

## **My personal reviews of helpful books for recovering from infidelity:**

### **Christian Books**

***Who Will You Become?* (2007) by Linda J. MacDonald** A hard-hitting, challenging book for people in the beginning stages of an affair who've lost their ability to be objective about the danger of an outside romance. This is my attempt to shake up a hormone-crazed spouse and motivate him/her to wake up and smell the coffee before it's too late. Also, useful for hurt spouses who want to understand the roles that hormones and rationalizations played in their partners' affairs. Currently found on Linda's [Mini-Books](#) page.

***Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect it* (1990, 2005) by Jerry Jenkins**

Helpful for preventing affairs. Offers practical guidelines for creating or rebuilding healthy boundaries around your marriage to keep yourself from temptation. When a church elder in town shocked everyone by his affair, friends of mine were so shaken, they designed and taught an adult Sunday school class for their church, based on the concepts in this book.

***Steering Clear* (2007) by Earl D. Wilson**

In this book Dr. Wilson presents his program for helping those who are tempted or have succumbed, in a process of true repentance and recovery. Want to "get" what it means to avoid, repent, and recover? Read this book! Perfect for the tempted or fallen.

***Restoring the Fallen* (1997) by Earl and Sandy Wilson, Paul and Virginia Friesen, Larry and Nancy Paulson**

The personal story of how one couple saved their marriage from the ravages of intimate betrayal. Husband and wife are therapists. Terrific story. Presents a wonderful model for building a support network to help shattered marriages recover. I wish more churches would catch the vision. Both of the Wilson's books may be ordered from: [www.TuffStuffMinistries.com](http://www.TuffStuffMinistries.com)

***Unfaithful: Rebuilding Trust after Infidelity* (2005) by Gary & Mona Shriver**

Realistic and personal story by a couple who weathered and survived an extramarital affair. They are Christians so this book is especially helpful for believers. An easy read for the "self-help-literature-avoidant" person. I have found that faithful spouses really appreciate this book and wish their partners would read it to better understand their pain.

***Torn Asunder: Recovering from Extramarital Affairs* (1995) by Dave Carder**

Terrific Christian book on the subject of repairing a marriage after infidelity. His newest versions include material on emotional affairs, too. I like his graph on the difference in recovery timetables for the betrayer and the betrayed. He includes some of Emily Brown's theories about couple-dynamics that make a marriage

vulnerable to an affair. I have had a few faithful spouses find these theories offensive because they felt blamed for the affair. However, Dr. Brown's framework, which Carder summarizes, is intended to help couples and therapists identify the "message" of the affair—the relationship dynamics that make a marriage vulnerable to an affair and how to approach repairing the relationship, if possible.

***Surviving an Affair (1998) by Willard F. Harley Jr., Jennifer H. Chalmers***

Strengths of this book are the variety of vignettes that both partners can relate to. He normalizes the jagged process of disengagement from the affair partner and rebuilding the marriage. Harley is very clear about the need to break off all contact with the affair partner and has practical guidelines for the unfaithful. I would rate it as a useful book for couples in the throes of infidelity, no matter their religious faith. He has a fabulous Web site: [www.marriagebuilders.com](http://www.marriagebuilders.com)

***Shattered Dreams (2002) by Larry Crabb***

Larry brings to life the story of Ruth and Naomi, highlighting how they dealt realistically with the grief of shattered dreams in their own lives. I appreciate his candor and insights on how to grieve honestly, without the performance pressure to "get over it" we often receive in Christian circles. He offers hope that God can bring redemption to people who feel like their lives are in shambles. I think this is Larry's best book and found it to be a pivotal resource during a traumatic season of loss in my own life.

***The Five Languages of Apology (2006) by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas***

A terrific tool for discovering the most effective, meaningful apologies for you and your spouse. If you are stuck in finding what really "works" for your partner, this may offer an overlooked key that unlocks the door to your partner's heart.

***Restoring the Pleasure: Complete Step-by-Step Programs to Help Couples Overcome the Most Common Sexual Barriers (1993) by Clifford L. Penner and Joyce J. Penner***

A helpful reference for couples who struggle with some form of sexual difficulty or dysfunction in their marriages. Tastefully and expertly presented.

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## Secular Books

***How to Help Your Spouse Heal from Your Affair: A Compact Manual for the Unfaithful (2010) by Linda J. MacDonald***

Due to a lack of resources with much-needed tools for the unfaithful partners who want to save their marriages, Linda wrote this popular book to offer practical tips to assist them. This book is perfect for those who sincerely want to rebuild their partner's trust but keep making mistakes that undermine the very results they want. Linda

used her 23 years (at the time) of counseling couples harmed by the wrecking ball of infidelity who successfully managed to win back their spouses trust.

***Runaway Husbands: The Abandoned Wife's Guide to Recovery and Renewal* by Vikki Stark.**

This book (along with *The Journey from Abandonment to Healing*) are my two most favorite books for spouses who've been betrayed and then abandoned by their wayward spouses. Vikki has been there and knows what it takes to make the arduous journey from the initial emotional "Tsunami" stage, through the "Ice Storm" stage, and all the way to what she calls the "Warm Summer Day" stage. Highly recommend!

***NOT "Just Friends": Rebuilding Trust and Recovering Your Sanity after Infidelity* by Shirley Glass**

This is my favorite all-around book on infidelity—especially for the hurt spouse. Dr. Glass's research and insights are amazing. She has a lot of clinical experience working with couples and doing co-therapy with such couples and individuals. She is more firm than all other authors on the stance of "no secrets allowed" if trust is to be rebuilt. In her research, Dr. Glass debunks many of the myths and rationalizations about infidelity and includes emotional infidelity as a violation of the marital bond. She does the best job of anyone of reducing the shame and blame of the betrayed spouse, demonstrating by her research that not everyone who chooses to be unfaithful does so because they are unhappy with the marriage. I spent 20 hours in an intensive four-day workshop with her and hold her in the highest regard.

***After the Affair: Healing the Pain and Rebuilding Trust When a Partner Has Been Unfaithful,*  
by Janis A. Spring**

One of the most notable strengths of this book is that the author does a masterful job of explaining the pain experienced by each spouse, on both sides of the equation. I like her careful approach to rebuilding trust, her cautions about quick forgiveness, and most of her comments about our unrealistic expectations of romance. Weaknesses of the book are that she works so hard to come across objective that betrayed spouses sometimes find her writing painful or difficult to get through. In her seminars for counseling professionals, Dr. Spring recommends having each partner read and underline what is meaningful to him/her in the book and then trade books with the other spouse.

***Private Lies: Infidelity and Betrayal of Intimacy (1989)* by Frank Pittman**

I attended a workshop by Dr. Pittman and have enjoyed his articles and taped presentations on the topic of infidelity. Frank Pittman, a systems-trained psychiatrist, is funny and down to earth. This book is pointed and challenges many of the rationalizations that unfaithful partners use to justify their affairs. One unrepentant betrayer called it "the book from hell" (which was a good thing.) An entertaining read, compared to many self-help books.

***Affairs: A Guide to Working Through the Repercussions of Infidelity (1999) by Emily M. Brown***

I attended Emily Brown's two-day workshop. I recommend that clinicians read this popular book first, before they attempt to read her clinical book, *Patterns of Infidelity and their Treatment*. She describes five types of affairs: Conflict Avoidant, Intimacy Avoidant, Split-self Affairs, Sexual Addict Affairs, and Exit Affairs. Her chapter on a partner's obsessing is the best I've seen. She normalizes the excessive ruminating to a point, yet if prolonged, frames it as the faithful partner "having an affair with the affair."

***The Monogamy Myth: A Personal Handbook for Dealing with Affairs, Third Edition (2003) by Peggy Vaughan***

Don't let the title fool you. It was chosen by the publisher, not the author. While Peggy is not a professional counselor, she has broad experience helping individuals struggling in the aftermath of a partner's affair(s). She weaves her personal story throughout the book and makes many helpful points. Peggy stresses the importance of honesty in order to rebuild and improve the marriage. Her Web site, [www.dearpeggy.com](http://www.dearpeggy.com), is one of the best online for victims of affairs, as well as for betraying spouses seeking to better understand their hurt partners.

***Forgiving the Unforgivable (1994) by Beverly Flanigan***

Beverly Flanigan is an expert on the subject of forgiveness. I liked this book because it honors the pain of the wounded in ways that I seldom see in the "forgiveness" literature. My copy is highlighted on nearly every page. Highly recommended for those who feel stuck in the mire of pain. No clichés or trite solutions offered.

***The Power of Apology (2002) by Beverly Engel.***

This book explains the roadblocks, necessity, and skills needed for giving a meaningful apology. An outstanding resource for those seeking an in-depth understanding of what it takes to offer apologies that offended spouses can believe in.