

Affairs Are About Anything But Love*

Participants present affairs as arising by chance and based upon love and mutual adoration. The relationship advances from flirtation to infatuation. This can happen quickly or over considerable time. Eventually there is an expectation that the affair advance to sexual behaviour. The participants then claim each other as true love partners who understand each other better than their own spouses. It sounds so romantic and so beyond their control. The relationship continues in secrecy.

Scratch the surface and what may transpire is one emotionally vulnerable adult and another adult seeking sexual gratification. More often than not, it will be the woman who is emotionally vulnerable and the man who is seeking the sexual gratification. Upon this scenario, the man professes his love and the woman in part feels completed by his attention and in part feels badly about herself in the context of the relationship.

What is most important for women to realize is that this is not a healthy loving relationship. More to the point, these relationships can be insidiously emotionally and psychologically abusive of women.

Affairs are secretive by nature and represent a betrayal of fidelity. Hence they contribute to marital turmoil and demise. Because of these factors, affairs also diminish personal integrity. It is hard to feel good about oneself entirely in this situation. If one does feel good about oneself, it may be through a psychological process of disassociation or splitting. Through these psychological processes a person cuts him or herself off from those parts of oneself that are distressful. Hence the person is not fully integrated in terms of feelings, thoughts and actions. It is a way to cope with loss of integrity.

Decent men do not subject the object of their affection to such harm. Decent men would not place a woman in conflict with her marital partner, family, children, friends and community... or with herself. Men who engage in such activity tend to be working towards their own sexual gratification

over the needs of the woman. The approach then, often involves a process of grooming towards the sexual encounter. The man pursues, the woman resists, the man continues and escalates displays of affection and adoration, and the woman succumbs. The period of grooming will depend on the vulnerability of the woman and the intensity of the pursuit. Guilt and shame are the most common of feelings when the intoxication of the moment subsides and the woman is left to ponder the experience.

If a fellow truly admires a married woman, in the first place he wouldn't compromise her marriage, family or integrity, but in the event feelings deepened and were mutual, he would resist the relationship so that the woman could choose how to deal with her marriage first – without the complications imposed by an affair. In the event the fellow is also married, his transgressions are threefold; one against his spouse, the other against the married woman as described above and the third to himself. He has also participated in self-demeaning behaviour.

Affairs are about anything but love. Romance has nothing to do with it. Harm to the participants and bystanders are an inevitable conclusion. Hardly the example anyone would want for their children.

No wonder affairs only happen in secret.

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