



Dangerous flirtations

You'd never cheat on your partner right? But beware the often equally damaging "emotional affair".

When Harry met Sally, he told her men and women can't be friends. Sex always gets in the way, so the friendship is doomed.

But his philosophy isn't always true, we find ourselves thinking. After all, most of us are mates with a member of the opposite sex, and there's absolutely nothing more going on. Or is there?

While that long, leisurely lunch last week was perfectly innocent, did you get around to telling your partner?

The flirting, teasing and friendly hugs with your buddy don't mean anything. After all, you haven't even kissed, much less slept together. So what harm can it possibly do? Quite a lot, actually.

Emotional affairs are the new infidelity, and sharing secrets, dreams and fears with another person can be as dangerous to your relationship as the old-fashioned exchange of bodily fluids.

The number of men and women indulging in emotional affairs is on the increase, and with it, the heartache that all too often follows.

According to the American Association For Marriage And Family Therapy, 15 per cent of women and a quarter of men have extra-marital sex. Add the non-physical relationships – emotional affairs – and those figures rise by more than 20 per cent.

It's easy to understand why. As more women enter the workplace, the opportunity for friendships, platonic and otherwise, has increased.

Many of us spend more hours with our colleagues than our partners, and our scarce time at home is often spent on domestic shores, social engagements or children.

We end up sharing the more interesting and intimate experiences with friends at work – our fears, our hopes, our feelings.

Slowly, you can start shutting your partner out. Contrary to popular belief, it's not the big events that build and strengthen a relationship or marriage – birthdays, anniversaries, Valentine's Day and Christmas – but the day-to-day intimacies: the shared laughter and special confidences.

Remove them from your relationship with your partner and what's left? Conversations about power bills and whose turn it is to walk the dog.

Add this to the inevitable waning of sexual frisson that takes place in any long-term relationship and can be a short, dangerous step to seeing your friend as more exciting and desirable than your partner.

If your spouse doesn't understand you, it's probably because you haven't been explaining yourself to them.

But instead of admitting the truth, you tell yourself you've

grown apart. You want different things from life.

You don't make each other happy. It's like living with a stranger.

Your special friend, on the other hand, seems to know you inside out.

Sometimes you don't even need to speak to know what's in each other's minds.

The truth is that a close friendship with a member of the opposite sex shouldn't be a threat.

But if it tourniquets the lifeblood of your relationship, it could wither and die.

Relationships need constant and attentive nurturing. By all means, enjoy a drink with friends after work and chat about the latest Hollywood blockbuster, but if you value your partner, make sure it is into their ear – and their ear only – that you whisper those sweet nothings.

Source: DAILY MAIL



HOW WAS IT FOR YOU?

DR BELLA



Can we make true love and sexual freedom possible at the same time?

Women the world over tend to look the other way or, like in modern-day Japan, even pack condoms in their partner's luggage when they head off on a business trip.

Historically and cross-culturally, most marriages aren't strictly monogamous. You could argue humans weren't designed to mate for life: we are not swans. Fine.

If I didn't want to have children, and someone to raise these children with, I think I'd give up this search for the Holy Grail: a man worthy of partnering who doesn't disappear-suddenly-without-even-an-adult-like-discussion at the merest hint of shared accommodation.

I may even renege on the entire pursuit of a lifelong partner. Rather, I'd settle with an inventory of hot lovers, who may or may not turn into "the one" and who would be celebrated for fulfilling the present (very Zen).

Sociologist Anthony Giddens says this is where intimacy is heading. Towards what he calls "the pure relationship".

In our culture of secularised values, skyrocketing divorce rates, and commitment ambivalence, desiring Ever After is becoming an old school kind of notion.

But, can we make true love and sexual freedom possible at the same time?

This actually works for some couples. Take my friend. She and her girlfriend are allowed to follow their outside desires. Meaning, be a couple and do, or be done by, whoever they wish.

They have two rules:

1) keep no secrets and

2) keep extracurricular activities outside of the house.

The ingredient to happy non-monogamous unions, according to research, is about committing oneself to non-commitment.

Meaning? Honouring each other's quest for a life of discovery and adventure; embracing on-going, honest negotiation; and only remaining in a relationship as long as both parties are satisfied versus MNMW (monogamy no matter what).

This is all well and good, but as a single straight girl who wants babies someday, I think embracing this kind of intimacy is scary.

"Where's daddy, mummy?"

"Oh, off rooting Bob, or Brianna, or who knows."

Then again, maybe it's about family structure. If we still lived in large extended families, perhaps daddy's absence wouldn't be so disruptive, because uncle Joe and grandpa would still be around to tend to little ones' scraped knee. Or maybe, just maybe, it's about money.

Look at Angelina Jolie – pre her Brad Pitt-poaching. She didn't require a man to fulfill her desire of being a mother.

So then, here's the plan:

- a) become rich
- b) adopt a baby from the Third World
- c) find a hot guy who's into the true love/sexual freedom thang
- d) prepare child that daddy may not stick around, but no worries, not much does.

BTW: Tim, interested in sharing some wine next time you're in Melbourne?



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IT'S

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PICK ME UP

FAST FUN
FAB & FREE