

Anticipate and Deal with Potential Hazards Before They Happen

By Robert Weiss, LCSW, CSAT-S, *“Out of the Doghouse: A Step-By Step Relationship-Saving Guide for Men Caught Cheating”*

The process of healing from infidelity does not always go smoothly. In fact, many former cheaters will relapse at least once or twice. When this occurs, the best they can do is admit what they’ve done and amend their future behavior.

With a bit of preparation, however, these setbacks can be avoided altogether, especially if you know the warning signs to keep an eye on.

The most common warning signs of a potential backslide are as follows [chart].

When you are faced with any of these warning signs, it is best to be honest about that right away with your therapist and/or an accountability partner. Talking about your temptations in this way will greatly reduce their power and the hold they have over you. The good news is that you needn’t share this with your spouse. In fact, she probably doesn’t want to know about the occasional wandering thought. She’s much more focused on the things you actually do.

<p>Overconfidence.</p> <p>“This is going really well. Maybe I have the problem licked and I can let my guard down.”</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Warning Signs of a Potential Backslide</p>	<p>Denial.</p> <p>“See, I can stop cheating any time I want. Now that I’ve proved this, I can look at and flirt with other women like a normal guy.”</p>
<p>Excuses.</p> <p>“I know that being alone with my computer is a danger zone, but I need to stay late at the office to finish this important project.”</p>		<p>Minimization.</p> <p>“I’m only looking at a little porn. It’s not like I’ve gone back to having affairs.”</p>
<p>Feeling Like a Victim.</p> <p>“I don’t understand why I have to deprive myself when everybody else can look at porn and have webcam sex without fear or problems.”</p>	<p>Ignoring Previously Agreed-Upon Guidelines.</p> <p>“I know that I promised my wife I wouldn’t look at porn or get on hookup apps, but what she doesn’t know can’t hurt her.”</p>	<p>Rationalizing.</p> <p>“It’s okay for me to sneak around a little when I’m traveling for work. My fidelity plan doesn’t count when I’m in a different state, right?”</p>
<p>Taking or Returning Calls, Texts, or E-mails from Former Cheating Partners.</p> <p>“I can’t help it if she won’t leave me alone, and it’s mean if I just ignore her. Anyway, what’s the harm in just chatting?”</p>	<p>Blame.</p> <p>“If my wife hadn’t gotten that new job that takes up so much of her time and energy, I wouldn’t feel the need to go online to socialize.”</p>	<p>Devaluating Feedback from Supportive Others.</p> <p>“The people in my therapy group just want to control me. The stuff they want me to do might work for them, but they don’t understand my situation.”</p>
<p>Feeling Entitled.</p> <p>“Nobody appreciates all the double duty I’ve been putting in at work. I deserve a little something just for me.”</p>	<p>Slippery Situations.</p> <p>“That Chinese restaurant across the street from where the prostitutes hang out is really good, so I’ll have lunch there.”</p>	<p>Isolation.</p> <p>“I can handle this on my own. I don’t need to go to therapy and I don’t need to be in constant contact with people who support what I’m trying to do.”</p>

