

Part 1

When Chatting Becomes Cheating

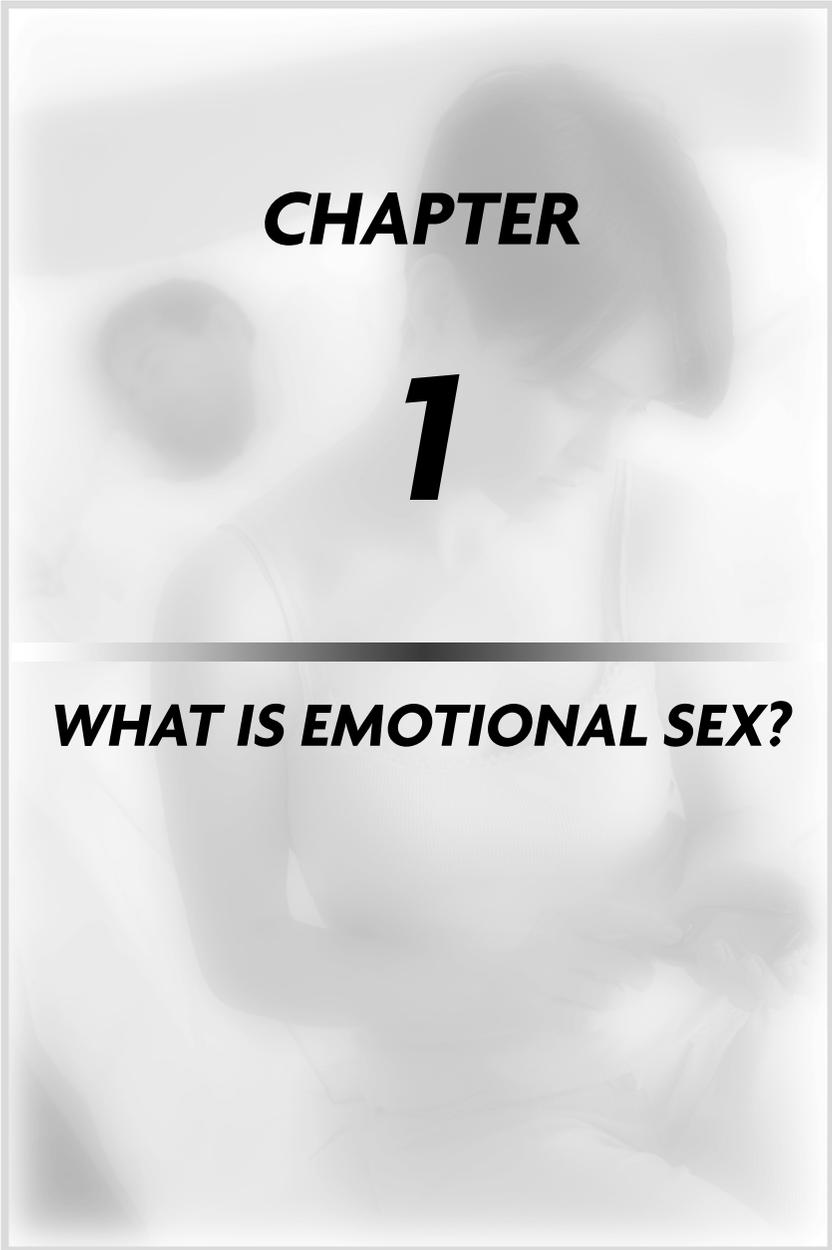
When does a friendship become more than a simple friendship? When does an innocent acquaintance turn into something extra? When does a relatively platonic situation evolve into a deeper connection?

How do you know if there is someone else?

How do you know if your partner has crossed the line?

When does CHATTING become CHEATING?

When Emotional Sex takes over.



CHAPTER

1

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL SEX?

EMOTIONAL SEX is a phrase I have coined over my years of practice as a licensed relationship therapist that describes how one or both partners are irresistibly drawn to people who they initially thought of as 'friends.'

EMOTIONAL SEX happens when you feel that someone else gives you what you are missing in your primary relationship, and because of this you channel the bulk of your emotions, hopes and desires onto the other person.

EMOTIONAL SEX is the unspoken attraction, the deeply rooted need to bond, attach, and feel loved that turns a friendship into an affair.

EMOTIONAL SEX is at the heart of what unconsciously draws us to make emotional choices and act in ways that are contrary to our ideals, values, and relationship goals.

EMOTIONAL SEX is an affair of the heart that feels the same as romantic love and can manifest itself in numerous ways - physically, chemically, romantically, emotionally, lustfully, verbally, even cyberly.

EMOTIONAL SEX involves a great deal of deception, lies, and betrayal, sometimes even more than a purely physical affair.

EMOTIONAL SEX involves a person's heart and feelings.

EMOTIONAL SEX is extremely damaging to a relationship.

EMOTIONAL SEX comes in so many disguises, often in the form of a seemingly innocent friendship. It can be so well-hidden, so unacknowledged, so denied, that when it unleashes its full force on your life and your relationship, it feels like you have been hit by a runaway train.

EMOTIONAL SEX is A NEW FORM OF INFIDELITY.

Whether it starts with a seemingly meaningless cyber chat, or an innocent cup of coffee with a workmate, playmate or a best friend's partner, the seductive chemistry of **EMOTIONAL SEX** can take over. And before you know it, it can overrule your better judgment, consume your mind, steal your heart and then steadily destroy your primary relationship.

*Most of us think we'd NEVER Cheat
Think again*

Since many affairs occur with a genuine friend, it is often difficult to distinguish between an affair and an innocent friendship...

Friends and lovers often behave and communicate in similar ways - they talk, text, have lunch together, give one another gifts and confide in each other. They offer time, attention, acknowledgement and meet each other's emotional needs. That is why it is so easy for friends of the opposite sex to fall in love.

**It can happen to you.
It can happen to your partner.**

None of us are strangers to the ever-increasing rates of **INFIDELITY**. If you have not seen the actual statistics, you have most certainly heard about it or have even experienced it for yourself. But now, you have a more seductive arena to be aware of—**EMOTIONAL SEX**.

INFIDELITY has been common since the dawn of time. But in today's world, with the 24/7 constant and consistent use of cyber technology that allows us to immediately connect with anyone at anytime, you are more prone than ever to being the victim of **EMOTIONAL SEX**.

If you are in the early stages of **wondering** whether you are falling for someone, or if your partner is falling for someone else, this book will give you the ability to either control the situation you are getting into or guide your partner away from the path they are taking.

If you are in the midst of an **affair**, this book will give you answers as well as a calm, rational, healing way to: confess the liaison; gracefully exit without drama; end the affair with honesty and clarity; and then deal with the trauma of loss so you can heal with your partner.

If your partner and relationship has taken the plunge into a nightmare you never thought would happen to you, this book will give you hope and the tools required to help you and your partner deal with and overcome the pain of cheating.

**Together, we can overcome the threat of
EMOTIONAL SEX.**

*You can actually have deeper,
more honest love on the other end of this*

WHAT IS CHEATING?

When one partner violates the other's expectations about what is appropriate for the relationship, the second partner feels betrayed.

CHEATING, and how much contact you think is appropriate for your partner to have with a person of the opposite sex—and under what circumstances—can vary widely from person to person in a relationship. You and your partner have come to this relationship with your own beliefs, expectations and definitions about what cheating is and means. Have you ever sat down and clearly told each other the specifics?

I often hear clients and friends describe **CHEATING** in broad strokes, such as, "***CHEATING** is when you have sex with another person other than me.*" While having sex with another is high on most lists, what about all the other things besides sex? I bet that there are dozens of behaviors your partner could do that would leave you feeling betrayed, shaken, jealous, and upset.

Nowadays, women and men are sending each other flirty texts, becoming friends with their ex on Facebook, getting overly close to each other at work and staying in contact after work hours. When does your partner's behavior (and—hello!—yours) cross the line into the this-is-NOT-cool **CHEATING** territory?

*It's a lot easier to **deceive yourself**
and your partner about cheating*

*when the **ground rules** of
your relationship are **murky***

Let's define YOUR rules, so we can pinpoint what **CHEATING** means to you in your relationship. Here are some ideas to get you started. Check all that apply...

It is unacceptable for my partner to:

- ➔ Flirt with others (i.e. send signals that they are romantically available or interested).
- ➔ Discuss confidential things about our relationship with a member of the opposite sex.
- ➔ Share their most private thoughts and feelings with someone else and not me.
- ➔ Tell other people he/she is single.
- ➔ Discuss sexual desires and fantasies with someone other than me.
- ➔ Regularly exchange 'personal' emails or text messages with an ex.
- ➔ Be emotionally or sexually intimate with someone other than me.
- ➔ Socialize with a person of the opposite sex without me.
- ➔ Purchase intimate gifts for others whom I don't know about.
- ➔ Engage in and become sexually aroused by online pornography, sexual chat rooms, or IM conversations.
- ➔ Develop a crush or feelings for someone else, even if not acted on.
- ➔ Become a best friend or activity partner with someone of the opposite sex that excludes me.
- ➔ Fantasize about someone else while having sex with me.
- ➔ Send or receive sexually explicit photos, messages, IM's or texts.

It is important for you and your partner to sit down and find out if you both share the same definition about what constitutes **CHEATING**. Defining **CHEATING** for yourself and your partner helps create boundaries. Crossing those boundaries is what leads us to feeling betrayed - which is what **CHEATING** is really all about.

When you are both clear on what types of actions and behaviors constitute cheating, and you both honor and commit to being faithful to that definition, then the chances of unknowingly sliding down the slippery slope of betrayal into **EMOTIONAL SEX** will be minimized

WHY WOULD MY PARTNER CHEAT?

As a therapist, I'm often asked, "Why would my partner cheat?"

My answer:

"An affair is generally a symptom of an underlying problem in your relationship - either consciously or subconsciously, your partner feels something is missing. And this missing element makes your partner vulnerable to temptation from whomever - the sexy co-worker, the attentive fellow parent who's always up to listen to them vent about work or parenting issues, a new friend on Facebook, the contractor who's going through a divorce and tells tales that resonate for your partner. Affairs, especially cyber affairs, may start innocently enough."

A partner cheats because there is vulnerability, either personally or in your relationship. Problems can occur if your relationship has become stagnant, if you are not interacting with each other, if sex is a thing of the past, or if there have been changes that have directed a lot of attention and energy away from the relationship.

Your partner may be hungry - for intimacy, for excitement, for companionship, for self-worth and seeks to fill that hunger through other means. Cyber sex, emotional intimacy with coworkers, or a full-blown affair may feed the need.

*To get to the heart of the reason for the EMOTIONAL SEX
consider CHEATING to be the symptom and not the illness*

There are lots of reasons why people cheat. We will get into more details about those reasons later in this section, but here are six of the main reasons why most cheaters say they strayed.

The 6 main relationship problems that lead to INFIDELITY

- 1. Feeling Lonely.** If one partner is often away; traveling for work, spending time alone, pursuing separate interests, hanging out with their friends, then the other partner may begin to seek contact and connection elsewhere.
- 2. Lack of Communication.** Poor or weak communication causes problems in any relationship. If partners are unwilling or unable to discuss day-to-day problems with one another or take the time to tune in and listen to each other, then the relationship will start to deteriorate rapidly.
- 3. Love and Affection Deficit.** One of the most common reasons for adultery is a lack of love and affection.
- 4. Boredom, Complacency and Emotional Distance.** Without the exchange of Attention, Affection, and Appreciation the relationship will starve.
- 5. A Sexual Disconnection.** If desire is low and there is a lack of sexual connection, then one or both partners may look for excitement outside of the relationship.
- 6. Lack of Intimacy.** Without intimacy, no relationship will survive for long.

IS MY PARTNER CHEATING ON ME?

If you're feeling insecure about your relationship, perhaps it's for a good reason. Maybe your partner doesn't seem as available to you, both physically and emotionally. You try to talk and their attention seems to be elsewhere. Maybe they are harder to get a hold of at work, don't respond to your touch in a loving way, or seem detached and preoccupied.

Maybe you've even picked up on some suspicious activity. For example your partner is spending extra time on the computer and texting regularly— but not with you.

- ➔ How do you know if there's someone else?
- ➔ When does CHATTING become CHEATING?
- ➔ And what really constitutes CHEATING anyway?
- ➔ How do you know if your partner has crossed the line?

If your partner is giving time and energy to someone else, what can you do to confront them about it - and what does it all mean for the future of your relationship?

In fact, where does it start?

The answer: It starts with EMOTIONAL SEX

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE OF EMOTIONAL SEX

The Slippery Slope that leads to cheating is everywhere—INTENSE AND INVISIBLE—waiting, stalking, and watching for the right moment to strike down the faithful intentions of you or your partner.

When does EMOTIONAL SEX begin?

Most of us think that there is a difference between a platonic friendship and a sexual relationship. Most of us think that we **know** the difference. Most of us think we can **control** that difference... **But when does the platonic cross over into the sexual?**

- ❓ Is it when the first words of flirtation are spoken... or written?
- ❓ Is it when there is a physical moment of intimacy?
- ❓ Is it when there is full on intercourse?

If you ask me, it happens in all of the above referenced cases (and then some). No matter how INFIDELITY evolves, it still involves secrecy and someone else.

*Did
YOU know?
Affairs 'happen'
to non-cheaters ALL
THE TIME.*

*I've counseled many of
them as clients over
the years.*

One of the pitfalls of **EMOTIONAL SEX** is that it often starts innocently.

For example, you're just chatting—talking lightly with someone at work or with another parent, and because a common environment or interest has thrown you together, you sit down to have a cup of coffee and pass the time.

While **EMOTIONAL SEX** may not lead to actual sex (although it commonly does), **EMOTIONAL SEX** can still be equally intense, sensual and all-consuming. An **EMOTIONAL SEX** situation can wreak the same havoc, mistrust and misgivings on a relationship as full on sexual **INFIDELITY** and may well lead to a break up of the primary relationship.

In actuality, most **INFIDELITY** occurs not because it is planned, but because people find themselves in situations where their emotions completely overwhelm (and even surprise) them.

Surging **brain chemicals** and **hormones** take over

*and once they do, it's a **done deal**... You're **IN***

The tendency very often is to dismiss **EMOTIONAL SEX** with “It’s just innocent flirting” or “We’re only Facebook friends” or “They’re simply a co-worker - nothing more!” I hear variations of these excuses from my clients all the time.

BUT THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE...

WHEN FRIENDSHIP CROSSES THE LINE FROM CHATTING INTO THE CHEATING ZONE...

There is a BIG Difference between a
Platonic Friendship and EMOTIONAL SEX!

Naturally, it's important for everyone to have a strong support system and friendships. However, there is a huge difference between a platonic friendship and a friendship that has crossed the line into the **EMOTIONAL SEX** danger zone. A Platonic Friendship doesn't have the elements of sexual chemistry or attraction. You may love your friend, but you don't fantasize or daydream about him or her. You CAN wait to talk to them. Your relationship with your friend is in the open. Your partner is welcome to join you and your friend, and is not excluded from the friendship because you have nothing to hide.

EMOTIONAL SEX, in contrast, is much more exclusive. There is an element of secretiveness to **EMOTIONAL SEX** that your partner has no part in. You are sharing a significant piece of your emotional life—more about who you are and what you really feel—with your friend than with your primary partner. There is also a strong sexual chemistry or attraction between the two of you, whether you are ready to admit it or not.

***A Platonic Friendship is an open friendship
that everyone knows about.***

***EMOTIONAL SEX is just the opposite -
there is secrecy, there is intimate bonding,
there's chemistry, and there is exclusion***

Emotional Sex Scenarios...

"I knew when I crossed the line because I was doing things and sharing myself in ways I'd never tell my boyfriend about, and would freak out if I found out he was doing these exact things with another behind my back." Cheryl

"I knew when I crossed the line because ALL I could think about was him, ONLY HIM. Being with him became more important than my friends, family or husband." Michelle

"I knew I had crossed the line when I found innocent touching, like taking lint off her sweater or accidentally touching her hand felt as thrilling as full blown sex with my wife." Frank

"In the midst of caring for three small children and working part-time, e-mailing, texting and talking with Chad felt like an innocent escape and a relief. I never would have considered or said that I was in an awful marriage. My husband and I actually got along fine. We just didn't have time to spend alone together as a romantic couple anymore, so when Chad and I started chatting on Facebook, I had no intention or desire to cross any physical lines. I would never cheat. But I increasingly found myself sharing more and more of my hopes and desires with Chad instead of my husband. I looked forward to my conversations with Chad in a way that was all too consuming. I felt withdrawal when we didn't connect. And it was Chad—not my husband—who was filling me up emotionally and romantically. I now realize that I was unwittingly cheating on my husband—I was having a cyber-emotional affair." Jennifer

**Even if
you think you
know your partner,
You don't know
EVERYTHING
(sometimes that's
okay... sometimes
not)**

HOW FRIENDSHIP TURNS INTO CHEATING

THE BIG WORLD WIDE WEB

With the ever-increasing technology that is available at our fingertips, the world is continually shrinking and expanding -

Expanding in that we can virtually access anyone anywhere in the world from our desks and laptops...

Shrinking in the sense that we can literally access anyone anywhere without ever leaving our house.

The world we desire is but a click away - 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

It's never been easier or faster to get intimate with someone outside of a committed relationship thanks to websites like Facebook, meet up sites based on common interests like Meetup.com, dating sites like Match.com and infidelity promoting sites like Ashley Madison. And then of course there's chatrooms, texting, sexting, even video-conferencing which allow us to show and tell, not to mention the millions of websites that allow us to access anything our heart, mind or body may desire.

A spontaneous decision to connect with an old flame or a new "online buddy," to instant message an acquaintance or coworker, leads to playful banter, ever-increasing exchanges, and then that butterfly feeling you get when you fall for someone you barely know (or know too well).....and you can't stop thinking about them. Before you realize it, you find yourself wondering, how did it ever come to this point?"

What may have begun as a chance encounter or a quick hello has quickly developed into a heart-quickenning, full-fledged emotional

*Did
YOU know?
Facebook is now
cited in
over 20% of
divorces†*

involvement - a situation with all the trappings, excitement, ups and downs of an affair. And just because it's purely emotional (or cyber) doesn't make it any less illicit or dangerous.

It is shockingly easy to get caught in this kind of situation, to dive head first into all of its digital glory. Feeling aglow (and aghast) with that sudden 'intimate' attention from the opposite sex - attention that feeds a desire to be attractive, sexy, intelligent, admired, desired, mysterious - all the things once felt with a partner, but are currently lacking or diminished because, well... because life got in the way and all of a sudden **EMOTIONAL SEX** has begun in the most innocent (and ridiculous) of ways.

Although people trapped in troubled marriages are more vulnerable to **INFIDELITY**, I've discovered that a surprising number of people in seemingly solid relationships have also responded to the novelty of a new love and ended up getting swept away by the emotional tide of something different.

Because it is so beguiling, its boundaries so fuzzy, the EMOTIONAL SEX challenge to a relationship is extremely hard to detect and diffuse - at least initially - but it can most certainly be felt.

Perhaps physical air space has not been shared. Yet.

But this is a dangerous path that could go all the way. The rush generated by a new 'friendship is flammable—a rush that, if fueled by one little indiscretion (i.e. one flirtatious text, one sexy photo sent, one kiss, one too many drinks, one lingering look or transfer of body heat) could ignite an all-consuming passion.

And whether it is you or your partner doing this, your relationship at home is at risk and **WILL** suffer.

... and there you have it - the slippery slope has been found, the friends card has been played and the **INFIDELITY** has begun...

You may well be asking - Why do people put themselves in a compromising situation to begin with?

If something is **NOT** right in the primary relationship, why not fix it?

HOW COULD THIS HAPPEN IN MY RELATIONSHIP?

WHY CYBER, PHYSICAL, & EMOTIONAL AFFAIRS HAPPEN

➔ **We share an address, but little else.** Living in the same house, but in different worlds, does not a relationship make. Let's face it, long-distance relationships are difficult to sustain, and by that I mean relationships characterized by any kind of distance, whether it be physical or emotional. Statistics show that couples who lead separate social lives — separate friends, careers, travel plans, etc. — are much more likely to cheat than couples who spend more of their time together and give each other the 3 A's: Attention, Appreciation, and Affection.

➔ **Houston, we've got a problem... or two or three.** As problems surface and grow in a relationship, people often avoid facing them and instead take refuge in other people.

Infidelity is more common in relationships where people feel misunderstood or under-appreciated and where fighting, bickering and belittling pass for normal communication. Frequent criticism and complaining about each other (especially to people outside the relationship) shows a lack of respect for your partner and undermines the core foundation and emotional safety in your relationship.

In her 2003 book "NOT Just Friends," psychologist Dr. Shirley Glass found that 82% of unfaithful partners (she counseled) had affairs with someone who was AT FIRST "just a friend"[†]

➔ **I love my partner, I'm just not "in love" anymore.** This is a fairly common phenomenon. After years of being with the same person and sharing the routines and roles of daily domesticity, couples find that without attention to keeping the spark alive, they have become more like roommates than sex-

[†] Not "Just Friends": Protect Your Relationship from Infidelity and Heal the Trauma of Betrayal (Free Press 2003)

ual partners. When couples stop seeing each other through the eyes of desire; romance and sexual desire declines and emotional separation grows. One or both partners may begin to look for fulfillment and excitement outside of the union to see if they've 'still got it' when it comes to attracting and keeping someone new.

- ➔ ***They 'get me' like no other.*** If you and your partner aren't sharing mutual values and interests, and you meet someone with whom you do, it makes you feel as if that other person is better suited for you. In fact, they may even seem like the 'soul mate' you never knew existed which, in turn, can fuel doubts about remaining with your partner.
- ➔ ***Not so sweet revenge.*** My partner did it to me, and now it's my turn. When one partner cheats, the other may feel they're entitled to do the same. If post-affair healing has never occurred, or is incomplete, the person who was betrayed may seize an opportunity to cheat. When opportunity knocks, they answer - willingly.

People
knowingly,
and often
unknowingly,
enter into an
affair

- ➔ ***The sweet escape of Internet communication.*** It's so easy to emote in the anonymity of your home without the risk of being discovered - plus, the forbidden nature of it all (consciously acknowledged or not) adds to the deliciousness of the communication.
- ➔ ***Ch-ch-ch-changes.*** The reasons could be any or many: raising children, midlife crisis, menopause, men-on-pause, seven year itch, financial woes, retirement, illness, loss of job, loss of parents, family pulls and pressures — you name it, it's an excuse turned into a reason.
- ➔ ***The kids may be alright, but what happened to us?*** Children may indeed be a blessing, but couples with dual careers often find limited time to spend with each other. Whatever time and energy they have is poured into the kids, to the extent that co-parenting becomes the only glue remaining in the relationship. Child-centered marriages put the real marriage at tremendous risk, as both parties feel isolated from one another and are not having their adult needs met.

- ➔ ***I deserve a little something for ME.*** Things are hard, frustrating and/or confusing in your life. You may be working too much, your needs are going unmet, and you feel all you do is sacrifice for others and get nothing in return. An affair is a way to distract yourself from all these difficulties, satisfy some unmet desires and treat yourself to some long overdue pleasure by creating an 'oasis of romance' for yourself.
- ➔ ***I need to feel.*** You haven't experienced this much excitement in a long time, if ever. Conversing on the Internet, going out for drinks with a co-worker and relaxing (just the two of you) after a hard day at work is fun. It makes you feel so happy, liked, and good about yourself. Where's the harm in that?
- ➔ ***It's a way of 'checking out' without leaving... yet.*** You've given up on your marriage but you're afraid to pull the plug, so you're hoping that an affair will end things for you. It's the 'affair as an exit strategy' with a built-in assumption that either your spouse will discover your infidelity and kick you out, or your lover will give you an ultimatum and/or the courage to leave.

The first step is to recognize that there may be weaknesses in your relationship, as well as a dire need to protect it NOW. Only then can it be brought back to stable footing and given a strong infusion of love and life.

Is your relationship vulnerable to EMOTIONAL SEX & INFIDELITY?

- 1.** Do you long for more emotional and/or sexual attention from your partner at home?
- 2.** Are the two of you spending less time together, either due to children, work, or simply growing apart?
- 3.** When you're with your partner, do you feel bored, detached, or just plain lonely? Do they?
- 4.** Is it hard to talk and connect with your partner about emotions and other things that are important to you? Is it hard for them to connect with you?
- 5.** Do you feel 'bottled up' on the inside - lonely, conflicted, bitter, or angry?
- 6.** Is there a big question mark in your mind and heart about your current relationship?
- 7.** Do you enjoy your friends' partners, and frequently ask yourself, "Why can't my partner be more like so-and-so?"
- 8.** Has there been an increase in fighting in your relationship? Does everything you say to each other seem to push a button?
- 9.** Do you blame your partner for that ever-widening distance between the two of you?
- 10.** Do you feel like the negatives outweigh the positives right now in your relationship, giving you a 'glass half empty' rather than a 'glass half full' attitude?
- 11.** Are you or your partner suddenly wanting to seek stimulation elsewhere, to shake things up, get the excitement pumping, and feel more alive?
- 12.** Are you or your partner hanging around someone who is sexually interested or interesting?
- 13.** Do you or your partner spend hours on the Internet, networking in chat rooms, socializing on Facebook, tweeting, texting, or emailing friends?

The Result:

- ➔ If you answered **YES** to **1 or 2 questions**, your relationship may not be particularly vulnerable to having an affair - but you can certainly stand to do some work on your relationship. All relationships require nurturing, but by answering YES to 1 or more questions above, you've confessed to yourself some dissatisfaction that ought to be addressed. Want a relationship that's vibrant and fulfilling? **WORK AT IT. WORK FOR IT.**
- ➔ If you answered **YES** to at least **3 questions** - **WARNING** - Your relationship is vulnerable to having **EMOTIONAL SEX**. Awareness is the first step to preventing **INFIDELITY**. This book will help you stop a problem before it develops or learn how to repair possible damage done.
- ➔ If you answered **YES** to more than **5 questions** - **RED ALERT** You're living in the danger zone. You need to take an honest, fresh look at your relationship and begin the process of repair. If you haven't been engaging often or honestly with your partner, now is the time to swing into action. Don't worry - I will hold your hand. This book has tips and guidelines to get you through the process of detection, confronting, repairing and healing. You can mend your primary relationship with the right tools and motivation.

THE GOOD NEWS IS...

*You are now gathering information that
will help you save your relationship*
