

# Should I Spy?

By Dr. Robert Huizenga

If you are a spouse who suspects your partner might be having an affair, wants to find out if he/she is telling the truth or has a need to discover details of the affair, this article is for you.

**The desire, sometime a fairly strong desire to spy or find out exactly what is happening between your partner and the other person, is commonly very strong,** especially at disclosure of the affair or prior to that when you sense that something is off kilter.

## 7 Legitimate Motives for Spying

### **1. Trust is a big reason, not of your partner, but yourself.**

Probably for some time you have sensed something is different or questioned the change of behavior in your partner. Perhaps you confronted him/her and it was met with denial. This created a huge dilemma for you because a part of you was screaming, Hey, this doesn't fit! I don't believe it!

To deny this part of you, which KNOWS the truth, creates a tremendous internal turmoil.

If the truth as you suspect it is confirmed, you can take a deep breath and at least know that you can trust yourself. You are NOT CRAZY!

**Spying is a way to confirm your suspicions and trust more fully your gut feelings.**

### **2. Spying may help you feel connected to your partner who seems to be steadily moving away from you.** It is a way of maintaining contact and have some sort of connection to this stranger who once was well known.

Isn't it like the game of hide-and-seek we used to play as children? Sometimes there, sometimes gone. At least it is a game, and a game

is at least some contact, some involvement. You miss the connection and try to find some way to maintain the ties.

**3. Spying may be an honest attempt to bring resolution to the relationship.** You want to know the truth. You sense something does not fit. You suspect there is a breach of something. You want to know what you are up against. You are not willing to stand pat and wait.

You are a person of action. You want some sort of movement. You want to get on with the relationship. You want to get on with your life.

You know that it is difficult maintaining your sanity when there might be this huge elephant that no one is talking about. **You want to know the truth, face the truth, deal with the truth and be free.**

**4. If you suspect that this behavior might be the end of the relationship, you want to protect yourself legally.**

If there is betrayal, lying and deception regarding a third party, other forms of deception may exist financially or in other areas of the relationship. Having "evidence" does have some impact in some court systems.

Whether you need to protect yourself legally depends on the kind of affair facing you and the character of your spouse. Please read through my "7 Reasons For an Affair" to determine the situation that faces you. **If your spouse is someone who can't say no, doesn't want to say no or is acting out rage, please make sure to take protective steps.**

**5. You want to protect yourself medically.** You might be concerned about sexually transmitted diseases. Your health may be at stake. And, of course, you need to know.

Shame, guilt or self-absorption may be so powerful in your partner that it gets in the way of responsibly informing you of the medical dangers when another partner is sexually brought into your relationship.

**6. Secrets are work!** There is not much written about the impact of a secret in a relationship, but believe me, in over two decades of working with strained relationships day in and day out, keeping a secret has a powerful impact.

It is the proverbial elephant sitting in the room that no one dare talk about. People take extraordinary measures to tip toe around it, but it IS there. Emotionally, you can't miss it.

Secrets are a drain. If the secret persists, its impact is felt in subtle but insidious ways. People become physically ill, sometimes seriously so. People become depressed. People start doing crazy things.

Children start acting out, stop achieving, become listless or exhibit a host of other symptoms. Children, or the next generation, often carry the emotional load.

**You want to spy because you don't want to live with a secret.** You want to discover the truth. You want to feel the freeing power of the exposed secret and the opportunity it offers for healing, resolution, a rich relationship and a productive life.

**7. Some of us like drama.** Soap opera scenarios and adrenaline based lives are a hallmark of our society. We get juiced or pumped up entering into emotional relational triangles that offer intrigue.

Without adrenaline, life seems boring or mundane. Perhaps an unspoken reason for an affair may be to fan the fire? Or, you may spy to keep the sense of being alive a part of your life.

## Is Spying an Invasion of Privacy?

My, how the person involved in the affair cries foul when he/she discovers you are spying.

**Outrage can be intense:** "How dare you!! I never thought you would stoop to that! How could you!? How can there be trust in this relationship if you do that? This is none of your business; I don't spy and go behind your back! Now you know why I want to pull away from you. How could I love anyone that would do something like that to me? On and on.

**Usually the person having the affair does not see or will not admit the duplicity of his/her clandestine behavior.** But you are made out to be the villain if you use detective work to discover the

truth. It doesn't make sense, but then again not much about an affair borders close to sanity.

Are you a morally corrupt duplicitous character hell bent on destroying the integrity of a relationship through spying? No, of course not. The integrity of the relationship has been destroyed through the affair. The affair shattered the promises and mocked the vows that the two of you made.

The affair invaded the domain of your marriage and crumbled its protective boundaries. **The affair broke the contract of the marriage; it was the act of betrayal. Spying does not damage the marriage. It is an attempt to seek the truth and resolve the pain and deception.**

Spying is often used to grasp the reality of the situation. It's intent is to find the truth. Only the truth can provide a foundation from which to begin resolving the hurt, pain and forging a direction for the marriage and enable each person in the marriage to attain health and sanity.

## **Are You Ready to Handle What You Might Find?**

Have you considered the many situations that spying might uncover? Can you imagine the worst thing you might find? Predict what your response will be to the worst-case scenario. Are you ready? Here are some **specific questions to ask yourself:**

- 1) **Do I have friends I can count on for support if I discover the worst?** Do they know I might need them? Have I told them exactly how they might help me? **Do I have the capacity to stand back from the deep emotions and not get mired or lost in destructive thoughts and feelings?**
  
- 2) How have I handled emotional pain in the past? What if it gets almost unbearable? If I encounter the worst possible emotional hurt and pain, **do I have a therapist I can contact immediately and see soon to help me through the rough spots?**

- 3) **What will be my strategy for what I find?** Do I have a strategy for the different scenarios? Do I have a strategy to confront or not confront my spouse? How, when and under what circumstances will I confront him/her?
- 4) **What kind of strategy will I have for self-care?** What will I need to do to keep myself functioning somewhat effectively?
- 5) **Do I have a coach or an objective someone who can help me develop strategies and goals for confrontation and self-care and keep me focused and working on these strategies and goals?**
- 6) **Do I know what kind of affair I might face? Do I know the prognosis for that kind of affair?** Have I educated myself about affairs and what I must do to effectively resolve and move through this crisis?

## **Spying is Not Revenge**

**Do not use what you find as ammunition for revenge.** Sure, you may have wonderfully violent fantasies of what you would really like to do to him/her and the other person. This is very normal. But, don't act them out.

**Using what you find to extract revenge will only lengthen the time of pain and anger.** It will undermine your integrity as a person, lower your personal standards and make you exceedingly unattractive.

Resist the temptation to sling the mud!

**Keep what you find to yourself.**

You spy because the truth will set YOU free. The quickest cleanest way to break free from the affair is to set your focus on you as you navigate your way through the difficult weeks and months.

The sooner the two of you can face each other, without outside input or influence, the better of you and the relationship will be.

**There usually is no reason to share new found information with family, friends, children or the spouse of the other person.** A concern about sexually transmitted diseases or health risks might be an exception. If it is important to share such information, do so without much fanfare or drama.

And of course, if you pursue legal action, any information obtained through spying is sometimes might be helpful to your attorney. Some "evidence" does carry weight in particular states or districts.

If you have questions or are in need of support, please visit my site at: <http://www.break-free-from-the-affair.com>.

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Dr. Huizenga is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist with over 20 years of professional experience, working with hundreds of couples and thousands of individuals. He has done extensive research and study in the specialty area of extramarital affairs.

  

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