
MEN AND WOMEN
CAN'T BE FRIENDS:
Love's Blind Spot
Volume 1
JERALD & JESSICA BEDELL

Men and Women
Can't Be Friends



Jerald & Jessica Bedell



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INTRODUCTION

You're a cheater. I'm a cheater. Once a cheater, always a cheater. Right? Not necessarily. But we always agree that everybody has the potential to cheat. When I say that, people automatically become defensive. But it's the truth. All people want to be desired, to feel the sparks fly, to be the "it" person to someone else. Timing is crucial here. Some people cheat early on in their lives, some later in life. No one is above doing it, and no one is above having it done to them. Understanding this is important since there is such a stigma attached to cheating.

Usually, for women, one of the first things they do after finding out they've been cheated on is blame themselves. They ask themselves, "What did I do?" "Why wasn't I enough?" "Did I not make enough time for my partner?" "Was I not adventurous enough in bed?" The list goes on and on. Trying to figure out the reason is enough to drive even the sanest person crazy.

I can assure you that when people cheat, it has something to do with their partner, but mostly to do with them. We can't control what others do in any way. They cheat because they wanted to. They cheated because they could. They may have cheated because they have issues they need to work out. Some people have shared with me their belief that the dysfunctional family systems they were brought up in greatly influenced their behaviors, including those that led to cheating.

Many of the negative actions they witnessed as children have become a part of who they are today. Is this true? Probably. It doesn't take a therapist to figure that out. Is it the only reason people cheat? Of course not. Either way, it has little to nothing to do with you.

The point of this book is to help other people recognize when they might be cheated on. I'm also seeking to set off a so-called light bulb in people's heads so they might be able to identify their own failures to communicate in their relationships, which can ultimately allow another person to sneak their way into the relationship.

I have always heard people say, "I already know the signs of cheating." But most people don't pay attention, or they second-guess themselves. More often than not, if people do recognize some of the red flags, most see the signs much too late.

The Wave is what I call the normal ebb and flow of a relationship between two people. It doesn't mean perfection or a steady trip up the ladder to bliss. I'm talking about the normal progression of your lives together. It's the fluidity of you and your partner's flow.

The different waves that make up every couple's relationship comprise: communication (which includes arguments and disagreements), sexual intimacy, acts of affection, patience with one another, intuition, forgiveness, empathy, the way you love one another, and your concern for them. Ultimately, your wave is made up of your interactions, all of which are wrapped up in your partner and in you both as a unit. Your wave is like a fingerprint. There are no two alike, and yours belongs only to you two. Once the facade is dropped, the waves will surely crash, revealing the real you, which results, hopefully, in you both settling into the union. All of this creates a pattern that is your wave. When you relax and be yourself in your relationship, you show the real you. You don't pretend to like video games, and your partner won't pretend to enjoy sappy movies.

Once there is another person added to you and your partner's wave, small flutters will begin to arise which will disrupt the normal flow of things. Your partner, who assumedly remains faithful, will notice the difference. Normally, your waves will go up at the same time and lower simultaneously, but with the addition of a new wave, yours with your partner's wave will begin to break off, no longer meeting at the same highs and lows.



When given the chance to manifest, those flutters will become ripples that grow larger and larger until the Wave you and your partner have created is completely changed. So many of you will read this and laugh because you're going to recognize some of the information here. Others will, undoubtedly, be shocked, while some will feel enlightened. Many will feel an array of different emotions, just like you do when you suspect you're being cheated on.



If you have ever gotten tired of being chastised by your partner because you're "insecure," "crazy," or "too suspicious," this book might be for you. I wrote this for every person who has ever been cheated on, cheated on someone, or is contemplating cheating, regardless of sex, race, sexual orientation, education level, or financial status. I do not doubt that this will serve as something different for every person who reads this, but the principles can be applied to anyone, any couple. You'll find that I have made sure to provide readers with the most basic scenarios that I have encountered.

With that said, we really hope that you take something from this book and learn a little more about yourself or a past relationship or, at the very least, just enjoy the read.

As we delve deeper into the intricacies of infidelity, the next chapter will uncover the subtle signs that often go unnoticed. We will explore real-life stories, the psychology behind cheating, and practical steps to fortify your relationship against infidelity. Prepare to uncover truths that will not only enlighten you but also equip you with the tools to build a stronger, more transparent bond with your partner.

Stay tuned, as the journey into the heart of relationships continues...

MARRIED TO MELANIN

A man would rather take the annoyance of the woman who is his everything than take even a second of it from a woman he doesn't see a future with.

- Jerald Bedell

CHAPTER 1

The Blueprint

Over the years, I listened to story after story from clients, watched my

friends and family go through countless relationships, and finally, it hit me...all the stories, from both men and women, started sounding the same. Every case became all too familiar. The patterns became easier to predict, so easy that I determined there was a Blueprint, and somebody's got to talk about it.



The Blueprint" is broken down into checkpoints that include the aftermath of cheating. The Initial Attraction that is sparked between two people is what leads to ongoing communication. As a result, the next step, which we call Building a Bridge, begins.

We all have memories that remind us to be careful who we share ourselves with, and who we let inside our lives. Sometimes these memories hold us hostage and prevent us from seeing something wonderful right in front of us, or these thoughts of caution can cause us to react with negative emotions which can cause damaging outcomes.

By understanding these elements we can better navigate our relationships, recognize the signs of potential infidelity, and address the baggage that hinders our happiness.

As we continue to unravel the intricacies of infidelity and personal baggage, you'll be guided through real-life examples of these Blueprints in action. You'll discover how to identify and confront these situations, transforming past pains into powerful lessons for a healthier future.

Get ready to delve deeper into the practical steps you can take to fortify your relationships and build a resilient bond with your partner.



Cheating isn't just about physical betrayal; it's also about the mask that hides true intentions and desires.

- Jerald Bedell

CHAPTER 2

The Mask

Let's talk about Tyrone and Michael, both of whom are single, who met at a mutual friends house two months ago.

They immediately hit it off, each putting their best foot forward, each showing his "representative self" through wearing a metaphorical mask. Though Michael and Tyrone were both single when they met, neither of them was truly honest about their financial status and level of ambition.



Have you ever met someone who was "about to do" something major? Sure, you have. Someone who seemed so passionate about where they believed they would be going in life. This could have been the guy you dated who was "about to go back to school," or the girl who was so convincing that she was "about to start my own business."

About-to-do people are experts at making themselves shine all the time, showing off their best selves at every chance. Michael tells Tyrone that he is planning to have his own art gallery and wine-tasting business soon. Putting on his mask, Tyrone explains that he, too, has big plans and shares that

he will be investing in his own food chain franchise. They are presenting each other with representative quotes.

Michael is, actually, pulling this information from another friend's life. While he enjoys wine tasting and is an art enthusiast, he hasn't made any concrete plans to establish his own brand, though this friend has. Tyrone does want to have his own business, but he is nowhere near the financial position required to do so. Both men have nothing to show for it but don't intend for the other to ever find anything truthful out because they each only have designs on engaging in a sexual encounter and nothing further.

Michael has been talking about this same plan for the last decade and has shared this same dream with multiple partners over the years. However, he has yet to do anything that will put his dream into action. He is a typical "about-to-do" kind of guy. I guarantee that you have run into these "about to do" people. Now, I also want to be very clear. Women can present themselves with the same representative quotes. I'm not bashing men, but I just want you to get a clear picture of what you might be dealing with.





You don’t have to be a genius to know that if they continue on this path of all talk and no effective action, neither Michael nor Tyrone will ever fulfill their dreams. So, it’s all bullshit because it’s the representative quote that is being presented. Neither is really expressing a true desire to achieve a goal that they are working hard to accomplish, but instead, they are working to impress the other.

People who are financially established or wealthy can wear a mask as well, but it will be comprised of emotion-based lies. Let’s say Michael is the owner of several successful wineries and art galleries. His representative quotes will be more focused on his character. Although he is a shrewd businessman, he will emphasize his imaginary ability to be loyal and honest. He may demonstrate a false sense of being overly considerate of those facing financial hardships. In doing this, he is trying to get Tyrone to drop his defenses so he is able to bait him with money. Knowing that Tyrone wants to start his own franchise, he uses his money as a way to convince Tyrone, that with his guidance and financial support, he will be able to build his dreams.



Teachable Moment

First, before you invest your time in someone, hold them accountable for the dreams that they share with you. Don’t allow yourself to blend with another person who has not yet proven that he or she can make it on their own.

Representative quotes are the best version of themselves that they think they can really offer. This representative does and says the right thing all the time while always making the appropriate decisions. This is all fake and totally impractical.

If you’re reading this and you’re in a relationship, you know that it’s impossible for you to think rationally all the time when you and your partner share strong emotions. If you get angry and call your partner a piece of shit, you know that you will, more than likely, get an emotionally-charged response. Name-calling is never the answer, by the way. Once you put something out into the air, you can’t take it back.

There is an emotional connection shared between the two of you and when people are hurt by the person they love, they react. Tell this story to the person you’re cheating with, or considering sneaking around with, and they’ll throw you a representative quote, maybe something along the lines of, “I wouldn’t lash out if you called me a piece of shit because I would just understand that you’re upset about something.” This is total bullshit, but their job is to make you feel good about yourself all the time. That is not your partner’s job. He or she will not pacify you, but, instead, call you out and be honest when needed.

CHAPTER 3

The Technique of the Centipede

There are certain places that are a breeding ground for infidelity. Work, the gym, or a best friend's house. These areas always offer opportunities to be separate from your partner without any chance of them being able to just pop up. Obviously, social media sites are the easiest place to create a false narrative.



When your partner goes to work, the gym, or to hang out with friends, you can't control their interactions. You can certainly try, but how would that make you look? You're forced to trust your partner. Better yet, trust the universe or your Higher Power when they venture out into the world to face cheaters on the prowl.

The workplace remains the number one pick for cheaters. People always ask me why I say that. They think social media is the number one place, but it's not. Yes, social media is the next best thing, but face-to-face interaction is more fulfilling, as it allows for more of a build-up to the actual cheating.

While social media will enable you to employ all the false narratives you want, these will quickly fail once you meet in person. There are no filters for any representative quotes. For instance, a guy can post pictures of wads of money, expensive bottles of alcohol, and jewelry, giving the impression that he is successful in his career. A woman, for example, who is a CNA, might take pictures at work and claim to be an RN. At her job, however, everyone knows she is a CNA. If you work with the attractive guy who's posting extravagant Instagram pictures, you'll be able to see that those diamonds are cubic zirconias, and he drives a 1999 Kia, instead of the Range Rover he stood next to in his posts.

At work, people typically can't get away with lies about what kind of car they drive, whether they're in a relationship or not, the career they are in, true height, weight, skin color, and so on. Also, you can see how people interact with others in the work environment. This is a neutral zone for men and women.





The Workplace Illusion

Erica and Shawn, co-workers who are both in relationships, are in yet another heated discussion with a group of their colleagues. Robert is a natural Illusionist, like most men, and he has been throwing Erica bait. To clarify, the bait is thrown out there through peacocking, which women also do. Shawn will do what he can to separate himself from the rest of the guys at their job. Some of her male coworkers choose to be extra nice and give Erica compliments. During the debate, another style of peacocking is demonstrated by Rich, who makes it known that he is always on Erica's side in any debate or discussion involving men and women. For example, "All women are smarter than men," or "Any woman can play basketball just as well as the best NBA players!" This guy goes against the grain all the time, disagreeing with his male peers so he can side with Erica.

Shawn on the other hand, introduces a different angle where he consistently goes against Erica, in an effort to further the debate. This is, actually, very tactical because in disagreeing with Erica, he proves to not be easily swayed by her beauty, simultaneously presenting himself as a challenge to her. This works in Shawn's favor, his true intentions unexposed, and Erica becomes like the lamb who walks right up to the wolf.

Keep in mind, whatever he displays as his personal peacocking style, he'll have to remain consistent in. Consistency results in the woman dropping her defenses because she feels she can trust him. She will believe that she has witnessed his true self, the unfiltered version of himself which is what you find in friendships. Shawn succeeds in gaining Erica's trust and friendship. Getting an "in" with Erica is all a game.



The only time he would stop hunting her is when he found someone even more challenging or more attractive to go after. Guys like Shawn will almost always shoot for the new hire at the job. Working in a hospital, for instance, is a large enough facility to maintain a neutral hunting zone, making it so easy for one to hunt multiple people at the same time while remaining consistent with each of them. Since I gave you some background information on where cheating starts, I'll give you a scenario. This can happen to you, and anyone you know. Ladies, because you are often so focused on how people view you, beware. Being "weak" or "strong" has nothing to do with this at all. Falling into the person's trap means he has applied the Technique of the Centipede. I know this term might throw you a little bit. The Centipede is more dangerous than any other insect, even the arachnid is no match. A lot of people don't know this. They also are unaware that you can't tell their head from their tail. When a centipede attacks its prey, the victim has no idea which end of the centipede is attacking them, which leaves them immobile, or stuck in a neutral position. This is the same technique introduced by the Illusionist when he leaves his victim stuck in one place, unable to move forward in her current relationship or back away from him.

Technique Of The Centipede

Let's be very clear, however, that the Illusionist does not want you to move forward with him or her, but instead, remain in limbo, at his disposal. Being able to move forward with the Illusionist means that you can give up your current relationship with your safety net, and establish a commitment with him. The Illusionist will never allow you to because he doesn't really want you and he must always be in control.

Even when you think you have the power, you don't. Backing away from him means that you have the ability to walk away and make things work with your safety net or some other prospect. Typically, one will feel unsettled if stepping back from the Illusionist because they'll wonder what could have been or if the right decision was made in walking away.

The Illusionist's Game

For example, the qualities that Erica doesn't like about her boyfriend, Shawn makes up for, but through his representative quotes. She has no idea if he is really better than Joe or not. Erica complained to Shawn that Joe was so lazy. As an Illusionist, Shawn would subtly convey that he is never lazy and could never be lazy. Through these false statements, Shawn has plugged a picture in Erica's head of his willingness to be better than her man.

After their affair begins, she realizes she can't give up all that Shawn offers just to stay with average, boring Joe who she has been with for two years. As a result, Erica will be stuck in neutral and won't back away from Shawn. Through sharing such intimate details about her relationship, Erica unknowingly handed Shawn the weapons he would need to present himself as the better man and defeat Joe in the battle that he won't even know he's in.



The Breakdown

What is an Illusionist? Why is this something that all men have in common?



An Illusionist, in matters of the heart, is a person who introduces themselves as having your best interest at heart when they don't. They have the skill set to make you see only the best they pretend to offer and anything else they want you to see. They are experts at making you question yourself-your beliefs, your desires, your perceptions. Illusionists have the power to convince you to ignore logic and believe whatever they put in front of you.

While women can be good illusionists, men are natural-born illusionists; we were made this way.

The safety net is the person who is always the safe option. No matter what you do, you always have this person to fall back on. Ring any bells? Be honest, now. This person will make you feel better about your mistakes and always be there. There could even be a chance that they'll never find out about the cheating and when things fall apart with the person you cheated on them with, they'll still be there, waiting for your mood to improve because they only want to love you and want you to love them. If they found out about you cheating, they might choose to stay and make an excuse as to why you did it. This can go either way. You never know what the outcome will be, so cheating is taking a gamble.



Another thing I need to point out that people don't realize is that men cheat to cheat. They want something new. Cheating, to men, is nothing but a moment in time, a blip in the movie that is their lives. So, men can cheat and come home to their partners or wives and act like nothing has happened. Women, on the other hand, cheat to replace. They seek someone new and move on when they think they have something worth moving forward with. There's the occasional woman who can cheat, cheat and cheat some more and will continue to go on as if nothing happened when she's with her safety net. But that really is rare.

Since we are on the topic of why women cheat, let me give you a heads-up, ladies. Most of you have the intent to replace your man. Remember that the person you are cheating with lives exterior to your life with your partner. That person might give you a little money from time to time. It can be $100 or $800, but more than likely it won't be on a consistent basis. Your partner, boyfriend, or husband brings in a check every two weeks, even if it's only $500, it's a consistent $500 every two weeks. But once you give your man the boot, that consistency stops immediately. So, the $800 you get here and there from this other person will not be consistent.

Also, keep in mind that once you start to make demands or insist on the things you need, you take the fun out of him giving you anything and it will stop.

A man will do for you when it's not a requirement. The minute you make anything a requirement is the minute he will lose interest. From a woman's point of view, sex is exciting when you anticipate seeing this guy you're so into. But when he starts making demands that sex will happen every time you meet up, the excitement for the woman quickly dwindles. She'll start making excuses as to why she can't make their meetings.

A woman will, more often than not, start to lose interest because her body is her body and she will decide what, who, and when she will do with it. The same thing goes for men and their money.

You also must be aware of Look-up Syndrome. This is the diagnosis for those women who are constantly looking for the next person they can attach themselves to who will build them up. These opportunists have no drive to accomplish anything great in life except sustaining or improving their level of financial comfortability through their partner or potential mark. Just beware. Life is like having two hands. In order to pick something up, you have to put something down. You see, what you think is a huge diamond, so you empty your hands of the real diamonds you've been carrying, only to find out that that large diamond is really a cubic zirconia. Now you have nothing worth anything.



CHAPTER 4

Intent

Sharon is the Human Resources Director of an Outpatient Mental Health facility.

She's married to Dave, who owns a very successful construction company. After 13 years of marriage, Sharon has grown bored with Dave and feels their marriage lacks passion. Hunter is a Clinical Therapist who works at the mental health facility with her. She finds Hunter to be handsome and loves that he is an intellectual. Hunter is 34, 10 years younger than Sharon. Hunter is not interested in Kim but he playfully flirts with her. Hunter is very comfortable with himself and secure in his lifestyle and has no intention of settling down with anyone right now. He's enjoying living a free life. Though Sharon is interested in Hunter, he sees her as a plaything, nothing serious.



Over the last several months, Sharon and Hunter have developed a rapport and she stops by his office most days just to say "Hi." She has explained to Hunter, seeking his advice, that her husband is a brooding, insensitive, and selfish man who has shut her out.



Within six months, Hunter noticed the subtle but bold changes Sharon made to her work attire. Her husband Dave noticed, too.

Sharon is, most likely, aware of her desire for Hunter. She wants all his attention now. Though she was always the type of woman who could just get up and go, she focused much more on her appearance. She recalls that Hunter said his favorite color is blue, so she makes sure she wears something blue to ensure she grabs his attention. She starts wearing a new perfume and is sure to never leave home without her eyebrows, hair, and nails done to perfection. Typically, women in this situation are already starting to wear sexier bras and panties, although they may not admit that they're planning to cheat. Sharon's subconscious, on the other hand, is way more powerful than her conscious mind and has already acknowledged what's coming.

Teachable Moment

So, let's talk about you. Imagine your partner or significant other is at work and finding this mystery person more attractive every day. As a result, he or she is becoming less and less interested in you. She may be consumed with all her new and confusing feelings but still has the sense to be mindful of how she treats you. She'll be scrutinizing her every move, every thought, every word. On the flip side, she's critiquing every word that comes out of your mouth, everything you do, everything you wear. Everything. You are being compared to this other person she is entertaining. This is unfair because most people in this situation don't know they're being compared to someone else until it's too late.

Let's talk about about one tactic that women use as a weapon to counter their very observant partners. Some women pretend to be giving their partner the silent treatment to make him or her think she is upset, sad, or hurt. Don't be fooled by this efficient and clever technique, which is comprised of both strengths and weaknesses.

This is the "I will not say a word" game plan because she doesn't have to remember the lies she tells you, she doesn't have to lie to you, and she doesn't have to worry about you being able to see the lies as she speaks them out loud. The only thing she has to do is allow you, her partner, to get upset and call her names and have a negative reaction. This woman who employs this trick is using your emotions against you.



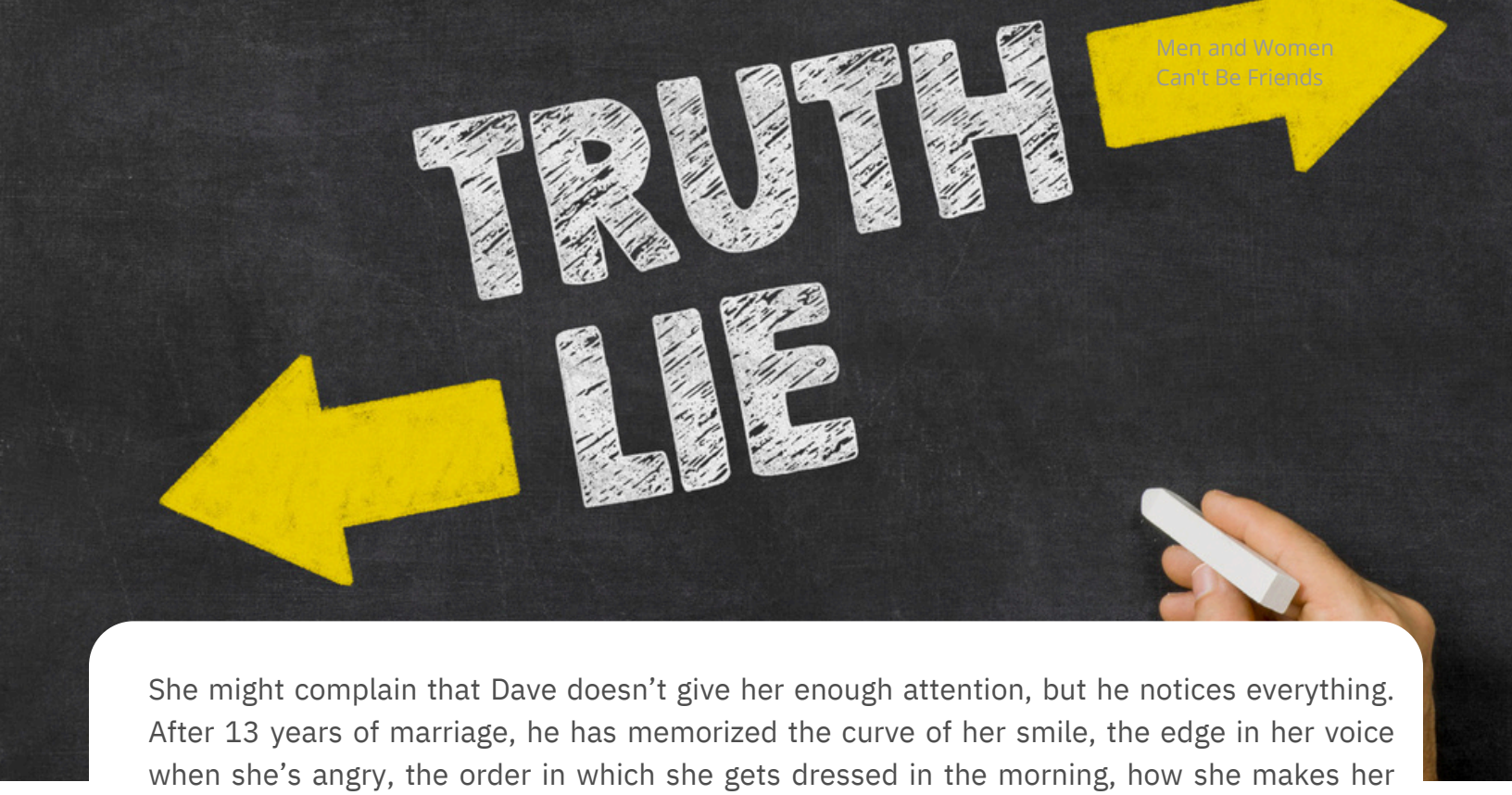
When you ask her where she has been because you suspect something and you make accusations as to why she hasn't responded to your phone calls or texts, she will continue to ignore you. Please believe that she will use your emotions and aggression against you later on to deflect. She will accuse you by saying that your accusations are implying that she is a slut, a whore, a thot, or a hoe. Every curse word you yell at her, every accusation, every name you call her, she will never let it go and she will use this as an excuse to cheat or behave poorly.



The Reality of it All

Sharon has been looking for an excuse to stay angry with Dave. The one thing she says she can't let go of is the fact that her husband invested money in another woman's ventures. Sharon was enraged when she found this out. But Dave explained the situation to her and she, somewhat, let it go. Dave invested his money in his best friend's business. Or so he thought. He was completely unaware that the business his friend wanted was actually a business that his wife had designs on building. Though this has resulted in additional income for the couple, because Dave would never invest his money into something he didn't believe would bring in revenue, Dave would have discussed this with Kim first. Under no circumstance would he ever disrespect his wife by investing in another woman without talking to her about it. Still, while Sharon complains to Hunter about Dave's disrespect, she fails to mention that Dave paid for her grad school and also invested thousands and thousands in past ideas that she lost interest in. As a result, he refuses to throw more money into Sharon because she is full of ideas but lacks conviction. She has proven to be irresponsible with money. But he is honest with her about his feelings. Dave doesn't sugarcoat anything and, yes, he told her she was a fuck-up. Harsh? Maybe a little. Honest? Completely.

Sharon has everything that so many women would kill for. She has a husband who is supportive, faithful, successful, good-looking, loyal, and reliable. Like most of us, he lacks in other areas, but tries to make up for it with nice things. Sharon is spoiled and she isn't honest with herself and not realistic in her wants. She looks to Hunter to fall for the representative quotes and tell her, not the, sometimes, painful truth but, lies that make her feel better about herself, temporarily.



She might complain that Dave doesn't give her enough attention, but he notices everything. After 13 years of marriage, he has memorized the curve of her smile, the edge in her voice when she's angry, the order in which she gets dressed in the morning, how she makes her coffee, that she hates the taste of Gin, she hates the color blue, how she twirls her hair around her fingers when she's sleepy, that she bites her lip when she's deeply focused on something, how long it takes her to complete her nightly beauty routine and how long it takes her to get ready for work in the morning. Dave knows about how long Sharon will be out when she goes grocery shopping, or that after she goes to the gym she stops for a large French Vanilla Coffee with extra cream and light sweetener and might even run to the market for dinner. Dave knows his wife. Most men know their wives. Women don't realize this. They think their men don't pay attention to them. Believe me, they do. Do they listen to every single word that comes out of your mouth? Of course not. But they know you. So, when she trades in her favorite $235 flats and starts wearing heels to work, Dave notices. When Sharon starts adding the nail salon to her weekly routine, Dave notices. When she takes two hours to get ready for work instead of 45 minutes, he really notices.

Dave has been trying to spend time with Kim for weeks now. He has been attempting to plan a nice dinner outing for the two and a movie like they used to do. After sitting up and waiting for Sharon's car lights to shine through the windows, Dave confronts her when she comes in after midnight. As soon as she walked in, she had an attitude. She came in like she was irritated about something. When he questioned her about where she was and why she didn't respond to any of his messages or calls, she appeared more irritated but did not respond. She had an attitude to create a diversion, but it didn't work because the questions were pouring out of Dave. Although it would appear that she was simply ignoring him, Sharon was staying quiet because she was preparing for war. She entered their bedroom and headed straight into her custom-built walk-in closet.



Dave followed her, interrogating her. Finally, Kim turned to face him and coolly responded with, “Now you want to talk to me, right? I beg you to talk to me. To want to talk to me. Now you want me to talk? I’m good, Dave.” In her head, Sharon believes that Dave is the reason she is cheating with Hunter. But that is not the case. Remember this: people cheat because they want to. Cheating has to do with them, not you, not their partner. People are tactical so they are good at making their partners feel that they are at fault for their infidelity, but you are not responsible for someone else’s behavior. There has never been a person who cheated whose faithful partner pushed him or her to climb into another person’s bed. Or Car. It’s simple.

CHAPTER 5

Building a Bridge with Toothpicks

A person, to find common ground or build a bridge, will begin voicing complaints about their partner to anyone who will listen, especially the person they are looking to cheat with. They'll drop hints about having relationship issues, allowing the other person an opportunity to weigh in. This is the same as throwing up smoke signals, which is done when a male or female makes a telling comment about an undesirable trait that his or her partner possesses. For instance, a woman might tell a man that she's interested in, "You pay attention to your woman. I wish I'd get that kind of treatment at home."

Most men know, where there's smoke, there's fire. Any woman taking this route is looking for trouble and is going to find it.





Toothpicks

Olivia has been establishing a new ‘friendship’ with James as they enter the building a bridge stage. Because he has sought her advice about his relationship so he can get the “female perspective,” she has done the same and now sees him as a friend. Though not quite aware yet, Olivia is looking forward to seeing James at work every day. When he asks her for her number, she makes an excuse as to why it is okay to exchange numbers. I say make an excuse because she recognizes, even if only subconsciously, that there is an attraction, or, as women often see it, a connection, even if only a flicker of one.

Normally, Olivia, like most women, wouldn’t just hand out her number to a guy, especially while in a relationship. Women cannot feel bamboozled or as if they’ve been played if things don’t work out as planned. They need to feel that they have power in giving someone their number. They have to be able to have an excuse as to why they gave a man their number just in case he tries to brag about it. This would prove that she’s not like every other woman because she gave you her number for a legitimate reason, a “friend” reason. By the way, a woman can never be tricked into giving out her phone number. This isn’t just some normal act. There must be a reason and they have to be in control of it.

> *“Women still have to feel as if they have the control, even in cheating. But they rarely do.”*
>
> ***- Jerald Bedell***



In this case, James and Olivia are working a late shift at the mall, when James stops by her store to tell her to give him her number because he's running out to grab dinner and she can't leave the store unattended. Olivia is hesitant but complies because she tells herself that "it's harmless." After all, she will really need to count her drawer and catch up on stockings and displays but could really use a hot meal. This is the first of many lies she tells herself, though she doesn't know it yet. Because Olivia feels she knows herself and she's powerful enough to start or stop anything she wants, she is confident that if James ever becomes inappropriate, she'll stop him dead in his tracks.

She gives him her number and they continue on the path of their new amazing and yet enlightening inappropriate "friendship." The deepening of what Olivia calls their "friendship" all started off with texts, then later, led to long phone conversations. It never ceases to amaze me how much extra time people can make during this stage. Because James is her friend, Olivia shares with him that her boyfriend Troy spends too much time with his friends, often leaving her feeling lonely.

James explains that his girlfriend is in school, which takes up most of her time, but she doesn't work. What he fails to mention to Olivia is that he told her to stop working so she can focus on school. She's at the top of her class but makes time for James daily.

James is really just making up issues to give the appearance that he and Olivia are both going through issues in their relationships. If they were both happy in their relationships, neither of them would be complaining about their partners. He is creating an issue, so they have some kind of common ground. This is to make Olivia continue to feel comfortable enough to talk to him. When he's with her, James makes her feel that she is what he needs in a friend...and possibly more. Because he continuously has encouraged her to work on her relationship, she feels compelled to offer him the same fair counseling. Olivia begins to feel like a stronger woman, so empowered and so... needed. She is contributing to the friendship by helping him understand women.



She gives him basic advice, explaining to him that, women expect certain things from a man and he should know how his girlfriend feels, even if she doesn't tell him. James, a true Illusionist, is still managing to subtly compliment Olivia while making small complaints about his girlfriend, that will eventually graduate to bigger problems. This is creating a system of comparison, which will automatically force Olivia to compare each compliment he gives her to every complaint he makes about his girlfriend, making Olivia feel that she is better than James' girlfriend, or a better fit for him.

Olivia is still in denial. Whether they are working or not, she and James are texting and talking every chance they get. Though she is becoming more and more distracted, she is still managing to be present in her relationship with Troy. This is imperative because there's an outsider, James, who is telling her to work harder on her relationship. She doesn't realize the severity of taking advice from this other person, this other man. She is, essentially, doing exactly what he's telling her to do. She is taking directives from a man who is not her man. This man's opinion now means more to her than that of her own partner. I know that so many people reading this won't agree, or they'll feel they could never get caught up in a situation like this. Believe me, you can. You probably won't even recognize what's happening. Like Olivia, you'll be so caught up in the illusion that is the friendship you think you've built with this outsider, you won't see that it's all a façade.

If you're like Olivia, you too have reached a very dangerous point because you are valuing this other person's thoughts over your partner's feelings and you begin to apply it to your everyday life, your relationship. You're living by his representative quotes. Whether subconscious or not, this person is on your mind so much that you are in the beginning stages of infidelity and don't even know it. At this stage, you're getting closer to the Compare and Contrast stage, which we'll talk about later.

Below, we're list a few examples of how this building a bridge stage can start. Look at how silly these statements are. But this stuff really happens like this.



Scenario #1:

Olivia: *I have a question for you. After your girlfriend worked a double, would you allow her to come home to a messy house to clean?*

James: *(Representative Quote) I would never have my girlfriend working overtime anyway. If she wanted to, I certainly wouldn't let her clean the house. I would make sure it was clean by the time she got home.*

Olivia: *Exactly. That's exactly what I thought! I just needed a man's opinion about this because I'm so over it.*

Scenario #2:

James: *I have a question for you. You have a boyfriend. Would you feel it necessary to go out with your friends with a tiny dress on showing off your ass and your breasts?*

Olivia: *(Representative Quote) No! I'm a representative of my man. Anybody who goes out dressed like that is doing it for attention. Attention from someone other than their man.*

James: *Exactly. That's exactly what I thought! I just needed a woman's opinion about this.*

Scenario #3:

(after Olivia has a long discussion with James, her new love interest, about future goals)

Olivia: *Babe, what do you want to do with your life in five years? Where do you see us at in the next five years?*

While these situations might sound ridiculous, and they really are, they're real. You might not get caught in such a conversation, but Olivia has already begun to fall into the trap of The Centipede, and James is going along with it even though he is the one orchestrating this whole situation that he has scripted in his head.

The Breakdown

James is taking in, and making a mental note of, all the information that Olivia is freely sharing about Troy. After obtaining all of these voluntary details about the unsuspecting boyfriend and their relationship, he will use it against Olivia. He can compare his own made-up issues to mimic hers. Whatever issue that she has, he will connect himself to it.

For instance, a woman can tell a man, “My man is lazy. He has no drive. He won’t go to school even though I encourage him to.” Nine times out of ten, over time, probably not right away, he will create a narrative that sheds negative light on his partner. This will give him an opportunity to ask this woman for advice about how to handle certain issues that arise in his relationship, thus creating a more intimate dynamic that feels like a friendship. But believe me, this is no friendship. It’s a ploy, a game, a scripted weapon he has planned to use against her.

Note for the Ladies:

you are never supposed to discuss numbers with anyone. This is giving out entirely too much information. For instance, you do not tell the number of years, months, weeks, days that you have been with your partner. Never share how tall he is, or his income, how long he has been at his job, how many years of school he has completed, whether or not he went to school. I know this will sound insane to you all, but I’ll explain further in a minute. You also cannot share details about your family, including the number of children you have, not even how many siblings you have.

Men do not fall for the numbers game. They will play along just to keep up appearances but they do not care. Men are NOT trying to replace their woman at home. A man who is looking to entertain himself sexually will only seek to replace his woman when she has dismissed him. Let me repeat, as to be very clear, men DO NOT leave their woman, whether it be a wife, fiancé, girlfriend. He will not ever leave HER for YOU. Men will only seek to keep you if that woman has ended things with him. So, when a man asks you lots of questions about you, your partner and your lives together, it’s only to gain information that will assist in building his arsenal of weapons to use against you and violate your partner. Most women immediately fall into this trap because most women love to talk, they love to brag, even if their relationship is not in the greatest shape.



Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on whether you've ever found yourself sharing intimate details about your relationship with someone outside of it. Did it seem innocent at first, only to realize later it led to complications? Recognize these patterns early to safeguard your relationship.

In the next chapter, we will delve deeper into the tactics used to create emotional dependency and how to recognize them. Learn how to maintain healthy boundaries and protect your relationship from subtle manipulations. Prepare to equip yourself with the tools needed to navigate these challenges and build a resilient, trusting partnership.

Stay tuned, as the journey into the heart of relationships continues...

CHAPTER 6

Acting Out of Guilt

Ava and Danielle have been together for almost a year. Ava, 27, works as a Veterinary Technician and loves her job. Though she has been planning to go back to Veterinary School, she hasn't made the jump because she has always hated school. She and Danielle have recently moved in together because it seemed like the right thing to do. They spend a lot of their time together, so it made sense for them to get a place and put their money together as they work toward their future. Ava has been feeling a lot of pressure to be perfect for Danielle, who, at 28, has a successful career in management. Danielle has been encouraging Ava to go back to school, and although she continues to drag her feet, Danielle expressed she will support her in any dream she has. Because in Ava's heart, she knows her partner is a good person, she's fighting against any urges she's having to cheat. She doesn't want to destroy what they've built together.

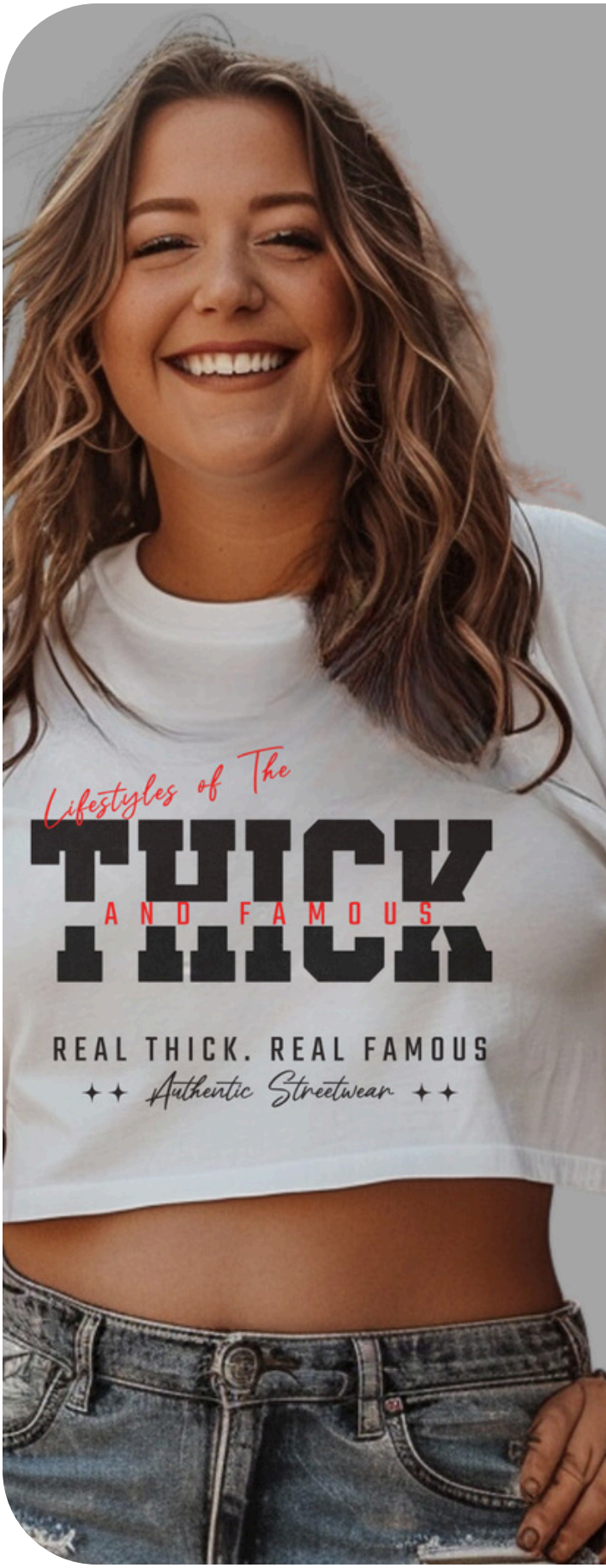


While at the market checkout, the cute girl from the gym

Drea, pulls her cart up right behind her. The two women greet one another and continue in light conversation until Ava pays for her things and prepares to leave the store. Shortly after, Drea yells to her, “wait up!” Ava stops, feeling a bit awkward and uncomfortable but excited, all at once, because she’s secretly attracted to Drea and gets butterflies whenever she sees her at the gym. “I didn’t know you live near here.”

They proceed to walk to Ava’s car and continue their conversation. After some time, Ava’s phone rings and it’s Danielle. She snoozes the call then realizes she and Drea had been standing outside talking for over an hour. She insisted on putting Ava’s groceries in her car and she let her. The two said their goodbyes until a planned meeting tomorrow when they’ll see each other at the gym.

In the car ride home, Ava determines from that conversation that she is undoubtedly attracted to Drea and enjoyed her company. She finds herself feeling guilty about the lengthy conversation, realizing that she should not have divulged some of the information that she shared with her. She was really engaged with Drea as she told her things about herself and her relationship with Danielle, and, regardless of how insignificant the details may have seemed to her, she gave actual facts and not “fluff.”



After reflecting on the conversation later on, she realized she went too far and shared too much and knows Danielle would not have approved of the interaction at all. She gave her a peek into who she really is, who Danielle is. She realized that she was attracted to Drea but she really cares for Danielle. She told herself that she would not allow anything to happen with Drea and decided that she would, actually, steer clear of her at all costs. Ava sat, parked, in the parking lot of their apartment complex for a few minutes in order to mentally prepare herself for seeing Danielle when she got home from work. She decided that she was going to treat Danielle to a gourmet, made-at-home dinner with candles and soft music following the bubble bath she would draw for her when she came in.



The Breakdown

When Ava snoozed Danielle's call during her conversation, she proved that she was already willing to invest in Drea. She demonstrated that the life of her partner was not as important as talking to Drea. That call could have been her last, still Ava dismissed the call.

What she didn't understand was, Drea was simply giving her a moment in time. That's it. So, she imagines, being in a relationship with her could be better than the one she's currently in because Drea seems like so much fun, while Danielle is so focused all the time and so serious.

What it is, that Ava is unable to recognize, is that Danielle is focused on the future and building together. She loves Ava and wants her to be happy. She believes in her and wants the best for her no matter what the outcome of their relationship. Though she is surrounded by attractive, powerful women, she wants Ava and remains loyal to her.

Ava is showing a little resistance to the feelings that are developing for Drea. She feels guilty for giving her so much of her time, snoozing Danielle's call, sharing so much about herself and the relationship so she now, subconsciously, is doing damage control. She knows that Danielle is a good catch and she knows that she is loyal. By, now, planning to cater to Danielle when she gets home, Ava is acting out of guilt.

On the contrary, acting out of guilt can also come in the form of meanness. Ava could have just as well reacted by pushing Danielle away and avoiding her when she came home. This could be by way of silence or picking a fight with her.



CHAPTER 7

The Comparison

Let's tell you how good intentions can go terrible wrong.



This often takes place when a man or woman adds extra estrogen or testosterone to the relationship, oftentimes because this add-on person is in need of assistance in some way. This brings us to Eva and Jonathan...and Lance.

Jonathan, a struggling musician, worked overnight stock at a retail giant. Eva is a real estate agent—popular, accomplished, and attractive. While she worked on her broker license, Jonathan took on all of the bills, putting his career on hold. He had the opportunity to audition for a record label a couple of years ago, but since it required him to be on the road for three months, Eva was against it since they were raising her three-year-old daughter from a previous relationship. Lance, Jonathan's younger brother, is in between jobs and has trouble keeping a job, while his wife is the stable one. Lance is a typical about-to-do guy.

Let's set the scene. Eva allowed her brother-in-law to live in their home while he and his wife were going through a rough patch. Initially, she did not want him there because she felt he would be yet another person she would be responsible for. Jonathan had an audition with an up-and-coming R&B artist who needed a pianist. Jonathan told Lance to take the car to pick Eva up from her last property she's been staging all day so he could catch the train into the city. He couldn't make the audition and pick her up, too. Lance went joyriding in Eva's new luxury vehicle and lost track of time, getting to her late. Naturally, she was pissed. Lance lied and told her he was late because Jonathan told him at the last minute to pick her up. Eva immediately expressed her annoyance as she bashed Jonathan. "I only ever ask him to put me first, considering how long I have been carrying this family."

Lance is tactical and begins playing devil's advocate. He spoke out in support of his brother and his dream. "I'm sure it hurt his pride that you have to pay all the bills." Striking a nerve as he knew he would, Lance encourages Eva to continue. "Exactly! I don't know why he can't see that when you can recognize it after only living with us for a month."

When Jonathan got home, he was excited to tell her about his audition and the new contract he signed with the new artist. If she blows up, he'll blow up. He will be getting paid $5000 per show for a 10-city tour with two shows per city beginning immediately, all expenses paid. She didn't want to hear it and walked away, but she eavesdropped and overheard him telling Lance the details. Lance was excited for him and explained he tried to convey this to Eva, who was upset with him. He told Lance that he had to pack because his flight would be leaving in the morning. He told him not to tell Eva because he needs to explain to her that this is his "shot." Jonathan went on to remind his brother that this is his second chance and he needed to take it and would not let it pass him by.

And all of his excitement at the contract he just signed, Jonathan headed to his parents' house to tell them the good news. When he left, Lance immediately went to check on Eva and knocked on her door. She opens the door and reiterated that he's being selfish and thinking about the little bit of money he'll be getting. Lance did not interject or stop to correct. His response was "sometimes you gotta do what you gotta do." Eva followed up by adding, "you're right because I am tired of taking care of a grown ass man." Lance took his opportunity to add in, "It's not right for him to leave you both hanging." Eva, falling right into Lance's trap, asked him, "What do you mean?" Lance added, knowing that she was playing into his game, "I'm going to stay out of it. Jonny will talk to you about it when he gets back."

Shortly after, Jonathan walked in the door and Lance sneakily went back to his room in the basement. Eva told Jonathan she still did not want to hear what he had to say and told him to sleep on the couch. The next morning, he tried again to approach her. “I know Lance told you but it’s better that I tell you. And I know the money is going to help.”

Eva, not listening or really even caring what her partner had to say, expressed her disgust, “your brother is more of a man because a real man would have told me all of this immediately, to my face. And $5000 is not going to fix anything! It’s not enough to take care of you, let alone your family.” Lance interjected because the conversation was getting heated.

Ultimately, his purpose for chiming into this quarrel between the two partners was to cover his tracks so his negative comments about his brother would not be exposed. Lance suggested he and his brother take a walk to cool down. Jonathan, completely unaware of his brother’s devious actions, explained he loves Eva so much but he has also given up so much for her so she could get where she is now. Now it’s his turn, he explained. This time, he could not, would not, let anything interfere with his pursuit of his dream. “I just don’t understand why she’s fighting me on this.” Lance knows why but he won’t admit it because he has a hidden agenda.

One thing that people fail to realize is that, in every relationship, there is a power imbalance. Someone is always trying to be heard, understood, or demanding to be taken seriously. It might sound unfair, but it’s just a part of the natural order of things. There is no such thing as 50/50. People talk about this 50/50 idea as if it really exists, but it doesn’t. This push-and-pull that we do with our partner is what creates our wave with that person.

Now, Lance is the fun guy, an escape from reality. He’s also Johnathan’s brother. Now I know people will be outraged when I share this story. But, yes, it is based on a true situation that was brought to my attention. Before you judge, see if you can understand Eva’s point of view.

Because, in her mind, she’s being smart, logical even, Eva is not considering dropping Jonathan, her safety net. She just wants to get away from him sometimes. Or...maybe all the time, these days, but she really is trying to keep some semblance of normalcy and peace. She didn’t plan on cheating on Jonathan with Lance but since he has moved in with them for a while, since separating from his wife Brittany, they have been spending a lot of time together. Lance understands that she gets lonely sometimes because he recognizes that

Jonathan is consumed with his work, just like his wife is, hers. Lance attempted to kiss her one day and she backed away from him. But since then, she can't stop thinking about him. He's good company and easy to talk to. He understands her.

While her sex drive has increased, because of all the excitement that Lance has created in her, her actual desire to have sex with Jonathan begins to dwindle, especially since, as she puts it, "he so often turns me down because he says he is just sooo tired." She's so charged up from her attraction to Lance and has to let that out in some way.

Though she's in denial about it, she's ready to cheat but an opportunity hasn't presented itself again yet. So, what does she do? The next best thing. Masturbate. Her mind is riddled with fantasies stemming from all those supposed innocent conversations that have led to now-inappropriate discussions about favorite sex positions, role-playing ideas, wordplay, and other intimate and intriguing personal details.

Fantasy-drunk Eva is mesmerized by Lance. He's a couple of years younger than Jonathan, less serious, and has a great sense of humor. His sex appeal, the words he speaks, the way he compliments her, the way they exchange light touches when no one is looking.

Now, when he complains about his wife, she no longer encourages him to talk about his feelings in marriage counseling. Now, she tells him he shouldn't wait around for Brittany but instead do whatever makes him happy, the thing that helps him keep his sanity. Even if that means breaking her heart and the hearts of their children. But according to all the hidden aspects of their marriage that Lance has confided in her about, Eva concludes Brittany is not the wonderful wife and mother they all thought she was over the years.

Lance has told her all about how Brittany never understands him. She doesn't ever encourage him to pursue his dreams of starting a real estate business. She used to but doesn't anymore. She is often so busy that she doesn't pay him much attention anymore. She puts him down and doesn't let him be a man. "What a bitch!" Eva thinks. She wishes Lance could see himself through her eyes. To her, they may look alike, but Lance is like Zeus, while Jonathan is nothing more than a mortal. She marvels at all of his fantastic ideas about life and feels that he will, one day, accomplish his goals.

Jonathan goes to work and comes home unless he's coaching basketball. Jonathan is pragmatic in his thinking while his brother is funny and animated and bold. Jonathan is an island, and a deep thinker. Lance is outgoing and wants her opinion and her ideas all the time. Jonathan looks at her and only sees his future wife and the mother of his children; he doesn't tell her anymore how sexy she is, but Lance does all the time. Jonathan doesn't notice every time she changes her nail color or tries a new perfume. But Lance does.

An important detail that she's forgetting, though, is that Lance doesn't have the connections to her that Jonathan does. Those strings make all the difference in the world.

Although Eva is unaware, this wonderful relationship she is building with Lance is all based on lies. His role is to pretend to "get her" by mirroring everything she has said to him. Because she has fallen for this, the team that she believes she has built with Lance is Team Them against Team Jonathan, and all they do for one another is feed their egos.

Lance's opinion matters so much to Eva because he is feeding her representative self. She truly believes that if Lance can see all of these supposed amazing qualities that she is presenting to the world, to him, then the feelings they have for one another must be real. She believes that what she shows him is her true self, rather than her representative self.



Scenario

Eva left work early to head to the nailery in a dual attempt to pamper herself and look good for Lance. She usually sticks to pale, neutral tones but today she is going for a spicy red color. Once home, Jonathan surprised her and prepared dinner. Disappointed that he came home early, she was slightly appreciative of his effort. Sitting at the dining room table, she waits to see if he notices her new bold choice of nail color.

Jonathan: *Hey beautiful. How was your day? Come on and eat before it gets cold.*

Eva: *(tapping her brightly polished nails on the dining room table) Sorry I didn't respond to your texts. I had the day from hell (rants about her busy day). Johnathan's lack of acknowledgement becomes irritating to her. So, to what do I owe the pleasure of having you home early today?*

Jonathan: *(noticing the new but constant irritation in her tone) What's wrong now? I'm sitting here listening to you bitch about your day like you always do and I cooked because I haven't made you dinner in ages.*

Eva: *Bitching? You're my fiancé. I'm supposed to be able to vent to you when I'm upset. You aren't even here for me to vent to all the time anyway!*

Jonathan: *(frustrated, goes into the kitchen and throws his plate in the sink) Because I'm working hard to pay for this extravagant wedding you want. And this big house. And the art classes you want to take. And yoga. And tuition for the kids.*

Eva: *Crosses her arms. Nice, John. That's right. And I do nothing, right?*

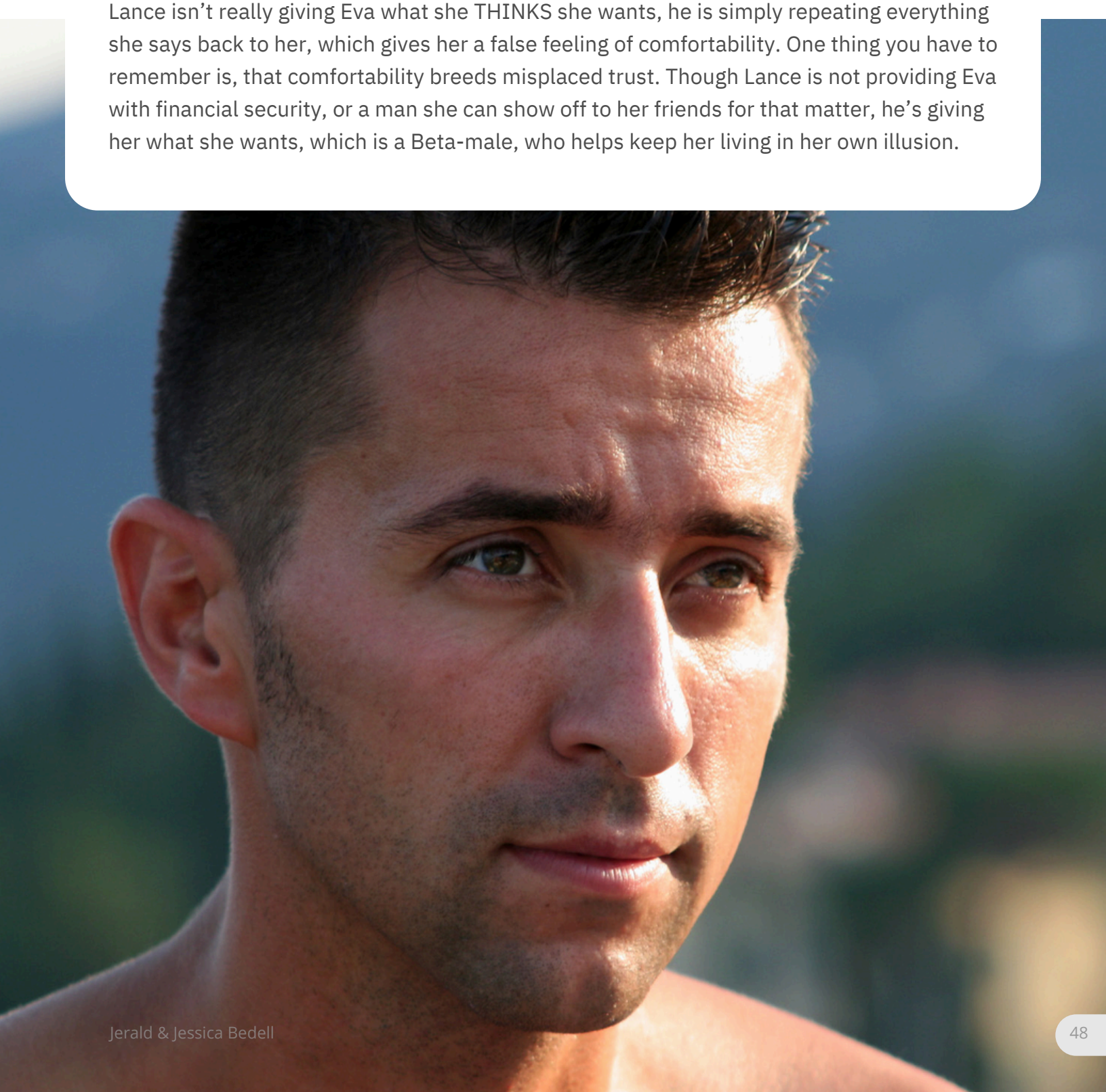
Jonathan: *(takes the rest of the dishes and throws them in the sink as well, breaking them) Jonathan never blows up and Eva sees this as a sign of weakness. In Eva's mind, this behavior proves that Jonathan, unlike Lance, loses his cool with ease.*

Eva: *You're such a little bitch! (under her breath)*

The Breakdown

Eva is delusional. She wanted an Alpha male – one who would stand up for himself (and to her), provide financially; someone she could show off to her friends. What she really wants, however, is a man who is going to cater to her every need and want. Lance is actually giving her this. He is fulfilling this desire, which is a major reason why she is so attracted to him.

Lance isn't really giving Eva what she THINKS she wants, he is simply repeating everything she says back to her, which gives her a false feeling of comfortability. One thing you have to remember is, that comfortability breeds misplaced trust. Though Lance is not providing Eva with financial security, or a man she can show off to her friends for that matter, he's giving her what she wants, which is a Beta-male, who helps keep her living in her own illusion.



CHAPTER 8

Character Assassination

Ezra and Janelle have been together for 10 years. Ezra is a dietician, while Janelle is a paramedic. Ezra is preparing to start a two-week vacation while he awaits his four closest friends who are flying in from Seattle. Together, they plan to leave for a week-long vacation to the Dominican Republic. His friends will be staying with him at the home he shares with Janelle until it's time to start the trip.



Janelle speaks openly to Ezra about her discomfort with all of the men being in their home, as she does not know them well and has never spent time with them. Ezra assured her that they would not be there long and she would not have to be alone with anyone, but the trip is a tradition that they started after high school and plan to continue. Janelle explained that she would stay with her sister who lives nearby and give the guys time to catch up without her impeding on their space and time. His friends asked him where Janelle was, and Ezra told them, "I let her know that if she can't stand my friends, she can't stay here."

The day of the flight arrives. Ezra called Janelle to say his goodbyes and promised to call her when he landed. Finally, in the D.R., immediately following the guys checking in and dropping their belongings at their rooms, they hit the pool bar. While having drinks and talking about all of the irritations they left behind with their partners, they all vowed to have a good time, with no regrets. A group of females walked to a nearby cabana, and the group of men ogled them and commented to one another. Chad laughed, “Look at these bitches over here. I bet you I can bag one of them.” Bets were placed, and numbers were going up and up.

Chad was up first and took his chances with Ashley, the thin, tall, mixed girl with curly hair. She said, “Fuck outta here white boy, I’m looking for dark chocolate.” The group of women burst out laughing as Chad embarked on his walk of shame back to the guys. Money was gathered as the guys laughed and pointed at Chad’s failed attempt.

Shortly after, the girls laughed as they walked closer to the pool where the guys were. The shortest girl of the bunch, Sharon, laughed and said, “Thanks guys. We all made a bet that one of you would come over and try to talk to us. And Ashley thinks you’re cute, but shooting you down made her win the bet.” The ladies joined the guys in the pool, and after plenty of dancing and drinks, the groups started getting deeper in their line of questioning.

Rebecca, the redhead who was fairly quiet, asked the question that all the ladies wanted to know: “Who’s single and who’s attached?” Chris, the youngest of Ezra’s crew at 32, announced that he has friends but nothing serious. In reality, Chris has a long-term girlfriend who all of his friends know since they’ve been together for the last six years. Chrissy, the brown-skinned and thickest one of the girl group, asked, “So are any of you in a serious relationship?”



His friend Todd, shocked, inquired about why he would have his girlfriend leave and not the guys, who could have stayed at a hotel, which they initially offered to do. Another friend, Tyrone, laughed hysterically before bringing up all the times in the past he believed Ezra had been a total asshole to girls he was dating. But Janelle is not just some girl he's dating. They bought a house together, and he has promised Janelle a wonderful future.

They all went around and shared their supposed relationship status. Chad, Ezra, and Jake all lied and said they were single. Lastly, Darnell, the 37-year-old, announced that he had a girl. All the ladies said, in unison, "We all have boyfriends. And you guys don't have to lie. Nine times outta ten you guys have girlfriends or wives. That's lame if you're lying. You must think you guys are gonna get some ass."

Chris and Ezra admitted to having girlfriends. Another girl in the group, Desiree, asked the guys, "Why not talk about your girlfriends? There must be something wrong with them?" Ezra responded, "There's nothing wrong with her really; she just lacks the drive I think she should have. Your partner should match your drive." Chris shared that his girlfriend, who is really a stewardess, is bad at managing her money and constantly asks him to assist with credit card bills.

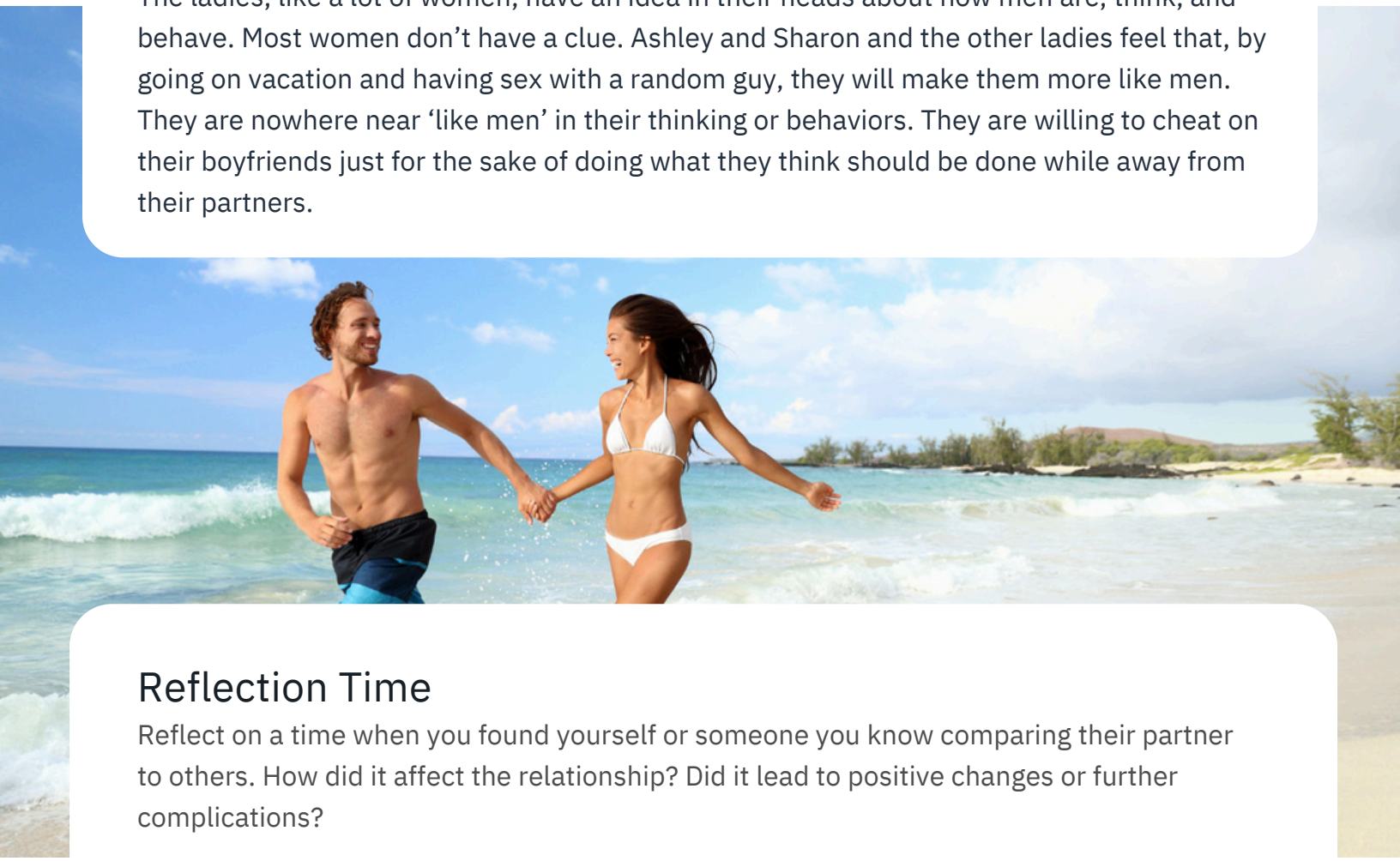


The Breakdown

The guys had no intention of being faithful to their partners. Darnell was the only person who was honest about having a girlfriend because he didn't care either way. He knows he is attractive and will get hit on the entire trip. If one of those girls didn't put out, someone else would. All the guys agreed their first choice would be to have sex with someone who was actually from the Dominican Republic, and this was still the plan. But the girls from Sharon and Ashley's crew were a backup. They were all cute and still offered one thing: new pussy.

None of the guys' girlfriends were dependent on them for anything other than companionship. Ezra would never admit that Janelle is extremely independent and is fine without him. She is very focused on her career, and though she is faithful, and he does not doubt this, he's a cheater and that's his intention on vacation—sex with no attachments. Janelle trusts him because he is, in actuality, not an asshole to her like he leads his friends to believe. She would be shocked that he cheats on her, even if just on vacation.

The ladies, like a lot of women, have an idea in their heads about how men are, think, and behave. Most women don't have a clue. Ashley and Sharon and the other ladies feel that, by going on vacation and having sex with a random guy, they will make them more like men. They are nowhere near 'like men' in their thinking or behaviors. They are willing to cheat on their boyfriends just for the sake of doing what they think should be done while away from their partners.



Reflection Time

Reflect on a time when you found yourself or someone you know comparing their partner to others. How did it affect the relationship? Did it lead to positive changes or further complications?

CHAPTER 9

Surge of Confidence



Melanie and Ed have been married for 13 years and have three children. Ed is a sought-after plumber, earning around $100,000 a year. Melanie was unhappy with her career in sales, so Ed paid for her to return to school, where she earned an MBA with a concentration in accounting. After this major career enhancement, Melanie found herself working in the private sector as an accountant. Making $150,000 in no time, she found her work-life to be much more demanding, which required her to be at home even less.

After some time, Melanie's comfortability with her finances created a rift in their Wave, which Ed noticed. Microaggressions in any disagreement, particularly involving money, became a regular occurrence. During a late-night discussion, Melanie expressed that she wanted their 12-year-old daughter to start ballet lessons again. Ed adamantly disagreed as she had previously joined ballet three times and quit every time. "Her heart isn't in it, and I'm not going to keep flushing money down the drain. For what? We can find something that she is actually interested in and will stick with."

Melanie retorted, displaying this new surge of confidence, “Forget that. You don’t even have to worry about it. I’ll pay for it. I make more than enough money. You don’t have to pay for anything. Now, I don’t have to hear your complaints about wasted money and time.” She rolled her eyes.

In response, Ed said, “Is it your money now, or our money? Because as I recall, since day one, and while you were in school, it was our money. But now that you’re doing well financially, I notice a lot of talk these days about your money and what you pay for yourself.” Often, women in this position, like Melanie, look forward to situations and discussions such as this one so they can throw their new, increased income in their partners’ faces.

Confidence Surges Like This:

A woman who is genuinely secure in her position in her relationship will have strong opinions about finances, children, and anything else that is a part of their lives, whether she has a large, small, or no income at all. A woman who is always agreeing with her partner is one who has look-up syndrome. The minute they are in a position to earn money or gain more income, their personalities change. This new personality and surge of confidence are similar to that displayed by some women immediately after getting pregnant by their financial catch. Her voice, tone, energy, and behaviors change, completely and for the negative.

When I talk about this with people, they automatically get a particular race of women in mind. So, let’s take race, color, religion, and sexual orientation out of the equation and just focus on women and their behaviors.

These behaviors of so many women will always leave breadcrumbs that will lead a trail to their true feelings, intentions, and thoughts about you. This is not a shot at women who make a lot of money or wish to find a man or partner who is also financially secure. The women I’m talking about, those who have look-up syndrome, are the ones who, when they meet or get close to meeting that pedestal that they’ve put you on financially, will dismiss you once they have found the next person who they feel can provide better opportunities. For instance, a man can make a million dollars a year, and once this type of woman reaches his level financially, she will no longer respect that man’s views and core values. Instead, she will keep the uncomfortable thickness of disagreement in the air so that when she does leave you, it will be because “the union was bad,” or you “couldn’t see eye-to-eye.”

This is another form of a prep job, but the exit prep strategy. She will absolutely feel the need to, and will indeed, create issues, start arguments, belittle you, tell you and/or tell others that you are not a good husband, not a good father, the list can go on and on.

When you attempt to fight for her, she will have made the relationship and your home so pernicious that she will have destroyed the way you look at, think, and feel about love.

Reflection Time

Reflect on the dynamics in your own relationship. Have there been moments where financial shifts caused tension or changes in behavior? How did you handle it? Take a moment to think about whether your partner's actions have ever left you feeling undermined or if you've done the same to them. Write down these reflections and consider ways to improve communication and mutual respect regarding financial matters.



CHAPTER 10

The Cheat Preparation

If you live with the person you're cheating on, you have, undoubtedly, "picked up overtime" as a front to prepare for when you're going to cheat. This way, it won't seem so far-fetched, for example, when you work an overnight shift. If you live alone, you'll probably be inclined to say you're going out with friends or family, your phone died, or you fell asleep early. Because this behavior is new and peculiar, your partner might fall for the excuse the first time. You always talk or text before bed, so when you don't, and if they trust you, you can hook them with the excuse that you're so tired you fell asleep, or got so drunk you just fell asleep. And sure, you can say, that's irresponsible, but that's better than letting them think you're actually having sex with someone else and doing things with that person that you're only supposed to be doing with them. Right? Yeah. But this is the first time, so you'll only have to think of other excuses later.



Women, if you thought you could just have sex with someone and walk away, you're lying to yourself.

And if the sex is terrible, women usually give a person a second chance, especially if you've built this supposed friendship. Too much groundwork went into you getting where you are with this person. You would have been able to walk away if you had jumped right into the cheat, but you didn't. You planned and prepared. The big excuse I've noticed people use is the quick call or text to say, "It's unusually busy at work babe, so I just wanted to say good night" or maybe even throw in an "I love you."

People who cheat usually don't want to share information with their partners that can open them up to being caught cheating, such as bank account information, email, and phone passcodes.

Have you ever been in this situation? On either side? If you have been the person who was preparing the cheat, some things in this chapter might seem inaccurate to you because what you did to plan your cheat execution was, in your mind, created organically and out of natural emotion towards a person. You prep yourself and you don't even realize it. If you've been cheated on, this information might be more accurate.

Now, it's important to add that every person does not prep the cheat. Women should like this one since most like to argue the exceptions to the rule.

Take a minute to think about all of what you just read.

For the reader who has never been cheated on: You feel you are an expert in noticing all the conversations, behaviors, inconsistencies, and other signs and clues, and you're incapable of being cheated on. The behaviors of someone who comes home after cheating, in most people's minds, will be, one, to hop in the shower as soon as they come home. This would be the tell-tale sign that they cheated.

For the supposed experts, this is the correct tell-tale sign #1:

To walk in with an attitude because that attitude gives them the right, the excuse to not explain where they have been. If you try to double down and pull answers out of them, the end result of you accusing them of cheating will be them blowing up and chastising you.

For those who have been cheated on before, I'm sure this sounds familiar to you. I know you know what that feels like to be ignored and treated with an attitude.

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Be aware of who you are around and who you let into your life. People will disrupt your wave whether intended or not.

- Jessica Bedell

CHAPTER 11

Second - Guessing

Second-guessing is when the person being cheated on starts making excuses for their partner even though their antennae have gone up. But because, more than likely, you love this person, you question your intuition and thoughts to shield yourself from the painful truth. You build your own excuses for the person or have gotten so used to the excuses they have given to pacify you.

Adrien, like so many others in this position, has started making excuses for Brianna, or has just allowed her to pacify him with the excuses she's provided him with. He's now grown accustomed to making all the false justifications, he doesn't even realize that he gives Brianna an answer before she can even come up with one.



Scenario

Brianna says that she is working on a difficult transplant case and must stay late to meet with the patient's out-of-town relatives. She never used to work late; Brianna is usually out the door every day by 4:00 pm on the dot.

Adrien's antennae are up, so he calls the job. The Nursing supervisor reports that she has not seen Brianna since 6 pm when her shift started.

> **Adrien:** *I called your job, but the supervisor told me that you weren't there.*
>
> **Brianna:** *I didn't see the supervisor. Did you tell her to overhead page me? Because I was definitely working. She didn't even come up to my office.*
>
> **Adrien:** *(thinks to himself) Normally when the supervisor can't find you, they overhead page you.*

The Breakdown

Adrien is too afraid to face the truth, so he'd rather live in a false reality. He doesn't say his feelings out loud, but keeps them to himself because he wants to believe her excuses in order to protect his heart and deny his worst fears.



Reflect

Take a moment to think about your experiences with second-guessing in real life and relationships. Have you ever made excuses for someone's suspicious behavior? How did it make you feel, and what did you do about it? Did you pretend it wasn't happening, or did you confront the situation head-on?

> *Trust is built in very small moments.*
>
> ***- Dr. John Gottman***

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CHAPTER 12

The Technique of the Parasite



Miles has been with Theresa for five years. He's a personal trainer and she is an Executive

Assistant. Miles has no intention of settling down with her. Let's
break down for you the inner workings of this type of guy.

He doesn't have his own car or anything. He lives off of Theresa. She has issues surrounding her weight, and though she is extremely attractive, she's self-conscious about her body. Miles feeds off of Theresa's insecurities and will do his best to separate her from any family and friends who will uplift her or attempt to encourage her to view him for what he is: a Parasite.

Now, think about this for a minute. What does a Parasite do to its host? A Parasite makes its host feel sluggish and weak, while it gains strength and power. The host will be left questioning their strengths, abilities, and healthiness, while unknowingly becoming dependent on those negative, toxic feelings.

Theresa thinks this is a healthy relationship because Miles points out all of her flaws while suggesting the changes she needs to make to improve herself.

In actuality, Miles is feeding off of her insecurities and deep-rooted issues while erecting a wall between them. A parasite that goes untreated can cause death or complete mental, physical, and even spiritual breakdown.

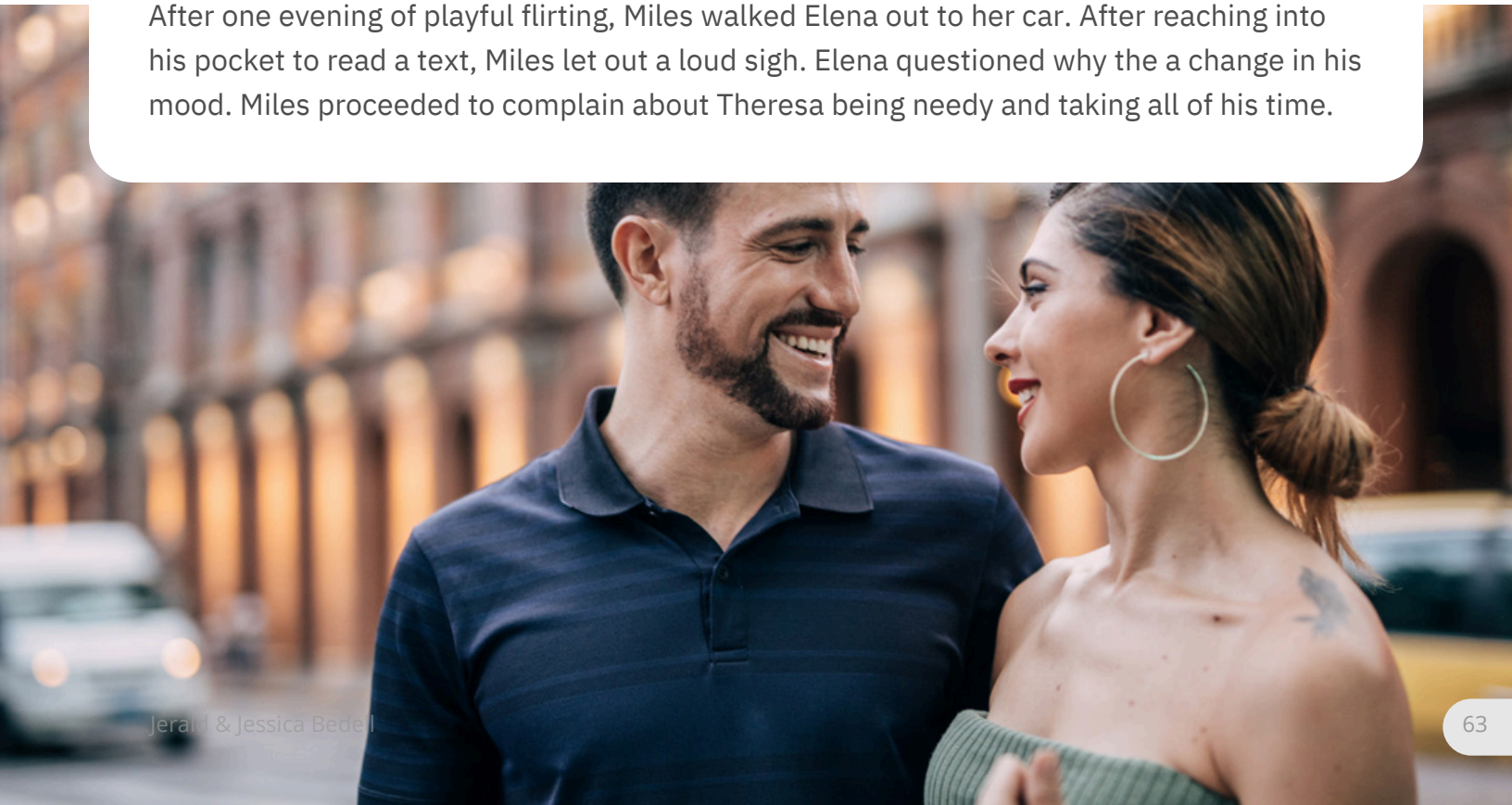
This leaves Theresa stuck in neutral. She cannot move forward with him because he has made her feel that the healthy attention she seeks in their relationship is her need. She cannot back away from Miles because she does not want anyone else to have him. She is in a weaker position but believes that he will come around and see her as the true love of his life.

Miles has been seeing Elena, who he met through a scheduled training session at the gym. They've been working out together for a few weeks, engaging in some flirtatious behavior. The texts and phone calls started somewhat innocent, but recent interactions have become more sexually charged.

Elena is no stranger to games men play.

She has played the position of #2 in a man's life before. She has heard the complaints and excuses while dutifully playing the role of the best side chick ever, providing financial assistance and emotional support, all while being promised the number one spot. At this point, Elena is pretty skilled at navigating through the bullshit.

After one evening of playful flirting, Miles walked Elena out to her car. After reaching into his pocket to read a text, Miles let out a loud sigh. Elena questioned why the a change in his mood. Miles proceeded to complain about Theresa being needy and taking all of his time.



Teachable Moment

This is Miles' go-to move with females he is pretending to build a friendship and moment with. He's creating an issue that doesn't exist to lead into his plan to complain about Theresa so Elena can question the issues in the relationship. Because remember, where there's smoke, there's fire. When Parasites seek a new host, they have to lure them in in order to attach themselves.



Miles created this moment to give himself a platform where he could stand on his complaints about Theresa. Men like to be needed by their woman. Women, however, do not like to be needed by their man. Women typically have a very low tolerance for being needed by their partner. They feel good about it until they don't. Then the person who needs them becomes a nuisance.

They want their man to take charge and take the lead on things. Miles attempts to use reverse psychology on Elena because he knows that most strong women will find a needy woman disgusting, which could work to his advantage if Elena took this bait.

Miles begins to distort reality to fit his needs, attaching past issues to a new and false narrative where his relationship with Theresa is concerned. Miles begins to tell Elena that Theresa is holding him back and she is always calling him and bugging him. People might think this intentional twisting, or distortion, of truth sounds crazy, but this is real life with everyday people. These things really happen, and these everyday people we are talking about, are real people.

Miles' False Narrative

His relationship with Theresa started out fun and exciting and he really loved her. But he tells Elena that, in order to focus on himself once and for all, he has to stop holding Theresa's hand. Helping her with workout plans, preparing her meals, and managing her everyday life. Now, he explained to Elena, that Theresa does not pay him any attention anymore, and she expects and demands so much of him. Despite his efforts to bring back the excitement, she has never been interested in doing anything but staying in and watching Netflix and ordering pizza.

There has been the occasional going out to the movies or out to dinner, but that has become a rare occurrence. Life with Theresa has become monotonous. Even sex, though he normally wouldn't complain, has become routine. There is no excitement. He expresses that he has not realized just how long he has been wanting something different. Miles told Elena that she was that something different. She was all for him, and he did not want to share her time with anyone else.

The Reality of it All

Miles has always considered himself first. Theresa didn't mind this characteristic because she is a natural caterer. Miles has never enjoyed spending time in the kitchen, sweating to prepare a meal. He was always more concerned with looking good, and keeping his body in perfect condition. So, Theresa cooks. Sex has become routine because he is an inhibited control freak, and he is never attracted to Theresa because she's only ever served as a security blanket.



He worked on Theresa's resumes and helped her prepare for interviews because he insisted on helping. The more successful Theresa is, the more Miles reaps the benefits. Theresa has a Master's Degree in English Literature and has never needed Miles' help writing anything.

But she loved him and thought that he was cute for wanting to help her. Still, Theresa always felt that Miles focused on her shortcomings, so he didn't have to focus on his own. Miles claimed that he wanted to open his own gym and talked about this at the start of his relationship with Theresa. When it came down to really solidifying plans to build his dream, Miles blamed everyone else and never took responsibility for his lack of drive. When he should have been searching for a stable job to assist in funding a rental property for his gym, he complained that he didn't have time because he needed to maintain his physique. When Theresa tried to help him with his business plan, Miles would always find an excuse as to why it wasn't the right time.

Scenario

Miles has been successful with this game in the past. This time, however, he is met with a line of questioning, rather than sympathy.

> **Elena:** *If she is so annoying and clingy, and you're sick of her, Miles, why are you still with her? You say you do everything for her, cook, clean, pay the bills.... Why haven't you left yet?*
>
> **Miles:** *I feel bad for her. She doesn't have anyone else. And frankly, if I left her now, I'd be afraid of what she might do to herself.*
>
> **Elena:** *So, you feel so bad about her, but you're still f*cking her, right?*
>
> **Miles:** *(immediately lies) We haven't slept together in a while.*
>
> **Elena:** *(demands to know) How long has it been since you were sexually involved?*
>
> **Miles:** *(silence speaks volumes)*

Elena laughed sarcastically and responded, "So you want me to play second fiddle to an overweight, annoying, insecure, clingy female who you fear would kill herself if you ever left her?" Miles raised his voice to a level that may have intimidated a weaker, less experienced woman, who does not know the game he's playing. "You don't know what the f*ck you are talking about. But whatever, Elena. You have all the answers." He proceeded to walk away. Elena laughed, threw her hand up to wave him on, and hopped in her car and pulled off.

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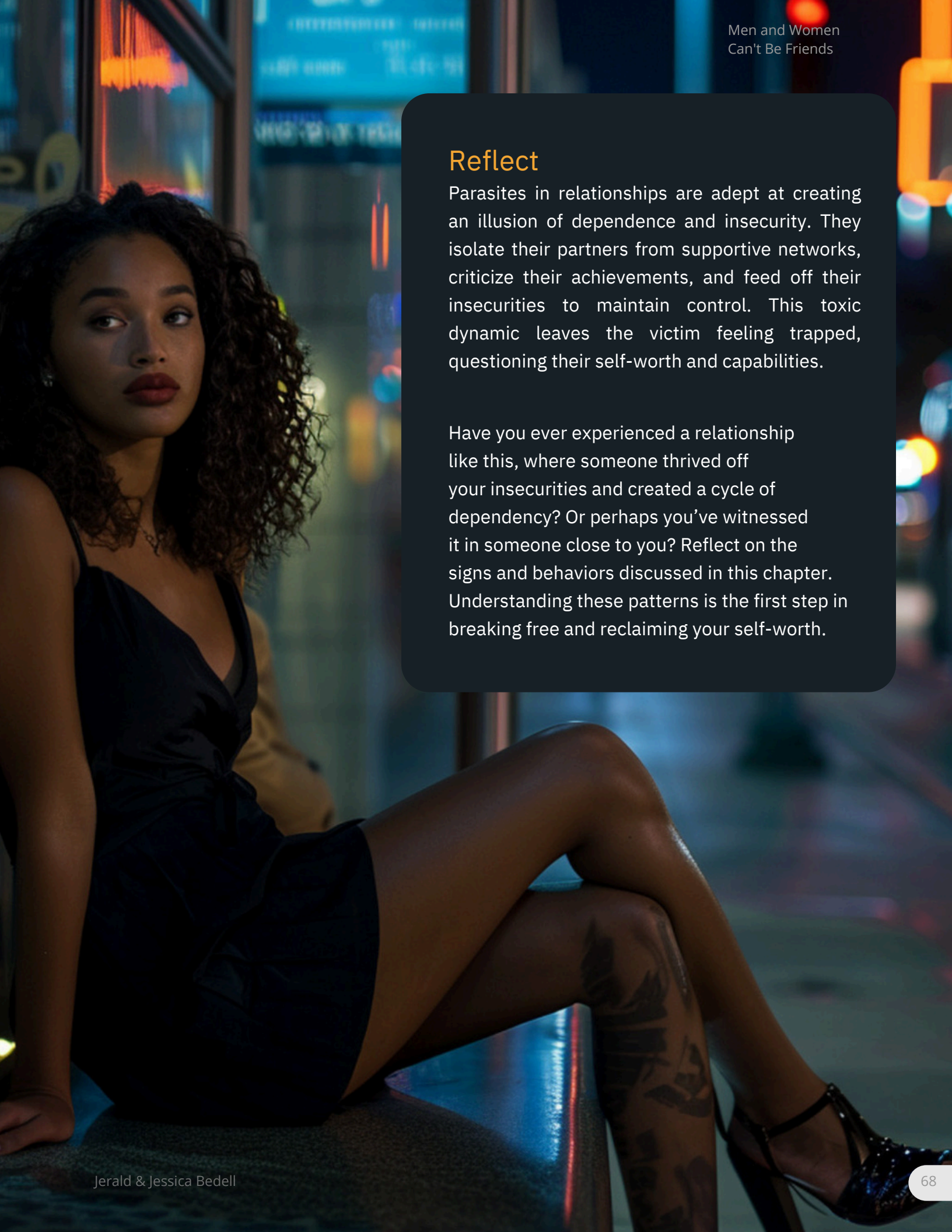
Parasites in relationships often use manipulation and emotional abuse to maintain control over their partners. They thrive on their partner's insecurities and create a cycle of dependency that makes it difficult for the victim to break free. This dynamic can lead to significant emotional and psychological harm.

- Dr. Ramani Durvasula



Reflect

Parasites in relationships are adept at creating an illusion of dependence and insecurity. They isolate their partners from supportive networks, criticize their achievements, and feed off their insecurities to maintain control. This toxic dynamic leaves the victim feeling trapped, questioning their self-worth and capabilities.

Have you ever experienced a relationship like this, where someone thrived off your insecurities and created a cycle of dependency? Or perhaps you've witnessed it in someone close to you? Reflect on the signs and behaviors discussed in this chapter. Understanding these patterns is the first step in breaking free and reclaiming your self-worth.

CHAPTER 13

Chastising

Chastising in relationships often involves turning normal, everyday questions into triggers for outbursts and accusations, making the inquiring partner feel insecure and hesitant

to ask questions in the future. This tactic is a form of manipulation designed to create an environment where the cheating partner can act with impunity, without the fear of being questioned or caught.

When people hear the word “chastising,” they often think of reprimanding a child. However, in relationships, chastising can be a tool used to belittle and manipulate partners into silence. By making their partners feel insecure and guilty for questioning them, cheaters ensure their activities go unchecked.



Chastising is a form of Manipulation.

Imagine this scenario:

Your partner is packing their gym bag. You ask where they are going or what time they plan to hit the gym. Once upon a time, you would get a straightforward answer, “Well, I’m probably going to head out in a little bit so I can get one last workout in for the day since I can’t go tomorrow.” Nowadays, the response comes with a blow-up and an unnecessary outburst, accompanied by obvious annoyance. The goal of chastising is to belittle you or fuss at you so intensely that you’ll never want to question them again. This isn’t about you getting on their nerves; it’s reverse psychology. For a generally strong and secure woman, his outburst will make her look and feel insecure and weak.

This might leave her angry, and her ego would get involved, so much so that she would lash out, announcing she “couldn’t care less about what you’re doing and when or with whom.” She would be playing directly into his hand. Mission accomplished.

Ultimately, he is chastising her, making her feel like she looks insecure, so she won’t ask any more questions. After all, who wants to be seen as weak and needy? I don’t. I’m sure you don’t either. Here are two different scenarios to make this crystal clear.

When most people hear the word “chastising,” they think of scolding, probably in terms of reprimanding a child for doing something they shouldn’t have done. People who are cheating always put their partners in positions where they no longer feel comfortable asking questions.

They want to take away any comfort or security their partner has in asking questions so they no longer have to answer any questions. No more questions = no more answers. This means he or she can do what they want without having to answer to their partner. It also means that they don’t have to remember the lies they tell. On the other hand, not asking questions could also give your partner ammo in blaming you, making you the reason they cheated in the first place. If you cared, you would have fought for me, you would have asked me questions. You would have done the work needed to keep your relationship going strong.

Scenario #1: Working Overtime

You: Babe, let's go out tonight.

Your Partner: I can't, I have to work.

You: But you don't ever work Saturday nights.

Your Partner: I picked up a shift.

You: Well, what time are you coming back?

Your Partner: (Blows up) Stop questioning me about my job. I don't know how long I'll be there. You're questioning me too much, and I don't do that to you. I'm feeling like you're putting restraints on me, and I'm not feeling it. It makes me not want to even tell you anything.

In this scenario, the blow-up serves to make the questioning partner feel guilty and overbearing, effectively silencing them and preventing future questions.

Scenario #2: Shopping with Friends

***You:** Babe, I planned something for our anniversary today. We're going out to dinner at your favorite restaurant.*

***Your Partner:** Great. I was planning on going to the mall to go shopping in a few.*

***You:** Looking forward to it. Make sure you're home by 4 o'clock.*

***Your Partner:** (Yells) So you're making plans for me and putting demands on me? Normally, you don't care what time I get home or what I do, so why the sudden interest in me?*

The goal here is to make the partner feel like they are overstepping boundaries, even when their requests are reasonable, thereby discouraging them from making plans or asking questions in the future.

The Breakdown

People who cheat often put their partners in positions where they no longer feel comfortable asking questions. By making their partners feel insecure and guilty for questioning them, they can act without having to remember lies or answer for their actions. This tactic also provides them with an excuse to blame their partner if they are caught, arguing that the partner's lack of attention or interest drove them to cheat.



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Chastising in a relationship is a way of deflecting guilt and responsibility. By making their partner feel insecure and wrong for asking questions, the cheating partner can continue their behavior without consequence.

-Dr. Tammy Nelson

CHAPTER 14

Weapons of Mass Destruction

Emily is enraged and bitter. She is using all her weapons, verbal, emotional, sexual and physical—against Phil, her husband, and the safety net. After eleven years together, Emily has learned all the things to use to destroy him, to hurt him viciously. The couple has been married for ten years, and Emily was faithful for six of them.



When they met, Emily was married to her first husband, Terrance, but convinced Phil that they were done for good because her husband had been cheating on her for years and she was tired of it. Phil and Emily began their affair and six months in, Emily had Phil prepped completely and ready to propose. Phil believed he was rescuing Emily from a horrible man who was unfaithful and verbally and physically abusive. Emily was planning to trap and release Terrance when she secured her new relationship. After the break-up, Phil felt that he won Emily.

Now, years into their marriage, Emily is bored and disgusted by Phil and has found a new man toy. She wants to give her other relationship all her attention now. She picks

fights with Phil constantly to keep him at bay, strategically making it possible to have a reason to stay mad at him. Often, she pulls past issues into the current and throws them in Phil's face.

For women, the guilt trips usually come from comments about their looks. Any remark ever made about your woman's weight, height, hair, or complexion, will use this against you. Although she knows you meant no harm, she will take this past mistake and run with it. Get ready, because she is going to dig deep to find these weapons so any hope you feel about making up will be shattered. Phil accused Emily of cheating before, and she berated him and chastised him so viciously that he apologized profusely for addressing the red flags that were right in front of his face. Still, Emily, a master manipulator, never stopped using this against Phil.

Staying angry means she can stop having sex with you.

It also means that when she's with whoever she's cheating on you with, she can ignore your phone calls. No sex, no communication, no nothing, which can cause you to lose trust, while your anger only validates her excuses to withhold everything you need in a relationship.

In this case, Emily is outwardly violating the four elements required to maintain a healthy union between two people. The four elements are Communication, Trust, Loyalty, and Intimacy.

It also means that when she's with whoever she's cheating on you with, she can ignore your phone calls. No sex, no communication, no nothing, which can cause you to lose trust, while your anger only validates her excuses to withhold everything you need in a relationship.

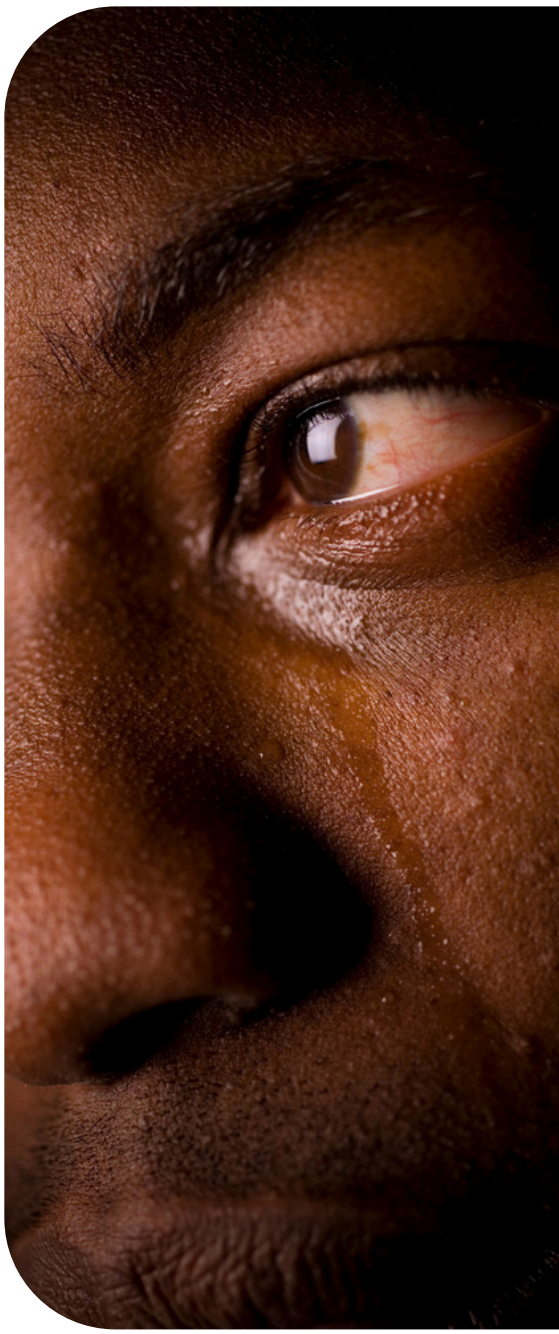
In this case, Emily is outwardly violating what we call the four elements required to maintain a healthy union between two people. The four elements are Communication, Trust, Loyalty, and Intimacy.

Without effective communication, one will begin to lose trust in a spouse or partner. Without a foundation of trust, loyalty will begin to erode. A lack of loyalty leads to diminished comfortability, which only decreases the likelihood of any form of intimacy within the partnership. If you take away any one of these, the other three will fail. Emily has already taken away two of the four elements and, as a result, her marriage is in shambles. She uses the foundational four elements as weapons of mass destruction.

Emily's False Narrative:

Phil, feeling hurt, confused, and alone in his relationship, is also furious. After accusing Emily of cheating in the past, she tells Phil that she is still offended by his disrespectful claims. In fact, she tells him, if he thinks so little of her, he should just leave now. Though she is passionate about her own pretend feelings of anger, Emily uses this former accusation to her advantage. Phil refuses to leave as he truly loves her and will not walk away from all that he has invested in her and their lives.

The Reality of it All:



Emily moved into her second marriage, seemingly happy and in love. This was short-lived. She was unable to deal with the normal stresses that come with married life and children. Phil allowed Emily to stay home so she could be with their children. Even as they grew up, she expressed little desire to start working or go back to school. In her free time, Emily dates several men, often taking Olivia along with her. Olivia, who is not Phil's daughter, serves as the perfect cover, and weapon, for Emily. This behavior will likely impact Olivia negatively in her future relationships, but Emily is very selfish and doesn't even put her own children first. For the men who Emily has used for her own personal excitement, they needn't expect to ever serve as anything more than personal entertainment. Emily knows that Phil is not going to leave her, but her false narrative encourages her to push him away in an attempt to force him to leave.

Phil will continue to endure Emily's mood swings and emotional and verbal abuse, making excuses, telling himself that her childhood is to blame. When things begin to fizzle out with her current fling, Phil will notice that their Wave will begin to settle and normalize. Phil lives for these times. He will continue to fight for their marriage and apologize for the false offenses she has convinced him that she has endured.

Lesson Learned:

There are many strings in a relationship, especially a marriage. While it is easy for us to see a case like this and make judgments, we really can't, or shouldn't. We have not experienced life with Emily as Phil has. He has so many strings attached to her and she, him. The strings, in this case, are time, wealth, a history of saving her, childhood trauma, two children, one biologically Phil's and the other he raised from a small child. He has learned that there are ups and downs in their marriage, as there are in all relationships, and eventually, these disastrous, heart-wrenching periods of time will all come to an end, turning into simply moments of the past.

> *"Emotional affairs can be just as devastating as physical ones. The betrayal of trust and the emotional manipulation involved can lead to significant damage in the relationship."*
>
> ***-Dr. Shirley Glass***

The use of chastising and emotional manipulation in relationships is a powerful and destructive tool. Recognizing these behaviors is crucial for maintaining a healthy relationship built on trust and communication. Have you ever experienced a partner who made you feel guilty for asking questions? How did you handle it? Share your experiences and insights as we continue to explore the complexities of relationships in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 15

The Bumpy Road...to Bliss

Broken promises, unanswered calls, text messages left without a response. Imagine that this is you. Let's pretend you're the cheater in your relationship.



Now, this is just pretend so don't get all high and mighty here. People often have this idea about themselves and can't imagine ever being deceitful, hurtful, or calculating.

Well, we have news for you, you aren't perfect. No one is. If you're human, you're a mess, confused, emotional, destructive, selfish, and probably mean. This part of you exists, and it is in all of us. It makes us who we are. It's like a good side and a bad side.

You ever shut down someone who was pursuing you out of pure disgust? How easy was that for you to do? Exactly. That's the person I'm talking about. The you that has no sympathy for the unattractive guy or girl that tries to pursue you.

This is why it is so easy to cheat. You have convinced yourself that it is okay to do so. It's okay for you to be selfish and not think about your partner right now.

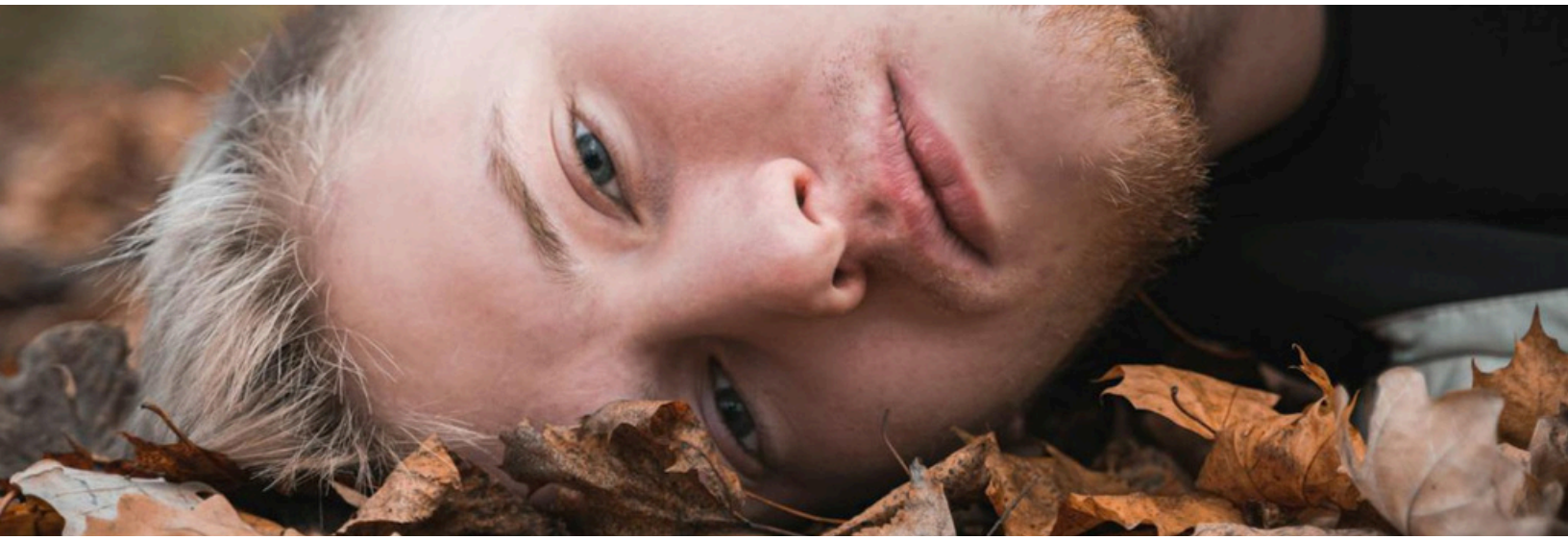
It’s okay for you to be selfish and not think about your partner right now. It’s perfectly alright that you’re knowingly building a bridge with someone else’s husband or wife, or fiancé or partner. You make excuses as to why it is acceptable for you to do these things.

The person you have chosen to step out on your partner with has a significant other. They’ve told you how much they want to end things with this person but they haven’t done so yet. If this other person just so happens to be single, he or she isn’t even showing all that much interest in the idea of you leaving your partner. It is possible that he or she has even seemed to lose attention in you. It is also highly likely that the side person’s mask has come off and you don’t like what you see anymore because it is terribly difficult to keep up appearances and maintain something that you’re not.



At this point, most people start to get a bit nervous, and they run back to their partner and try to make things work. So many excuses are made—"It was hormones…" or "Work has just been really stressful…" or "You just don't pay enough attention to me and I was angry." I've also heard, "Well, I was acting like such a jerk because ___ said you were cheating on me but I should have come to you first…" and I can't forget the excuse, "I just feel you've been distracted or maybe weren't attracted to me anymore." The list can go on and on. It might even appear that things get better for a while. That is, until the person on the side begins to show an interest again and makes it seem that he or she is fighting for you. Naturally, this will pique your interest again, though you never really lost interest. All that effort you were starting to put back into making your relationship work with your partner has quickly faded.

Your poor partner is being thrown into a tailspin. The waves grow and grow and lessen then grow again. There is no doubt that they are aware there is someone else in the picture. The sad part about all of this is that you really won't see the person on the side for who he or she is until your partner is gone. Please believe that this other person has told you or will express some sort of regret that you're in a relationship. If only you weren't in a relationship, you could spend more time together.



Have you ever found yourself justifying questionable behavior in a relationship? How did you navigate those feelings? As we continue to delve into the complexities of human relationships, it's crucial to remember that understanding and empathy are key. Share your stories and thoughts as we prepare for the next chapter, where we will explore the aftermath of infidelity.

MARRIED TO MELANIN MARRIED TO MELANIN

Affairs aren't always about sex. It's about desire and longing for someone to make you feel special, give you their attention, help you to be seen and to feel alive.

- Esther Perel

CHAPTER 16

The Fight

This usually goes one of two ways. Even if some people think it sounds crazy, it isn't crazy.

We, like so many other people, have been through this exact kind of situation when cheated on. Either you get a new person to cheat with, to keep the feeling of excitement while working to quell the pain of rejection from the side person, or that side person begins to fight for you because he or she "can't live without you."



Next, you're going to meet Miley, Harrison and Demetri. Miley had been cheating with Harrison for a year but started to work things out with Demetri. She began arguments with Harrison because she knew he could not provide for her the way Demetri did. Demetri is college-educated, while Harrison had more street education if you will. Miley was spending all of her free time with Harrison, cooking and cleaning at his place. Harrison was a listening ear and believed every representative story that she told him. Harrison fell for Shelly because she was taking care of him, but more so than that, his ego got involved. He was excited to be violating another man. That was a major turn-on for him.

Miley brought one of her closest friends around sometimes when they would spend time together. They would go out for double dates. This friend was also cheating on her husband. After some time, Miley stopped texting and cut back on the amount of time she spent with Harrison. Miley started to weigh what he could offer her and he lost the battle with her husband. Now, Miley was putting Harrison through the same drama and mental anguish that she was exposing her husband to. Imagine that? Imagine trusting a person who tells you all of the deepest and darkest secrets of the man she stood in front of God and her family and married. Would you trust this woman? Harrison questions whether he ever even truly loved her. His closest friends, both of whom are married, tell him that he needs to move on and accept the fact that he got played at his own game. But, like most single people, Harrison doesn't have any faith in his married friends and believes they are out of touch and no longer know women.

Despite how badly she has hurt her husband, he loves her, and he is searching for every reason he could have caused her to go astray. However, Harrison comes back after being MIA for a brief period. He tells Miley that he can't live without her but he tries because he has so much respect for her and doesn't want to inundate her with his feelings. After all, it was supposed to just be sex, he wasn't supposed to fall in love. And he certainly didn't plan to fall in love alone.

Miley swings back to Harrison, immediately, from Demetri. After all, Demetri is only her safety net. He's safe and familiar and provides mental, physical, and financial security.

Like a parachute, Demetri opens up and helps her glide safely back to the ground after being up in the clouds for so long. Harrison, a true Illusionist, on the other hand, is fun, exciting, and risky, maybe even a little dangerous. But now, since he has professed that he can't live without Miley, he offers her security somewhat similar to that which Demetri provides. Naturally, after all that he has confessed to her, Miley feels it's time to make the jump and leave Demetri, assuming that Harrison will do the same for her. Not only does she feel excitement all the time about Harrison, but he also makes her feel sexy and desirable and now, he loves her. Love makes us feel so good, so high. Anything is possible. The sky is the limit.

Harrison is offering Miley everything she never realized she wanted. The danger of cheating now feels safe. The unknown risks now seem more like security. It all feels so right again. This leads Miley to a constant state of euphoria. Who knows how long this will last? It's like an addiction.

The reality of it all is that Miley destroyed

Her husband's character to Harrison, makes him feel that he was better than Demetri. She was, ultimately, weighing her options. Because she violated her husband, in the worst way, she will never really be loyal to him. She knows how she violated him while cheating with Harrison...the things she did with him, to him. She knows what she would consider ultimate transgressions if Demetri engaged in sexual acts with another woman. In areas not related to the sexual deeds she engaged in with Harrison, she knows that the fact that she cleaned his house and cooked meals for him was, and would be for most men, extremely disrespectful. Whether he knows that she cheated or not, she will still hold this against him, viewing him as a weak man. She is going to judge Demetri based on every position she has put him in, and the fact that he stays with her, which makes him less of a man in her eyes. Still, however, Harrison is not on her husband's level and Demetri is the lesser of the two evils***, if you will.***





Reflect

“The fight is usually not real. They just gotta make it look good.”

- Jerald Bedell

CHAPTER 17

The End of the Road...Maybe?

You either decide to fight for your partner or leave them. Many people are going to read this section of the book and won't be able to relate. This will sound crazy and impossible. People truly do imagine their "Alpha-Self" in their heads when they play out scenarios or when they say what they would or would not do. Love does make people appear blind, weak, and foolish. People look at themselves as the greater person who doesn't chase anyone until they are in the position where their partner wants someone else and no longer wants them.



Imagine this. You turn on the flame to your stove and allow your hand to hover over the flame on high. Everything in your body is telling you to pull your hand back. All your senses tell you to do what you know you ought to, take your hand away from the blazing heat. Against good judgment, you keep your hand over the flame. Just imagine the pain this person is feeling. As you read this, you're probably thinking rationally, but for a person in love, they might not be. For a person in love, this is their life, their heart is on the line.

Miley and Demetri's End

After all that Miley put Demetri through, how could he possibly even attempt to work it out with her? The thing is, there is a lot of emotion connected to the pair. It's not so easy to walk away from someone after three years. People on the outside can and will always have an opinion. But does that really matter? It doesn't. The more Safety Net has fought for You, the more she has disrespected him. After some time, the begging and pleading have stopped. Now he has flipped the script, so to speak. Now, Demetri is different. They are like two ships passing in the night. When he's in the living room, she avoids him. When he's making dinner, she goes into her bedroom. Their bedroom is no longer theirs, it's hers. Safety Net is sleeping on the couch.

Although he knows that she's cheating now, he refuses to cheat. But he does, however, stay out all night sometimes with the hopes of getting a reaction. But he never does.

After two months of trying to create a spark and get them back into their wave, he has finally had enough. Demetri hasn't hidden the fact that he has been looking for a house. The two share some of the same friends so he knows she is bound to hear that he's moving out. He just doesn't really care anymore. The one thing that Miley once provided for him—mental security—is gone, so there's no reason left for him to stay. Every man needs mental security, while every woman needs mental, physical, and financial security. Men usually provide between one and three of these things.

Quick Reflection

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you had to choose between fighting for your relationship or leaving it? How did you make that decision, and what was the outcome? As we continue to explore the intricate dynamics of relationships, it's essential to remember that every situation is unique, and what works for one couple may not work for another.



The Release

Letting Go for Good

If your safety net, is still there, holding on to your relationship for dear life, you let go. You set this person free. You have grown so tired of being concerned with their feelings and only want to focus on your own. After being as mean, as spiteful, and as hateful as you possibly can be, you let the safety net know that you don't want them anymore. You might not even care if they leave with the furniture, the expensive dishware, and the king-size adjustable bed, you just want them to leave you alone.

Have you ever heard the saying, "If you die with your eyes open, you deserve it?" Your partner died with his eyes open. A person who steps onto train tracks with no regard for his life, watching it come toward him at top speeds, willing to take the crushing blow, isn't necessarily doing it for love, but rather for ego. Do you think he deserved it?

The crash and burn doesn't always happen immediately. More likely, it's already happening, but no one can see it yet. You've already jumped from the rooftop, and your safety net is no longer there to break your fall. You hit the pavement and have to lick your wounds. You're not ready to reach out to your safety net yet, but you will.

You are comparing and throwing idle threats to the person you have been cheating with. More often than not, people try to keep up appearances. After all, you have to make it "look" good after you left the person who was willing to, and did, put up with terrible treatment from you. The person who knows you without the mask, the real you. In some cases, you still might be able to make it work with this person.

Remember Sharon & Hunter?

Now, the Illusionist is beginning to ignore Sharon. At this point, she feels like an ass. She feels like she's been played. In her heart, Sharon feels like she gave the best of herself to Hunter, and in turn, he treated those best parts of her like trash. Now, she's angry and upset. She reaches a point where she tries to acknowledge her feelings and tells herself, "F**k it, I'm ready to move on with my life." But here comes the Illusionist again. He's back to play this game and show her some attention. To him, things are never over because you're probably still engaging in communication that gives him confidence that it's not really over. The only way he'll get the picture is when you block him out of your life and leave no avenue open to him. Block him on Facebook, Instagram, your email, Snapchat, and any other way he can reach you.

But hey, we wouldn't be able to write this book if everyone made good decisions all the time. Most of us live in the moment and don't think about the consequences of what we're doing when we're doing it. Dave, the person who Sharon treated like yesterday's newspaper, in her head, was the cause of her actions. This wasn't true, but she made so many excuses she started to believe her own lies. Deep down, however, Sharon knew Dave didn't do anything wrong. No one is perfect, but he didn't do anything to deserve the treatment she gave him.

This is one of the things that you'll be feeling inside. This is the time where you reflect on the last however many days, months, weeks, or years it took you to get to this point where you are right now. You're feeling this now. Sharon is living her decisions. Instead of growing from this, Sharon is furious that someone else, Hunter, dragged her down. She's mad as hell! Being in this position, she wants to go after Hunter in any way. She wants to lash out and hurt him the way he hurt her. Sharon starts to think, "You made me blow up my life, now I'm going to blow up yours!" This is the end of their tunnel. Hunter promised her a better life than what she already had with Dave, in so many words. She gave it all up, let down all her defenses, and showed him the best parts of her. Sharon, once a rose, shed all her thorns for Hunter, and he left her, just a stem.



Reflect

One of the biggest lies women tell themselves when they cheat is that they're looking for someone new, someone who will fight for them. The truth is, they're searching for a new version of themselves—another version that they still won't really know because they lose track of who they are after reinventing themselves so many times.

- Jessica Bedell

Have you ever found yourself regretting a decision that seemed right at the moment but turned out to be disastrous? How did you handle the aftermath, and what did you learn from the experience?

The Why?

At this juncture, most people are thinking there is no hope for Sharon. Most people are thinking, “There’s no way in hell Dave will take her back.” How many knights in shining armor show up to the castle and kill the dragon? One. How many knights show up to the castle? Hundreds. Then there wouldn’t be a story to tell about the knight who saved the princess after all others were burned to death by the dragon. How many knights were there? Would we ever hear about it? Dave was just one of the knights that got burned. He was one relationship in Kim’s, hopefully, long life.

Everybody has some Kim in them, some Dave, and some Hunter. An important thing to remember is that timing is everything. Self-preservation is also everything. And we lose this as time goes by and we shouldn’t. Because we start to focus more on others’ wants and needs, we often lose sight of our own. Kim can meet someone else one day and be happy. There’s a possibility that Dave can take her back. Or, if he doesn’t take her back, Dave will eventually find someone else who accepts him for who he is.

But why did she cheat? I can say she was bored and unhappy in her life and she wanted something to make her feel alive. She wanted to feel sexy and wanted, and she longed for excitement. Hunter made her feel all these things. She was also very selfish, and she stopped thinking about Dave, stopped considering his feelings, and put hers first. I’m not condoning cheating, but I am condoning life. When you choose yourself 100%, that is selfish. Sometimes the outcome can be near devastating. But you still have a choice.

Why did Hunter cheat? If you couldn’t tell, this wasn’t the first time Hunter cheated on Angela. Hunter cheated on Angela because the opportunity presented itself and he’s a serial cheater. He’s not losing anything if she leaves him. But he’s not leaving her. He’s comfortable in their unspoken arrangement. A serial cheater needs some type of consistency, a safety net. Angela is Hunter’s own safety net. This has nothing to do with finances because he lives a comfortable life.

Why did Hunter choose Kim? He chose Kim because she is attractive, and she bit hard on all of his bullshit. Other guys shot at her and were unsuccessful. This made her somewhat of a challenge. He was intrigued by the fact that she talked about Dave and spoke highly of him. Her arrogance appealed to him as well.

Important Note About the Woman Who is Cheating:

Once the cheat is accomplished, you no longer see your partner's good qualities. Instead, you focus solely on the dissimilarities. Your partner is just annoying now. Kim is at this stage now. Dave is a nuisance and is very much like a wall that is blocking the sunlight. Hunter is that sun. Seeing the light peek through from the other side of the wall irritates her even more, and she gets angry and becomes resentful of him.

This is all assuming that this rendezvous wasn't a total waste of time. If it was, indeed, a disaster, you would almost immediately feel that you made a huge mistake. Suddenly you would come to your senses. But chances are you are still on such a high, that even if it wasn't the greatest sex you'd ever had, you still got pleasure from it, and because you built this up in your head so much, you might even be willing to give it another shot. In this case, you'll be making excuses for it and after all, as far as you've gotten, there is no turning back now.

Your partner, whether you want to believe it or not or whether you care or not, is feeling your wrath and can feel your disdain for him or her. Undoubtedly, they are bewildered but angry, and their defenses go up. They feel like they have done nothing wrong to deserve this nasty attitude you are giving them. This might even result in a big, blow-up argument. Which is good for you because it gives you more ammunition to cheat without feeling guilty. Now your partner is giving you a true reason to cheat and you refuse to feel bad about it.

After a while, when you keep this new attitude up, your partner will start to think that he or she really did something wrong and will come back to you and apologize, forgetting that you essentially caused the blow up. Now, they will try everything in their power to make you happy, to fix whatever is broken. But no matter what he or she does, it goes unnoticed because the only person who can make you happy is the Illusionist and it is he/she who knows what you really need.

Dave is in the way of Kim's side relationship, and she doesn't like it at all. Dave, who is strong, driven, and attractive to many, has become disgusting and weak because no matter how she treats him, he just keeps on fighting for her. He's willing to forgive her for some unforgivable comments, but she knows that Hunter would never forgive her if she spoke those same unspeakable things to him because he's not the type of man who would ever allow anyone to disrespect him. The truth is, she's not the one, so he wouldn't allow it. He doesn't want Kim and would never even attempt to see a future with her.

CHAPTER 18

Conclusion

Everybody on this planet is capable of being every negative or disgusting thing that exists on this planet. Once upon a time, for instance, a very repulsive fact, back in the 1700s, it was acceptable for a man to marry a 14-year-old girl. It was also not frowned upon to enslave another man. Society deemed these behaviors acceptable. Society makes men go out and be whore mongers because it is considered something to be proud of. Be a “baller,” be a “player,” be a “pimp.” It’s ok to live in that light until it happens to your daughter, or your niece, or your sister or mother. And let’s remember, men, “If we can do it, women can do it too.”



Do men really throw away the women they don’t want? Men are very tactical. There aren’t always keepers and throwaways anymore. It’s really about what you have to offer. These days, men look for a woman who meets her own financial needs and one who meets their physical needs. If a woman is attractive and has money, there’s a high chance that she won’t meet an insecure man’s mental and emotional needs.

I say this because a lot of men cannot handle an attractive woman who doesn't need them. Without mental security, a man will be insecure. Insecure men cheat. Every step along the way, he's going to need to be reassured of his position in the relationship.

An established man will seek out a woman based on her physical attributes because he already has the money and is always in the position of power. This man can be insecure but seem confident in all aspects of his life. This powerful man will not pair well with the attractive, independent, and successful woman because he needs to be looked up to like he's a king.

People love who they love. There are limitations on what you're willing to share and willing to give. There are no good or bad guys, there's just timing. Timing means everything. Timing means everything for the woman who is looking for the light at the end of the tunnel. You look in a sea of "bad" guys in search of that one "good" guy who is waiting for YOU. This is the one thing that little girls who grow up to be women have been plagued with all these years. That their knight in shining armor is going to swoop in and save them from the misery or mundaneness that is their life.

People cheat for different reasons. Men who cheat don't necessarily mean that their man or woman at home is lacking in any area. Sometimes it's just selfishness.





One thing that women need to understand, whether you're dealing with a man who cheated on you, or you're the woman he cheated on his wife or partner with. A man would rather take the annoyance of the woman who is his everything than take even a second of a woman he doesn't see a future with. The other woman is not his tomorrow. The tomorrow woman is... The today woman is everything for today. She can be fun for today and fulfill all his desires today, but she would never be able to turn into a tomorrow because she's annoying tomorrow. She takes up valuable space in tomorrow.

For the woman who's been waiting for her time in the sunlight, she's going to be a vampire. The moment he focuses on her, she's going to disintegrate. The reason I say she'll disintegrate is that everything they have done together—every hotel that they spent time in knowing that he lied to his tomorrow, every lunch he left work early for—are little specks of sunlight that burn her skin. You can't wipe clean your memory of every time he had to lie to her to be with you. This man you are sneaking around with is the sun. You're the vampire. Being with him harms you.

Men need one thing in a relationship: mental security. A woman can provide a man with mental security by seeing his vision, believing in him, being stern and strong, being consistent, and by having her dreams.

Men and Women
Can't Be Friends



Jerald & Jessica Bedell

Thank you...



We want to extend our deepest gratitude for you choosing to read Men and Women Can't Be Friends. We hope that this book has provided, and will continue to provide, you with insight, clarity, and strength you need to navigate complex relationships.

Remember, growth comes from recognizing the truth, taking accountability, and making choices that serve your highest good.

Stay strong, stay true to yourself, and never settle for less than you deserve.

With appreciation,

Jerald & Jessica

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