

# Secrets and Lies

Couples come to therapy for a range of different reasons and one of the most important requirements for any good therapeutic experience is that there is openness and honesty in the sessions. However, clients are not always honest with themselves, or their therapists and this often leads to a breakdown in the therapeutic alliance and a breakdown in the relationship.

From the start therapists need to be clear with their couples as to what their policy is on secrets especially if they have some individual sessions or if one partner contacts the therapist between sessions to reveal a secret. It is not a therapist's role to hold onto secrets for the couple but to help and prepare them to have a more honest relationship with their partner. To understand and explore together what their fears about what might happen and why it seems easier to withhold than be honest and open. Sharing these difficulties and bearing the tension and the shame is the path towards a more open and intimate relationship.

## **Definition of Secrets and Lies**

Keeping secrets from your partner is a deliberate intent to keep information hidden. This choice is usually because you fear the impact on yourself or others that the information may have. What often underlies secrecy is a fear of judgment and reprisals. A lie is a deliberate act of deceiving another person by hiding the truth or trying to manufacture an untruth.

Secrets and lies jeopardize trust in our relationships and can cause irreparable damage in the following ways:

- \*Trust and vulnerability are blocked
- \*The need to constantly cover up and watch your back leads to tension
- \*Easier to blame a partner than recognise your choice to maintain secrecy
- \*Jeopardises sexual intimacy

Being honest in a relationship doesn't mean you have to share every single detail all the time. Knowing what to share and what not to share is an important communication skill in any relationship.

It may seem like your relationship is smooth sailing but having secrets can cause catastrophic results:

## **SECRETS THAT HURT A MARRIAGE**

### **Unhappiness**

In my experience the reason that couples come into therapy often too late is because sharing their unhappiness or discontent with each other is too

difficult. The reason for keeping these feelings a secret for so long is hoping that the problems will eventually sort themselves out, or the fear things could get a lot worse if true feelings were disclosed. Sometimes it's hard to just be honest and admit we are unhappy.

### **Finding intimacy outside a marriage**

Disconnection between couples is often around for a long time before an affair happens. If you have stopped having sex for a long time and there is a lack of affection and intimacy, it needs to be understood and talked about. Often it feels that it's easier to turn to someone else and get emotional and sexual fulfilment than manage the honesty and vulnerability that is needed with your partner.

### **Financial Decisions**

Keeping secrets about how you spend money or make financial decisions without sharing with your partner is a major violation of trust and can have devastating consequences.

### **Dishonesty**

Making decisions together as a couple is an integral part of any relationship. However feeling that you have to agree all the time for a quiet life is not being honest with yourself or your partner. This leads to unresolved feelings and resentments. Working through disagreements and difference is essential for a closer emotional connection.

### **Past relationships**

Couples often find it hard to share or hear experiences they had with previous partners for fear of exposing aspects of themselves that partners may not feel very attracted to. However part of growing closer together is knowing and understanding each other's different experiences and how you were affected by them both positively and negatively.

Knowing you are being lied to is often worse than being hurt by the truth. This quote sums it up for me:

*'If you tell me the truth  
I'm going to get mad but  
I'll get over it.  
If you lie to me, I'm never going to be  
able to trust you again.  
Your choice!*

If you would like to discuss things further or to make an appointment, you can call me on **07976 403741** or **(020) 8959 9528**. Alternatively you can contact me by email: [dawn.kaffel@couplescounselling.com](mailto:dawn.kaffel@couplescounselling.com).

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