



Dear Barry,

My girlfriend just cheated on me. I can't control my anger. I want to hurt her! I wouldn't put a hand on her but all I can think about is making her hurt as much as I do. She says she is sorry but I hate her now. She tells me to calm down and wants us to go to therapy. How can I forgive her? It hurts too much?

Signed "Devastated in Rancho Mirage"

Dear Devastated,

Your feelings of anger are justified! Betrayal is one of the worst pains a couple can experience. But getting even is not the answer. It can lead to far greater devastation, including arrest!

First you need to decide if you want to forgive her. Is this a relationship that has a future? Do you think she is really sorry or just sorry she got caught? If you want to forgive her, take her suggestion and go to couples therapy. This relationship was probably broken for some time. There are two people in this relationship. Get outside of yourself here. Ask her what she feels she is not getting from you in the relationship and tell her what your needs are. Make sure she hears you.

Use therapy as an opportunity to build a healthier/stronger relationship. Forgiveness builds over time. Trust must be re-earned.

About 70% of my patients who choose couples counseling are able to reconnect and move forward. But beware...if she cheats again...run!