

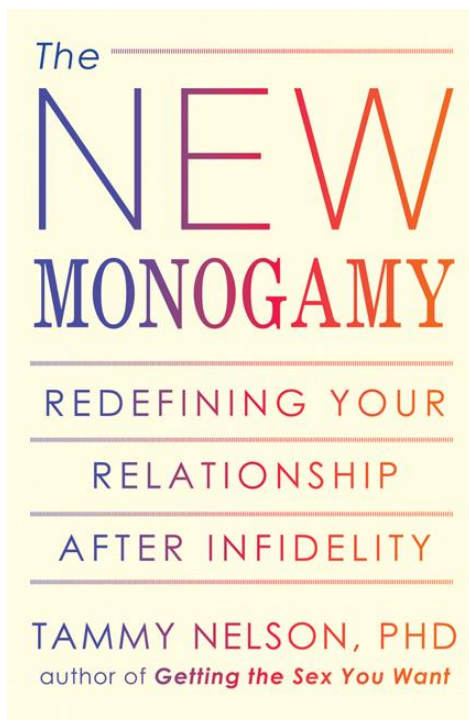
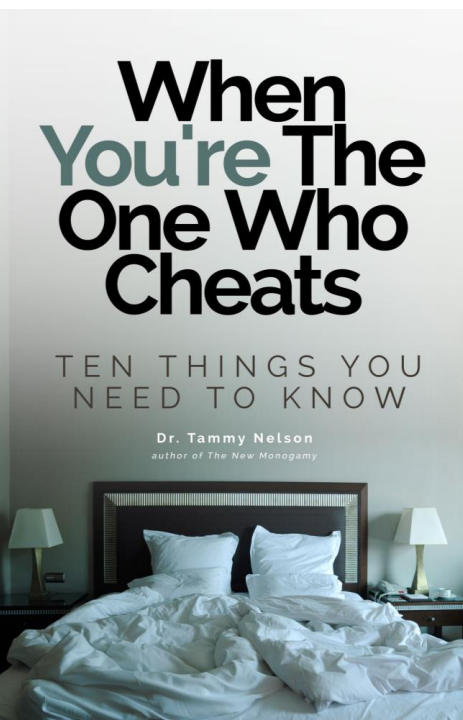
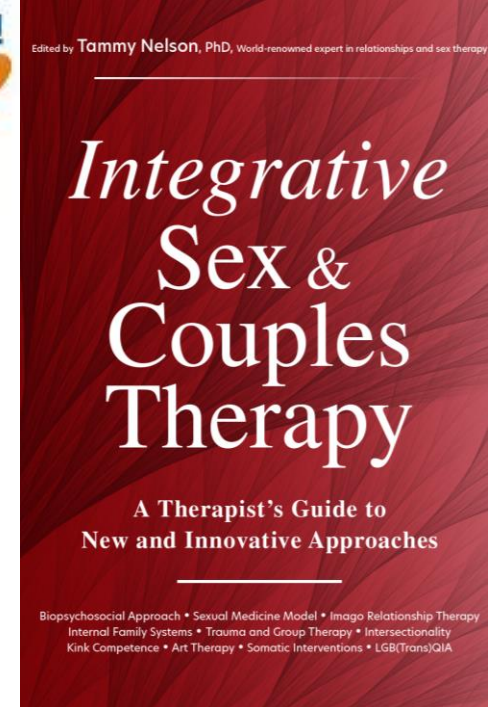
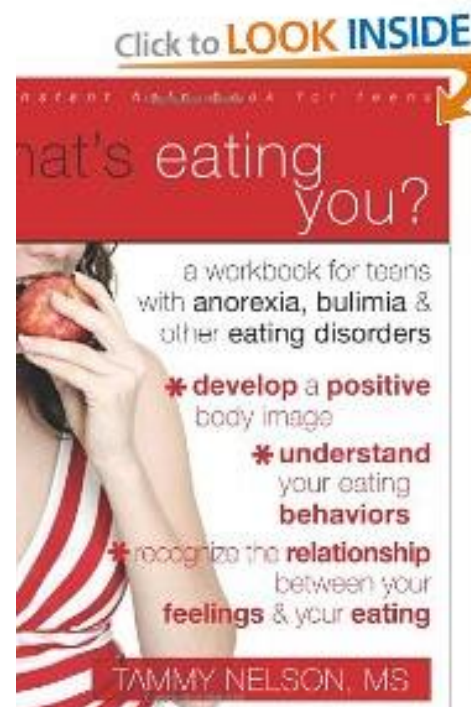
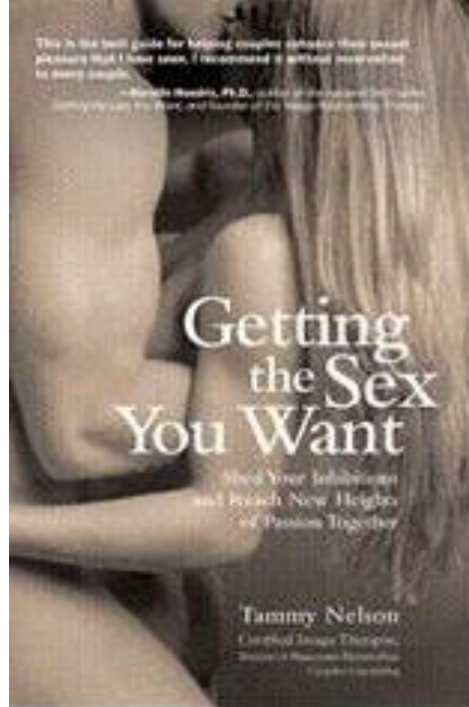
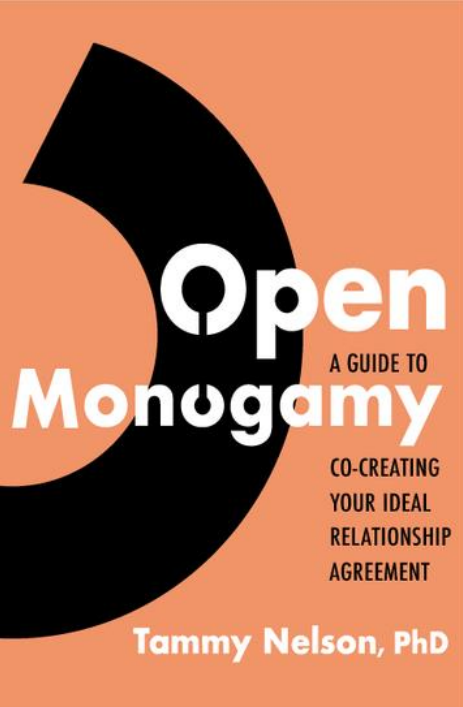


Treating the Cheating Partner

**Couples Conference
San Francisco
June 2022**

Tammy Nelson PhD





Tammy Nelson, PhD

- **Certified Sex and Couples Therapist, Certified Sex Therapist**
- **Director Integrative Sex Therapy Institute**
- **Director Sex Therapy PhD Program, Daybreak University**
- **Certified Imago Relationship Therapist**

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When You're The One Who Cheats

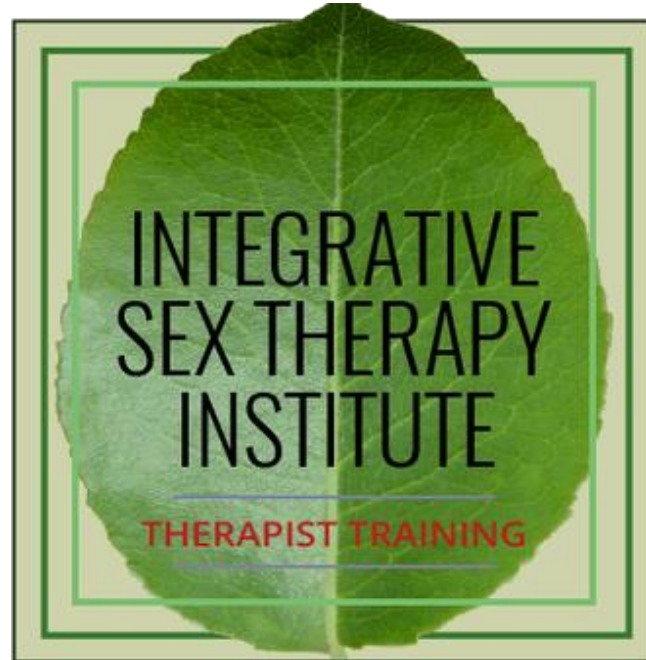
TEN THINGS YOU
NEED TO KNOW

Dr. Tammy Nelson

author of The New Monogamy



**www.ISTtraining.
com**



Join Tammy on Social Media



Instagram: @doctor_tammynelson



Twitter: @drtammynelson

@askdrtammynelson



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Please note.

- The experience of all represented here are probably mediated to a significant degree by culture, race, gender, and other variables which are often not adequately represented in the literature by all races, cultures, genders and diverse populations.

- *“The opposite of death is desire...”*

Tennessee Williams



Treatment for the One Who Cheats

-The one who has had or is having an affair

-The one who has had a one-night stand

The one who is involved in online infidelity

-The “other” person on the outside of a partnered relationship

The
marginalization
of the 'other'
in affair
therapy

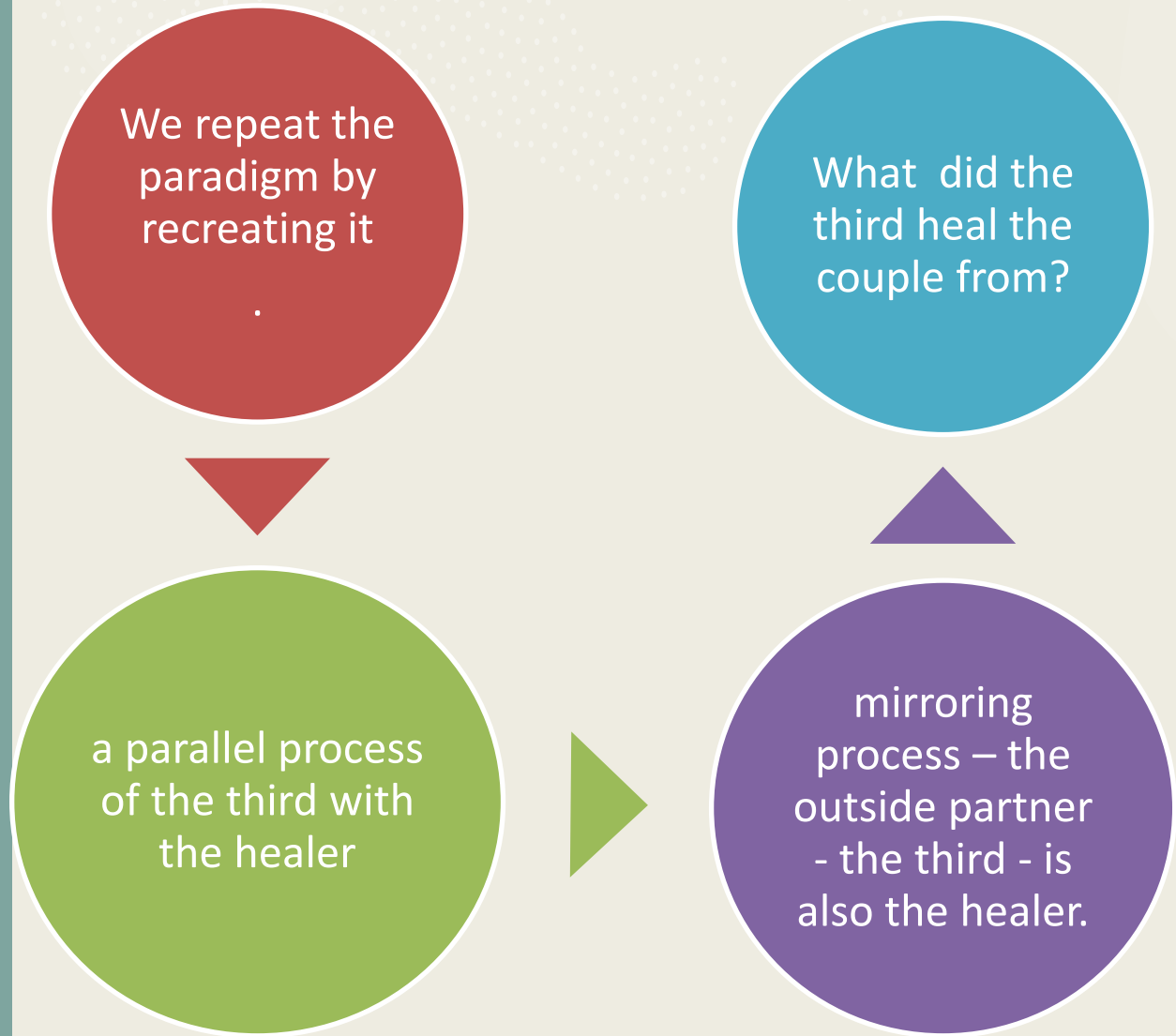
Is affair therapy an extension of a Western medicalized therapeutic framework?

It reflects all the same limitations and replicates existing power structures ([Sevelius, 2017](#))

Recognize the role of the marginalized outside partner

Sexuality is not something that can be forced underground or reduced to tropes within traditional monogamy stereotypes.

Parallel process



What did the reconfiguration of the relationship draw the couple to recognize?

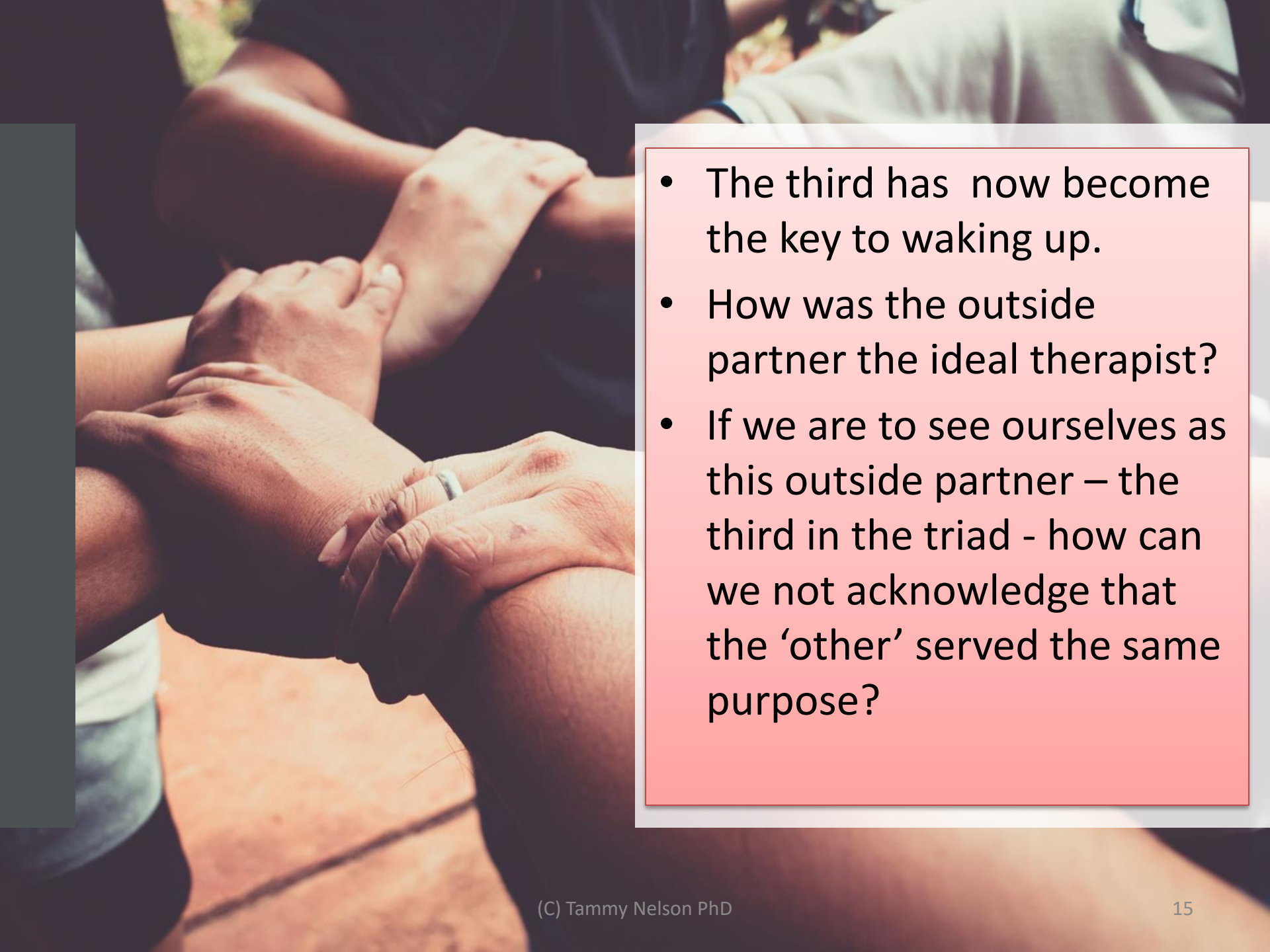


- To pull them out of regularly configured dyad
- To shake up notion of coupledness
- To help them to seek a new vision of relating

The therapist can reflect:



- this new way of relating
- this change is/was necessary
- And can be a catalyst for good.

- 
- The third has now become the key to waking up.
 - How was the outside partner the ideal therapist?
 - If we are to see ourselves as this outside partner – the third in the triad - how can we not acknowledge that the 'other' served the same purpose?



We inadvertently give the third more power by denying their existence, by pretending that we are the only powerful healer in the room we set ourselves up to wonder why the couple does not improve.

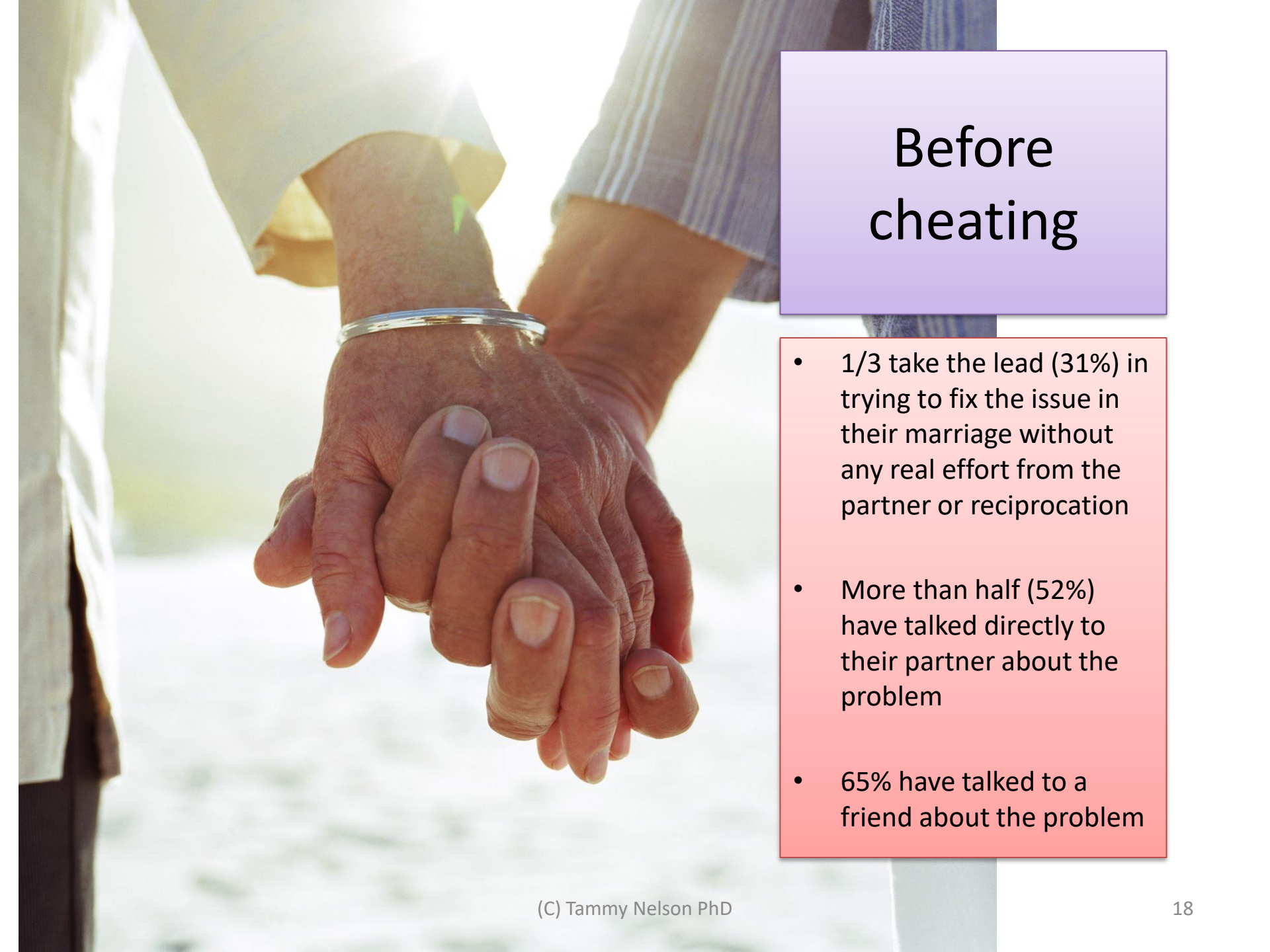


They have no choice to either break up with each other or break up with us to find their own power.

Data shows that cheaters are willing to look at their own role

*

based on the survey of 1727 AM members Aug 2021



Before cheating

- 1/3 take the lead (31%) in trying to fix the issue in their marriage without any real effort from the partner or reciprocation
- More than half (52%) have talked directly to their partner about the problem
- 65% have talked to a friend about the problem

Couples therapy

38% have gone
to therapy

Almost half
(47%) have gone
weekly

Motivation for therapy

- 43% hoping to avoid divorce or separation
- 50% better emotional connection
- 24% better sex life

- 69% said
couples
therapy DID
NOT WORK

- Infidelity is the last resort after much consideration

Ashley Madison



2002

AM has 70 million members worldwide since 2002 in 52 countries and 19 languages



Aug. 2021

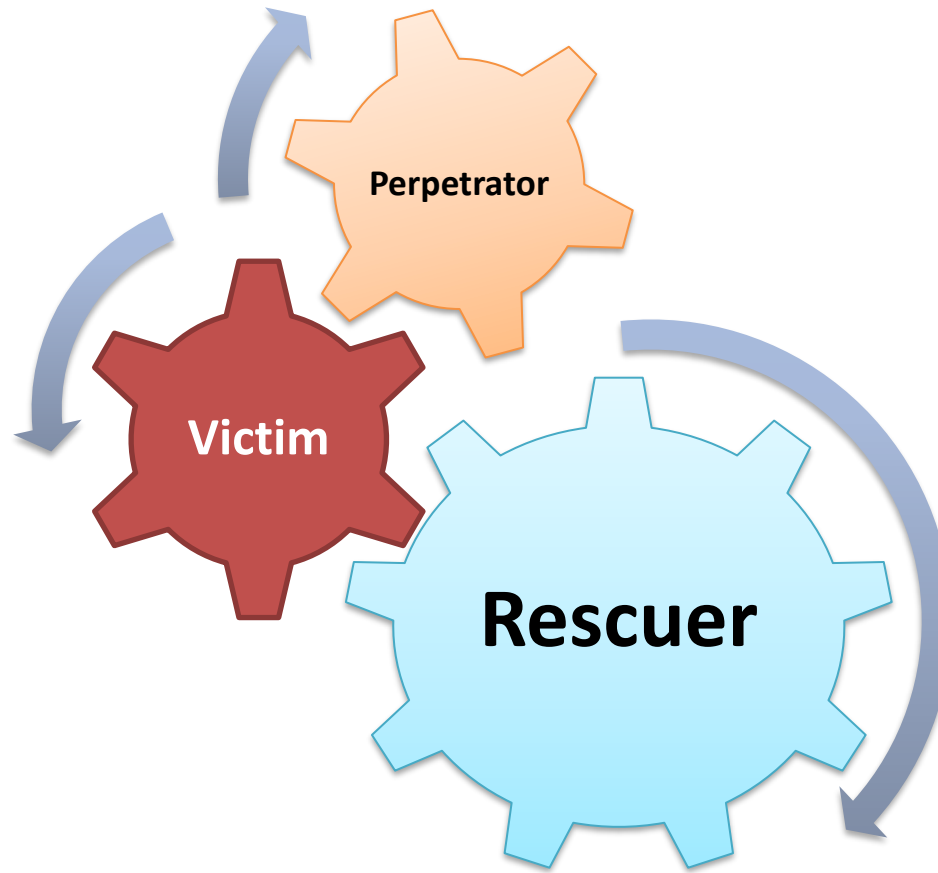
Based on a survey of 1,727 AM members in August 2021

Individual therapy

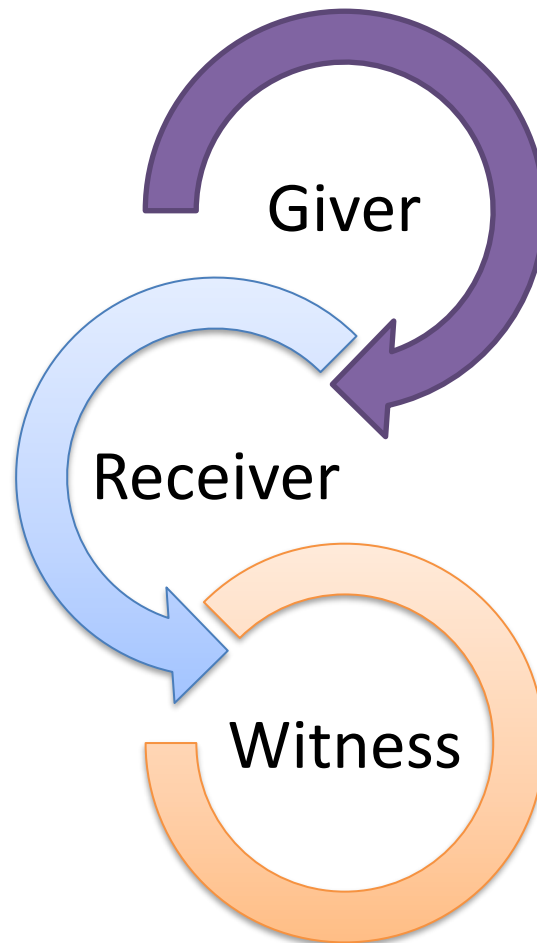
27% have gone
to individual
therapy

Said they saw
improvement in
their marriage

Trauma Triangle




The « witness » model



The Monogamy judgment

- Americans say that adultery is worse than polygamy and worse than human cloning.
 - Druckerman, 2007



...90 percent of Americans believe adultery is
morally wrong.

— (Source: Associated Press)



- *98 percent of men and 78 percent of women have fantasized about someone other than their spouse*
- *(Druckerman 2007)*



Crisis of integrity

- Infidelity is not a sexual dilemma
- ...but a MORAL dilemma
- How do we remain committed to our selves while remaining true to our partner – thus maintaining our integrity?

INTEGRATION



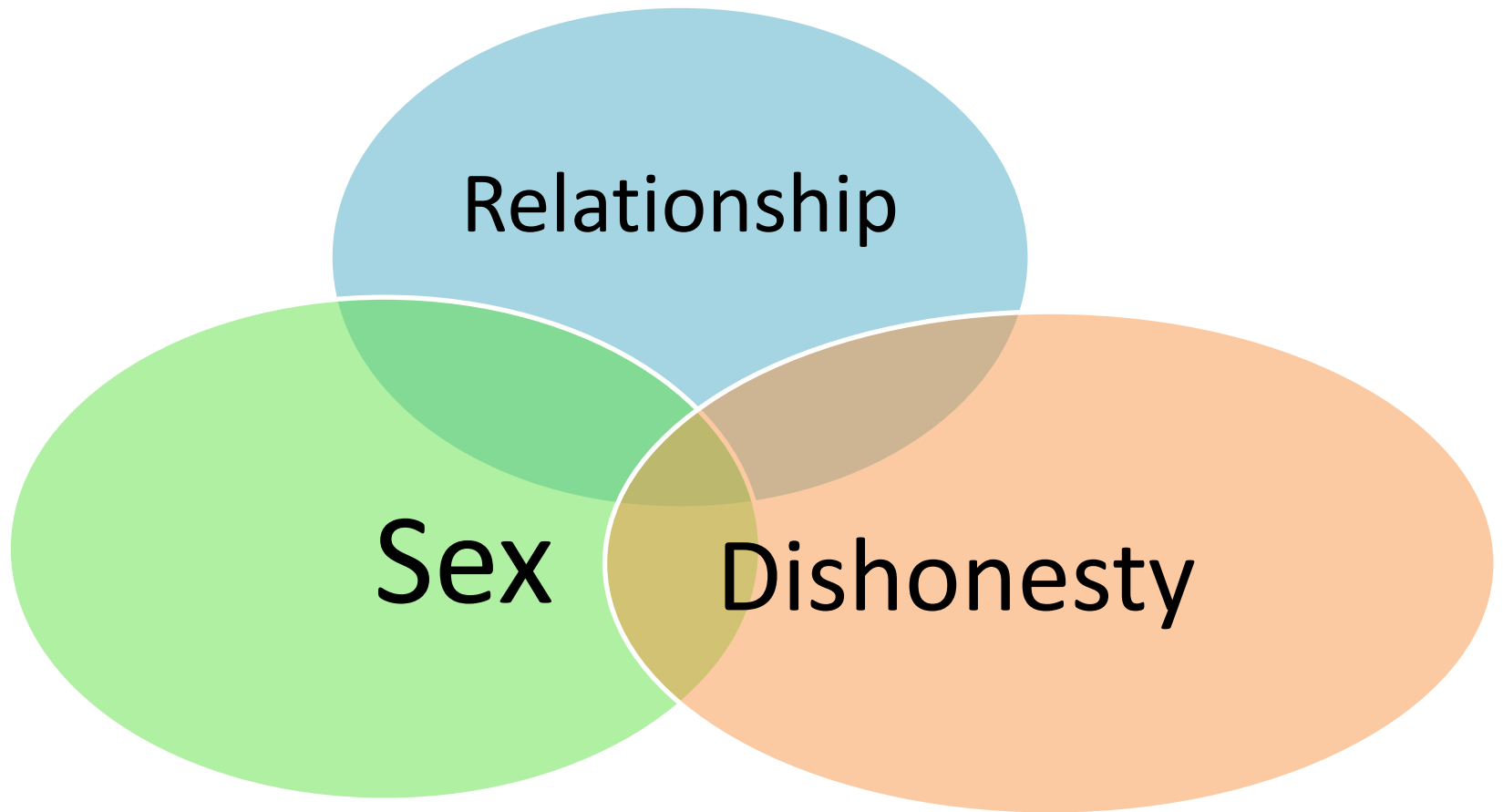
Thus play I in one person many
people,
And none contented.

William Shakespeare, Richard II

What is cheating?


- 90% of women and 75% of men say a passionate kiss constitutes cheating
- 68% of women and 51% of men said flirting over text was cheating

What is an affair?



- People don't necessarily look *for* another person.
- They look to *be* another person.





Wake-Up...

... or Break-Up

Late life
affairs

- Midlife crisis vs
Second
adolescence

Why does an affair end?

- **It reaches a natural conclusion:**
 - An alternative self is discovered
 - the part is integrated
 - It stops serving its purpose

- **A pivotal event:**
 - getting caught
 - unhappy marriage ends
 - scratches a sexual itch

Do you need to end your affair with integrity?

- Did you have sex?
- Did you tell them you loved them?
- Did you say negative things about your spouse?
- Did you say you would leave your marriage?
- Did you make any promises about a future together?

Rules of disengagement

- Be clear
- Set boundaries
- Make amends
- Show empathy
- Admit ambivalence
- Say thank you
- Share priorities

Ask each other the following questions:



What is the difference between secrecy and privacy?



What does honesty mean?



What should be kept private in our relationship?



How transparent do we want to be?

dialogues

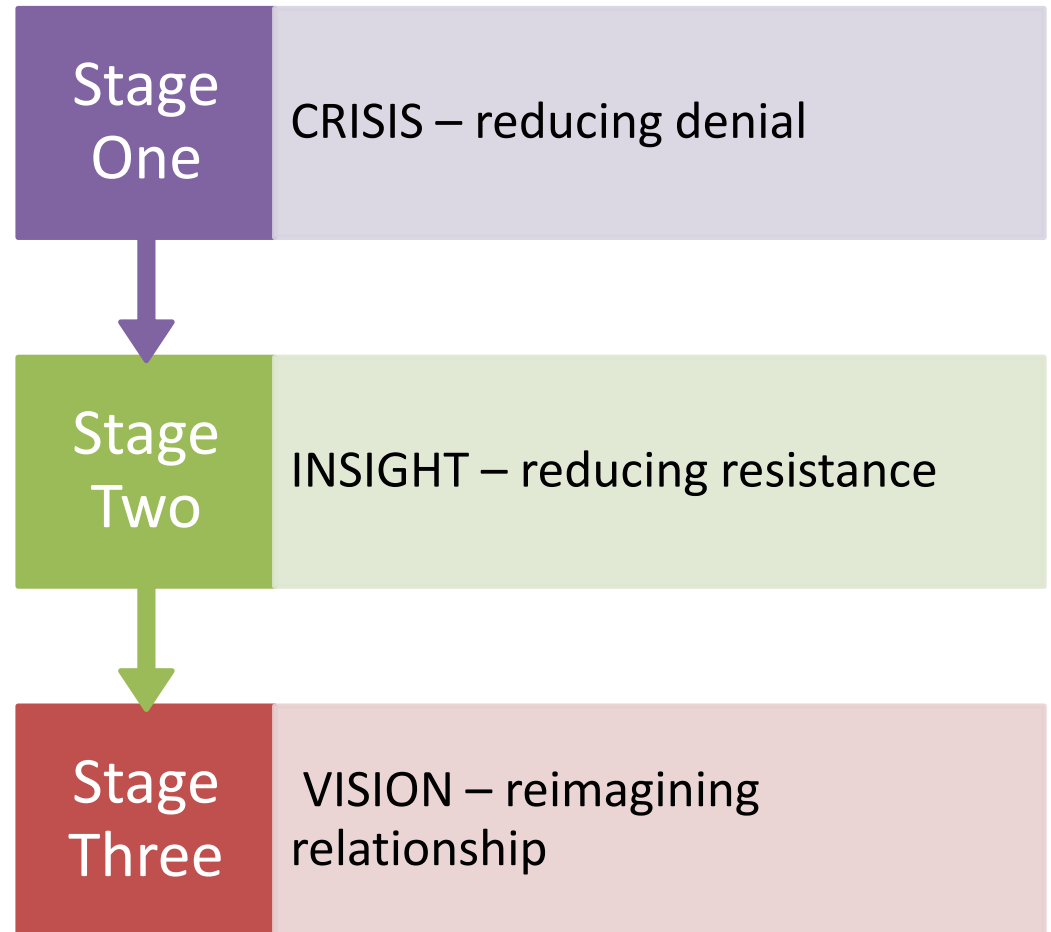
- What I really want to know
- What I can't stop thinking about
- What I want you to know about me right now
- What I need from you each day
- What I need from you when I tell you my feelings

- Affairs are not ALWAYS a result of unhappiness in the primary relationship.
- Up to 56% of men and 34% of women in affairs described themselves as being in happy marriages.
- They also say that they love their primary partner and have good sex with them. (Ben-Zeev, 2008)

After effects

- **Grieve** – the fantasy of the affair partnership
- **Guilt** – remorse is intense
- **Trust** – intuition vs fear
- **Vision** – create a new monogamy
- **New marriage** – what will that look like?

Three Stage Erotic Recovery Plan



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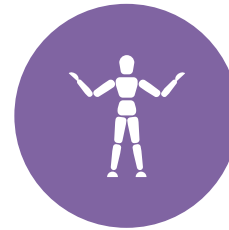
Avoidance/Repression



WHAT WE
AVOID
RULES US.



THE THINGS
WE DENY
CONTROL US.



OUR
REPRESSED
DESIRES
GROW.

Attraction Dysfunction



How come I'm not into
you anymore?

Disappointment

- We often proceed as if *low frequency of desire* were evidence of psychopathology whereas it may be *evidence of good judgment*
 - – Kleinplatz

3 Signs of a Sexless Marriage



you're not having sex



**the thought of initiating
sex makes you anxious
and avoidant**

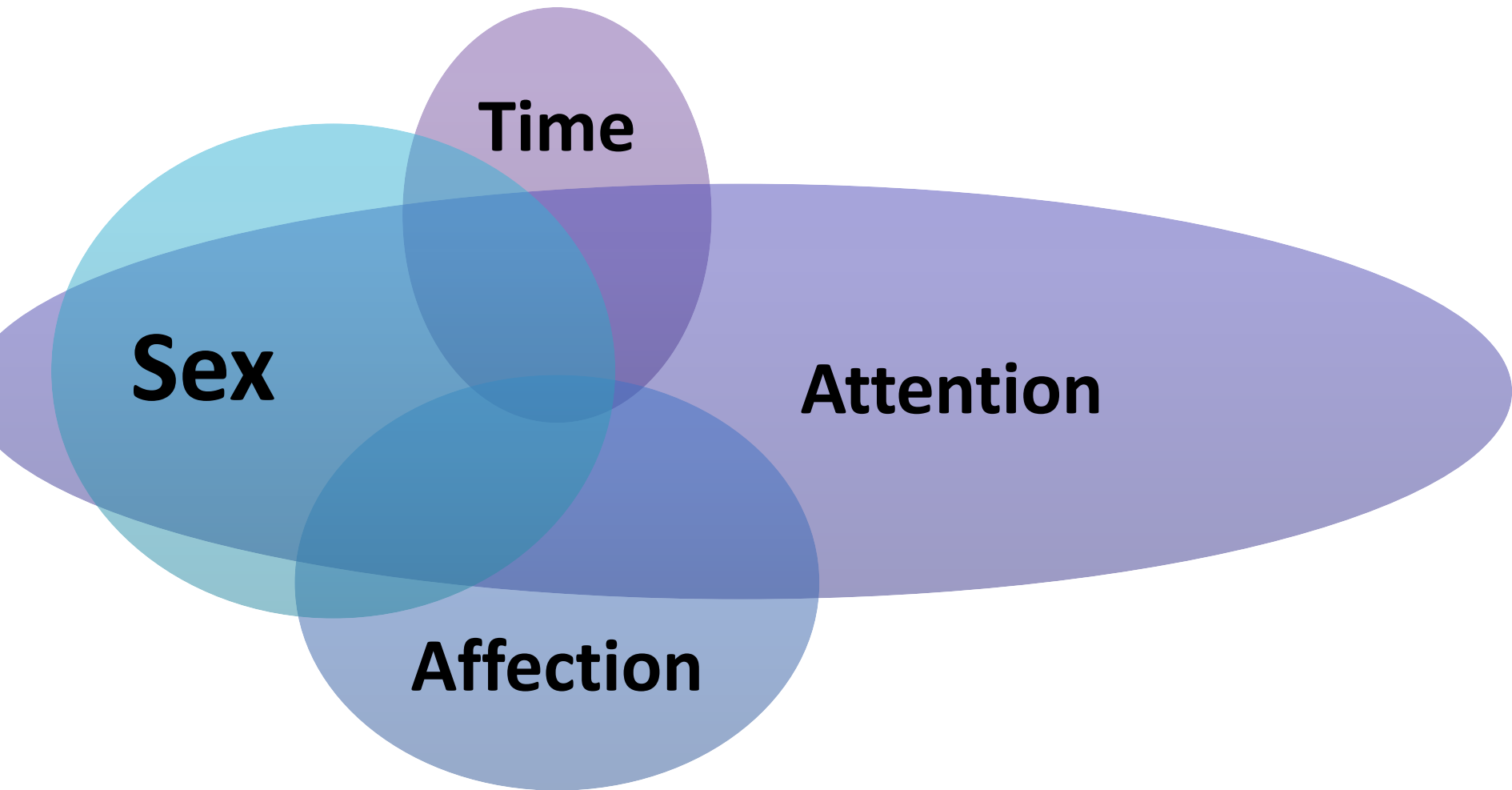


**you never touch each
other in a sensual way**

Directed Emotional Attempts to Reconnect

- *What does sex mean to me?*
- *What does sex mean to you?*
- *What does sex mean to us?*

Revisioning: Long Term Conscious Repair



New Vision



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- Include new monogamy agreement

monogamy gap

disagreement on level of
openness in their monogamy

caused by lack of communication,
lack of experience, or simply lack
of trying

can lead to conflict, resentment
and for some couples, ultimately
separation

Explicit vs Implicit Monogamy Agreements

New Monogamy

***Monogamy is not synonymous with
morality***



-but honesty

Continuum of Monogamy

AROUSAL

FLIRTATION

EMOTION

ACTION

CONNECTION

SEX

LOVE

DETACHMENT

Research shows that less than half of Americans believe in marriage anymore.

- Pew Social Trends found that *four out of ten* Americans say marriage is becoming “obsolete.”

- Are we really born monogamous?





- Its not about "saving" your marriage.
- Its about "choosing" your marriage....

Book links

- [When You're the One Who Cheats; Ten Things You Need to Know](#)
- [The New Monogamy; Redefining Your Relationship After Infidelity](#)
- [Open Monogamy; Co-Creating Your Ideal Relationship Agreement](#)
- [Getting the Sex You Want; Shed Your Inhibitions and Reach New Heights Together](#)
- [Six Weeks of Erotic Dates & A Protocol for Erotic Recovery](#)

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- Tammy Nelson, PhD
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- www.drtammynelson.com
- Contact me for a free eBook
 - – Six Weeks to Erotic Recovery
 - Tell me you saw me here at the Couples Conference!