

# CONTENTS

Getting Started: A Note from the Author	9
Chapter 1: <i>Five Classes of Emotional and Sexual Betrayal</i>	13
<b>SECTION 1: THE RISKS OF WHO YOU KNOW</b>	
Chapter 2: <i>The Dangerous Partner Profile</i>	35
Chapter 3: <i>The Emotionally Charged Friendship</i>	53
Chapter 4: <i>The Old Adolescent Romance (or Secret Crush)</i>	59
Chapter 5: <i>The Seductive Personality Pattern</i>	63
<b>SECTION 2: THE RISKS WITHIN YOUR HOME</b>	
Chapter 6: <i>The Stuff You Brought with You</i>	75
Chapter 7: <i>The Seasons You Pass Through</i>	83
Chapter 8: <i>The Story You Two Have Created</i>	95
Chapter 9: <i>The Style You Have Perfected</i>	111
Chapter 10: <i>The Dance Steps You Both Want to Change</i>	123
<b>SECTION 3: THE RISK OF REMODELING YOUR RELATIONSHIP</b>	
Chapter 11: <i>Attitudes Within and Without</i>	139
Chapter 12: <i>Activities That Reignite the Passion</i>	155
Afterword	169
Appendix	177
Resources	181
Notes	187



# FIVE CLASSES OF EMOTIONAL AND SEXUAL BETRAYAL

**CLOSE CALLS ARE VIRTUALLY** all alike. They begin with an attraction to somebody other than your spouse that causes you to think about your time with this individual simply for the pleasure that it provides you. Maybe you're having regular meetings with someone of the opposite sex for business, shared interests, or volunteer opportunities.

In other words, you start to daydream about this person. It is not just the thought: "Boy, is he good looking," or "Wow, she's gorgeous," but rather it is the reflection on the individual that results from the initial contact.

Somewhere in this phase, a mere friendship ceases and a close call starts. Now you're saving topics of conversation for this person. Your conversations progress from topics related to your mutual interest to far-ranging ones—and soon into personal issues. The reflection on personal life will cultivate the relationship. You scheme and plan on how to be together more often, for more time, without raising anyone's suspicions. There may be rituals unique to this relationship. For example:

- "Hank and I meet at the break room for coffee at nine every Monday morning and talk about our weekend. If I get there first, I pour him coffee in that mug he

likes. I make sure to keep plenty of hazelnut cream in the fridge since that's his favorite.”

- “Judy and I always have a lot of business matters to talk about, so we started having lunch at the restaurant across the street so there are no distractions. I call her cell to let her know when I'm ready to leave; that way, we can just slip out without anyone interrupting.”

These types of relationships easily become close calls. As time goes on, there is mutual admiration and a growing number of shared secrets.

At this point, many folks go into denial about how much the relationship is beginning to mean to them and may get to the final phase before recognizing how close he or she really came to having an affair.

### **Tracking the Phases of a Close Call (or an Affair)**

Hank's and Judy's friends (above) may not have realized the extent of their feelings for the other person. It was just friendship, or just a business relationship. But if left to progress, these relationships could easily have progressed from friendship to the point that both parties will share their mutual feelings of attraction for each other—the start of an emotional affair.

Let's look now at the four different phases of this dangerous sequence:

- 1. GROWING MUTUAL ATTRACTION**
- 2. ENTANGLEMENT**
- 3. DESTABILIZATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP**
- 4. TERMINATION AND RESOLUTION**

#### *PHASE 1: Growing Mutual Attraction*

Many times when men and women who have had affairs are telling their story, they begin by saying, “It all started so innocently . . .”

After all, most people who have an affair are not out looking to do so. But because we all are sexual creatures, created by God with that dimension of our personality, some

sexual attraction toward another person (even though we are not married to that person) is natural. Those who cannot accept that such feelings are normal will often deny their existence. Christians especially hate to acknowledge this sexual attraction. Denial becomes the defense mechanism of choice.

Yet denial doesn't solve anything. Just because you don't acknowledge, even to yourself, that you feel the attraction doesn't mean that the attraction has stopped developing. In fact, it usually intensifies the problem. When you're in denial, the desire to be around the other person "goes underground," and contact with that person is often initiated unconsciously.

### *PHASE 2: Entanglement*

This is the infatuation phase. It begins with verbal signals. That's a good reminder for married couples!

Fantasy creeps in here very quickly too. Eventually, Phase 1 (Growing Mutual Attraction) moves to Phase 2 (Entanglement) when the future adulterer shares these feelings of attraction with their potential partner. Those feelings might be couched in an intended compliment such as, "If I wasn't married, I would think of marrying you," but nevertheless the message to the dangerous partner is that you *are* thinking about him or her.

Those who have slipped from a close call into a full-blown affair have told me that this (mutual acknowledgment) is the point at which everything changes: the emails, voicemails, verbal comments, meetings, lunches, all become saturated and supercharged with emotion. They mean way too much—much more than they should. Still, the denial of it all allows the emotional intensity to grow to the point that it appears that a "spontaneous combustion" occurs the first time they become sensual with each other. The denial is so powerful that if you told this adulterer-to-be that within twenty-four hours he would violate his own values, threaten his marriage, and risk his career, he would deny it.

### *PHASE 3: Destabilization of the Relationship*

Most affairs, even one-night stands, have "on-again, off-again" periods when the partners withdraw from each other and try to stop the relationship, even on the single night they might be together. This behavior is called "intermittent reinforcement,"

and B.F. Skinner argued that it is one of the most powerful of conditional practices. When continued over long periods of time, these emotional attachments can become so intense and consuming that physical health suffers and emotional well-being and job production decline, and the individuals can no longer think rationally, often destroying other lifelong friendships.

Being with this other person brings a sense of normalcy, some healing to life's hurts, as well as comfort and security. This other person causes them to feel cared for and cuts them loose from all the world's responsibilities. The two of them have created their own little world. This is what we all yearn for in our marriages—the “I want to be with you” feeling, not the “I’m too busy; I don’t care what you do” response. It is the desire to be wanted!

In healthy marriages, there is a balance between these feelings and the compulsivity that is so apparent in an affair. But on the other hand, the one thing I find so intriguing when I talk with adulterers is what they all seem to have in common: the passion they have for their partners. I cannot tell you how many times I’ve thought when listening to their stories, *If I could just figure out a way to help couples develop these same feelings for each other on some kind of a regular basis, then all the need for marital counselors would disappear!*

Actually, the destabilization process reflects what can happen in a good marriage. In their effort to return to normalcy, most affair partners in this stage try to refocus on the demands of life. But due to all the mixed feelings in the relationship (fear, guilt, infatuation, shame, anger, exhaustion, and so on), they cling to each other in unhealthy ways for reassurance. However, if a marriage can take the good from this process—the periodic intense passion and love for each other—and leave all the desperation and negative feelings out of the picture, the married couple will be on their way to building a great relationship. It is the *practice*, not the *person*, that needs to be added to the marriage.

#### *PHASE 4: Termination and Resolution*

A good marriage doesn’t have to go through this phase. Most affairs do. Even those couples whose affairs resulted in marriage have a difficult time building and maintaining the trust, respect, and safety that the affair initially appeared to provide.

Without commitment, sexual passion creates an artificial sense of closeness. It is the unrealized sexual satisfaction (sexual tension) in a dating relationship that provides the energy for the couple to work through the differences in their backgrounds, their goals and values, and so forth—this is how couples build a solid foundation. Too often, though, these same couples, after marriage, don't continue creating the passion that an affair provides. They had it once and they let it die.

I think this is why most unfaithful spouses coming back to their marriage work so hard at rebuilding what they once had. It might sound very strange to you, but in most cases the passion of the affair was what was missing in the marriage.

## **Five Classes of Affairs**

Interestingly there are five types of extramarital affairs. Counselors find that these descriptions help them portray for their clients more clearly how an affair developed and ended.

Knowing the details about these types of affairs will help you see just where there might be risk of falling into an affair. The stories that illustrate each affair will show you how real people can so easily get swept up to the point of being unfaithful.

### *CLASS 1: One-Night Stand*

This type of affair is usually unplanned. It often involves partners who didn't even know each other prior to the affair. It is done in utmost secrecy, and it often, though not always, results from alcohol consumption. This type of affair is self-serving and contains no emotional involvement or desire to perpetuate closeness. It has all the components of a "first love" type of sexual experience. Our sexually saturated culture feeds especially into this type of affair, and it is the one-night stand that usually results in immediate and intense remorse. Bill's story illustrates how quickly a one-night stand type of affair crept up on him.

Exhausted, Bill decided to return to his hotel for a brief nap prior to grabbing a bite to eat in preparation for the evening's seminar. Upon arriving in his room, he noticed the red message light flashing; his wife had been trying to reach him throughout the afternoon.

When he called her back, he realized from her tone of voice that Gwen was both angry and hurt that he had to be gone from home again. As he hung up the phone in

FIVE TYPES OF EXTRAMARITAL AFFAIRS					
	<b>CLASS 1 One-night Stand</b>	<b>CLASS 2 Entangled Affair</b>	<b>CLASS 3 Sexual Addiction</b>	<b>CLASS 4 Add-on Affair</b>	<b>CLASS 5 Reconnection</b>
<b>Description</b>	One-night stand	Addictive relationship	Multiple partners	Satisfies a specific void	Activates old infatuation
<b>Development</b>	Immediate	Gradual	Impulsive	Gradual, focus on marital void	Rapid redevelopment
<b>Emotional Involvement</b>	None	Intense	None	Intense, with narrow boundaries	Intense, adolescent memories
<b>Sexual Activity</b>	Single experience; intense, lustful, passionate	Only much later in relationship; after friendship established	Immediate with multiple partners and increasingly distorted sexual activity	Irregular, often without mutual enjoyment	Often within 60 days of reconnection
<b>Family of Origin Deficit</b>	None	Emotional deficits create vulnerability	Sometimes an influence	Emotional deficits create vulnerability	None
<b>Remorse/Repentance</b>	Usually immediate and intense	Initially none; initial grief is for lost relationship; later grief is possible	Only after acting out internal tension builds to another episode	Regular, but marital void "drives" reconnection	Adolescent memories confuse a good marriage
<b>Recovery</b>	Can be immediate with forgiveness	Long-term process with marital therapy	Sobriety first; then individual therapy; later marital help	Long-term process with marital therapy	Long-term with marital therapy
<b>Duration</b>	One night	18-24 months	Years, with periods of binge behavior	Long-term with sporadic contact	Unpredictable

These patterns of sexual betrayal have been around since humankind populated the earth. They are not new in the twenty-first century, though we are inclined to think that sexual betrayal is a fresh threat created by our culture, encouraged by Hollywood, and made prevalent by divorce. No doubt the digital connection has made it worse, but sexual secrets have existed for centuries.

discouragement, Bill reflected on how exciting it had been when he had taken this new job several years ago. The pay increase was phenomenal, the relocation in new quarters sounded attractive, but the side effects—the family concerns, mainly—had been pretty negative.

He tried to fall asleep, but now his mind was racing and he couldn't. Finally, in frustration, he jumped off the bed and decided to go eat a little early—maybe that would make him feel better. Due to the early hour, the restaurant was nearly empty. Maybe here in this peaceful spot he could find some rest from all the turmoil he was feeling inside.

*Why did Gwen have to call and dump all that stuff on me anyway?* He felt bad that she had to be home alone, but he also felt angry because they had decided to take the new career position together, both of them knowing a lot of travel would be involved. Why couldn't she live up to her part of the bargain?

He felt torn. And the more he thought about it, the more stirred up he got inside. Scanning the menu didn't help either. What normally would have been a fun part of his day—enjoying some good food—had suddenly turned flat.

Only after the waiter departed did Bill notice the attractive woman sitting across the aisle and down one booth. She was busy making notations on some reports. Unaware of his glance, she remained engrossed in her work.

Wow, she looked so in control of what she was doing, so professional and, Bill had to admit, quite attractive. He couldn't help but notice that she wasn't wearing a wedding ring. She was quite a bit younger than he was. Somebody's going to be lucky to have her as a wife someday, he thought.

His mind drifted back to Gwen and how she used to appear so efficient and attractive when they first met. But family wear and tear had taken its toll. Then again, he mused, he wasn't all he used to be either. He cast another glance at the woman and, as if by some magic cue, she looked up at the same time. The meeting of their eyes frightened him, and he immediately looked away.

In the moments that followed, Bill couldn't believe the sudden rush of emotion he felt. He hadn't felt so anxious since he was in high school. He didn't even know this woman; he'd only seen her five minutes ago. Irrationally, he felt sure that she could see his heart pounding wildly in his chest.



*Get a grip. Stop acting so foolish and juvenile.* He tried to change the focus of his thoughts. He had no luck. Over his coffee cup, he found himself glancing at her again. From then on, it was just a matter of time before their eyes connected.

She smiled, and he reciprocated. She started some innocent small talk across the empty aisle; they were both on business trips, both in sales. Innocently, she asked whether he cared to join her at her table. Why not? It was nice to meet a fellow business traveler in a near-empty restaurant. Amazingly, Bill found himself thoroughly enjoying the stranger's company. She often traveled on business and was married too. They had a little wine and a few laughs with their supper. Like cool water on parched ground, Bill soaked up her company and felt thoroughly refreshed by the time the checks came.

When she invited him to her room for an after-dinner drink, he knew he shouldn't go, that in fact he had probably gone too far already. For a brief instant he teetered on the knife's edge of the decision. But in his confused mind he didn't much care anymore about keeping the rules. *I haven't felt this alive and vibrant in years. I'll accept her offer, just this once. I'll miss the seminar, but I can always order the DVD. This won't get out of hand.*

But it did get out of hand. A few hours later, all those alive and vibrant feelings were gone. He had lost all control in the intoxication of the moment. As he rushed to dress and depart later that evening, she was hurt that he was leaving so quickly and not spending the night; he was angry at her and furious at himself. He felt so full of turmoil that he thought he would explode. How he hated himself for what he had done.

### *CLASS 2: Entangled Affair*

This type of affair develops gradually. The emotional involvement is intense; perhaps there are family-of-origin deficits that contribute to the emotional need that has been fed by this more complex relationship. Such an affair might last for a year or even two. Sexual activity is not immediate, as in a one-night stand, but occurs only later in the relationship, after a friendship is clearly established. The story of Rob and Becky and Becky's boss, George, illustrates this type of affair.

Rob was in graduate school at night and working full-time. Becky was doing quite well in her career and had enough going on that she was able to hide her disappointment in Rob's overinvolvement in his work and studies. They had talked about this season in their lives beforehand, and both knew that it was going to be tough.

But somehow Becky just couldn't help feeling utterly unimportant to her husband and left out of Rob's daily life. She told herself, *Once school is over it'll get better. Better to go along now than to rock the boat. Rob has enough to worry about without a whining wife added.* So she tried to hang on and wait for the situation to improve.

Instead, it got worse. When graduate school was over, Rob began to study intensively for state certification. Licensing would take another two years of internship. When that began to sink in, Becky started to feel as if she were at the end of her rope. *Another two years? I don't know if I can last that long; I'm dying on the vine.*

She tried to discuss her feelings of desperation, isolation, and emotional fatigue with Rob, but there was so little time. So she shared her frustration and disappointment with her girlfriends at work. If Rob wouldn't listen, at least they would.

Apparently one of them mentioned it to George, her boss. George called Becky into his office one afternoon and gently probed about how she and Rob were doing. Becky didn't intend to, but right then and there she broke down and wept. George seemed so kind and understanding. He even offered to take her out to dinner that night while Rob was at school. Tearfully, she accepted.

Soon their dinners together became a regular feature in Becky's needy life. Their times together made work more pleasant, and it gave her something to look forward to, instead of the lonely evenings to which she was accustomed. Rob never got home earlier than 10:00 p.m. and was usually so exhausted that he really didn't seem interested in hearing about her day anyway.

As Becky and her boss got to know each other better, they began to really hit it off. Before long, they started exchanging little hugs upon separating after dinner. Though she felt guilty about it, Becky found herself thinking about him more and more. She valued their newly escalated relationship a lot—maybe too much. But she tried to put her worries out of her mind.

George apparently felt the same way she did. One night at dinner, he revealed his feelings for her, and she had to admit that she felt the same for him. That evening when they left the restaurant, they decided to go to his apartment, and there they lost all control. Becky hurried home late at night and felt lucky to arrive before Rob did.

After that, she abandoned her restraint. Her life became centered around George and the time she could spend with him. For the first time in years, she felt alive and in love. She was beside herself with infatuation and found herself thinking constantly of ways to make their relationship more fun and exciting. She bought new clothes, began to get back in shape, and started having her hair done regularly the way George liked it.

Rob liked the “new” Becky as well, but he interpreted the new behaviors as Becky finally coming to grips with his schedule and internship. He felt now that he could begin to concentrate on his studies without worrying about how Becky was feeling. This continued for months until the second time that Becky almost didn’t make it home to their apartment before Rob did.

Becky knew she had to quit seeing George outside the office, so they decided to call it off. They both felt guilty enough to agree readily to such a plan.

But it didn’t last long. Two days later, George called her into his office to say he just couldn’t end it that quickly. Through all those great dinner conversations, her friendship had become very meaningful to him. “Couldn’t we just be friends?” he suggested. “We can talk during dinner and then just say good night.”

Becky wanted to maintain their relationship just as badly as he did. So, mustering all her willpower, she agreed to try it. But that night they ended up at his apartment once more. Again she was able to beat Rob home. But the next morning at the office, George called her and apologized for not holding up his end of the bargain and suggested that maybe they needed a break from each other for a week or two.

By this time Becky was thoroughly confused. Her feelings for George were becoming stronger every day. She reluctantly agreed to the “trial separation,” even though the previous night with him was so perfect that she had entertained the idea that George was “the one” for her.

A week went by, and Becky found herself desperate just to talk to him. Finally, she couldn’t stand it anymore. She called him on the intercom, and when he answered, she couldn’t believe the rush of feeling she experienced upon simply hearing his voice.

During their conversation in his office, she could hardly control herself. Reflecting later, she was shocked at her lack of self-control and stewed about it all night, losing precious sleep. *Why am I so obsessed about our relationship?*

By the next morning—dragging herself to work after a sleepless night—she knew she had to end it.

After work that day, she called and said goodbye. George argued that his feelings were involved and that it wasn't fair to end it so quickly. But Becky just hung up. She knew it wouldn't work; they had tried self-control, and it never worked.

Then, rather suddenly, George was promoted to a new division and transferred to a new office across the country. She just had to call and offer congratulations. His immediate response was “come with me.” Overwhelmed and feeling more confused than ever, she said she would have to think about it. When she got home that night she told Rob she needed “some space.” She had to get away and think about what she really wanted for her life. She felt sorry to see the hurt look in Rob's eyes, but she also knew there was very little left of the relationship they once had.

### *CLASS 3: Sexual Addiction*

This behavior is not really an affair. There is no relationship involved. This is a sex-only experience and it is never satisfying. This behavior often starts in childhood or early adolescence with inappropriate sexual exposure. It eventually develops into a ritualistic pattern of acting out. It is not about emotional attachment and it would have happened no matter who the addict might have married. It is always about the addict's history and never about the spouse providing enough sexual activity.

This behavior is an attempt to self-medicate shame, anxiety, and depression. When women experience these feelings, they tend to eat. When men do so, they act out sexually. Sex is the best antidepressant medication known to males, at least initially. Like alcohol, which feels initially like an antidepressant but with use becomes a depressant, so does compulsive sex.

Being freed from sexual addiction usually requires professional and/or intensive therapy to sort through all of the contributions, followed by an ongoing maintenance group such as a twelve-step model. Couples counseling will not be the best option until the addict has a stable sobriety and is able to engage emotionally with the spouse. A betrayed spouse will never move emotionally toward the addict until he or she is convinced that they will not be hurt like this again.

A typical scenario of sexual addiction might play out this way:

Though excited about being married, Todd quickly realized that his mother-in-law meant as much or more to his wife than he did. His in-laws visited every weekend, and all the holidays required a barbecue at Mom and Dad's house. It was as though Sherry, his wife, had never left home. Todd was a quiet guy, though, and kept his feelings to himself. In fact, he had always prided himself on being unemotional. His job required that, and he was a very good at keeping his feelings out of the circumstances that needed his attention.

When Todd's company was bought out, he was let go. He found other work right away, but by that time Sherry's mother's health was failing and required a lot of her attention.

It wasn't long until Todd found himself visiting an old haunt from college days—the local massage parlor. He always hated the guilty feelings he had later. He knew Sherry would be disappointed if she found out, and he often promised himself that he would not go again. But he did. Every time things became difficult, he found himself visiting the place weekly for months on end before he stopped.

Sherry was busy with the three children, homeschooling, her mother's declining health, and a part-time job that she held on the weekends. She loved her life and assumed Todd loved his as well. Todd made a very good living for them all and appeared to enjoy his work even though it required very long hours. There were times that Sherry felt some misgivings about the growing distance between them, but she always managed to brush it off with the thought that this was just a season of life for the two of them.

Todd had never had many male friends, and he had very little interest in most sports. As a tech guy, he liked reading scientific and engineering magazines but was conversant in other subjects as well.

As the children got older and Sherry became increasingly distant, Todd found himself visiting the massage parlor more frequently. It was where he could reassure himself that he was an okay guy, where what he wanted mattered, where somebody cared for him, where he could get rid of those lonely feelings, and where he was known on a first-name basis. It became his haven away from work prior to going home.

Initially it was the bright light in his day, something he eagerly anticipated starting each morning. It was becoming more frequent, though, and it was starting to cost a lot of money. The girls did not seem as nice to him as they used to. Often, he would leave feeling taken for granted and disappointed with the experience. “Maybe I need to find a new place. Maybe I need to try some different things.” He had always promised himself that he would never mix pornography with his business, and uncertain where to go or what to do, he returned time after time to this disappointing experience. Finally, he gave in and started using the Internet. Initially, he had a satisfying response, but before long he was spiraling out of control. When he finally told Sherry, she was shocked with a first reaction of kicking him out of the home. At an intensive session several weeks later, he began to understand how and why he was attracted to this kind of sexual practice. Wasn’t right, lots of bad choices, but he wasn’t crazy either. The understanding gave him renewed strength to pursue recovery, regardless of whether or not Sherry would take him back.

#### *CLASS 4: Add-on Affair*

This affair occurs to satisfy a specific void. It develops when an individual shares an emotionally satisfying experience with an acquaintance because their spouse has no interest in participating in this activity. This experience is initially platonic, developing within a hiking club, worship team, or other shared ministry or common leisure pursuit. Because participants in this kind of affair generally do not meet outside of the experience they find so satisfying, they consider the other a friend rather than a lover. They don’t contact or meet at any time other than the shared activity. They don’t have lunches, and they don’t check up on each other. They have no intention of leaving their spouses and family, and often feel they have done nothing wrong. Whatever erotic activity occurs is often infrequent and dissatisfying to one partner, but is provided out of obligation or for the purpose of maintaining the friendship. Invariably, however, in addition to the affair, these relationships rob the marriage of emotional content. Jenna and Larry’s story is an example of this type of affair.

John and Jenna had the ideal marriage. All of their children were adorable. John coached all the kids’ athletic teams, and Jenna, with the golden voice, was an enthusiastic participant on the church’s worship team. A lot of men were intimidated by singing with Jenna—then Larry came along. Finally, she found a voice that matched her

own, and the two of them sang beautifully together. The music director was thrilled. The congregation was transported. The more they sang, the more people asked for them to perform. Folks began to expect perfection, and rehearsals were becoming longer and more frequent.

One evening rehearsal was just not turning out right. Still working on it, they soon found themselves alone in the music room. Finally, Larry laughed and said, "Let's quit and sing something we know well so that we can go home happy."

That started a tradition. Every rehearsal now ended with fifteen or twenty minutes of singing together for fun. Sometimes a few of the team members would stay and listen, but on other occasions it was just the two of them. Those times started meaning a lot, and both Larry and Jenna wondered if the other felt it as strongly as they did. They would squeeze each other's hand as they left, but nothing beyond that.

Occasionally, the various worship teams would have social outings that spouses would attend. Jenna's husband, John, and Larry's wife, Kaye, would often joke about the need for the two of them to find something to do together while Larry and Jenna were rehearsing. But everything was open and aboveboard, and respectful friendships developed between John and Larry and the wives, Jenna and Kaye.

One evening, after their fun sing, Larry asked Jenna if she would like to go out for coffee. He said Kaye was out of town with the kids, and he would enjoy her company prior to going home to an empty house. After calling John, who was watching a play-off game on TV, Jenna accepted. Thus began a sporadic but endearing set of conversations that ranged far beyond their shared love for music.

Eventually, over time, these conversations drifted into sharing common marriage struggles. They came to know each other too well. They began to save conversational topics for just these after-rehearsal coffees. They developed an intense friendship. They slipped into an emotional attachment that Larry especially was finding difficult not to sexualize.

They both reassured each other that they were still crazy in love with their spouses. They never talked about marriage to each other, and they were very cautious not to touch each other. But over time even that boundary was eroded. They felt so close to each other that their touching gestures became those of very close friends.

This “close-call” relationship started stepping over the sexual boundaries two or three times a year at choir retreats, music conferences, and concerts. Though both would be hurt afterward, their friendship would bring them back together. This extramarital relationship contaminated almost fifteen years of their marriages to their spouses, and when exposed, it generated an emotional disaster in their community.

### *CLASS 5: Reconnection*

Class 5 says very little about the state of the marriage. It starts innocently enough, “I wonder what ever happened to . . .” Even when the marriage is close, it is normal to wonder about what happened to those old girlfriends and boyfriends from adolescent years. Many of them were “first loves.” Many more of them broke hearts. And even when things are good between you and your spouse, social media makes it appealing and easy to try and find them!

Why the extreme danger? That earlier time period was fueled by hormones and sexual attraction, parking and making out, and often encompassed one’s first erotic experiences. It contained all the freedom with little or no responsibility. No wonder culture has encouraged efforts to prolong adolescence, now viewed as extending through the midtwenties! Who wouldn’t be enticed to go back?

Time creates this nostalgia that only intensifies infatuation. Some individuals will even search for first loves from their elementary-age days. Don’t laugh! First affections are rarely forgotten. Contrasted with family ruts, busy schedules, relentless responsibility, tight finances, and seemingly unending chores, it’s no wonder that—even when someone loves their spouse—they can be tempted to go back to find “better times.”

In the past, this desire was often put on hold due to the difficulty of finding and interacting with old flames. Reunions, years apart, were often the only option. Now, within minutes of wondering and searching, you can be emailing, texting, and on FaceTime or Skype with each other, all while commuting, cooking dinner in the kitchen, or sitting in the stands at your daughter’s soccer game.

In Class 5, you don’t have to create a relationship; you have an old familiar one stored in your brain, just waiting to be rekindled. Within the first thirty days of contact, you will begin to think that maybe you married the wrong person. Your spouse certainly doesn’t generate this kind of excitement. In fact, they hardly notice you at times. If



you stay in touch with that individual for an additional thirty days, you will be looking for ways to meet and become more intimate with each other.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN CLASS 4 & 5	
CLASS 4 Add-on Affair	CLASS 5 Reconnection
A new relationship that develops over time	An old relationship that is resurrected
Develops around a current void in the marriage	A return to an old idealized period of time
Has very narrow boundaries—a new relationship with no contact between times scheduled by the experience they both enjoy and no plans to leave the marriage	An old relationship with lots of contact that is a direct threat to the future of the marriage

### COULD THIS BE YOU?

*The following story highlights many of the issues that make close calls so dangerous. Pay attention to the timing of the phone call, the dangerous partner’s experience at this sort of behavior, the business stressors that set up this close call, the addiction that had long been an irritation in the marriage, and finally, the distance that made this new friendship “safe.” Remember, no number of miles will ever protect you in this culture!*

*Read this story in Gail’s words:*

**M**y husband, Garry, and I have been married for sixteen years. For the most part, our marriage has been happy. We owned and worked a business together for many years.

About six years ago or so he was offered a position with our supplier. The offer was too good to pass up, and we both decided he should do it even though

the plan had been for me to get out of running our business since I was becoming unfulfilled with it.

I therefore remained at the helm of our business. As the years passed, I noticed our marriage starting to change. It started feeling more like a business relationship than a marriage since we would both try not to step on each other's toes taking care of the companies each of us were responsible for. One thing I seemed to notice was that Garry was more concerned about the company he was working for than the one he actually owned that I was overseeing, and this started to cause some ripples.

Along with that complication, my husband has chewed tobacco ever since I met him. While we were dating, I had no problems with him chewing, as of course when you're dating, your guy has no faults! But as the years continued, I began to dislike the habit and the taste and smell it left in his mouth. I began to kiss him less, and I let him know that that was why. We had gone to counseling a long time ago, and I brought that issue up, and he promptly told me in front of the counselor to live with his chewing. He had tried a few times to quit, but he seemed to go back to it pretty quickly.

Around that time, we lost several of our business locations due to some "political" reasons, and it was very difficult and emotional for both Garry and me. Since he did not have to work within our business on a daily basis as I did, he was able to get over the loss much more quickly. It affected me a lot, though. I felt I had lost half of my identity, yet Garry could not understand that. I do think it takes me longer to process things than he does.

At any rate, our marriage began to suffer. We were also building a new home, and I was scared financially, especially since our business had just been cut in half. My husband does not worry about anything, so when I told him of my fears about going forward on the home, he pretty much said that he wanted to continue on and not to worry.

We started to drift apart, and as we did, we started to argue and disagree, make demands on each other and give ultimatums. I kept asking him to quit chewing tobacco as I was tired of living with it, and it hurt me that he didn't love me enough to see how it affected me and my intimacy with him. He started complaining about lack of sex, and of course that made me feel unloved because he

refused to even consider really trying to quit chewing. I also felt unloved because it seemed that my feelings on issues concerning the home we were building and so forth did not matter.

A lady who worked for one of the vendors we used happened to call the day that Garry got the news about us losing the stores, and he told her the story. He said he felt something connected between the two of them. She lived clear across the country, and later that month she called Garry's secretary to have her e-mail a picture of him to her. She did! His secretary sent her a picture of him! Garry actually told me of this. He told me that he was very upset with his secretary for doing so, and therefore I felt that there was no threat.

I guess over the next few months they began to call each other more often and talk on a personal level about things. Then Garry scheduled a business trip that allowed him to meet with her out of state. During this time, he and I drifted further apart. I asked him what was going on, told him I did not know him anymore, and had asked him if he was going through some sort of midlife crisis. I did ask him at one time if he was having an affair. His answer was "When would I have time for an affair?" I had noticed his work hours got longer and longer, and he traveled more and more. When he was home, he'd arrive around 8:00 p.m. or so, eat dinner, then have an alcoholic drink, sit on the couch, and fall asleep within the hour.

The weekend before he went to meet this woman, we had actually enjoyed a very fun and relaxing weekend together. We talked about our house that was starting, we dreamed together, we visited with family, we enjoyed each other. We did not argue or fight at all that weekend. He left Tuesday morning, kissed me, and said, 'I love you.' He called me later that evening and told me he loved me. Later I found out he called me from the lobby of the restaurant where he and his girlfriend were having dinner.

What I didn't know was that he had packed three condoms in his suitcase for his trip.

Not too long after that, I awoke early one morning to find my husband was already out of bed. I could see that he was in my office, so I got up to see what he was doing. He panicked when he saw me, like I had just caught him at something. I asked him what was up and he told me an unbelievable story, but I let it go. Later that morning, it bothered me, so I called him up and flat out asked him.

He denied an affair at first; then I asked him if he was involved with or starting to have feelings for someone. The silence told me before he uttered the word yes.

I then asked him what was going on, and he said he should come home. He told me about her but led me to believe that it was strictly a long-distance emotional type of thing, and he still refused to call it an affair. He told me his partial disclosure, turned my world upside down, then went and played golf with some attendees of a seminar that his work was putting on. He had promised that he'd play.

We sought counseling. Over and over I asked if they had ever met and he denied it . . . in fact, he got angry that I kept asking. Then the American Express bill came in with a dinner for supposedly one person in the amount of \$56. I questioned him, and he said he had broken up with her that night and was drinking and that was why the bill was so high. I actually contacted the restaurant and found that there were three meals on the ticket and not drinks (dinner was with him, her, and a friend of hers). I confronted him, and he said the restaurant sent the wrong receipt. Finally, several months later, I found out the truth. The woman's husband called me on my cell phone to tell me of the affair. I guess the husband had contacted Garry earlier that week and had been trying to contact me.

We have sought counseling, but my husband does not really believe in it. He doesn't seem to realize the damage he caused by lying to me in the first place. He says he loves me and doesn't want her (he found out that she has had many affairs, had a sexual encounter with another man the night before they met, and had had an abortion behind her husband's back. He claims he found all of out this after they met in person).

I want this to work out between Garry and me, but I really need him to find out why he did what he did.