

# Adultery

*The Forgivable Sin*

**SECOND EDITION**

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## When the Forgivable Sin Is Not Forgivable

### *Test Your Skills*

How much do you know about divorce? Consider the following widely held opinions:

1. Second marriages have lower divorce rates.  
False: higher.
2. Adultery is lower in second marriages.  
False: higher.
3. Divorce solves a problem and gets rid of your emptiness.  
False: It gives you more emptiness for a more extended period of time.
4. It has been said that you never are really divorced when you have children.  
True
5. Divorce is a process that starts well before you split and continues long afterward.  
True
6. It takes just as long to end a relationship as it does to start one.  
True.

If you want to know about how long it takes to get over someone, factor in how many years you have been together (remember, add in years you knew each other). If you knew each other for two years and have been married for three to five years, if you divorce it may take at least one-and-a-half to three years to get out of the emptiness syndrome. If you are married for twenty-five years or longer, don't be alarmed if it takes a very long time to let go.

7. Negative ties are stronger and prevent you from letting go.

True.

8. A divorce, like death, doesn't necessarily end a relationship.

True.

9. It is over when it is over.

False.

10. The adulterer is mostly at fault.

False: Two people unconsciously collude to have an affair. 11. Forgiveness is mostly about the adulterer stopping the affair.

11. False: The betrayed must see his/her part to move to forgiveness and stop obsessing.

12. Flirting is innocent.

False: Without boundaries and limits it leads to temptation and adultery.

13. Jealousy is not a good emotion.

False: Jealousy acts like a "brush with death," brings about change in a relationship.

14. If your child is symptom free (after an affair) he/she will not have trouble with intimacy as an adult sex partner.

False: It is better to show symptoms, otherwise there is more chance of intimacy problems.

Sometimes the forgivable sin is not forgivable, and your only recourse is divorce.

But only after real soul-searching. Remember you can always get a divorce so try everything first! Most divorces do not have to occur if you take the journey and work harder instead of leaving.

*BREAKING UP SHOULD BE REGARDED AS A LAST  
RESORT RATHER THAN AN EASY WAY OUT.*

**I'm distressed by the fact that, although the divorce rate has stabilized, 50 percent of today's marriages still end in divorce, 60% step families divorce, and 65 percent of divorced marriages have been struck by adultery. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, nearly 80,000 couples divorce each month.**

I'm convinced that too often couples jettison a relationship for the wrong reasons: hurt pride, guilt, shame, denial, stubbornness. They act impulsively, just to take some sort of action out of confusion or sheer emotional exhaustion, wrongly thinking, "What else can I do?" Or they are still in denial and refuse to confront their emptiness. Divorce, in the face of all of this, may seem like an easier way out yet actually causes deeper problems.

*Divorce can compound the family damage done by infidelity.* According to a study by psychologist Matt McGue of the University of Minnesota, an inclination to divorce is heavily influenced by heredity—much like adultery. McGue studied the divorce rates of 1,516 pairs of twins (both identical and fraternal) and found that they rose with every family tie. If a twin's mother and father had split, for instance, the likelihood of divorce increased 10 percent; if in-laws did the same, the rate jumped to 20 percent; if a sibling did so, the rate rose another 10 percent for fraternal twins and 25 percent for identical twins.

**What's more, divorce is not only disruptive but often ineffective. If you separate without coming to terms with your emptiness, you will never conquer the problems you have with intimacy. The unresolved issues will simply follow you from relationship to relationship.** I see this happening extensively and expensively in divorce court, where couples are still wrestling with unresolved furies. Emotional closure shouldn't have to occur through such expensive fighting!

## Thinking About Divorce

Yet despite all the drawbacks, it may become clear to you that ending your union is the only answer. If you have done the anger and grieving exercises in previous chapters, yet cannot bring yourself to forgive, your wounds may not be curable. You or your spouse may be unable or unwilling to make the commitment necessary to work hard at your relationship. Your relationship may be too far gone. Some people really can't go back after adultery. Something inside them dies, and they don't seek help in time.

**Divorce does not signify failure. Often, it takes more courage than remaining in a bad situation. If you have sincerely tried and tried, and nothing has worked, give yourself credit for getting this far.**

Amanda, for example, went to heroic lengths to save her marriage to Don, a handsome realtor who was always making passes at her friends. Then, when after four miscarriages, she at last had a healthy pregnancy, Don took up with her best friend, Sonia.

Somehow, she managed to forgive even this double betrayal. For two years after the birth of Stephen, she persevered, even though Don kept on philandering, acted jealous of the baby, and wouldn't help with childcare.

Finally, when Don refused to get help, she decided that she had too much self-worth—too much to put up with this humiliation any longer. She filed for divorce—and now her real estate career, her son, and a second marriage are all thriving.

*How do you know when it is time to leave?*

This is a very complex question, and one of the most difficult decisions you will ever have to make. I ask my patients to answer a series of questions to measure their true feelings before they make up their minds about divorce. I hope this “Exit Interview” will help you, too.

This is what I do with couples thinking of divorcing. **I feel very strongly that most couples divorce too hastily, and for the wrong reasons, when they really could stay together.**

Most couples fall in love but don't know how to stay in love. I have found that many people change their minds about divorcing, work through their emotions, and move on to forgiveness after they carefully reconsider the following questions, which I methodically go over with them before I encourage their final decision.

You should do the same. These questions could save your marriage, and 98 percent of the cases I treated saved theirs. Keep in mind the betrayed and the adulterer may have different answers. **There is a very thin line between divorce and forgiveness.**

*Questions to Ask Yourself When Deciding  
Whether or Not to Stay*

1. Did you not marry for love?
2. Are you running away from emptiness?
3. Are you avoiding intimacy now that you are in the rebuilding phase? (After the affair is uncovered and stopped the real intimacy-avoiders have to look themselves in the face. That is when panic sets in.)
4. Are you a grudge-holder like other members in your family?
5. Do you have a hard time with bitterness? Do you not handle forgiveness well?
6. Did you or your partner not commit to working on your problems?
7. Is there no love left between you? *Warning: hurt numbs love.*
8. Did you receive a sexually-transmitted disease from your partner (the adulterer), which you can't forgive?
9. Are you interested only in being right so you can't forgive? Do you suffer from false pride?
10. Are you aware that negative ties are stronger and don't allow you to let go?
11. Are you confusing hurt with the death of your relationship? *Warning: Most people leave when they are hurt and don't give the other person a chance to heal themselves. This is the most common reason for divorce.*
12. Did you as the deceiver fail to work through your guilt and shame before deciding to divorce? (Many adulterers leave a marriage because of the intense guilt and shame they feel, rather than trying to work through these feelings to forgiveness.) *This the most common cause of adulterers leaving for the wrong reason.*
13. Is the hurt too deep? Has too much time passed so you cannot forgive, yet cannot let go?
14. Is your unwillingness to work through your anger a sign you want a divorce?

15. Are you divorcing *not* because you fell in love with your new lover, but because you have unresolved guilt and it is interfering with your marriage or long-term relationship?
16. Did you use an affair specifically to get out of this relationship?
17. Do you have trouble with separation in general? Are you trying to let your partner down easy? Have you secretly always wanted to divorce?
18. Is having an affair the coward's way out? The only way you could get divorced?
19. Are you putting your lover's needs before your children's and your partner's needs?
20. Did you as the adulterer do most of the emotional work? Were you in more pain than the betrayed? Were you more willing to face the issues that drove you to the affair than your partner?
21. Are you, the betrayed, hanging onto the coattails of the betrayer, refusing to see your part, obsessing about the lover, feeling you have been wronged? Are you using divorce as a solution to your feelings of emptiness? *This is the most common cause of the betrayed divorcing for the wrong reason.*
22. By not taking responsibility for your part, are you making reconciliation impossible and divorce the only solution?
23. Have you failed to make the distinction between what you can do for yourself and what you need from another person?
24. Did you have an "emotional divorce" for many years?

If most of the above applies to you, perhaps divorce is the answer. **However, seek professional help before making your final decision. Remember, this is for the rest of your life! Divorce is one of the biggest steps you will ever take in your life. You have to seek every alternative you possibly can before making that decision. Don't leave yourself in a position where, after you've divorced, you find yourself saying, "If only I..."**

*There are, however, some red-flag situations that must be heeded:*

1. If you or the children are being subjected to emotional and physical abuse or you don't feel safe, GET OUT NOW!

2. If you or the children are becoming physically or emotionally ill, get out and seek help.

Yes, divorce can bruise children. But a study of 17,000 British families published in the June 7, 1991, issue of *Science* magazine suggests that what does most of the harm is the hostilities that existed beforehand. In the British sample—as in a similar study among 1,700 American families—half the boys developed emotional problems, and almost as many of the girls, reflecting those difficulties before the split. Make no mistake: *If a relationship is causing you and your children great pain, it may be less damaging to you all to get out.* Several studies—and my own experience—indicate that children in a family racked by conflict are better off if the parents divorce than if they stay together.

3. If you feel you need help, and your mate adamantly refuses to go along, it may be time to leave. Often, one partner initiates therapy, but the other must join in eventually if the process is to succeed. You must be patient—but you can't do it all by yourself forever.

4. If your partner is in denial, continues to cheat and lie, or won't promise not to do this again even after therapy, leave. Repeated adultery is abuse.

One woman I helped had put up with infidelities for forty one years, claiming her husband was otherwise a good father and partner! After she came to see me, she finally realized that enough was enough, and filed for divorce—even though she swore she still loved him. He came in but refused to stop philandering, saying the affairs just felt too good and he was not hurting anyone.

5. If you feel swallowed up by a destructive relationship in which you have no rights and are treated as if you were invisible, you should leave. If the pain outweighs the pleasure, is the status quo worth preserving?

Don't be blackmailed by money, the good of the children, etc. Like Amanda, who finally divorced and made a new life for herself, you can survive without your adulterous mate.

6. If your partner really doesn't want you, don't stay! You can't force closeness or talk someone into loving you again. If someone tells you, "I don't love you anymore," take him/ her seriously. Most times, these words are sincere. Once love dies it is over!

7. If you did not marry for love in the first place, you will most likely not stay together, there is nothing to hold you there. Some affairs, as we have noted, are motivated by a desire to head for the exit door. This is particularly true for women who married without love but lack the courage to leave until their adultery forces them out.



In some cases, a spouse will act like a dog in the manger. He doesn't want to be married to you, but he doesn't want anyone else to have you, either.

That was the case with Larry, who hadn't made love to his wife, Christina, in years though he was carrying on around town.

When Christina and the children moved out, Larry refused to support his family. He even spent a night in jail rather than comply with a court order. He kept trying to blame Christina for the situation, trying to make her feel guilty for leaving.

In therapy, she grew strong enough to admit her right to be angry. She asserted her independence, going back to school and studying computer programming while her folks minded the children. Today she is divorced, self-supporting, and proud of what she's accomplished.

**If you do decide that divorce is necessary, proceed as carefully and compassionately as possible.**

You may want revenge—but if you seek vengeance against your mate, you may retard your chances for future happiness with someone else, and your children's chances, too. Several studies indicate that children whose parents communicated poorly and fought unfairly were among those most likely to divorce in later life.

### **Children: The Silent Witnesses**

Children whose parents divorce because of adultery absorb a lot of guilt and take on a terrible sense of responsibility for their parents' fate.

Tammy, age five, asked, "Daddy, are you going to live with her? Don't you love Mommy and me anymore? I'll be good, I'll do my homework. I'll go to school. And I won't fight with Derrick."

She then asked her mother, in front of her father, "Mommy, are we getting a new daddy?"

The father, crying, said, "I'm never going to leave you. I'm always going to be your daddy, even if Mommy or I remarry someone else. We are both always going to love you." **Be sure to tell your children you will always love and cherish them.**

### *Violence*

I see these hostilities reverberating through too many families. After a screaming Angela confronted Dan about his mistress, he hit her so hard, he broke her nose. Neither realized that their six-year-old daughter, Jody, had overheard the terrible fight. Suddenly, because of the trauma, she simply stopped speaking.

Meanwhile, her parents escalated their conflict to a very destructive level. On his lawyer's advice, Dan remained in the family home pending a final decree, although Angela would not cook for him, allow him into the bedroom to get his clothes, or give him his telephone messages.

They spoke only in insults—and Jody remained silent.

Finally, they brought her to me. Through Family Play Therapy, she revealed what she had witnessed, reenacting the shocking scene with toy police cars and an ambulance (both had been called during the dispute) and “Little People” dolls representing members of her family.

Her parents realized that their heedless fury was destroying them and their child. Dan realized that, if he valued his little girl more than his property, he would have to leave the house. Angela saw that she would have to let go of her animosity and find a humane way for Jody to see her daddy.

The little girl regained her speech, and the custody arrangement is working smoothly for the whole family.

### *Obsession*

Obsession can upset children almost as much as violence can. Although she was divorced from Lester, Lil and her son, Aaron, couldn't give up the fantasy that someday he'd come crawling back.

In truth, they'd scarcely spoken in seven years. When Lester came to pick up ten-year-old Aaron, he'd honk the horn outside.

Traumatized by the stress, the boy developed severe allergies that required hospitalization. At one point, he almost died.

Concerned, his parents eventually got together to see me. In Family Play Therapy, we were able to show Lil and Lester that their “silent fighting” had to end for their son's sake. *Like all*

*children of divorce, Aaron wanted his folks to reconcile. They did not, but they did do the next best thing, they became friends. Aaron was elated and eventually recovered.*

## ***A FRIENDLY DIVORCE MAY BE AN OXYMORON, BUT A CIVILIZED ONE IS POSSIBLE AND ESSENTIAL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE CHILDREN.***

### **Minimizing The Pain**

*To make a clean break as gently as possible you must share your pain and disappointment and anger together. (See chapter 10 for Echo, Bulletproof Vest, and Embraceable You exercises.) Cry together. Discuss the good aspects of the relationship, how you've grown, as well as issues that may arise in any new relationships.*

Talk about how you will tell the children. **Remember: You will need to maintain connectedness, if only for your children's sake. This relationship, like any other, is fragile and will need nurturing.**

1. *Dissipate your white-hot anger.*  
Very often, the only way couples can bring themselves to split is to get into a rage. Repeat the exercises in the anger, grief, and forgiveness chapters to solidify your new relationship with your former mate even if you did them before reaching your decision. They will help keep the parting amicable and help you build your skills so that you can go on to a new life and a new partner with more dignity and less pain.
2. *Do the funeral exercise on page 174.*  
This will help you cherish and accentuate the positive aspects of the relationship and allow you to grieve its loss and let go so that a better relationship will be possible someday. You will have regrets and trouble with intimacy later on if you don't.
3. *Acknowledge how important you are to each other and how important your marriage has been.*
4. *Acknowledge your own part in the breakup without sinking into remorse or blame.*

5. *Write a letter to your spouse, but don't deliver it.* List what your needs and expectations were in the marriage; how your mate failed to meet them; how you yourself failed to go after what you wanted.
6. *If you have trouble letting go, write letters to yourself.* Note the appealing and not-so-appealing facets of the marriage and your about-to-be ex-spouse. Only after you've properly said goodbye to the love and the anger, can you approach intimacy with someone else.

If eulogizing, write down negatives; if bastardizing, write down positives. Note both the good and the bad.

7. *If the tension and turmoil are too much, seek help with your children and your spouse.* See the same therapist together and separately to get a grip on your hostility before you see a divorce lawyer.
8. *Address your own needs.*  
Note what was lacking in this marriage that you'll look for in your next relationship. Put it in the form of a list. Keep it somewhere handy, like your underwear or sock drawer, and consult it occasionally.
9. *Watch for symptoms in your children.* (Watch more carefully children who show no symptoms.) Practice Family Play Therapy with them as described in chapter 15. (Use the genogram and triangles described in earlier chapters to understand your legacy and to correct destructive patterns.)
10. *Try to make your children understand that you have done everything you could to make the marriage work.*

Remind them that both of you will continue to love them. Don't punish them or put them in the middle. **Tell them it's not their fault.**

With young children, I frequently use toy analogies (see box, on next page). When one parent is moving out, for instance, I note that on a paddle ball, the ball does not always come back to the same place—but it remains attached, nevertheless.

Tale Of The Toys

In the 2 percent of my cases where parents do divorce because of adultery, I often help them break the news to the children with parents and grandparents present.

I show them broken toys. One is a doll (or a car) that has broken in just a few pieces and can be put back together; the other is smashed to smithereens like Humpty Dumpty and cannot be mended. I let them try to glue it and then let them cry if they don't succeed.

I explain that Mommy and Daddy have been working hard to put their marriage back together, but that it proved to be too much like the second toy.

They understand, although they still feel sad. (I encourage them to grieve for the broken plaything. It's O.K. for them to cry.) I then tell them that they will have a new relationship with their parents now, and that it will be like a new toy but it can't replace the old. It's never going to be the same; it's different. But I remind them that they often grow to like new playthings as much or even more than the old ones—although they miss the originals.

We explain that Daddy turned to a new friend, but that's not Mommy's fault. Maybe Daddy never told Mommy that she wasn't being his best friend. Maybe he didn't know how to say it.

I want them to see the equal signs as I explain that Daddy and Mommy were both very lonely and had problems, but they didn't know it for a long time. Maybe Mommy showed it by being too close to the children and not to Daddy, and Daddy by finding his new friend.

The friend didn't cause the problems... and neither did they.

11. *Don't make your children spies or marriage counselors.*

Make sure they understand that they will not be expected to defend one parent against the other or to keep secrets.

Reassure them that no matter what changes, both of you will continue to love them just as much.

Give the child permission to love both of you. Give reassurance that the child will not be rejected as disloyal if he/she meets and likes the new lover.

## Introducing The New Lover

When you decide that it is time for your child to meet your lover, handle the get-together with extreme care. Make sure that this develops into a sound relationship.

### **STEPS TO TAKE WHEN INTRODUCING A NEW LOVER:**

**Do not** introduce the new person right away. The children need time to spend with each parent first, to assimilate the changes in the situation and rework their relationships with Mom and Dad.

**Wait** at least six months or longer, if possible, so that the child can grieve. Often, the lover will press for an early meeting, thinking this is a sign that marriage is in the offing. Keep the needs and feelings of your children paramount; don't give in until all of you are ready.

**Do not** take any action without discussing it thoroughly with your spouse first. Both must agree because if the child and spouse are not ready, it can contaminate the relationship for life between parents, child, and lover.

**Lay the groundwork** well. Children of any age resent meeting the third party without honest airing of feelings first. They can, in many cases, come to accept the stepparent—but not if the relationship is rushed, or the abandoned parent is not ready.

**Don't** nag or threaten to try and force closeness; it's counterproductive.

**Don't** expect anything more than decent manners. Meet on neutral turf and don't demand instant intimacy.

Greg's mistress, Polly, tried to buy the affections of his two children with gifts. Against my advice, they met three months after Greg left their mother. Daughter Tina, age four, was in the Oedipal stage where her dad could do no wrong and was therefore charmed. But Tim, age seven, was more allied with Mom and Tim refused to see Polly when she came by every week with Dad.

He was old enough to look beyond the presents and sense his mother's pain. Unfortunately, his father pressured him to love Polly because "your sister does." This only made Tim distance from his sister as well as his dad. The ill feelings continued after Greg divorced the

children's mother and married Polly. This caused a split with each child allying with the opposite parent. Tina and the mother have a negative relationship now.

### *How to Start Over*

Once you are divorced, how do you get going again? First, of course, you need time to mope and grieve (see chapter 12). But make yourself move on.

1. Connect to support systems.

You will probably feel antisocial, but force yourself to see a lot of family, friends, and take advantage of support groups such as Parents Without Partners.

2. Forgive yourself, your partner, and your parents.

Make contact with the parent you're distant from; now is a good time to deal with the emptiness you've felt since childhood.

3. Change your place and pace to get a new perspective

Take an adventure vacation, go river rafting or bicycling. Go on an archaeological dig sponsored by a museum; go somewhere you've always wanted to go—perhaps with your college alumni association.

4. Pamper yourself at a spa or join a gym.

Exercise combats depression by releasing endorphins, the body's own feel-good medication—and it will leave you looking better, too.

5. Find a new purpose.

Take on a new, meaningful volunteer activity. Teach reading to illiterate adults, tend to AIDS babies, work on a campaign or petition drive. It will renew your energy, make you feel good about yourself—and you might meet some great new people, as well.

6. Let Go.

It's over—don't clutch at negatives. After the dust clears, ask yourself: Am I still holding a grudge against my spouse? Remember, negative ties are stronger.

7. Act like a single.

Date. If no invitations are forthcoming, invite several pals over for dinner—and include someone you'd like to go out with. Have friends fix you up.

8. Don't be afraid to be hurt again.

Wisdom and change often grow out of pain. **Risk** and **hurt** are part of love. We can't love unless we put our hearts on the line. Remember, if you don't risk, *loneliness is the price you pay*. (Besides, now that you've mastered the skills in this book, you're better prepared!)

9. Use the upheaval of divorce to make you stretch and reach out for new challenges.

10. Give yourself hope.

Hang up a sign where you can see it every day, saying: **"I will find someone who loves me."**

## The Long Way Home

Even in the nastiest of breakups, divorce doesn't have to destroy families. Consider the case of Richard and Jane.

He hit her when he found out she was having an affair; she called the police. Now they were separating and he feared that he would never see his son and daughter again because their mother would turn them against him.

I invited Richard, Jaimie, age ten, and Molly, eight, to play a "Gilligan's Island" game with me. Jane refused to participate, which made her children feel torn and disloyal about loving both parents. Eventually, I kept her in telephone touch with the feelings her kids were expressing.

In Family Play Therapy, the children's feelings of being torn, disloyal, and forced into a triangle with their parents came through. They wanted to visit their father, whom they loved, but they were afraid they would be punished by their mother. They needed their mother very much. Who would take care of them if she got mad since their father was already gone? Jaime started the storytelling based on the "Gilligan" game.

"The father's out there on the island," he declared.

"Does he like it out there?" I asked.

"Nah—nobody likes him."

"A coconut fell on his head," Molly chimed in.

"He's hurt," said their father, Richard.



“So, who cares?” shrugged Jaimie.

“I care. He might be dead,” Molly whimpered.

“Where’s everybody else?” I asked.

“The boy and girl are over here in a house,” Jaimie replied.

“So’s the mother. She won’t let him help the father.”

“Why not?”

“He did a real bad thing and he had to be punished,” Jaimie said.

“The island is the father’s jail?” I asked.

“Yeah.”

“People get visitors in jail,” their father suggested.

“The girl could bring him food and water,” Molly said. (Molly was open about the affection she felt for her father and then admitted she was the little girl in the story.)

“The father would like that,” said Richard, his voice cracking with emotion.

“What would the mother do?” I asked.

“She’d be very mad,” admitted Molly. “Maybe kick the girl onto the island, too. But the girl doesn’t care.”

“The little boy and the little girl can’t get to the island anyway,” Jaimie said. “They can’t drive the boat.”

Sensing Jaimie’s fear that he had no power to maintain contact, I suggested that the father could be happy on the island because there was a nice beach and friendly animals and that he could drive the boat to the house and get the children to enjoy “Gilligan’s Island” with him.

At that point, Richard broke down and cried, apologizing profusely for hitting their mother. I suggested that when people do bad things, they do not have to be punished forever. I suggested that forgiving people for the bad things was also important. “Even God makes mistakes,” I said.

After giving Jaimie my permission to love and visit his father, I told Jaimie to also ask his mother’s permission to love and visit his father in the game. He did so with a little coaching from me, and she relented in real life. Jaimie also worked out his ambivalence by observing Molly’s positive response to her father in the game.

Eventually, through the testimony of an innocent child, the family found that their love outweighed their bitterness.

Their rapprochement lessened the odds that Molly and Jaimie or their children and grandchildren will have to live out their dangerous legacy. By working together to understand and forgive after adultery and divorce, this family bettered their children’s chance for happiness.

## ***Is Your Choice of Divorce Really Your Fear of Reconciliation?***

How you and your partner answer the next questions, how much effort you are willing to put in, will decide reconciliation or divorce.

These types of questions have to be asked of yourself and your partner before you can make any definite decision about divorce or reconciliation. If there are more yes's than no's you may be divorcing for the wrong reasons. If there are more no's than yes's, your marriage probably can be saved, so work harder.

1. Are you leaving mainly because you can't deal with the uncertainty any longer?
2. Are you leaving because of impulsiveness?
3. Are you leaving because you just want to take any action even if it is not the right action?
4. Are you leaving because of confusion or hurt?
5. Are you leaving mainly because of pessimism?
6. Are you leaving because of emotional exhaustion?
7. Are you leaving mainly because the hurt has *numbed* your love?
8. Do you feel not in love anymore, even though you fell in love once and you married for love?
9. Are you leaving mainly due to *stubbornness*, which is preventing you from rebuilding and reconciling?
10. Is your indecisiveness—not knowing who to choose—causing you to leave those whom you love?
11. Are you *provoking* your lover or your partner into making the decision to get out of this turmoil? Are you forcing divorce?
12. Are you leaving mainly because your partner refuses professional help? Are you aware that sometimes the *runaway* is slow to come around and you, the pursuer, need to lead?
13. Do you see that divorce doesn't solve your problem?
14. Do you feel blame gives you more control and you can't get beyond this?

15. Are you leaving mainly because you believe **getting rid of a person is getting rid of your problem?**
16. Are you divorcing before you have a *conscious* awareness of your emptiness, your partner's and your parents'?
17. Have you gone through the pain together now to avoid greater pain later whether you stay or leave?
18. Do you understand why it happened? Can you be sad together as you prepare to leave?
19. Do you understand the fragile nature of relationships and the skills necessary to do it differently?
20. Will you take this second chance either with your partner or someone new and do it differently?
21. Do you know divorce doesn't always end a relationship, especially if you have children?
22. Have you discussed divorce with your children?

### **Some Pertinent Questions**

#### **FOR THE BETRAYER:**

1. Is indecisiveness causing you to lose or leave those you love?
2. Are you still in denial? Do you feel you are not hurting anyone with your adulterous behavior?
3. Have you forgiven the betrayed and yourself?
4. Do you still idealize or eulogize the lover?

#### **FOR THE BETRAYED:**

1. Are you leaving because of the adulterer's denial and unwillingness unwillingness to stop the affair (most common and acceptable reason for divorce)?
2. Have you forgiven the adulterer and yourself?

#### **FOR BOTH:**

Is the selfish part of you still having trouble? Are you still unable to block out your own hurt and righteous thoughts, instead of empathizing with your partner by listening and validating?