

Forgiveness After Marital Infidelity and Betrayal

By Sandy Levey-Lunden

There is a reason for the public fascination with sex scandals such as the Clinton-Lewinsky affair and the more recent revelations about Tiger Woods. Most of us carry some kind of sexual guilt, which overlays our spiritual guilt. In short, we think, feel, and believe we've left God. And that's why betrayal and abandonment are recurring themes in human relationships. We create these experiences over and over again unconsciously out of guilt.

So that's what is activated within us each time such a story hits the news. Tales of infidelity, betrayal, abandonment--each of these stimulate memories of every single perceived sexual indiscretion in our own lives. Because we don't want to look at ourselves, we point the finger at someone else. We love to ask, "How could Clinton (or Spitzer, Sanford, Woods, etc.) *do* such a thing? Yet, there's an internal resonance--a resonance through our own unconscious guilt around "betraying" God. We believe we have betrayed God, which we then translate into feeling that God has betrayed us. Therefore, betrayal becomes a theme in so many relationships in terms of our sexuality, fidelity and finances. Then we attract the scenario of someone not giving us the piece of the pie that we feel we deserve monetarily. This can manifest as a dispute related to an inheritance or a divorce. Money or sex can then be used to attack, creating feelings of separation and abandonment.

In my counseling practice, I have encountered many couples who felt that they were wounded by betrayal and/or abandonment. I never thought it would happen to me, but it did. To make matters worse, the betrayal and dissolution of my marriage occurred within months of moving my daughter and my business from the United States to Sweden. Now I was experiencing what I had seen so many couples and individuals suffer through during counseling in my practice.

I thought the loss of my husband and our marriage would kill me. However, that loss turned out to be a great blessing. The pain drove me to look more deeply into the nature of the Holy Relationship and to discover not only a way for me to heal and live happily, but to help others achieve it for themselves.

It began in the late 1980s. I was on a tour and conducting trainings in Sweden, where I met a man. We fell in love and decided to marry. So in 1989, I moved my family and business to Sweden.

On our honeymoon, my husband told me that he wanted to host a peace conference that year. I helped him register the participants, but did not attend the final evening of the conference because I wanted to relieve the baby sitter who was with our three children. Days later, I left for Hawaii, where I was scheduled to give a training. Within 24 hours of my arrival, I bent over and couldn't get up; I was in so much pain, I thought I had broken a vertebra. The truth was that exactly 12 hours earlier, in our home in Sweden, my husband had taken a younger woman to bed. Somehow I sensed that, even from such a distance.

I called my husband a couple of times during the training and noticed that he sounded distant and aloof. I didn't panic until I returned home. Everything *looked* okay. He had even put out a spread of champagne and smoked salmon as he did on special occasions. But I *felt* strange. I didn't say anything during the meal, but as we got ready for bed, I felt compelled to address it. "Tell me now what happened in my absence," I said. "I know something dreadful has happened. Do you have cancer? Are you going to die?" That's how upset I thought his energetic fields were.

He was honest with me. "I've fallen in love with a younger woman. I want to be with her and enjoy my second adolescence with her. But I don't want to give you up either. There's a 10 percent chance that I actually still want to be with you, but 90 percent of me wants to be with her."

I asked him all kinds of fear-based questions. I wanted to know if he slept with her—he did—and what her name was. He wouldn't tell me. "You might as well," I said. "I'll know her name by the time I wake up."

That night, I hardly slept. I felt like I was dying, and was completely out of my mind with jealousy and grief. But by the morning, I knew who it was: Maria. I had registered her at the peace conference and I remember noticing her when she arrived.

I couldn't imagine forgiving him. I felt I had been stabbed with a sharp sword and didn't know how I would ever feel whole again. Fortunately, he and I had agreed to go for counseling if we ever found ourselves in such difficulty that we couldn't resolve it ourselves. I couldn't think of anyone who could help us to heal our marriage because I felt so triggered in my feelings of survival that I couldn't even think clearly. Finally, I resorted to something I did as a child: I prayed. ("When all else fails...") Over several years of teaching, I had observed that many others experienced the same unfaithfulness I was facing. I asked God to give me a process that would help me and others with similar experience to heal and feel whole and complete again. I told God that I could live only 31 more days without an answer because I couldn't stand the pain I was in any longer.

I longed for someone who would join me in this process of healing because I believed it was clear that my husband had chosen the other woman. After praying almost continuously for 30 days and 30 nights, I got my wish, and I couldn't believe that my prayer had been answered.

On the 31st day, I was scheduled to give a seminar on The Art of Surrender. To my shock, 35 people registered without any effort on my part. I couldn't imagine why they'd want to learn, or what they could learn, from someone in so much pain.

The night the course started, I remember feeling a surge of fear that went through my entire body when I saw my assistant, Mats, step out of his car and walk toward the house. I had this crazy thought—*I do not want to be alone with him tonight!*

I noticed that thought, but continued as if everything was fine. At the end of the evening, I was left alone with Mats. He asked if I would like to go into the meditation room on 4th floor. My first thought was, “No way!”

Reluctant as I was, however, I went ahead. As I walked up the circular staircase, I *knew* my life was about to change forever. As we sat together, Mats’ appearance began to change right before my eyes. I could see he was an ancient being.

During that conversation, we committed to the purpose of finding the answer to all pain and suffering in relationships. We both were going through the same suffering from our previous relationships. I later found out that this was the beginning of a Holy Relationship (according to ACIM) that would last for eternity. That’s right, I committed for eternity. (In a Holy Relationship, a person commits to a purpose, not to a body or personality. Therefore, it can go on forever and never end.)

When I left the tower, I knew we had made a huge commitment. While conducting the rest of the training, I realized that the answers I had prayed for so desperately for a month were coming effortlessly. In the days that followed, I received information about a process that could free people in difficult relationships: practical steps that could help a person release core guilt from their past, especially guilt stemming from relationships with their mother and father, which invariably becomes the source of their present relational problems. While receiving the process, which we now call The Power of Clearing, I was given guidance on how to apply it to my own anguish regarding my ex and his girlfriend.

The Power of Clearing process which I received in prayer after my husband fell in love with this other younger woman, is a three part process in which you clear any and all suffering, mistaken beliefs, traumas, attack, defense in your life. The last two stages of the process are forgiveness exercises which confirm and affirm A Course in Miracles. The first stage of the power of clearing process goes into the old ego thoughts that a person is having at the time of their upset and then takes it to the original place in your history where the original thoughts, feelings, and beliefs came from. Sometimes it is just emotion that comes out during stage one, and sometimes you actually get back to the origin from where the pain came from when you were little. As the course in miracles says it is not necessary to go back to the original trauma to clear something from your past. Many people need an emotional tool to work with to sink their teeth into their feeling so that they can let it go. The clearing identifies the exact beliefs you are having, so it is the belief about yourself that you are actually clearing.

In the first stage of the clearing process, I come up with all of my ego’s projected thoughts, feelings and beliefs that are negatively impacting me. In this case, against my ex-husband and against this other woman. I felt all of my hatred. I felt I had been victimized. I felt I had been betrayed and abandoned. I used the structure that I received in the clearing process, which was a specific structure and formula for me to release everything and just be heard. For example, I said “What I want you to know Sven is that I feel that you promised me to tell me the truth and always be there honestly and I feel you have betrayed me now by being with this other woman and that makes me feel alone, just like I felt as a child when my father left me when I was six months old in the hospital and I was very ill and thought I would die. The person

holding the space would say “Thank you,” and they would be present with me without judging me, or agreeing with me; they merely offer compassionate support, so I would continue saying everything possible in my ego mind from my pain and suffering about this betrayal.

Another example of the first stage of the clearing was “What I want you to know Maria is I felt like you were trying to steal my husband from me behind my back, which made me feel betrayed, just like when my other friend when I was very small in school stole my best friend from me and they went off by themselves, leaving me out completely. I felt totally abandoned.”

I went on identifying and expressing these feelings and thoughts for at least another hour. Then I had completed the first stage of the clearing process. The second stage involves asking for forgiveness and the correction of misperceptions in regards to the ego’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs. You can only go to this stage when you have completely let go in stage one. The purpose of the first stage is to really clear the mind of unconscious guilt. I had felt guilty that this happened to me and that I “created” this in some way, just like victims of rape feel that they have created it in some way.

During the second stage of my clearing, I said “What I want you to forgive me for Sven is for feeling that you have betrayed and abandoned me, which makes me think there is something wrong with me and I’m not good enough in some way.” The coach then affirms with “Thank you. That is not the Truth. It’s a Story you made it up and you can let go of that anytime you want.” Then I went on to ask forgiveness from myself, saying things like “What I want you to forgive me for Sandy is for believing that you were rejected by your brother (who you gave everything to), which means you would always be rejected by the man you love.” I went on with step two for around twenty minutes, asking for forgiveness on all of the main issues that I identified in the first step. I mainly asked for forgiveness for the beliefs that I held against myself.

The third step is also a process of forgiveness, but in the third step, you remember your Eternal Truth and your True Nature. You also remember the Eternal Truth and True Nature of every person that you projected your feelings against. Whether you felt attacked or victimized, it doesn’t matter. It’s both the same thing. “What I want you to forgive me for Sven, is for forgetting that you and I will always be one. Thank you. That is the Truth. You and I will always be One. There is only Oneness and I love you. What I want you to forgive me for Sven is for forgetting that we’ll always be Joined. Thank you. That is the Truth. There is only Joining in Truth.”

Devoting myself to the process for three days gave me the ability to let go of any and all grievances against my husband, Sven, and his lover, Maria. In fact, I was so “clear” that Sven eventually called and asked me to help him and his girlfriend with some difficulties they had created for themselves.

After the Art of Surrender course was over, I conceived the method of helping people work through these kinds of relationships, which later became The Holy Relationship training, and then the 10-day Holy Relationship workshop. With Mats, magic began to happen in my life at an exponential rate because of our Holy Relationship purpose and union. During the months

and years that followed, more processes were revealed to us as we learned to use The Power of Clearing and ACIM. Since 1990, I've been privileged to see many of the men and women who meet in my seminars decide to marry.

Only today, I received the following testimonial from Elaine Clark and I have included it with her permission.

“Hi Sandy,

This is a great big thank you ! Doug and I got married in December as a celebration of 23 years of working on having a great relationship. That work never would have started if not for you. I am so very grateful that you cared enough about me to never give up - even when I wanted to. Of course our relationship is not perfect but it is fulfilling and peaceful as it never has been before. Love has won again!

It is my intention to teach other couples how to do this work of transforming a relationship from painful to peaceful.”

About the Author

Sandy Levey-Lunden is an international workshop leader, speaker, and counselor who has assisted over 30,000 people worldwide to transform their relationships and their lives. She created the Clearing Process™ based on *A Course in Miracles*. The Clearing Process™ is easy to learn and effective in helping individuals release whatever keeps them from experiencing the peace, love, and success which is their birthright. Sandy lives in Bellingham, WA. Her websites are www.SandyLevey.com and www.holyrelationship.com.