

**Affair Proof Your Marriage Is your marriage affair-proof? It will be if you follow these six tips to keep you both on track, committed and, most importantly, happy.**

**By Tracey Porpora**

It may start with what seems to be innocent, yet playful e-mails to a coworker. Soon, this person becomes your confidant for the troubles you have in your marriage. Next thing you know, you're in bed with him having a full-blown affair. If this is a scenario you can relate to, you're one of the 22 percent of married men and 14 percent of married women who have "extramarital affairs." "Women cheat because they don't feel loved or appreciated. Generally speaking, men cheat because there's not enough sex, or the sex isn't working for them in some way," says Tina B. Tessina, a Long Beach, CA-based psychotherapist, and author of *How To Be A Couple And Still Be Free* (New Page, \$13.99). However, relationship experts say there are several ways to "affair-proof" a marriage. In fact, the following tips can help you stay connected with your partner, and resist the temptation of cheating.

### **1. Communicate Honestly**

Communication fosters a close marital relationship, and prevents couples from drifting apart from each other. "Communication is about sharing your intimate goals, thoughts and dreams," says Dr. Terri Orbuch, a Detroit, MI-based psychologist, national radio host, relationship columnist, and marriage and family therapist known as "The Love than the children, work or daily tasks."

In fact, having a regular “talk” at least once a week will help married couples be each other’s most trusted companion. “I call it the ‘state of the union talk’ where couples should regularly ask each other what’s going on in each of their lives,” says Tessina. “They have to know that they can tell each other anything. If you’re regularly communicating honestly, someone will say, ‘We’re not having enough sex to make me happy,’ or ‘You don’t touch me ever unless you want sex.’ Once you have the problem out in the open, you can work to do something about it.”

When couples stop talking, that opens the door for infidelity to occur. “Often, the precursor to sexual infidelity is emotional infidelity,” explains Ruth Houston, founder of [www.InfidelityAdvice.com](http://www.InfidelityAdvice.com), and author of *Is He Cheating on You? – 829 Telltale Signs* (Lifestyle Publications, \$29.95).

## **2. Enjoy A Passion-Filled Sex Life**

When sex and intimacy become mundane, passion has been extinguished in a marriage. “People need to kiss and touch. People stop kissing and touching when they are trying to avoid sex,” says Dr. Ava Cadell, founder of [loveologyuniversity.com](http://loveologyuniversity.com), and author of seven books, including *12 Steps to Everlasting Love* (Peter’s Publishing, \$17.95). “You should kiss passionately everyday because it’s so intimate. A 12-second kiss in the morning, and another at night is a minimal investment into a ritual that will maintain passion, and possibly prevent infidelity.” In addition, relationship experts say comes to sex, don’t do the same thing every time,” instructs Tessina. “If sex becomes a chore, you’ll never have it. Get out the whip cream can, wear costumes, or read erotic passages to each other; make it more

fun.”

### **3. Keep Flirting With Each Other**

Flirting doesn't have to—and shouldn't—end once you're married. Couples need to reinforce their interest in each other, and flirting often is a perfect way to do it. “You don't want to become a boring married couple with no fire or adventure,” says Cadell. “You have to keep the playfulness in a marriage. Flirting, like you did before you were married, will help keep the bond between the two of you. If you don't flirt, other people will. Flirting with someone makes them feel very sexually confident.”

Flirting within a marriage doesn't have to be overt. In fact, it can simply be a “look” or kind words that will let your partner know you still have flirtatious feelings for him. “Things like reaching over and grabbing your partner's hand when you're sitting in the car can create warmth,” says Tessina. “If your husband says, ‘Wow, you look great in that dress,’ it lets you know you're desired.”

### **4. Spend Quality Time Together**

While it's easy to say you should enjoy the fun things you did together when you were dating—such as working-out, bar hopping, or just watching an old movie while splitting a bottle of wine—many married couples claim their lives are simply “too busy” to indulge in these activities on a regular basis. But relationship experts say it's think they reached the

goal they wanted, and they get lazy. They don't think they need to do anything to maintain the marriage,” said Cadell. “Couples need to talk specifically about their feelings for each other—the more you do this, the closer you will become. Quality time can be 10 minutes every night before you go to bed. If a man or woman can't share their feelings with a spouse, they may find someone else who will listen, and will bond with them, which can manifest itself into a sexual relationship.”

And quality time doesn't mean just being together at home. "Sometimes a man will say, 'I'm home every night,' but he's on the computer, and she's doing another activity, so you're not spending quality time together," says Houston.

## **5. Maintain Your Own Interests**

While quality time is imperative to a committed marriage, couples also need some space to do their own thing. If couples find themselves desperately trying to get away from each other, lies and secrets to achieve this may start to manifest. "When you're married, you need to have some space between each other, so you remain interesting to each other. Have something you do in your life that your partner doesn't do with you, so you can talk about it to them," suggests Tessina. "This doesn't have to be jumping out of airplanes. Instead, it can simply be coming home and saying, 'Guess what happened on my bowling team tonight.'" There needs to be hobbies or activities that you can enjoy on your own, which contribute to your identity as an individual. "Having your own hobby gives you a chance to pick up energy from other places, and bring it back into the marriage."

## **6. Handle Conflict Constructively**

When disagreements arise—and they inevitably will—it’s important to extinguish the fires of anger before it turns into a full-blown blaze. “Destructive ways of handling conflict are name calling, hitting, yelling at each other, and dismissing one another’s feelings,” says Orbuch. Constant bickering, criticizing and negativity toward each other will surely put a relationship at risk for infidelity. “If a couple is doing this to each other, they need to recognize it, and stop it. Take a time out. You need to calm down, and come back to it. You need a way to talk to each other without creating explosions,” says Tessina.

Any disagreements that arise should be dealt with, rather than ignored by either partner. “Women sometimes tend to think men are mind readers. You can’t hold things inside,” says Houston. “Both partners need to speak up when something upsets them, or they’ll find someone else to complain to.”