

AI-00922 Affair-Born Longevity

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What is the historical data for success of a relationship born from an affair? Will the affair last for good or is it doomed to fail like the previous one. Explain and delve .

The data paints a challenging picture for relationships born from affairs. Here's a breakdown:

- **Low Success Rates:** Studies suggest only 5-7% of affairs lead to marriage, and of those, a significant portion ends in divorce [source: Dr Kathy Nickerson, Can a relationship that started as an affair work?]. This translates to a very small percentage of affairs becoming successful, long-term relationships.
- **Trust Issues:** The foundation of secrecy and dishonesty in an affair can make building trust in the new relationship difficult. Open communication and a strong commitment to honesty are crucial for overcoming this hurdle.
- **Underlying Problems:** Affairs often bloom from dissatisfaction in existing relationships. These problems don't magically disappear with a new partner. Addressing the reasons behind the affair is vital for the new relationship's health.

Can They Last?

While the odds are stacked against them, some relationships born from affairs do succeed. Here are some factors that might contribute to a positive outcome:

- **Honest Ending of Prior Relationships:** If both partners come clean and end their previous relationships maturely, it demonstrates a commitment to building a relationship on a more solid foundation.

- **Addressing Root Causes:** If the individuals involved actively address the issues that led to the affair (e.g., communication problems in the old relationship) they can build a healthier dynamic in the new one.
- **Couples Therapy:** Seeking professional help from a therapist can be instrumental in navigating the complex emotions, rebuilding trust, and establishing healthy communication patterns.

Delving Deeper

The success of any relationship depends on various factors beyond its origins. Communication, shared values, emotional compatibility, and a willingness to work through challenges all play a significant role.

However, affairs introduce a specific set of baggage. Consider these additional points:

- **Social Stigma:** Relationships born from affairs often face social disapproval, which can put extra strain on the couple.
- **The "Honeymoon Phase" Trap:** The initial excitement of a new relationship can mask deeper issues.

Overall

While some relationships born from affairs do defy the odds, the statistics are not encouraging. It requires a lot of self-reflection, honesty, and hard work for them to have a chance of lasting.

More on the behavioral science about the dynamics of relationship

Here's an even deeper exploration of the behavioral science behind relationships born from affairs:

The Allure of Novelty and Forbidden Fruit:

- **Dopamine and the Reward System:** As mentioned earlier, the brain's reward system plays a big role. The novelty and excitement of an affair trigger dopamine release, creating a pleasurable experience that can be highly reinforcing. This reinforces the behavior of seeking out the affair partner.
- **Breaching Excitation Transfer:** This theory suggests that arousing experiences, even negative ones, can become linked to the person you're experiencing them with. The secrecy and potential danger associated with an

affair can heighten arousal, making the affair partner seem even more desirable.

Mirror Neurons and Emotional Contagion:

- **Mirroring and Emotional Validation:** Mirror neurons are brain cells that fire when we observe an action or emotion in others. During an affair, partners may unconsciously mimic each other's expressions and body language, leading to a heightened sense of connection and understanding.
- **Emotional Contagion:** Humans are wired to pick up on the emotions of those around them. The affair partner's excitement and validation can be emotionally contagious, further reinforcing the positive feelings associated with the affair.

The Investment Model and Sunk Cost Fallacy:

- **Investment Model:** People tend to value things they've invested more time and effort into, even if they're not necessarily good. In a troubled relationship, the time and energy invested can make it harder to leave, despite the presence of the affair.
- **Sunk Cost Fallacy:** This cognitive bias involves clinging to a failing course of action because of past investments. Someone in a troubled relationship might stay due to the sunk cost of the time already spent together.

The Role of Forgiveness and Reconciliation:

- **Attachment Styles and Forgiveness:** People with secure attachment styles are generally more forgiving and open to reconciliation after a betrayal. Insecure attachment styles can make forgiveness more difficult and lead to lingering resentment.
- **The Power of Apology:** A sincere apology that acknowledges the hurt caused and expresses a commitment to change can be a crucial step towards rebuilding trust.

Remember: These are just some of the complex behavioral factors involved. The success of any relationship, regardless of its origins, depends on a willingness to work through challenges and build healthy dynamics.

Considering seeking professional guidance from a therapist specializing in couples therapy can be highly beneficial. They can provide a safe space for

open communication, help navigate the emotional rollercoaster, and develop strategies for rebuilding trust and fostering a stronger relationship, if that's the chosen path.

Is "strike one you are out" rule a good rule in a matrimonial infidelity?

The "strike one you're out" rule for infidelity is generally not recommended by relationship experts. Here's why:

- **Oversimplification:** Infidelity can come in many forms, with varying degrees of severity. A one-time mistake due to intoxication might be different from a long-term emotional affair. This rule doesn't account for those complexities.
- **Discourages Repair:** Relationships can recover from infidelity, but it takes work and commitment from both partners. This rule shuts down the possibility of forgiveness, reconciliation, and rebuilding trust.
- **Rash Decisions:** Major life decisions like divorce shouldn't be made in the moment of anger or hurt. This rule could lead to rushed decisions without proper reflection and potentially create lasting regret.

Alternatives to Consider:

- **Couples Therapy:** A therapist can provide a safe space for open communication. They can help you explore the underlying issues that led to the affair and determine if there's a path forward for the relationship.
- **Open Communication:** Honest and open communication is crucial after an affair. Discuss the reasons behind the infidelity, the impact it had, and your wishes for the future. This can help guide decisions.
- **Time for Reflection:** Both partners need time to process the emotional impact of the affair. Rushing into a decision about the future of the marriage can be counterproductive.

It's important to consider factors specific to your situation:

- **Severity of the infidelity:** Was it a one-time mistake or a long-term pattern?
- **Underlying causes:** Were there problems in the marriage that contributed to the affair?

- **Willingness to work on the relationship:** Are both partners willing to put in the effort to rebuild trust and heal?
- **Your personal values:** How important is forgiveness to you? What kind of relationship do you want to build?

Ultimately, the decision is yours. There's no right or wrong answer. Weighing the pros and cons, considering the specific circumstances, and potentially seeking professional guidance can help you navigate this difficult situation.