

Stop being so selfish

We all know that having an affair in the first place is an insanely selfish thing to do. I'm not going to beat that point into your brain any further. But whether you realize it or not, your selfishness may be continuing as we speak – even if you've ended your affair and committed yourself to saving your marriage.

One of the most disturbing behaviors we've observed by the cheater time and time again is selfishness – thinking that everything is about them and how they are hurting, feeling and grieving – as a result of their affair. They believe there are only two people in the world that are important or valuable – them and their affair partner. Additionally, they more than likely have the mindset that they just want to move on and demand their spouse to just get over it. That's selfish.

I have witnessed many cheaters (me included at one time) who lack compassion and empathy and are unable to see beyond the fantasy world and understand the pain their selfishness has caused.

Also, many times after an affair has been discovered, the cheater shows selfishness by “sitting on the fence.” In other words, the cheater won't make a decision post discovery, so instead they hold everyone hostage. They want their affair partner and their spouse—the ultimate in having your cake and eating it too!

It's a very cowardly act as they can make a conscious CHOICE to have an affair, but can't make a choice about whether to stay or go. It's just another way to make it all about them.

Here's what Linda has to say about my selfishness:

“After three years I truly understand how much selfishness played a part in Doug's affair. I remember about almost a year after the final D-day, Doug wrote a post about his selfishness and how he realized that that was part of the affair and the reason why he didn't end the affair after I found out. I think that was the first post that he actually started to get it. Up until that point, he was writing more about what he read in books. It wasn't from the heart and he had finally come to the point where he internalized that he had been very selfish.”

At first when I found out about Doug's affair I blamed myself because I didn't do this, or I didn't do that. What he was telling me at the time made me believe that. I didn't meet his needs and that we were living like roommates, etc. After three years, now I understand it had nothing to do with me and him not ending the affair. It was just something that he wanted to do. He didn't want to end it.

He really didn't care about anyone but himself. He didn't care about me. He didn't care about his children. He didn't care about the other woman. It was all about how he was feeling. That selfishness allowed him to be dishonest and to say things that were very uncharacteristic of him."

If you take the time to look inside yourself and really analyze what was going on while you were in your affair before, during and probably after it, you'll realize that there was/is a great deal of selfishness on your part.

Action Steps:

- Think about your selfishness and be aware it and the consequences it is having in your marriage and in your life.
- Get to the root of your selfishness. What was missing in your life that caused you to be so selfish? Why was it so necessary to concentrate on your ego rather than be the husband that you want to (and should) be?
- Have confidence. Being selfish sometimes relates to a lack of self confidence. Make a list of things you are good at, cut it into slips, and put them in a jar. Everyday draw one slip out of the jar and read it, remembering that although you may be good at one thing, you are not good at everything.
- Work on being less selfish. Make an effort to focus on other people's perspective. Ask questions of others and listen actively. Extend yourself to help your wife, family and friends. It will make you feel good, as it softens and warms your ways.