

Nine Steps to Save Your Marriage

for Husbands

**Wife's Module
TEXT**

by Kenneth Johnston

W9-uhwm



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Wife's Module

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

Why This Module

We wrote this for wives because we found it's critical that you clearly understand what your husband has said to you and exactly what he means. This is a deeply troubling time for you and your husband. 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 husband saying to you?
2. What will he learn from our course?
3. How will he be different — if you forgive him — 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 Husband Saying

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

- He is deeply apologetic. He is sorry that he risked his marriage and risked losing you.
- He feels mortified, ashamed, and embarrassed that his foolishness put his whole life at risk. He loves you. He wants your marriage to endure and he wants to learn to appreciate you and your marriage more.
- He now realizes that his indiscretions had nothing to do with you.
- He had unrealistic expectations about his ability to resist temptation.
- He felt like something was missing, not because you or the marriage was at fault.
- He had a man's vulnerability, and he gave in to it. He wasn't thinking.
- We will teach him to think, wisely, before he does anything reckless again..
- We will teach him to cope, and how to create a really great relationship.
- He wants to build that relationship with you, and he'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 he did.

His coping was not very good. He made herself dissatisfied, and his dissatisfaction made him vulnerable. He won't make that mistake again.

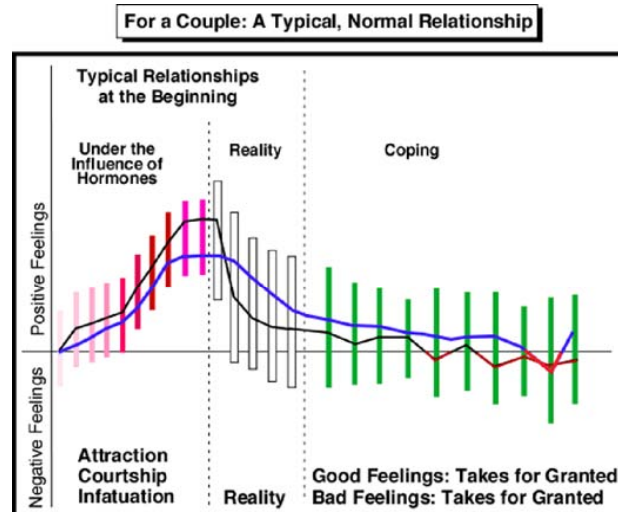
We'll show you what we showed your husband, about relationships and coping. We won't be teaching you about coping here, but if you're interested, it's all taught in the

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books that come with your husband's course. Here is something about coping that your husband 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 say that if you experienced infatuation — wow — this is the stuff of romance and magic. If you were infatuated with him, you loved every little thing about him. He was the funniest, the cleverest, the handsomest. You were blinded by infatuation. Even his failings were not so bad. You might think: "I never know when he'll show up. That means he's spontaneous. 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 you might have about him during this phase were better than the best feelings you 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.

The Relationship Diagram

The purpose of attraction, courting, and infatuation are simply to help humans find a mate, and bond into a couple. Once a couple is formed, attraction and flirting are natural

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and pleasant to feel from other women, but are not to be acted upon. Genes, chromosomes, and hormones prepare males for a lifetime of responding to attraction and flirting. Adulthood, maturity, and marriage are often enough to allow men to defend against their impulses. But, as in your husband's case, sometimes it takes a little more direct instruction. We'll teach him to look! but don't touch! Between your reaction to his lapse, and our instruction we can be pretty sure he'll learn. It's clear that you've gotten his attention. Good for you.

Coping

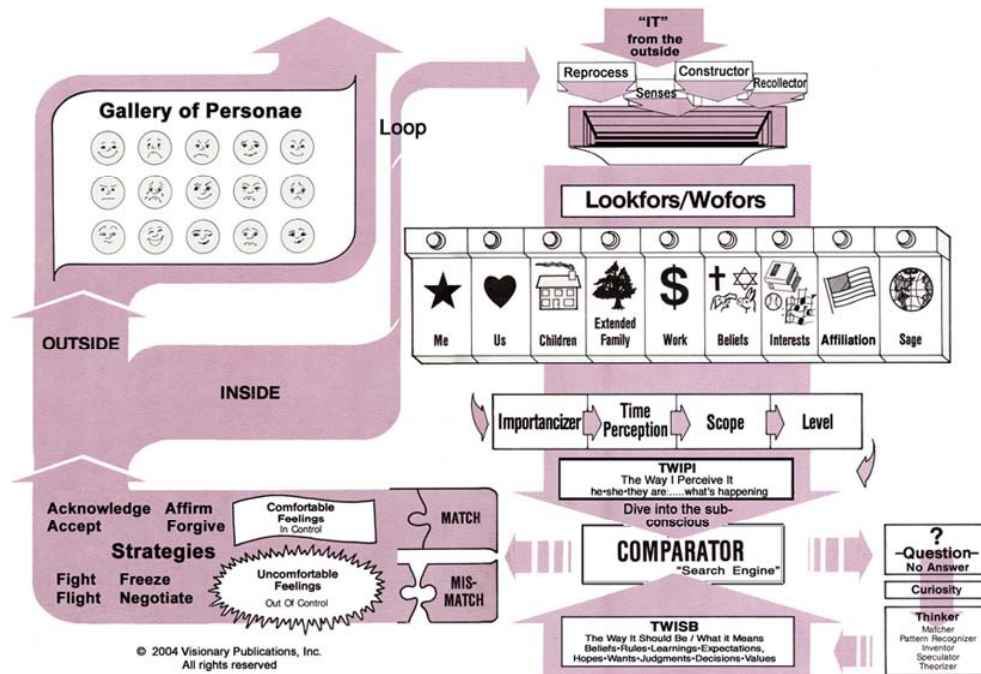
Coping is what happens for the rest of your lives. The keys to successful coping are having

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

How will we teach your husband 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.

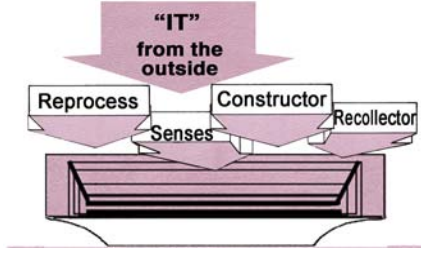
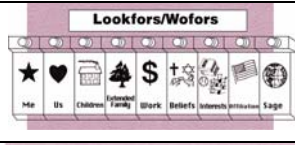
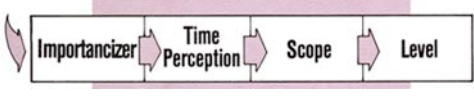
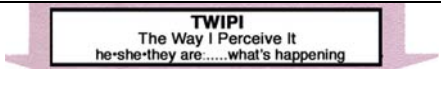
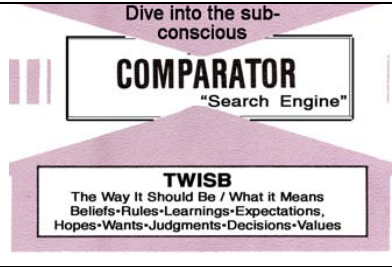
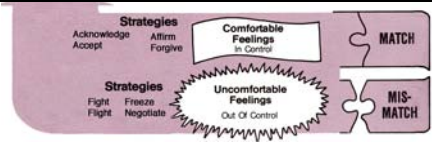
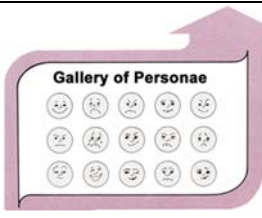
The Sage Model

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



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The Sage Model demonstrates that feelings are created by the thoughts we have. Here are some of the 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.

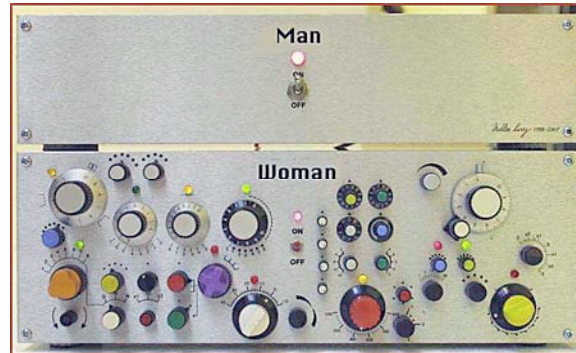
<p>Any given thought comes from either memory of past events (Recollector), from our senses (Senses), or from imagination about something that has happened or might happen in the future (Constructor).</p>	
<p>One of your nine sub-parts grabs it.</p>	
<p>You add some importance, time perspective, scope 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 generally think they 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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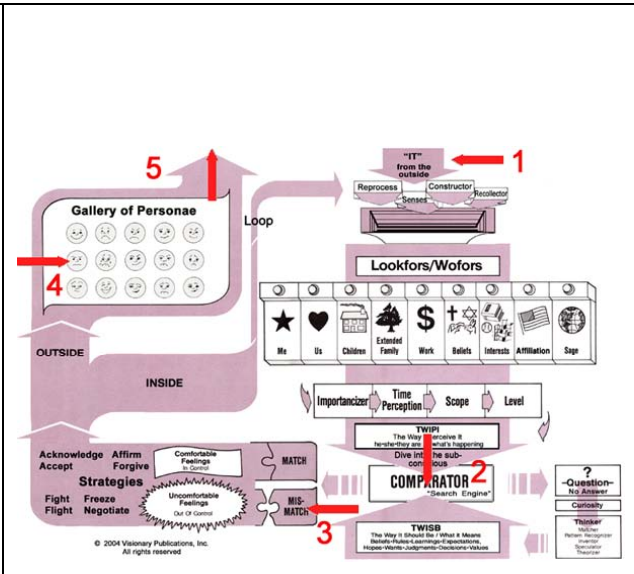
- 1) He hears a complaint, and a judgment — toilet seat left up—he's inconsiderate.
- 2) He processes that and
- 3) gets a bad feeling and he becomes angry.

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.

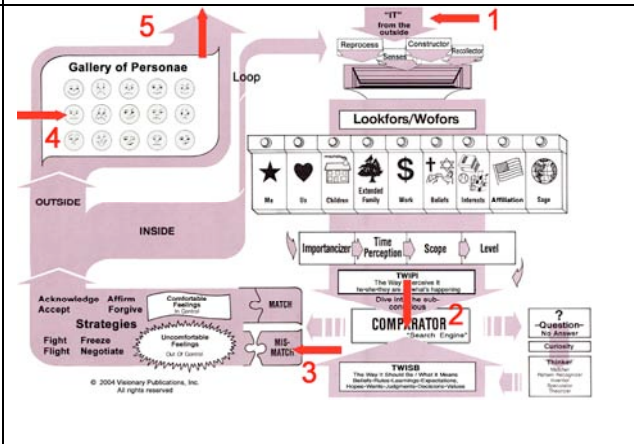


Now let's see how a woman might handle the same transaction and cope poorly.

- 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 feels things stronger than men tend to do, 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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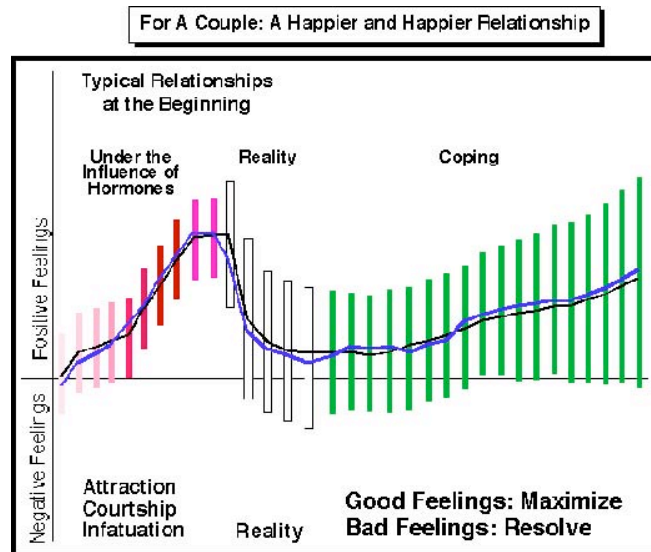
We don't know exactly how your husband manages his coping, but we want you to understand that he now knows that poor coping can damage a relationship, and it's exactly the opposite of what he really wants. His poor coping made him vulnerable, and he now realizes he was seeking something outside of your marriage because he was creating negative experiences of his marriage for himself.

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

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

A Really Good Relationship

Here is the relationship diagram for a really good marriage, where one person copes really well and leads both parties to have very good feelings about the relationship. That's what we teach: how to cope well and build extraordinary relationships.




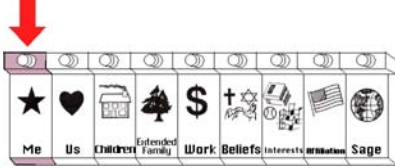
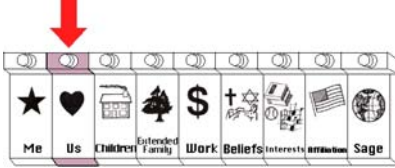
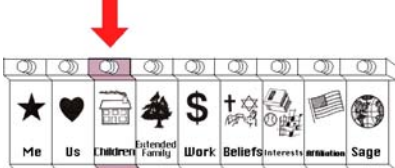
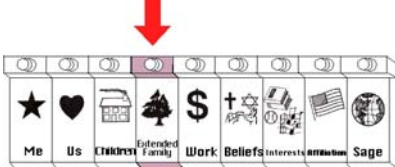
Forgiveness

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.

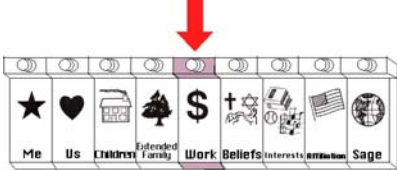
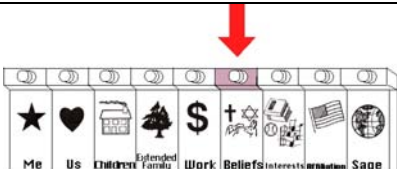
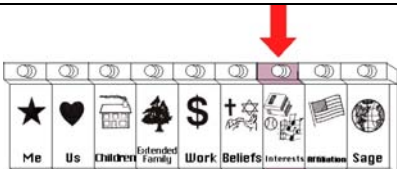
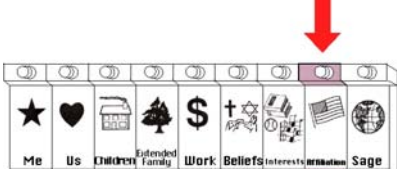
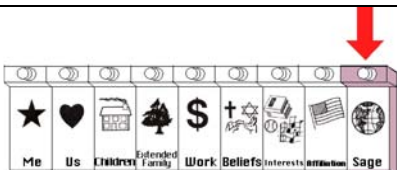
And worst of all, you'll never get over it. The pain of divorce would stay with you forever, and bring you nothing but pain and grief, because the self-talk will stay with you for the rest of your life. In the self-talk, you will blame your husband for the indiscretion, but you will blame yourself for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

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If Some Parts Won't Forgive

<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 sense of pride, 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 husband'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 husband, and will miss him 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>	
<p>Here's the Extended-family-part that 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>	

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<p>Here is your Work-part that has needs to contribute and achieve and whether you work in the workplace or at home, 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 part's 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 needs of your hobby, or reading, or learning, ahead of the other part's needs.</p>	
<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, bridge friends, and other groups, many of which will be lost if you have to move, or if you get spread too thin on finances.</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

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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 husband's mistake as a human error brought on by poor coping on his part, then you'll get some really great benefits.

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

The Research

We shared our research on wives who have forced a divorce following a husband's infidelity, with your husband. We'll share it with you as well. For starters, virtually all of them regretted their failure to forgive and the pain of the divorce. But, we'll leave it up to you to research that question for yourself. Here's what we learned from those women that we told your husband. Almost all of them said that they wished their husband, or somebody, had talked them out of divorce. Notice that that is exactly what your husband is doing his very best to do, for you.

About Forgiveness

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

Failure to forgive is the severest form of self punishment.

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.

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

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More Quotes

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.

Thank you for taking your time to read this module. If you wish, there are two pages of additional reading, that follow.

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.
- 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

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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.)