

I love you, Linda.
Oops...
I love you, Jane.

EMOTIONAL INFIDELITY

Emotional infidelity is terminology for damaging behaviors that compromise a relationship/marriage. It is basically any perceived or real secretive third party connection that isolates a spouse. This is not new—infidelity has been around since the existence of relationships. The only thing new is our technology. There are more ways to communicate secretly, and more ways to get caught. It becomes more convenient with cell phones, emails and chat rooms to be connected. The spouse or partner often feels isolated and uncomfortable with the

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communication and is often disregarded when addressing the issue of concern. The guilt associated with emotional infidelity drives a thick wedge between the couple. The self-hatred escalates as the "affair" continues. There is also a bit of a "thrill" of the personal secret and the challenge of risk-taking.

The big question: If sex isn't involved is there still emotional infidelity? Yes. Why? When there is any kind of intimacy with a third party, it still compromises a partnership. Motives are not really innocent when there are secret relationships,

phone calls and voicemails. If sex hasn't yet occurred, it is very possibly on the way. The sex may be the outcome, but the relationship has already been threatened.

Once the anger has subsided, and the initial shock and violation has been addressed, the ability to trust takes a new learning curve.

After the trust has been broken what steps can be taken to save the marriage?

1- The behaviors have to change and one's thoughts and triggers need to be clarified. Everyone has thoughts, BUT... when it crosses the line is when behaviors follow the thoughts. Most of the time this is a path of self-discovery for an individual to find out what makes them take these kinds of risks. Although the marriage is compromised, the behaviors were created by 1 individual and need to be addressed. Individual therapy is needed to stop the destructive behaviors.

2- Marital counseling can be brought in as a way to open the doors of communication, in hopes of developing a more honest relationship. The spouse will have to decide if the basis of the relationship is enough to return to the marriage in an emotionally safe environment.

3- Once the anger has subsided, and the initial shock and violation has been addressed, the ability to trust takes a new learning curve. What changes can be created to stay in the marriage? What does the couple have to change about themselves individually to stay in the marriage? Are these changes for the better?

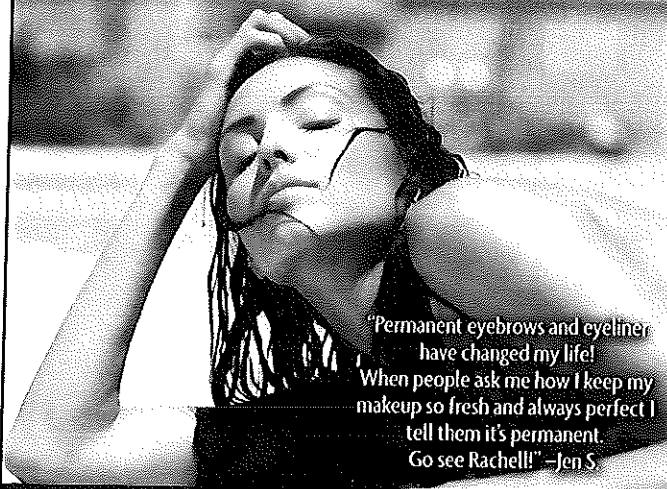
In the process of reconnecting it would be beneficial to objectively look at the marriage. What made that first date years earlier motivate them to choose a lifetime commitment? Bringing back a simpler history can help alleviate the difficulties of the present journey.

This is not an easy path. It is now a time to learn and utilize new coping skills contributing to a more honest and strength-based relationship.

Have a topic or questions you'd like covered? Send an email to michelle@richmanmediagroup.com and it could be covered in upcoming issue!

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