

# Chapter Summary

## **Chapter 1: *Healing a Broken Heart***

This book is written for the woman who senses, intuitively, in some way instinctively knows that she will not only survive this nightmare, she will emerge to shine. And for the woman who, reading this now, resonates with this as the truth that she, too, will claim for herself. However fleeting that impulse, it is there. She says, from the very depths of her being, in face of the anguish that threatens to consume her, “*Yes, I will.*” The intention is set... but first, how does a woman even *survive* a broken heart? How can we make good of these experiences of infidelity, in our individual lives?

## **Chapter 2: *The Nature of Infidelity***

A window into the depth and breadth of the devastation and trauma left in the wake of infidelity, that reaches far beyond the woman who has been betrayed, and her family.

Love and marriage alone do not protect anyone against temptation. The workplace and internet are the fastest growing danger zones of attraction *and* opportunity for affairs. After an affair, couples who choose to may rebuild a relationship that grows in depth, honesty, and intimacy. Regardless, there is always the unwanted, uninvited potential for reclaiming a more authentic self.

## **Chapter 3: *Coming Home to Ourselves***

This book is not *just* about how women are betrayed—it’s about how we betray ourselves. A woman betrays herself every time she denies the wisdom of her instincts and intuitions, says “*yes*” when she really wants to say “*no*.” In doing so, she forfeits her inner authority and personal power. The losses, shame, and anger reach an all-time high at infidelity, carrying many a woman to acclaim *Enough, no more*. Becoming aware of the inner voices that perpetuate a reality that says she is “not enough,” fundamentally flawed, unworthy of love, a woman sows the seeds for the journey home to herself.

## **Chapter 4: *In the Aftermath of Infidelity—The First Year***

While every woman’s experience will differ according to a whole *range* of factors, there is always the shock, the grief, the shame, the anger... the disbelief, the shattered heart. There are the friends avoiding her, fantasies of wishing her partner dead and the other woman in hell, suicidal thoughts—all normal responses to his infidelity. Knowing this does not diminish the raw intensity of the emotions, but it may relieve a woman of the fear she is going crazy.

## **Chapter 5: *The Early Years and the Adults We Become***

Many of us, often unconsciously, carry from childhood the belief that we are in some way unworthy of love. We learned as children that betrayal is the name of the game. By succumbing to the demands of others as to who we “should” be and what we “should” do, we betray ourselves. However, we are not victims of the past, and we are not irreparably damaged.

## **Chapter 6: *Women Betrayed—The Beliefs and Illusions that Blind Us***

The stories of women who have been betrayed reveal the myriad ways that the absence of self-love and the subsequent self-betraying patterns appear in a woman's life. They blind her, placing her in a position to be betrayed. Her ruthless self-judgment, not knowing what she wants or needs, her inability to set boundaries, and her looking to a man for security and fulfillment are epidemic among women.

### **Chapter 7: *Unraveling the Patterns of Self-Betrayal***

This chapter is replete with practices and processes that are designed to engage a woman in the process of identifying and changing any self-betraying patterns, healing her broken heart, and reclaiming her inner authority and personal power. Grounding, self-inquiry, and self-compassion are essential elements in retrieving those lost instincts and intuitions that are hers to guide, inform, and protect her.

### **Chapter 8: *Choosing to Stay***

These stories of couples that chose to renew their marriages have their wisdom to share with each of us, regardless of whether we left, stayed, or are uncertain. The first step is restoring trust. This requires establishing safety and cultivating goodwill. Rebuilding a relationship demands huge reserves of courage, resolve, and patience—and can culminate in a marriage that is richer, deeper, and more mature than before.

### **Chapter 9: *The Other Woman—Sluts, Bitches, Whores!***

A woman who is betrayed feels deeply violated—firstly by her husband, but also by the Other Woman. Her shock at the depth of venom she feels towards the Other Woman intensifies her feelings of shame and bewilderment. Anger itself is not good or bad—the body needs to eliminate it, not suppress it. Initially, a woman may use it to empower herself. She must be careful, though, or it can hurt her—badly.

### **Chapter 10: *Projections—What We Resist, Persists***

As long as a woman projects her anger onto *him* or onto the Other Woman, she disempowers herself. While the intensity of her hostility and desire for retaliation is understandable, as long as she carries these feelings and remains at the effect of these emotions, she perpetuates her own suffering. Recognizing how and why these same feelings live in her, she can choose to use them wisely.

### **Chapter 11: *Forgiveness***

To forgive may seem an impossible ideal as a woman grapples with her anguish, fear, rage.... Allowing herself to be admonished or judged by others for not forgiving exacerbates her sense of betrayal and alienation. Encouraging forgiveness is to be out of touch with the reality of the depth of her hurt and pain. In time, a woman may discover a need to forgive, for her own sake.

### **Chapter 12: *Bad Girls—Looking for Love In All the Wrong Places***

Of course, there are *many* bad girls, and here we see they are not *all* bad. To a degree, rising from the ashes requires an understanding of the “Other Woman”—who she is, why she did what she did. The journey, for these women, is not unlike that of the women they betrayed. Although understanding is one thing, forgiveness another—entirely.

### **Chapter 13: *The Drug that Masquerades as Love***

Once tasted, the passion of forbidden love—like any powerful drug—is difficult to resist. Sexual impulse is the animal drive in humankind, the deep primal longing that serves to perpetuate the species. But in a committed relationship, satisfying that longing with someone outside of the relationship equals infidelity.

### **Chapter 14: *Once Friends—Colluding in Our Silence***

A woman may be deeply saddened, conflicted, and confounded to find friends avoiding her; wanting to remain “neutral,” and stay friends with both; actively siding with or colluding with the unfaithful partner; not speaking out in the face of his unfaithfulness. She may feel abandoned not only by her partner, but also by others she thought to be her friends.

### **Chapter 15: *Weathering the Tsunami***

Having, somehow, survived that initial shock, the reverberations of the devastation of infidelity continue to pour and ripple through a woman’s life. Will it never end? She does what she needs to do to get through each day—and to cultivate a sense of hope and possibility for the future. Women share how they supported themselves in weathering these years.

### **Chapter 16: *Reaching Out for Help—The Gift of Empathy***

The tendency can be to isolate yourself... to believe you are a terrible person, an embarrassment, a wrathful bitch, a failure—a disaster, really—as a human being. Here, we see the importance of reaching out for support, and the strength found in the company of women who accept you as you are and communicate through their empathy, “*I see you, I love you, and you are not alone.*”

### **Chapter 17: *Children of Infidelity—How They Hurt, and How They Heal***

Children feel betrayed when a parent cheats on their spouse. Regardless of age, they react with intense feelings of anger, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness and confusion. They are left with a host of psychological issues that—unresolved—can plague them throughout their life. Understanding the emotional impact of their parent’s betrayal is an important part of the healing process.

### **Chapter 18: *Fidelity—A Lie, a Bear Trap, or Whole-Hearted Commitment?***

Fidelity is a bear trap when a woman naïvely, unconsciously, accepts the collective assumptions and understanding of what it means. Even people in happy marriages have affairs. The assumption that love alone will protect a marriage has led to many an infidelity. What are the danger signs? How can a woman protect her marriage, and why bother?

### **Chapter 19: *Coming Apart, with Care and Compassion***

Here we learn from the stories of couples that having chosen to end their relationship, cleanly and caringly negotiate a coming apart. Knowing that “*someone had done that, and it could be done,*” carries the potential to open doors—and hearts—to kinder ways of ending a relationship that has run its course.

## **Chapter 20: *It All Starts Right Now***

Surely respect, empathy, and compassion for others are not only fundamental principles that make a society work, but also the expression of an awareness of our interdependence? At what cost do we trivialize, dismiss, or deny the repercussions of betrayal? Are we, through this unrelenting epidemic of infidelity, being invited to choose a higher ground—not simply as a moral stand but an immanently practical one?

