



# HERS OPINION HIS



## Why Do People Cheat in Relationships?

by Vickie Hughes

Linda picks up the phone to call her girlfriend, Anita, and here's how the conversation goes.

777-9311...

Rrrring...rrring...

Anita: Hello.

Linda: Hi Anita. How are you?

Anita: Fine. What's up?

Linda: Girl, I found out that Travis is cheating on me!

Anita: What! How did you find out?

Linda: I found a letter from somebody named Connie. The letter was about their trip to the beach last weekend and how much she loves him. I can't believe this. How could he do this to me?

Anita: Did you ask Travis about it?

Linda: Yes and he denied everything. He said that he was on a business trip last weekend.

Anita: Dump him, girl. He's a dog!

Linda: Someone's at my door. I'll call you back.

Anita: Okay, bye.

Linda: Bye.

(click)

Does this conversation sound familiar? How many times have you suspected or discovered that your partner has cheated on you? Why did your partner cheat? Although some of you look for answers in newspaper columns, there are no clear-cut answers as to why people cheat in relationships. We are all unique individuals. No two people are exactly alike and our motives vary from person to person. I can give my opinion but it is good to hear what others have to say also. I have interviewed 20-25 individuals ranging in age from 21-62. Each person was asked, "Why do people cheat in relationships?" Some people hesitated when asked the question; not because of guilt but because of lack of understanding. One person even responded and said, "This is stressful!" when asked the question. Others gave in-depth answers. Here are some of the responses I heard from the individuals I interviewed.

**Why do people cheat in relationships?**

**Male responses**

- Men try to see how many women they can get, in order to compete with their male friends. It's an "ego thing".
- Men like to sneak around.
- People get bored with their relationships and partners.
- Men want to experience new sexual en-

counters and to carry out certain fantasies.

- The Devil works on a person's weaknesses and the person gives in.
- The partner lacks some qualities or is not up to the person's standards.
- There is an inability to communicate.
- They are not able to communicate on a romantic basis.
- People get used to having things one way and then when things change, they want things the way they used to be. If that is not possible, they go elsewhere.
- There may be negative factors in the relationship such as distrust, jealousy, or different personalities.

**Why do people cheat in relationships?**

**Female responses**

- Something is not being fulfilled financially, physically, or emotionally.
- People cheat to get attention.
- People are greedy, and feel that "grass is always greener on the other side".
- People are generally inquisitive and adventurous.
- One partner is not being treated the way they want to be treated.
- Moral differences exist in the relationship.
- The relationship no longer meets their needs. The new relationship or encounter appears to be more satisfying, have fewer demands, and require less commitment.
- Some people just don't know any better.
- People have low self-esteem and are trying to fill a void within themselves. They need someone to "pump them up".
- Men are usually the ones who cheat. Men are dogs!

In my opinion, the desire to cheat surfaces when something is lacking in a relationship whether it be sex, finances, emotional support, romantic adventures, or attention. People feel the need to look outside for something within. When things go wrong, people do not think twice about bringing a third party into their relationship. Is involving another person or bringing another person into the problem truly the answer to the problem? My question to people who cheat on their partners is, "Why stay with your partner if you are unhappy in some way?" If you have to go to someone else to be happy, you should stick with that "someone else". There is no reason to continue holding on to a

relationship if it is beyond repair and there is no hope for reconciliation. I am a very strong believer in working out problems in relationships but not if the relationship is a dead-end relationship.

When we are in relationships, we are dealing with human emotions that can affect a person for life if the emotions are bruised or mistreated. If you are having an affair, put yourself in your partner's shoes. How would you feel if he/she were cheating on you? And let me ask you this, "Do you have a conscience? Do you feel the least bit guilty?"

You cannot share emotions with two people at the same time. One person will always receive more than the other because you cannot give your all to both. I don't think that's humanly possible. Each person you are with becomes a part-time lover and you don't have a complete and fulfilling relationship with anyone. You are really cheating yourself.

If you truly want a fulfilling relationship you should try things differently with your present partner. Again, I am a firm believer in problem-solving. If you foresee any future at all with your partner, work it out. You two have already built the foundation for love and happiness together. Don't let that foundation go to waste! There is no reason whatsoever to step outside of your relationship to find the missing link if there is any hope for the two of you. Look within the relationship and within yourselves. Remember that no one is perfect and that no relationship is without problems. If you find a good person, hold on to that person. If the flame has gone out between the two of you, it can be rekindled. Herbert Vander Lugt, staff writer of *Our Daily Bread*, writes, "Yes, warmth and sincere affection can be brought back into a marriage relationship that has grown cold. Love is not only an emotion we feel but also a decision we make. The choice may not be easy, but it's really quite simple. Take the first steps of positive action by praying for your mate and treating him or her with kindness and consideration. If you do, the sweet winds of grace will blow upon the smoldering embers of your dying marriage. The flame of love will break forth anew. Try it. It works." Experience new and exciting experience with each other, and one day, the flame that went out will burn again.

By Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

"...regardless of ones moral view, affairs cause more problems than they solve. It seems unreasonable to conclude that anyone would get married (or involved) and plan to have an affair. Also it seems reasonable to conclude that an affair is a sign of unresolved problems."

Jeanne Miller & Phil Laut  
Love, Sex, & Communications

Trust is very important in a relationship. In my observations, there is no worst feeling than being betrayed or used by someone you really care about or love. I've been used and I'm most confident that the majority of readers out there have had someone cheat on them or are currently in a relationship where this is happening. Some people tolerate the infidelity of their mate and others take a walk. Why do humans cheat on their mate or is it just an accident? Is cheating on your mate a conscious act? Is it an addiction or sickness? Regardless of what inspires infidelity, it seems to me that most people (according to polls and surveys), cheat at one time or another. As a young man with future aspirations to get married, this either tells me what I have to look forward to, or what I have to avoid when I am eventually blessed with a mate for life. Not one to place great faith in statistics, it amazes me (the results that is) what polls and surveys disclose about people. For example, a woman's magazine write in survey of readers found, 80% of the 600 women having an affair with a married man, and a British sociologist, Annette Lawson, found in a study that 66% of the women and 68% of the men have affairs in their first marriage. Lawson also noted, in her book "Love and Betrayal", that women use to wait 15 years before they had an affair-men 11 years. Today, cheaters indicate that fidelity for women now last only 4.5 years and 5 years for men. It's been said that men find dissolving a relationship much easier than women. Without a doubt, I can easily see why people are skeptical about get-

ting married or take their time in the mate selection process. We are living in a society of declining morals and values. Still, it has not affected my desire to be married and reading such dismal statistics only makes me more determined to do the right thing.

Honest and open communications with our mate may prevent him or her from going outside of the relationship. Unresolved issues lead to stress and tension, which ultimately leads to one or the other going outside of the relationship to have needs fulfilled or desires met. Very rarely do I hear men say that they strayed outside of their relationship for anything other than sex. All they wanted to do was the "nasty" as Spike Lee mentioned in several of his movies. On the other hand, I hear women say things like: he was supportive, a good listener, gentle, understanding, warm, and just so happens the sex came along later. I'm sure there are women out there who think like the men I mentioned above, and more importantly, there are men who seek the same elements as the women listed above. I could never understand or accept why men are perceived as "studs" during their quest to sleep with every woman that walks or how women are labeled as "sluts" or "loose" when they sleep with several men. It's a serious double standard.

Again, why do people cheat on their mates? Some people blame it on being bored, a strong sexual drive that their mate can or will not accommodate, the children, feeling neglected, and a host of other excuses or human problems. For years, I've also stated that as long as it does not involve a "third party", I would be more than willing to work the situation out. I refuse to compete with another man for the affection of my mate. Another person can only complicate a relationship or its' problems even more. Everyone is vulnerable to having an affair, but if it does happen-should you tell your mate? A person either tells their mate what is going on or they start living a lie. The good thing about telling the truth is not having to remember everything you say. When you start the pat-

tern of lying in a relationship (be it for cheating or not), it goes downhill. Honesty is the best policy. Some people contend that an affair brought them closer to their mate and others said that it destroyed trust. Personally, you can forgive a person for their "slip", but it would be very difficult to forget what happened. What's to prevent it from happening again in the future? Extra affairs can cause violence, paranoid behavior, and divorce. My grandmother always said that what is done in the dark shall come to light.

Marriage is not a dream world as some people think it is, but people go into them with unjust expectations and behaviors from the past that might affect interaction with our mate. I'm not suggesting that people hold each other hostage in relationships or marriage because it's unrealistic. However, in the beginning of the encounter, people need to check out some of their potential mates before making a serious commitment. Those unfaithful patterns can be right before your eyes. Make that person earn your respect, love, and affection. Do not allow yourself to be abused or used by anyone. You always have a choice about what and who you want to deal with or tolerate.

At some point, men and women will hopefully conclude that everything is not about sex. We have all gone through that stage where the more sex-the better. Unfortunately, some people wait until they are married to go through this stage and hurt others in the process. Noticing my own behavior, I have greatly melowered with age and my attitude towards sex has changed. I've had an opportunity to "sow some wild oats" over the years and now I'm more responsible. I also think that I'm less inclined to cheat because I've had the chance to get "things out of my system". There's no substitute for maturity. So, when I do get married, there's no real urge to get "out there" in the streets because as we have all learned, there's nothing out there but trouble. Regardless of your reasons for cheating on your mate, it is wrong. Communications is the key.

Coming next week: Don't believe what you hear about people; RUMORS



### In Response...

To the Readers:

First of all, I could care less who a person decides to marry or spend the rest of their life with. I could care less because I do not have to live with someone else's choices. I stated this several times in the story. As far as the allegations implying that I suggested how "a black man could not, or might not provide the same stable home for interracial children as he would black children," I suggest that you re-read the story. No where in the story do I make reference to a black man not being able to provide (or might not) a stable home for children born in interracial couples. However, I did express "my desire to build a strong black family and be a positive role model for my black children in the future." This was my only reference to fatherhood and children. I also mentioned that black men need to be around for their children as opposed to being in jail or dead from street related activities.

While my desire is to marry a black woman, there is no telling how a future wife will come into my life because I believe in the power of love. I wrote myself "...love is a wonderful thing that no one is supposed to have control over when it happens. To say what color I am going to marry would be limiting my chances (consciously) or choices of whom I could fall in love with. Love is deeper than that..." I even asked if I would be less of a man if I did decide to marry outside of my race. This to me sounds a lot more progressive than someone so limited.

As far as separatism is concerned, you can take a look at some of the conditions that exist in America and see that it existed long before I started writing for this paper. We live in a very

racist country. There is economic separatism, separatism in housing, education, and a host of other circumstances beyond the power of my pen. My intent is to objectively add potential new perspectives, enlighten, share my personal experiences and those of others. By no means are my observations law.

Sometimes, we as people need to get beyond individual frustrations, emotional baggage, anger, and look at our own ankles to see the "chains of ignorance." Lastly, I admitted that it is beyond my comprehension why people date white knowing that they will marry black. It is my opinion that if you do not honestly love or care for another human being, don't waste your time. Your youthfulness, energy, intelligence, and writing aptitude can be better served writing a "Teen Column" for this newspaper rather than attacking me for something you did not read carefully. Let us hear from you.

Ulysses Tucker, Jr.

To The Readers:

I have been asked to respond to a letter that was written to the editor of The Portland Observer regarding a column I wrote with Ulysses Tucker Jr., entitled, "Why Date White When You Plan To Marry Black?" I am not writing this letter to apologize for my opinion but to clarify my opinion. The letter that the editor received was from an eighteen year old girl who is a child of an interracial married couple. First of all, let me say that I am not prejudiced and am not totally against interracial relationships. My article was addressed to those indi-

viduals who have decided to marry someone within their own race yet date outside of their race for ridiculous reasons.

I am a twenty-seven year old African American female who no longer dates for fun. I now date men who I am interested in sharing a serious commitment with. It is my personal preference to date men of my own race because I plan to eventually marry one of these men. I have friends who date or are married to someone of a different race. I have no problem with their decisions because that is what they chose to do. The girl that responded to my article implied that I am promoting separatism. However, I strongly believe that everyone should interact with all races and I expressed my opinion in a previous article on Black/White colleges.

Each week when I write my opinion for the Hers/His column, I recognize the fact that some people are going to agree with my opinion and others will disagree. In the case of my last article, I feel that it was misinterpreted. I did not state that all white women are "tacky" and that all children of interracial relationships have problems. However, my statements were interpreted that way. I only hope that before someone forms their own opinion of my writing, they have read my article thoroughly and fully understand the viewpoint I am trying to get across. I am happy to know that the Hers/His column has invoked so much conversation within the community. Keep reading!

Sincerely,  
Vickie L. Hughes, Staff Writer

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