

The Relationship Institute

www.therelationshipinstitute.org

The Three Infidelities

Definition of Infidelity: a unilateral decision to breach a relationship's overt or assumed agreement of sexual and/or emotional exclusivity.

An infidelity is a divining rod to the individual and couples impasse in growth.

All infidelities occur at predictable times in relationships- when the couple is in the developmental phase of Soured Symbiosis.

Two subsets of infidelities:

1. *Affairs*: an infidelity that denotes an affectional relationship that may or may not include a sexual relationship.
2. *Sexual Liaisons*: an interpersonal interaction entered into expressly for the purpose of sexual satisfaction; it can be for the satisfaction of one or both parties.

The Three Infidelities:

Each type of infidelity is fueled and initiated by an unrecognized and untamed need- fear, loneliness or anger.

Infidelity of Fear

- The individual is controlled by fears that come from early childhood experiences.
- There are three fears that power an Infidelity of Fear:
 - the fear of intimacy (i.e. their fear of being subsumed in a relationship),
 - a fear of commitment (i.e. comes from much early criticism),
 - or a fear of being unworthy of love (i.e. the experience and subsequent belief that one is not loveable).
- The unresolved Family of Origin (FoO) issues and beliefs are brought to the surface by the present relationship and its necessary demands.
- These infidelities occur early in the relationship and there are usually many infidelities.
- The individual is characterized by low Self Intimacy, limited Conflict Intimacy and resulting variable Affection Intimacy.

Infidelity of Loneliness

- The individual is eventually controlled by a sense of “coming alive” after being in a relationship that has been hamstrung by limited and unsuccessful Conflict Intimacy.
- Usually the loneliness is minimized as the person often unwittingly lowers his/her expectations of closeness and satisfaction in the relationship.

- The sense of loneliness in the primary relationship “goes underground” until the person is surprised to find him/herself attracted to another with feelings of being alive.
- An infidelity of loneliness occurs often after five+ years and is not intentionally sought.
- The infidelity is characterized by low Conflict Intimacy and low Self Intimacy. The Affection Intimacy can appear to be satisfactory.

Infidelity of Anger

- The individual is controlled by a distorted belief that relationships should fulfill all of one’s needs and that relationship disappointments are unacceptable.
- The individual is controlled by a belief that s/he has to protect him/herself. And this belief is longstanding from early life experiences.
- The infidelities occur at any point in the relationship and there are many.
- Low Self Intimacy and low Conflict Intimacy are equal partners in fueling the infidelities.

Why some partners do not betray:

- Sufficient level of Self Intimacy
- Sufficient level of Conflict Intimacy
- Significant level of empathy
- FoO does not include betrayal
- Punitive super ego
- Fear of abandonment