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## **How Not to Have an Affair!**

### **Thoughts of the Month: September 2008**

It's easy to have an affair! **ALL** you have to do is expect your Partner to meet your every need... insist that your Partner see everything as you do...sweep your conflicts under the rug... get totally absorbed in your work or your kids or your lifestyle...and/or create a picture of your Partner as the source of your misery and convince yourself they are unwilling to change (or, even more effective, they don't care).

Most of this happens unconsciously or unmindfully as some people now say.

Let me use the rest of this space to be more positive. Let me remind you of what you already know...Imago tools not only help couples heal from an affair but can also prevent affairs and the soul wrenching misery that ensues.

First of all, we are quite clear in fundamental Imago theory that your Partner is not even supposed to meet your every need OR to see all things the same as you. These notions belong to the romantic phase and are supposed to give way to the challenge of real, committed love.

The more Donna and I grow and the closer we get, the more amazed we are at how different we are from each other. For instance, she gets so frustrated when I put wet dishes in the drainer on top of dishes that are already dry. I don't get it! They will all dry eventually, I figure.

Imago also encourages us to show up in a safe structure called "dialogue" to deal with conflicts before they are out of control...to become vulnerable and curious...especially at the times we least "want" to.

Then there is the idea that your complaints and frustrations with your Partner are 90% about you and your story and ONLY 10% about your partner. (Remember that piece from the workshop you didn't really want to hear?)

Of course, we also insist that couples pay attention to what is happening in their Space so exits do not grow into greater disconnection or even contempt.

As you can see, it would be pretty hard to have an affair take place if a couple is practicing these powerful relational Imago tools.

Maybe we should gift young couples with the "good news" of Imago early in their relationships. We have had a number of young couples who have come to our workshop as a gift from their parents or other relatives and friends. What a wonderful way to begin healing our planet. What a wonderful dream of reducing the occurrence of affairs and the unavoidable pain and devastation by 50% or even 80% in the years to come.

(I share this, knowing that an affair, although far too prevalent, is not a choice most of you would make. I share this not only to address affairs but also to lift up the experiences that lead many couples into "parallel" relationships, barren of the joy and connection each Partner really wants.)

Please share your thoughts with us.

*With great encouragement and hope,*  
David and Donna

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