

Nine Steps to Save Your Marriage

for Wives

**Husband's Module
TEXT**

W9-uwhm
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Husband's Module

You're in the right place if you are a husband whose wife's indiscretion has threatened your marriage. We're the people who help save marriages and avoid divorce. Your wife came to us because she wants to save her marriage.

Why This Module

We wrote this for husbands because we found it's critical that you clearly understand what your wife has said to you and exactly what she means. This is a deeply troubling time for you and your wife. Feelings are strong. Your thoughts race. Self-talk can come in torrents. It's sometimes difficult to get things across to each other.

So in this module we'll deal with these things:

1. What is your wife saying to you?
2. What will she learn from our course?
3. How will she be different — if you forgive her — and resume your marriage?
4. How divorce will affect your life if you choose not to forgive.
5. A few thoughts on the benefits of forgiveness.

What Is Your Wife Saying

Let's start with what your wife is saying to you:

- She is deeply apologetic. She is sorry that she risked her marriage and risked losing you.
- She feels mortified, ashamed, and embarrassed that her foolishness put her whole life at risk. She loves you. She wants your marriage to endure and she wants to learn to appreciate you and your marriage more.
- She now realizes that her indiscretions had nothing to do with you.
- She had unrealistic expectations about her marriage and relationship.
- She felt unsatisfied — not because you or the marriage was at fault.
- She had a woman's dreams of "happily ever after," what we call Barbie doll dreams.
- Real life isn't like that. Real life is coping with reality. She knows that now.
- We will teach her to cope, and how to create a really great relationship.
- She wants to build that relationship with you, and she'll do all the work. You'll get all the benefits.

Relationships

Each person creates his or her own experience of a relationship. We'll show you how that works in a minute. You may have created a better experience of your marriage than she did.

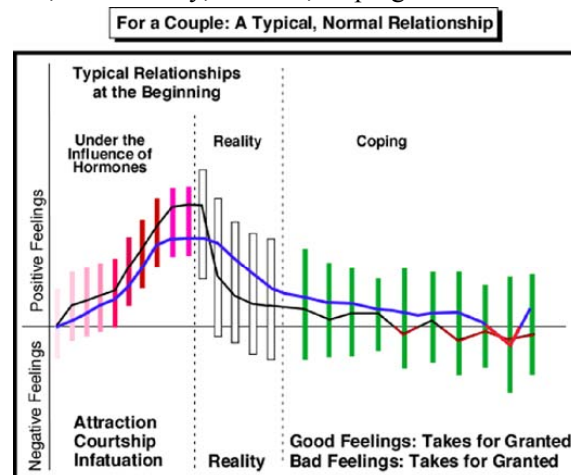
Her coping was not very good. She made herself dissatisfied, and her dissatisfaction made her vulnerable. She won't make that mistake again.

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We'll show you what we showed your wife, about relationships and coping. We won't be teaching you about coping here, but if you're interested, it's all taught in the books that come with your wife's course. Here is something about coping that your wife will be learning.

Relationship Diagram

This is a diagram of how relationships usually begin. The different phases are Attraction, Courting, maybe Infatuation, then Reality, and last, Coping.



Notice the vertical bars. These represent the range and strength of the feelings partners have. The top of any of the bars represents a strong good feeling, the bottom a bad feeling. At the beginning, most of your feelings are good. The few bad feelings — little niggling concerns — aren't very strong. So, on balance between your good feelings and bad feelings about your partner, your total feelings are well above the neutral line.

We tell her that if she experienced infatuation — wow — this is the stuff of romance and magic. If she was infatuated with you, she loved every little thing about you. You were the funniest, the cleverest, the handsomest. She was blinded by infatuation. Even failings were not so bad. She might think: "I never know when he'll show up. That means he's spontaneous. His belches are so cute! When he drinks too much, he gets so hilarious. When he ignores me, it shows that he's cool," and so on. The worst feelings she might have about you during this phase were better than the best feelings she might have had for any previous suitors.

Then, of course, reality kicks back in because infatuation only lasts two, or three, or maybe six months, and all of a sudden everything isn't quite so funny, or cute, or reliable, or caring.

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Coping

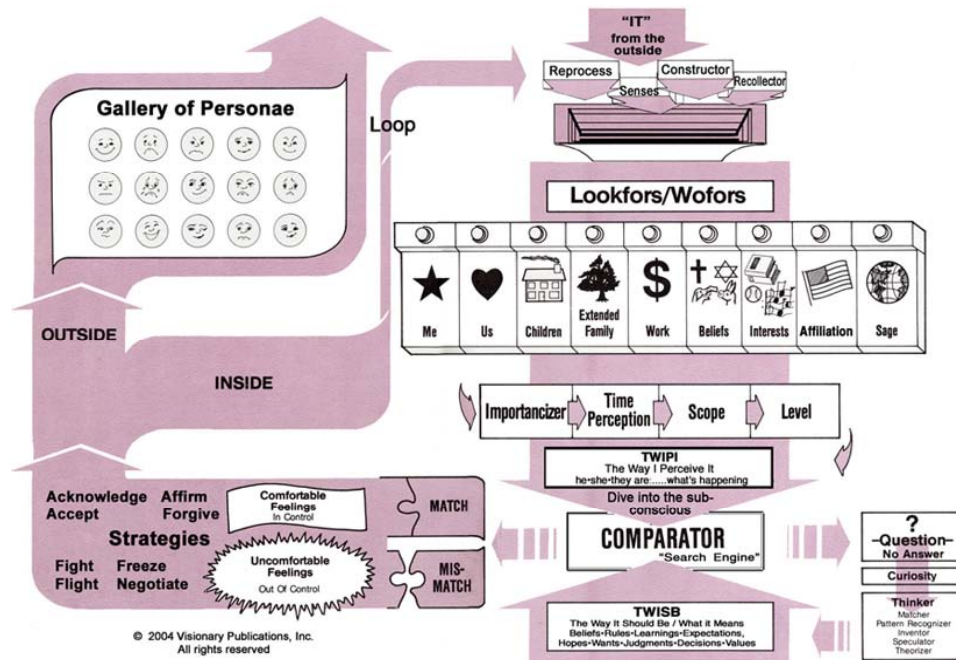
Coping is what happens for the rest of your lives. The keys to successful coping are having

- many good feelings — that are strong — and last
- and fewer bad feelings — milder and shorter.

How will we teach your wife to cope well? It's all about self-talk — the thoughts we have — and how we evaluate the thoughts that we have. You probably have noticed that your self-talk — those thoughts running around in your mind — has been in some turmoil lately; many thoughts flowing through your mind.

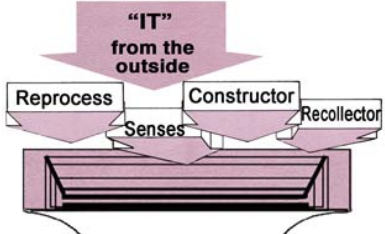






The Sage Model

Here's a diagram that we use in your wife's course. We don't teach it thoroughly in the short course your wife is taking, but it's all taught in the books with the course.



The Sage Model demonstrates that feelings are created by four thoughts. Here are brief highlights of the model to show you how our self-talk determines our feelings, actions, and responses. Glance through it and then continue to read something about each of its sections.

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| <p>Any given thought comes from either memory of past events (Recollector), from our senses (Senses), or from imagination about something that has happened or might happen in the future (Constructor).</p> |  |
| <p>One of your nine sub-parts grabs it.</p> |  |
| <p>You add some importance, time perspective, scope and level to the input.</p> |  |
| <p>And you have a thought (called TWIPI: The Way I Perceive It).</p> |  |
| <p>Your comparator is like a search engine. It takes the thought and evaluates it based on your storehouse of all of your past experiences.</p> |  |
| <p>Then you get a match or a mismatch, which creates a good feeling or a bad feeling. That feeling leads to a strategy.</p> |  |
| <p>Then you choose a persona, and you respond to the world.</p> |  |

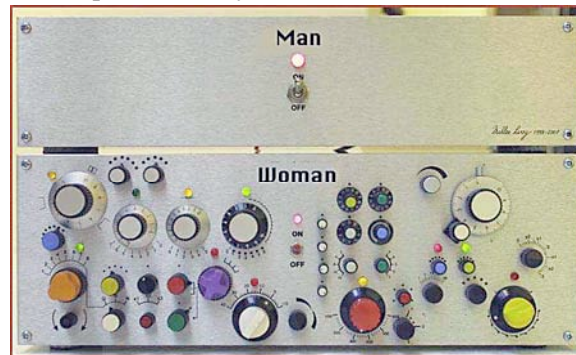
This happens so fast that you can't follow it in your conscious mind (your awareness).

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You'll see in a moment how this relates to coping, but first I want to ask you to notice that men are different from women. You and I understand that men are somewhat simpler to understand than women. Men might use logic where a woman might use emotion. That doesn't make them wrong; it just makes them different.

Here's a graphic that makes the point visually.



I apologize for using something funny when we're discussing something so serious, but I think it might help you be clearer about my next point.

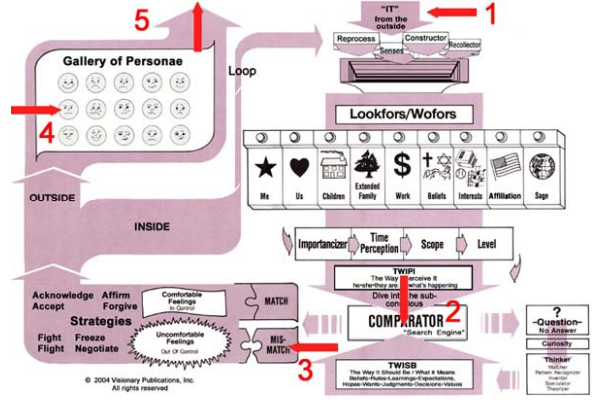
Strategies

How can one person cope well, while someone else copes poorly in the same situation? Here's the Sage Model again. Let's say a man and his wife have a fight. Nothing big, just a little spat. They yell at each other and then it's over. Let's see how a man might cope differently than a woman. We'll take the man's case first.

She says, "I've told you ten times to put the toilet seat down. You're very inconsiderate." The man says, "Get off my back! You're always nagging me." I'll trace the man's path first, using the Sage Model.

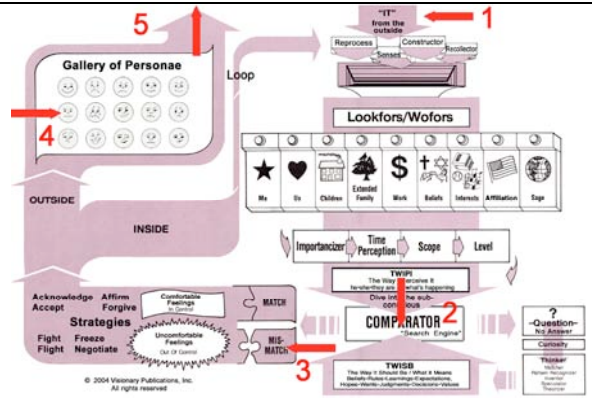
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1) He hears a complaint, and a judgment — toilet seat left up —he's inconsiderate.
 2) He processes that and 3) gets a bad feeling and he becomes angry. 4) He adopts a fighting attitude and facial expression and says 5) "Get off my back. You're always nagging me." Now, unless she wants to continue the fight, the exchange is over. He promptly forgets about it and goes back to what he was doing. Actually, in this example, his response wasn't very good but his coping was excellent. Tiny bad feeling — very short — not strong at all.



Now let's see how a woman might handle the same transaction and cope poorly.

1) She hears the attack; "You're always nagging me," and 2) switches to her Us-part, the relationship part. 3) She gives it lots of importance because her husband, who is important to her, is shouting at her.
 4) She hears "always" and gives it a huge scope and gets the thought "He thinks I'm a terrible wife because I'm *always* nagging him."
 5) Partly because she's a woman, and partly because she puts a lot of importance in whatever angers her husband (and because she believes he means "always" is nagging him), 6) she has a very strong "hurt" feeling. Then, because she is using her Us-part (which doesn't like to fight because it's bad for the relationship), she 7) stays inside her head and
 8) reprocesses her hurt feeling. We call it looping. Over and over she replays the



exchange — every time, feeling worse each time. Some women cope so poorly, they could take an exchange like that and pout or sulk for a day or two, creating extremely bad feelings, nursing them and keeping them around for a long time. Making bad feelings strong and long lasting is exactly the wrong recipe for good coping.

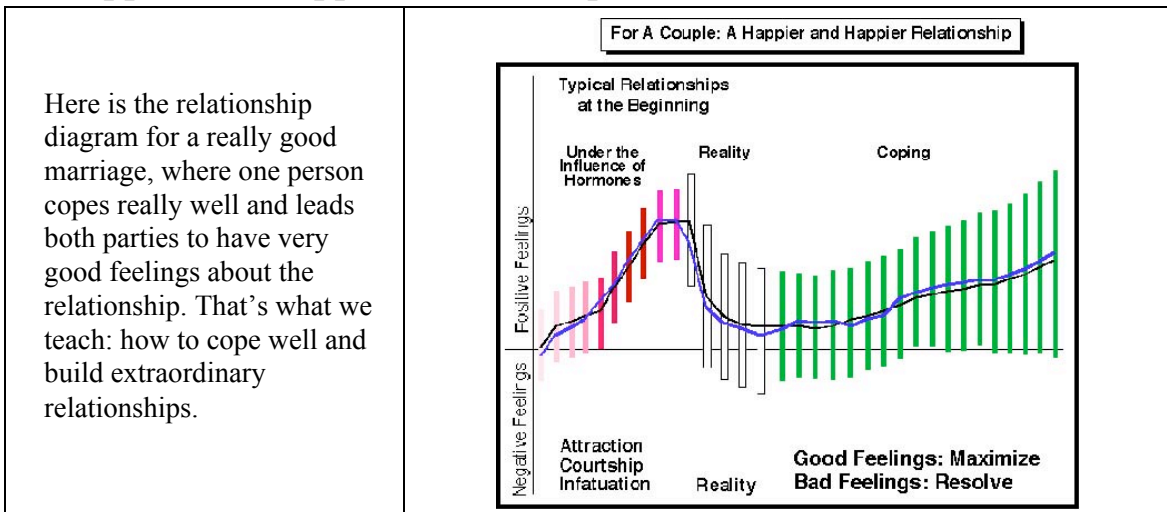
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We don't know exactly how your wife manages her coping, but we want you to understand that she now knows that poor coping can damage a relationship, and it's exactly the opposite of what she really wants. Her poor coping made her vulnerable, and she now realizes she was seeking something outside of your marriage because she was creating negative experiences of her marriage for herself.

Her pain at the thought of losing you, and her search for help, led her to us. We will teach her how to cope superbly well, so well, that she — all by herself — can learn to turn your relationship totally around, and make it loving, accepting, and forgiving.

If you'll let her back into your life, she'll make your marriage better than it ever was.

A Happier and Happier Relationship




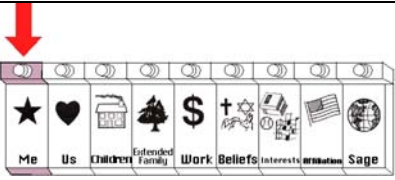
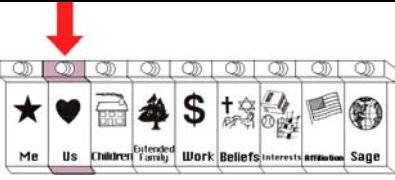
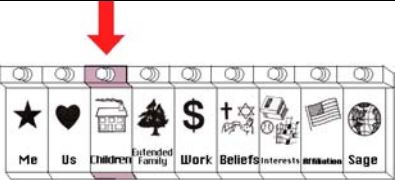
Forgiveness

If you won't forgive, then you're going to face the terrible specter of divorce. Everyone who has been through one will tell you it is awful. Divorce can cost a lot of money, be damaging to children, if you have them, pull family members apart, cause stress at work, split your friends, cause huge changes in your life and the lives of everybody that cares about you: your extended family and all of your friends.

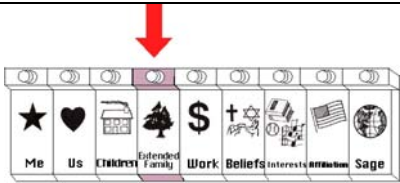
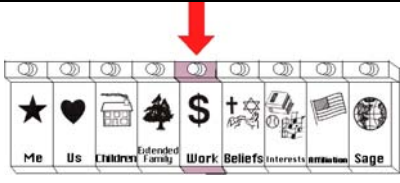
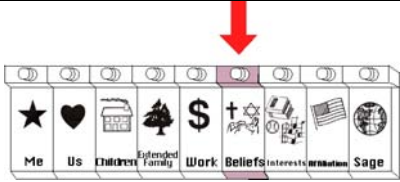
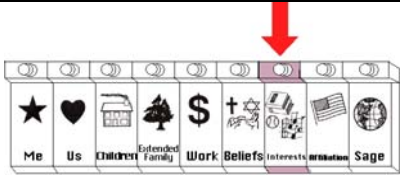
And worst of all, you'll never get over it. The pain of divorce would stay with you forever, and bring you nothing but pain and grief, because the self-talk will stay with you for the rest of your life. In the self-talk, you will blame your wife for the indiscretion, but you will blame yourself for the divorce.

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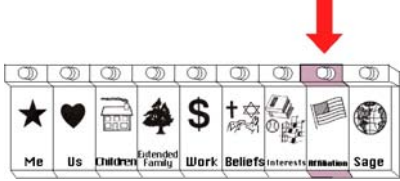
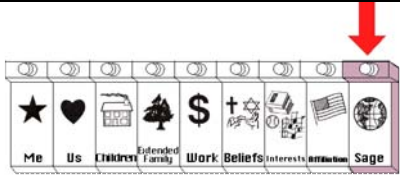
If Some Parts Won't Forgive

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| <p>Let me illustrate what I mean when I say you'll never get over it. Here are your parts, each with different needs. You've got one, maybe two parts that won't forgive, if you won't forgive.</p> |  |
| <p>This is your Me-part. This part cares only about you. "Me, me, me. I want what I want when I want it." This part has your ego, your need for status, power, and aggression. This part also keeps you alive and out of danger, and eating, and surviving. It's a vital, important and strong part, maybe the strongest part of you.</p> <p>Your Me-part is the one whose ego has been damaged by your wife's mistake. But all the other parts know that your Me-part is causing the divorce, choosing the divorce, and they'll never let your Me-part forget it.</p> |  |
| <p>Here's the Us-part that needs a partner in a relationship, the part that can put the needs of your partner ahead of your own.</p> <p>Your Us-part loves your wife, and will miss her terribly, and will keep talking about it to you inside your head. Your Us-part is very forgiving and wants to keep the marriage.</p> |  |
| <p>Here's the Children-part that needs children and puts the needs of children ahead of your own.</p> <p>Your Children-part knows the damage that divorce can do to children, and this part puts the needs of the children ahead of your own or your partner's. If you have children, this part is saying things like "Don't break up, it's bad for the kids, it could ruin them, they need both of you. You need to soft-pedal the ego thing and pay attention to what's good for the kids."</p> |  |

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| <p>Here's the Extended-family-part. It has a blood bond with siblings and parents, and respects the inter-family relationships with your in-laws.</p> <p>Your Extended-family-part will be yelling at you about the chaos a divorce would bring to both extended families. You'll lose part of your extended family, and that part will complain to you forever.</p> |  |
| <p>Here is your Work-part that has needs to contribute and achieve and will sometimes put the needs of the work ahead of the needs of yourself, partner, kids, or family.</p> <p>Your Work-part will tell you that divorce is stressful, it could affect your work, and odds are good that this part is feeling enough work stress already.</p> |  |
| <p>Here is your Beliefs-part, the part that can put the need to honoring your beliefs ahead of your own or other parts needs.</p> <p>Depending on your beliefs, your Beliefs-part may be with your Me-part, or against it. You may have some deeply held beliefs that fidelity is vitally important. You may also have some deeply felt beliefs about the value and importance of forgiveness. So, the beliefs part may vacillate and make internal comments on both sides of the question.</p> |  |
| <p>This is your Interests-part, the part that might put your need to go fishing, or play golf, or watch the big game ahead of the other parts needs.</p> |  |

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| <p>This is your Affiliation-part, that needs to have friends, neighbors, groups to be part of, and a nation to serve. This part will put the needs of the group, or the nation ahead of all other needs when called to do so.</p> <p>Your Affiliation-part will want to keep all your friends, and neighbors, and church groups, poker buddies, and other groups, many of which will be lost if you have to move, or if you get spread too thin on supporting two households.</p> |  |
| <p>Last, here is your Sage-part, your wisest part, that has the need to use your accumulated wisdom</p> <p>Your sage part won't say much, but if asked, it'll tell you that forgiveness is wise, and divorce is painful.</p> |  |

You're probably hearing all these voices and thoughts running through your head already, and based on everything we hear from people who have chosen divorce in your situation, the self-talk continues for the rest of your life. Not only that, but you can become defensive about your decision to divorce, and then you have inner arguments among your own parts, that can last a lifetime. And, failure to forgive means the pain of this episode will stay with you forever. The anger, the self-doubts, and the continuing pain will hurt for a very long time.

Forgiveness is a Wise Option

So, the more you consider your options, the wiser forgiveness becomes. If you won't forgive, you face a lifetime of pain and regret, and you've hurt a lot of people, and you're the one making the choice to do it.

If you forgive, and accept your wife's mistake as a human error brought on by poor coping on her part, then you'll get some really great benefits.

We'll teach her to cope well. Your relationship will be much happier for her and for you. She'll be more loving, accepting and appreciative of you than she ever was in the past. She'll respect and admire you for your generous forgiveness. You'll forge a stronger bond than you ever had before, as she learns good coping. As the relationship strengthens, she won't be tempted to look outside the relationship for what she already has with you.

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About Forgiveness

Here are some things about forgiveness that we will teach your wife in her course. So, if *you've* ever done anything within the relationship that can use some forgiving, notice how forgiving she'll be in the future. In the meantime these thoughts are for you.

“Failure to forgive is the severest form of self punishment.”

We'll end this with a list of additional quotations on forgiveness. Thanks for listening — Your wife loves you and wants your marriage to continue. She's willing to learn what it takes to make that happen. You're a very lucky man.

More Quotes

If I forgive, I am free to create my experience of my life with more loving thoughts, and fewer pained and angry thoughts.

Forgiveness is a modest price to pay to achieve peace of mind.

If I can forgive others, I can forgive myself.

Don't forgive someone because they deserve it; they may not. Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

Forgiveness does not change the past, but it enlarges the future.

Any man can seek revenge. It takes a king or prince to grant a pardon.

Forgiveness is a gift of great value, yet it costs nothing.

When a deep injury is done to us we will never recover until we forgive.

A good marriage is the union of two forgivers.

Forgiveness is a choice. Not a decision. It's an act of will.

Don't wait to forgive until you feel like it. You may never feel like it. Feelings may take time to heal after the choice of forgiveness is made.

Additional reading follows.

About Divorce — Additional Reading

Those who have researched divorces stemming from infidelity find there are significant differences between men and women who have been through the divorce experience.

Almost universally, both the men and women reported that in retrospect, divorce between a loving couple because of infidelity, was a mistake. They almost universally wished they had been more forgiving, or that their spouse had talked them out of it. In summary, they felt the divorce ruined, to one degree or another, both of their lives.

When men and women were asked, "What would it have taken for you to forgive your spouse and continue the marriage?" the answers were different for husbands and wives.

Here is what the men said they would have need to hear in order to forgive their wives, and continue the marriage:

- A very persuasive apology: an admission that the infidelity was foolish, wrong, and hurtful.
- That his wife did not blame her transgressions on him. They didn't want to hear, "I only did what I did because he..."
- Convincing evidence that it would never happen again.
- Strong evidence that the wife really wants to save the marriage.
- Some indication that a reunited marriage would be more fun and more satisfying than it had been before (less criticalness, more loving and fun, less fighting).
- Recognition that her acts may have been unforgivable, and that he would be a very generous and loving person to forgive them.

Here is what the women said they would have needed to hear in order to forgive their husband for his indiscretions:

- A very persuasive apology: he has to be truly sorry, or forget reconciliation.
- That his transgressions weren't because she was an unsatisfactory or unsatisfying wife.
- Strong indication that her husband really loves her, and wants to save the marriage.

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- Persuasive evidence that he was committed to their marriage for life, and nothing that might happen in the future would jeopardize that. (The research showed that women, in general, were not as interested in promises of "never again," because they tend to think men are not capable of keeping those promises. The fear was that any possible future episode could break up their marriage at a time when the wife was less likely to find another relationship. Another way to put this would be the spoken or unspoken agreement, "If I forgive you now and take you back, you won't take my best years and then dump me when I'm old and less likely to form a new relationship.")
- A clear commitment that if she forgives him this transgression, he will never, ever, ever expose her in the future to public humiliation or a sexually transmitted disease. (Many women evidently think that once an adulterer, a man is likely to be an adulterer again, and if she accepts him back the first time, she asks that he never expose her to public humiliation by being indiscrete, careless, or reckless, and that he be extremely careful to not expose her to potentially life-threatening diseases like AIDS or the embarrassment of STDs.)
- Recognition that his acts were really difficult to forgive and that he would appreciate it forever, if she would forgive him and resume the marriage. (The view seemed to be that a man could promise lifelong appreciation and mean it, whereas he might not be trusted to promise lifelong fidelity.)