

The Secrets of Surviving Infidelity

Scott Haltzman

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Author gives helpful advice on how couples can survive an affair and avoid the slippery slope that can lead to infidelity in the first place.

Infidelity does not necessarily have to mean the end of a marriage.

In *The Secrets of Surviving Infidelity*, Scott Haltzman, distinguished fellow of the American Psychiatric Association and retired Brown University professor, offers this encouraging and nurturing advice, from a nonjudgmental standpoint, to spouses who are considering remaining in a marriage after infidelity.

With suggestions both for the spouse who was unfaithful as well as the spouse who was cheated on, chapters deal with how to discuss an affair with a spouse, forgiveness, post-affair instructions, and how to identify the individual expectations spouses place on each other, as well as whether those expectations are realistic.

This fourth book of Haltzman's (the previous three also focused on "secrets" to being happy individuals and establishing joyful marriages and families) includes many interesting and revealing examples gathered from his research, where participants shared their very personal experiences with infidelity. Those stories serve as case studies and add authenticity to the information Haltzman provides, and because Haltzman draws on his own experience providing couples counseling, as well as academic research studies, the guidance he offers is credible and convincing.

In addition to navigating the process of dealing with the aftermath of infidelity, much of the book addresses how to avoid situations that can lead to distrust between spouses and create suspicions about an affair. Haltzman dissects the types of nonsexual gestures and behaviors that can be a "slippery slope," as they increase intimacy between nonspouses and can evolve into a sexual affair.

Haltzman speaks from a self-described pro-marriage bias—admitting he wants couples to attempt to save their marriages rather than divorce. He does not adopt the position of therapists who believe individual happiness is paramount. In a conversational tone, he mainly directs his suggestions to readers who are weighing whether to pursue a divorce or attempt reconciliation after a spouse has been unfaithful. By presenting real-world case studies and supporting those examples with statistics and other academic research findings, he validates that remaining in the marriage is a viable and common option.

While encouraging couples to make an attempt to keep their marriage together, Haltzman also acknowledges that each person must identify his or her own "deal breakers"—the situations that make the relationship irreparable. As a result, his advice will be helpful to those with the goal of saving a marriage after infidelity, but his guidance is also realistic and seeks to help readers determine the circumstances that might make reconciliation difficult or impossible to achieve.

MARIA SIANO (Summer 2013)

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