

LL13-Can You Prevent Cheating?

Hi I'm Doug Weiss
and I'm Alvean Lyons, and this is love life.

Well we have a difficult topic today,.... about cheating, and whether you can prevent that in a relationship and how.

You know Barbara had an interesting story about something that I guess concerned a friend on Facebook and so I asked her if she would really relate that story quickly.

I wanted to say that a post popped up on my feed and the wife wanted to know what should she do: a woman at her husband's job had made it very clear that she was interested in this wife's husband and even gave him candy, and her question was do I do anything, or do I let it go? And I thought it was very interesting at the time, when I was reading the feed, most of the responses at the time were women, and the majority of them said nothing. It's up to the guy to shut it down. I'm just curious as to what you guys think about that?

So you already said they had lots of female responses, so put me on the spot here.

Yeah well, I don't disagree that it's up to the person to whom overtures have been made to shut it down. But the bigger frame around this has to do with the conditions of the relationship between a man and a woman that create the potential, at least, for cheating to be an issue. I want to say something that I think is strong, maybe too definitive but we'll let our listeners decide that.

I've heard people say Love takes a lot of effort it's real work and then I've heard the counter to that, love should never be work. Do you think that is a Pollyanna perspective?

I think it is real effort. I don't mean work, but it is real and constant effort to put the person that you care about in your life front and center. I have a simple saying, God's my number one, Peggy (my girlfriend) is my number two, and I don't mean in rank and order. I mean those are my priorities in life. Not all of them but those are my chief priorities and that means that I want to love Peggy the way that God loves me, unconditionally. All the time, unwavering consistency. And I want her to know that, I want her to know every day, that's where she is in my life; she's that important to me, she's that central to me, to my sense of well being. I believe that if you are both living your life that way that the conditions for cheating will never occur, because you will have no motive, no incentive, no desire to turn away from a relationship that's positive, and affirming, and uplifting to seek out something from someone who by the way, is about violating trust. Because someone who's going to come to you and say: hey I like you, whether they're single or married, they know what they're doing they know that they are about to violate the most sacred trust that exists between a man and a woman.

So what do you think, Alvean?.

OK, so I have two thoughts. The first thing is that I agree with you on the condition concept what we actually call it in a piece I was writing some years ago is the grass principle and what the grass principle is, and this can be applied to all kinds of things, is that if you drop a match on dry grass it will set a flame. If you drop a match on wet grass it will fizzle out. The match will always be the same, but the condition of the grass is what determines whether or not they'll be divided.

That is true in conflict. If we have a really healthy dialogue between the two of us, even in our workplace, we can talk about things, we can disagree about things, but it doesn't turn into a major issue because the conditions for it to be a fire are not present simultaneously. I could say something that is seemingly insignificant but because the contestants are so dry it turns into a fire. So we call it the grass principle and it's very true inside of a marriage. Are the conditions such that someone is being left without something inside of the relationship that he or she feels the need to supplement or complete whatever it is that is missing outside of the relationship? OK So whatever's missing on the inside they're using something on the outside to supplement that, because obviously they've opted not to separate and start their independent lives. They're still married, that is problematic and that's what we're talking about cheating. But I will say this, that I heard once this interesting quote that said you always have two kinds of

people: the ones that no matter how bad things get in a relationship they will never cheat and the ones that no matter how good things are in a relationship will always cheat. Because cheating at the end of the day is a character issue. It is not just about the conditions. The conditions are a factor, no question about it, that lend themselves to good or bad things happening; but the final decision as to whether or not we're going to allow for those things to take place rather than choose to separate and go our independent ways that's a character issue, and what no one can fix inside of a relationship is the other person's character.

You know, Alvean, that's an excellent point, and I should have spoken to that. I do think that there are people who are constitutionally unable to maintain a relationship. And I'm not casting judgment here. I want to say that I think if you find people like this you'll find, if you get below the surface, that this is a function of how they were raised. Absolutely no value set, and as you very well said, it's a question of character. These are people who don't have a very good sense of who they are, and don't know what they represent. When you cheat, first of all, you're cheating on yourself, or you are doing to someone else what you would be intolerant of having done to you. And if you think about that for just half a second you'd never do it.

But I do think that there are people good people who are tempted who, so to speak, could fall off the wagon. And I think that the antidote, and I'm being quite literal here, to prevent cheating is by being in a relationship with somebody who has that kind of integrity, that kind of character, and by making sure that before he's gone down the path of the relationship to the point where that's an issue, where you said: we are in a monogamous relationship and this is the trust that exists between us, that you know who that person is that you bonded with. And then I think as you said, you have to keep the grass wet, you have to make sure that there isn't fertile ground for cheating to prosper. This doesn't relieve either party of responsibility, it just simply ensures that it's not even a temptation, because we are..... you know I say this often but this is so real, we're human beings. We are fundamentally flawed. It's absurd to believe that human beings are going to walk the perfect walk in their lives. We're all going to make mistakes.

Well here's a question that I want to throw out there because the other side of what people were responding was to take her out in the back alley. Which I want to get to the point of this whole idea of blaming the other person, the external. And where is that line, where do you draw that line? It should always remain internal, meaning if someone is approaching, you know what your spouse will do. Do you ever speak to that person, or do you just keep it with you and your spouse?

Well, Barbara, I certainly have an opinion about that. Generationally, of course, you know that women in my thirty, forty age group tend to be a little bit different about what it is that they want, and how they want to go about doing those things and who belongs to whom and who should be upset about what.

What I would have to say is that from a personal perspective, I don't believe that there is ever a time that two women should be fighting over a man I just don't believe in it period. What I also say though is that if it were me, I would leave it to Matthew to handle the situation. However, if he has done that and says to me: Hey honey I told this woman that I feel this way and she is persistent and I'm getting uncomfortable with how persistent she is, I don't want to be aggressive about it as a man (because Matthew is a true gentleman) I don't want to be aggressive or rude about it, but I have made this wonderfully clear, but she is really certain about this thing.....then I would get involved. Because if my husband has told you're making him uncomfortable, and you are continuing to persist in this pursuit then we need to have a conversation, because you need to understand that woman to woman I'm not kidding either.

So, we need to have a very serious conversation, because you need to understand that Matthew was loved, protected, comforted and there is a whole other side to his very professional life. I don't I don't feel the need currently to take you into an alley but it is not beneath me.

So. Yeah. I don't want to get caught up in in the blame thing. But I do want to revisit what I said earlier, which is that when someone, man or woman makes overtures to a person who's in a relationship and they know they're in a relationship this isn't innocent, right, let's call this what it is. This is not innocence. You know what you're doing. And there is no excuse, there is no possible explanation, rationalization that you can offer. You can sell yourself one..... we did a show not long ago about lies we tell ourselves: oh he's not happily married, she's miserable, he's a

terrible provider, he beats on her. These are not an excuse, sorry. If you are concerned about somebody you should give them good counsel but that has nothing to do with getting into the midst of their relationship. That's an intentionality to do harm. You may disguise it as Love, you may disguise it as, well I care very much about you, know I mean? I don't resort to this often, but I will say it this has nothing to do with love, this is straight out lust, right this is straight out I want you.

So there you have it.

The first of some conversation that we're going to be having on this topic Stay tuned for next week because we're going to talk about this some more. If you have some stories that you'd like to share with us we would like to hear them. We can read them anonymously or we can include your name, as you choose, but if you'd like to do that please write to us Alvean@lovelife.digital or doug@lovelife.digital and stay tuned for some more conversation about the subject of infidelity and what to do about it if it happens in your life we'll see you next week.