

**EXERCISE: This exercise is for both partners to explore the underlying reasons for the affair and discuss ways to improve various aspects of your relationship together.**

**1) The unfaithful spouse should read through the reasons listed in the blog and make a list of ones that s/he feels are applicable to his/her situation. If there are other reasons, not included in the blog list, be sure to list those as well. Beside each reason, explain why you cite that reason.**

**2) Go through the list together and consider how that “reason” could be impacting your relationship, whether or not the unfaithful spouse cites that as a reason for the affair.**

1. Sexual needs--assess and discuss your sexual intimacy. What is good and already working? What needs to improve? How can you meet in the middle more?
2. If you or your spouse meet the criteria of sex addiction, develop a plan to get outside help and fight this together before it destroys your relationship entirely.
3. Emotional connection--assess your ability to communicate and share feelings. What can you share? What are you afraid to share? What ways do you react to each other that might shut down emotional sharing? Are you sensitive to your spouse when they are emotionally vulnerable? Do you actually listen and hear your spouse when they express their emotions?
4. Need for validation--assess and discuss how well you are expressing appreciation and admiration for each other. Are there ways you can improve in this area? Also discuss how each of you feel about yourselves. Your spouse can adore and appreciate you, but they cannot provide your self-esteem--you have to do that yourself. How can you each feel more at ease in your own skin and build your own self-confidence in healthy ways?
5. Avoiding “accidentally falling in love” and “opportunity”--Both partners need to assess and discuss their interactions with people outside of the marriage. Are there times and places where you might be allowing others to get too close physically or emotionally? Are you flirting or leading people on? What boundaries do you need to establish to stay safe from inappropriate relationships?
6. Boredom--If you and/or your spouse are feeling that the relationship is monotonous, when what do you need to spice it up? Have each spouse write down exciting adventures, outings, activities, discussions that they would like to experience together. Make a plan where both partners get to introduce new interests into the relationships. The activities should help you both feel closer and more energized, so make sure that these new activities are not dangerous, painful or degrading to either partner.