



5 Emergency Tactics

If You Found out Your Spouse was Cheating

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1. To Begin With, Just Breath. I mean take some really deep breaths. *Please don't roll your eyes and think this will not help.* This may seem like a very simplistic step, but this is a quick, sure-fire way that will help you shift out of your panic mode and into functionality. You need to breathe deeply, or else you're going to continually feed your panic. Remember you're in affair survival mode and hyperventilation can happen. When you're not breathing deeply, your brain is deprived of oxygen and your body tenses, feeding the cycle. The probability of making bad decisions increases. Deep breathing needs to be done as often as you can remember to do throughout the day.

LET'S DO THIS TOGETHER... You can do this any place...driving your car, on a subway, at work...any place. It can be even better if you can remove yourself to a more comfortable chair, couch, bed, or position...whatever feels more relaxing. Close your eyes (if you're in an appropriate location) and begin to calm yourself down by counting your breaths. In other words, breathe in and out "one," breathe in and out, "two," etc., starting at one and ending at ten, and then starting over again. If you have any soothing music, please find it now, and start playing it. Music has been shown to decrease blood pressure and release toxins. Now, with the music playing (again, if you're in the right location) and with the completion of breathing in and out while counting, it's time to start deep breathing. Take a deep breath all the way from your nose to your belly. Feel your stomach lift as each breath enters...breathe in and count to 4. Now, release the breath in 4 counts. Then try to release whatever remaining breath remains. Try this a few times until you get the momentum of deep breathing. Don't breathe quickly. Do this slow and deep. There. You have learned how to deep breathe and calm yourself down.

2. Our Next Step...Create a Support Team and Connect. This will help you to survive and recover from the affair quicker. Your team and connections will become your relationship counselors! Think about all of the people that you love and know will understand your situation and be supportive. This is the time to get very selective and discriminative. It's very important to assess your relationships with others to determine who you believe will be the most understanding, nonjudgmental, and willingly supportive person. If you have any doubts on any particular person, don't call them at this point. But if you do have someone who's been through something similar, put them at the top of your list. They are often the ones who are best in this early stage, because they've been through it. Now, write their names down. Before you make the call, use the following guidelines to help you clearly state what you really need from them:

- a. When they answer the phone, let them know right away that you're in crisis, that you don't want any advice...you just need them to listen. This isn't the time for advice, this is the time you need them to listen. Constructive criticism can come later.

- b. This isn't a time to censor your verbal reactions to your friend. Let your friend know that you just need a sounding board, even though what you may say is only negative stuff about your partner.
- c. Let them know that whatever you decide, you want their support. It's not the time to go overboard and join in on your spouse-bashing.
- d. Don't think you have to do anything. If your friend suggests going to the movies, and you don't want to go, don't. Let them know you appreciate the offer and to not give up...that you'd appreciate them asking you again at a later time...and maybe again, and again.

Now, make the call. There's absolutely no reason to feel ashamed about what's happened. If you do and it's hindering you, it's critical to muster the courage and strength that is built into all of us, and then just make the call. Remember, it's a time to build a network of support rather than worry about what others will think. There is nothing wrong with needing help at this terrible time. Remember, your friends want to help you through the good, the bad, and the ugly, so give them the opportunity to be there for you.

If your support person moves to judgment about your cheating spouse, remind them to hold onto that for now. Tell them that they just need to listen to you and that they're strictly your sounding board at this point. You just want them to be there for you and have them in your corner. And let them know that you'd like their support no matter what decision you make.

3. **Make a List.** Since you're breathing better, possibly feeling less panicked, and maybe feeling more grounded after talking to your support friend, begin to make a list of all your concerns and questions. Should I stay with my cheating spouse? Should I leave? How do I get him/her to stop seeing the other person? Can I trust or ever forgive my cheating spouse for his/her infidelity? Why did this happen? Is it me? Should I keep the kids from him/her? This list is not designed to help you answer these questions, but to help you organize your thoughts, to get clear, so that you feel less chaotic and can eventually create a plan of action. Don't think you have to decide anything concrete now. It's okay to sit with your uncertainty, but just keep adding to your list of questions. For example, here's what you might write:

- I can't believe I didn't see this affair coming!
- How could I not know that my spouse was cheating on me?
- What does the other woman/man look like?
- Is he/she better looking than me?
- What exactly did they do?
- Where and how often did they meet up?
- Were they working friends?
- Did anyone else know about my cheating spouse?
- Why was I betrayed?
- Am I not good enough?
- Can I ever forgive his/her infidelity and recover from the affair?

4. **Take this Day-by-Day.** You really need to look at this as a day-by-day process. Stay in present time, and don't worry about tomorrow. Your job is to just get through the day. Also, your feelings and emotions about the affair are going to be all over the place. You're going to love your cheating spouse one minute, and hate your spouse the next. This is all a normal part of the process. But know that there really is a beginning, middle, and an end to this. You will survive this affair. You're going to feel as if someone has died. And you're right, what has died is the relationship as you knew it. It doesn't necessarily mean it's the end of your marriage, but what it does mean is that you are in a grieving process over the infidelity, and this process parallels the grieving process of a death. These seven stages, according to RecoverFromGrief.com, include 1. Shock and denial; 2. Pain and guilt; 3. Anger and bargaining; 4. Depression, reflection, and loneliness; 5. The upward turn; 6. Reconstruction and working through; and 7. Acceptance and hope. This is a general guide of what phases you can expect to go through.

5. **Plan of "Non"-Action.** Remember, you've been traumatized from the infidelity. Each day the trauma will subside a little bit, and you won't feel like your very survival is at stake. This means that the initial feelings you experienced when you found out about the affair can change on a minute-by-minute basis, so don't put anything into action that you can't change. In other words, after the infidelity, it's wise not to make any rash decisions when you're in this crisis. You're just gathering your information right now. Ultimately, you will have some decisions to make as to what direction you want your relationship to go. Do you want to try to work on your marriage and forgive your cheating spouse? Do you want to divorce your cheating spouse? Is this your bottom line? It is impossible to forgive your spouse for the infidelity and overcome the affair? Or are you on the fence? With time and clarity, trust me, you'll know the answers to these questions.

[\[Click Here to Contact Sharon\]](#)

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