helped women whose husbands had cheated and left them for other women. The cheating men were firefighters who assisted the widows of fallen comrades and later began affairs with them. I realized on that show that cheating can happen in the most unlikely circumstances, even if the original intentions are well-meaning.

Fidelity Facts

How many husbands really cheat? Is it possible your husband is cheating? Could he be on his way? The results of studies are spread widely, suggesting that anywhere from 22 to 70 percent of husbands cheat on their wives. Many suggest the current acceptable statistic is that roughly half of all men have had affairs. Ruth Houston, the founder of infidelityadvice.com, says that anywhere from 38 to 53 million men in the United States have cheated on their wives. In other words, nearly one in every three couples will be affected by an affair. You may be unsure whether you and your husband are one of those couples, or you may confidently shake your head and be like so many who never imagined such a possibility.

I'm not sure how confident you should be that your husband would never cheat, though. According to my research, 69 percent of husbands who cheated never considered it a possibility. The rest who thought they might do it either told their wives they never would or cleverly avoided the topic.

Think your husband will confess if he's already done it? Extremely unlikely. Cheating men rarely do. Without being questioned, a mere 7 percent admitted to their wives that they had cheated. And unfortunately, few men admit to it even after multiple questioning. Shockingly, 68 percent never admit to cheating or only do so after their wives have concrete evidence of the affairs.

You may have heard that the Internet has swelled the ranks of cheating men. I'm not so sure. Keep in mind that back as far as 1953 Alfred Kinsey learned that 50 percent of husbands had had at least one affair by the time they were forty years old. Clearly the Internet has made cheating easier by helping men find women who are willing to have affairs with them and allowing them to hide those affairs. No longer does a man have to pretend that he is single or on his way to divorce in order to jump into bed with another woman.

Private Affairs is an online dating site that targets users looking for extramarital relationships, or EMRs. Another service, the Ashley Madison Agency, which boasts the motto “When monogamy becomes monotony,” has 1.03 million members as of this book’s printing and claims that its membership doubles annually. A German company, Perfect Alibi, claims to provide 350 clients a month with handy cover stories for cheating, such as bogus invitations to weekend business seminars.

William’s Story: Cheating Trips

William was a manager at an international company. He traveled to multiple destinations every month for years, but it had nothing to do with business.

“I learned from a friend about the idea of creating trips regularly that sounded like business trips. I knew I could get caught if I said I was going on planes and then didn’t, so I’d say I had to go to our offices in a different city, about a three-hour drive away. I’d only drive about an hour to see the woman I had an affair with for a few years. My wife never suspected and since she called me only on my cell phone, I never worried about her figuring things out through the office. Besides, I had the kind of flexibility at work that as long as I clocked in and did my job, they didn’t care which office I was at.”

In retrospect, William felt quite remorseful for his behavior. “Now that I think about it, I did feel bad especially when I’d return home and my wife would be nice to me because I was away and had such a hard trip. Oddly, it was really the only time we connected and I felt like she was being especially nice, so it was working for me on many different levels.” William never told his wife about his affairs. It was only because of a car lease letter indicating the odometer reading that his wife was eventually tipped off. She confronted him with the facts but William maintained his innocence.

The message is clear. Now more than ever, it is worth learning what you can do to develop a marriage that is safe from infidelity. After being a marriage counselor for over twenty years and the author of multiple books and manuals on marriage and divorce, I have discovered how you can. I decided to write a book to solve the cheating problem the day I was contacted by a television station to comment on a book that asked women all kinds of questions about their cheating husbands, from warning signs the men sent to the reasons why they cheated. I wondered why people were only talking to wives about why their husbands cheat. Wouldn't it make more sense to ask the guys? As I searched the journal literature for answers that I could use for the interview, I was astounded by what I found—not a whole lot.

The issue of cheating is enormous to any marriage because it involves the most necessary ingredient of any relationship—trust—and yet the psychological world was far from offering a collective voice about how to avoid cheating. I felt that it was time to provide a well-researched response.

Getting Answers to Vital Questions

This book will lead you through the complex maze of the mind of the married man and offer you real answers to the big infidelity questions. Is it all about sex? What are the signs men say they're giving that show they are close to or already cheating? Will they tell you if they cheated? Do cheating men feel guilty about their actions? What do they say they're missing in their marriage and what could they and their wives have done to avoid it all? What do they say their mistresses were offering that their wives were not?

You can avoid a broken heart with clear answers. I've been helping people find their own solutions for over twenty years. Marriage counselors have a way of making the unclear and unknown seem rather obvious. We have to—we're good listeners, and after all the

listening we begin to develop a sense of what works and what fails. We then parlay it into our own tips, advice, and theories and send that message to every person who asks for our help.

I wanted clarity. I recognize that we have a life outside of our marriage and we don't have all day to ruminate over making our marriage better. In this book, you will find the small number of areas that a wife could put her attention to. After all is said and done, you'll leave this book behind with a clear knowledge of what you should focus on in order to create a rock-solid marriage. Then you'll be able to follow through on your own. And don't worry—you won't be asked to do it all and be perfect in every area of your relationship.

The Research

I contacted a friend, a college professor, to help me in my quest. With the aid of many men and women and my own personal consideration, I created a forty-two-question survey that my friend improved into something that would give us all clear answers to the big mysteries about infidelity.

You may wonder how I could find cheating men who would be honest with me. I drew on a few different parts of the population in order to create a well-rounded study. I had two main sources for participants. In Miami, divorcing parents must attend a mandatory class that I was fortunate enough to be able to help develop many years ago. Another therapist on my research team and I took the opportunity to privately interview men from these classes. I found a plethora of men willing and able to share their many thoughts and stories.

Every interview was a learning experience for me. There were some strange moments: once I was reviewing a question about lying and the man told me to keep my voice down. "My wife is right over there and she still doesn't know," he said.

These men talked to me, another man, honestly because they would never see me again. I didn't know their names. I began to

realize that I had a diverse group of men who could teach me and others a great deal. In order to create a well-rounded study, I also worked with an international online survey firm specializing in a wide variety of medical and psychological research. Men from forty-eight different states completed the questionnaires. There were also a handful of other surveys gathered from other research team members.

Each man chose one of two surveys to complete—“if you are having or ever had a physical infidelity,” or “if you never had a physical infidelity.” To get real answers, I had to go beyond cheating men. I wanted to truly find indicators for why men cheat, and I had to compare them to those of men who do not cheat. The men in both groups mirrored the percentages of the cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the U.S. population. Throughout the book I will clue you in to the responses of noncheating men as they relate to answers we discuss.

Ultimately, my study comprised two hundred men—one hundred cheaters and one hundred noncheaters who successfully completed the interviews and questionnaires. In total, I collected 25,500 individual responses.

How to Use This Book

My work is dedicated to helping you learn and change in ways that will significantly benefit *both* you and your husband.

In part two of this book, I'll share my Inner Voice Recognition Formula with you so that you will have a way to understand your challenge and make sensible, worthwhile changes. How often in life can you work to make changes and know that they will get you the result you want? Hardly ever. Being successful is your big motivation. There is nothing harder than change, especially in the world of emotions and love. But for every change you make, you'll be working toward the goal of a faithful husband.

You may be wondering what good it is if your husband doesn't read and make the changes with you. In this book, the men give you control by saying, "Had such and such happened, not only would we not have cheated, but we would have responded and been better husbands in general."

I'm Not Blaming the Victim

As you read on you might be wondering, "Why are you telling me all this? Tell him. He's the culprit." When I write about men and the aspects of their marriage that helped contribute to their cheating, I am by no means saying that the fact that they found flaws in their marriage gave them the right to. What they did was wrong, a clear breach of trust and the spoken rules of marriage.

But believe it or not, this doesn't usually mean that the cheating men didn't love their wives. I didn't meet a single cheater who was in any way cavalier about his actions. In fact, not a single one wanted to do it again and each one wished he could take it all back. All of the cheating men had some remorse and accountability even if they felt their wives' behavior was a strong factor in their infidelity.

So take this book in the only way it's meant—to empower you in your desire to have the marriage you want. I've written this book because I've seen the pain that women have endured when their husbands cheat as well as their suffering when their marriages are failing. You can make changes on your own that will create a safe, meaningful marriage.

The Stories

Throughout the book are personal stories that were shared with me during the interviews for this research. Identifying facts have been altered to protect privacy, but the feelings and issues are very much

true. You will also read about many women who informally shared their own stories about their marriages, some of them knowing their husbands had cheated on them. Beyond these real stories, I have merged some as composites. I do not share the stories of clients who see me therapeutically, so any similarity between the stories in this book and those of people I have counseled is purely coincidental.

The Quick Action Program

Throughout the book, you'll find steps you can follow in my Quick Action Program. These concise focus points, suggested behaviors and schedules, and exercises will help you turn the knowledge and suggestions from this book into tangible improvements in your marriage. I created the Quick Action Program based on what we learned from the husbands who took the survey. Following the steps of the program will greatly diminish the chances that your spouse will cheat and at the same time will help create a more meaningful and intimate relationship.

Let's Find the Answers

During my research, when my determination got the best of me, often in the wee hours of the morning, I came to repeat a favorite phrase to myself: *the paralysis of analysis*. When conducting research, you always feel there is so much more you could've done with your study. As a result, you risk spending your time constantly tweaking your survey and gathering further information but never ending up with any clear and final results. I was determined to avoid this fate. My study needed to be clear and concise with precise direction. That goal was the primary focus that drove the study.

However, statistics are a lot about averages. They don't dictate how your husband will behave in an exact way. Among the husbands we

surveyed, 12 percent of cheating men said that their wives' actions or inactions had nothing to do with their cheating. If your husband falls into this minority, you will not be able to influence the outcome.

The odds are, though, that you have a husband like the vast majority of respondents, the 88 percent who believe their cheating was linked to some significant dissatisfaction in their marriage.

Now, let's find the answers and take action. You will find some of the questions I used in my research with cheating men below. Please try to imagine how the cheating husbands answered and fill in your guesses. I'll reveal how the men responded in chapter 2. Remember that the men taking the survey had already cheated, and few had ever been in individual counseling. Don't think like a therapist, don't respond in the way a woman might answer, and don't guess as a way of compensating for what you've already been told will be the results. I want this to be a very personal activity so forget about trying to get it right and instead go with what you really feel the cheating men would say. That will be the best way of learning something helpful.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Why Do Men Cheat?

Can you read the minds of cheating men? Fill in the blanks with your guesses for how the men who have cheated on their wives answered these questions. For questions 1 through 10, each response should be a percentage value so that your answers add up to 100 percent.

1. The issues that figured into my infidelity can best be summed up as:
_____ An unsatisfying sexual relationship with my wife outweighed the emotional dissatisfaction in our relationship

- Emotional dissatisfaction in the marriage outweighed the sexual dissatisfaction
 - Both emotional dissatisfaction and an unsatisfying sexual relationship figured about the same
 - Other factors unrelated to either sexual or emotional aspects of my marital relationship prompted the infidelity
2. These issues factored into my infidelity:
- Sexual dissatisfaction
 - Emotional dissatisfaction
 - Other
3. These were the specific sexual issues that factored into my infidelity:
- Sex life with my wife was unsatisfying
 - My wife had significantly neglected her appearance
 - Sex with my wife was generally too infrequent
 - Other
4. These were the specific emotional issues that factored into my infidelity:
- Other aspects of my wife's life (e.g., children, career, community responsibilities, etc.) were more important to her than our relationship
 - I could not communicate my feelings to my wife
 - I felt underappreciated by my wife. She was not sufficiently thoughtful and caring toward me
 - My wife and I no longer shared the same values and/or interests
 - I felt emotionally disconnected from my wife

- My wife often lost her temper and was frequently moody, angry, and/or hostile, etc.
- Other
5. Through this infidelity, the woman I cheated with differed from my wife in the following areas:
- She offered things sexually that my wife would never consider
- She made me feel wanted, loved, and appreciated
- She was more physically attractive than my wife
- I felt more emotionally connected to her than to my wife
- I felt we shared more common values and/or interests
- I felt that I could communicate more openly
- Other
6. Prior to the infidelity, my wife and I attempted marital therapy:
- Fewer than three sessions
- Three to ten sessions
- More than ten sessions
7. I met the woman I had the infidelity with:
- At work
- In the neighborhood
- While engaging in some activity of personal interest
- On the Internet
- Other
8. Feelings of guilt:
- Were not experienced during my affair
- Were only experienced at the onset of the affair

- Continued throughout the affair
- Escalated as the affair continued

9. When I got married:

- I never thought I would have an infidelity
- I thought it was a possibility that I would have an infidelity

10. Did you:

- Tell your wife about the infidelity without being questioned?
- Tell your wife after the first time you were questioned?
- Tell your wife only after being questioned multiple times?
- Tell your wife only after she had evidence?
- Lie to your wife even after she had some evidence of a relationship but not hard evidence of actual sex?
- Not disclose the affair and she has not questioned you up to this point

11. What warning signs do you think you gave to your wife that hinted that you were involved in infidelity? (Men could check off all that apply. Guess the percentage of men who checked off each item.)

- Avoidance of contact
- Unexplainable purchases of gifts for my wife
- More criticism of her
- Diminished sexual activity
- More time spent away from home
- Transfer of funds from accounts
- More fights with my wife
- Other