

The background image shows a woman's silhouette on the left, looking out over a field of lavender. The sun is setting in the background, creating a warm, golden glow. The lavender plants are in the foreground, slightly out of focus.

# HEALING BETRAYAL

a guide for  
women dealing  
with the trauma  
of sexual  
betrayal

A NEW LIFE EBOOK  
VOLUME 1



*"Give all your worries and cares  
to God, for he cares about you."*

*- 1 Peter 5:7*

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# You Are Not Alone.

AND YOU ARE SAFE HERE.

It's okay to not be okay. It can be confusing when you don't know why bad things can happen to you. That does not mean there's something wrong with you. It might be hard to hear, but 1 in 3 marriages in the United States experience at least one instance of infidelity. When someone discovers their partner has been unfaithful to them, it can be a confusing and emotional time. Betrayal trauma happens when trust or well-being has been violated in a relationship. Is there any hope of healing from betrayal trauma? Yes. Healing is possible—even if your marriage or relationship can't be healed, it's never too late for you to heal.





*"Then your salvation will come like the dawn, and your wounds will quickly heal."*

Isaiah 58:8

## STEP 1

# Spot the Symptoms of Betrayal Trauma.

Being betrayed by your husband can cause a person to experience mental and physical health struggles such as:

- PTSD
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Nightmares
- Stomach distress
- Low self-worth
- Insomnia

The road to healing can be difficult and long, but it's worth doing the work so you can experience the power of God's love over your life. It's essential to learn that the trauma from the betrayal doesn't have to fill you with lies that you are not good enough, beautiful enough, or strong enough.

Addressing the wound is important for the work you are doing on yourself.

If not addressed early on, the struggles you are facing are only going to get more and more difficult to handle.

We know it's not fair because you didn't ask to be

betrayed, but when you walk through suffering, talk about it, seek support for it, and acknowledge what's happened to you, God can begin to heal your wounds and bring you out on the other side.

There are steps you can begin taking to help with your healing process. We'll be covering that in this eBook. If, along the way, it becomes too much for you then pause and feel your emotions in the moments. It's important to check in with yourself to feel seen, heard, and understood by you.

## Prayer for healing:

“Lord, I am not what has happened to me. You are with me right now in the pain of my suffering. I invite you into this moment I am in right now. Let your love pour over me. Cover my fresh wounds and help make me whole again. Have your way, Lord. In Jesus name, Amen.

# | Let's Continue..

STEP 2

MAKE SURE TO SET

BOUNDARIES



FOR YOU.



REALIZE THAT SETTING BOUNDARIES DOES  
NOT MAKE YOU THE BAD PERSON.

After a person is betrayed by their spouse, they may feel guilty or even bad when they set boundaries. Boundaries are not meant to punish the guilty spouse but to keep the innocent spouse safe. The sooner you realize setting boundaries doesn't make you the bad person, the sooner you will begin to heal. When it comes to establishing boundaries, there are three things to keep in mind:

***First, boundaries are to protect you.***

They are something you put into place to protect yourself from unnecessary hurt, pain, and anxiety. Think of them as a guardrail or fence around your heart and mind. Keep in mind that boundaries are not walls; rather, they are more like a fence with a gate. A boundary keeps the bad out and lets the good in.

***Second, boundaries require that you find***

***your voice.*** Start by using "I" statements. For example, you can say "I feel..." or "I need..." Make it clear that you are establishing a boundary by telling him that it is for "my safety and security" and "this is what I need." Try to be as concise as possible. And use a deadline if necessary.

***Third, boundaries aren't easy.***

Establishing boundaries will not make your spouse change. After all, choosing to change is between him and God. What if he repeatedly chooses not to respect your boundaries? A Counselor can help you navigate setting boundaries.

# Build up your self-esteem.

## STEP 3



One of the worst casualties of betrayal in marriage is when the betrayed partner's confidence and self-esteem take a big hit. The good news is that self-worth can be built up again. Start by taking thoughts captive (see 2 Corinthians 10:5). Be willing to look at all negative thoughts about yourself and discard any that don't align with God's Word. Getting rid of negative thoughts will make it easier to express your feelings to your spouse and ask for what you need.

**Take a moment and  
say this out loud:  
I am loved.  
I am enough.  
I am adored.  
I matter.  
I am worthy.**

Say this as many times as you  
need to believe it.

# Feel your emotions.

STEP 4



Emotions don't go away if they are ignored, suppressed, or numbed. Here's an exercise to try: Keep a Feelings Word List handy (See pg. 13).

When it is difficult to name an emotion, keep a Feeling Words List to help pinpoint your feelings. Putting a name to the emotion you are experiencing makes it easier to express your feelings to your spouse and ask for what you need.

# Feeling Words List

God gave each of us emotions, but knowing how to talk about them can be complicated and confusing for us. In many cases, most of us don't know or understand what words to use when describing how we feel. So, this Feelings Word List is a helpful word-reference guide to accurately describe feelings and emotions.

When it is difficult to name an emotion, look at this list below to help pinpoint your feelings. By putting a name to the emotion that you are experiencing, it will be easier for you to express your feelings to others and ask for what you need in a relationship.

## • Happy

Accepted, amused, appreciative, attentive, cheerful, courageous, delighted, ecstatic, elated, encouraged, fulfilled, grateful, hopeful, important, intimate, joyful, liberated, loving, optimistic, peaceful, playful, pleased, proud, relieved, respected, satisfied, secure, thrilled

## • Sad

Abandoned, alone, apathetic, blue, bored, burdened, crushed, dejected, despair, depressed, detached, devastated, disinterested, empty, forgotten, gloomy, grief-stricken, grieved, heartbroken, heavy, hopeless, ignored, indifferent, isolated, lonely, melancholy, miserable, neglected, outcast, pessimistic, powerless, somber, unhappy, victimized, weepy

## • Disgust

Abhorrent, ashamed, aversion, awful, avoidant, contempt, detestable, disappointed, disillusioned, distrustful, embarrassed, guilty, hesitant, incompetent, inept, judgmental, let down, loathe, repugnant, revolting, revulsed, stupid, timid, ugly, unacceptable

## • Fear

Afraid, alienated, anxious, apprehensive, cautious, distracted, distressed, frightened, hypervigilant, inadequate, indecisive, insecure, insignificant, jilted, nauseated, nervous, overwhelmed, panicky, rejected, scared, tense, terrified, uneasy, unsure, worried

## • Anger

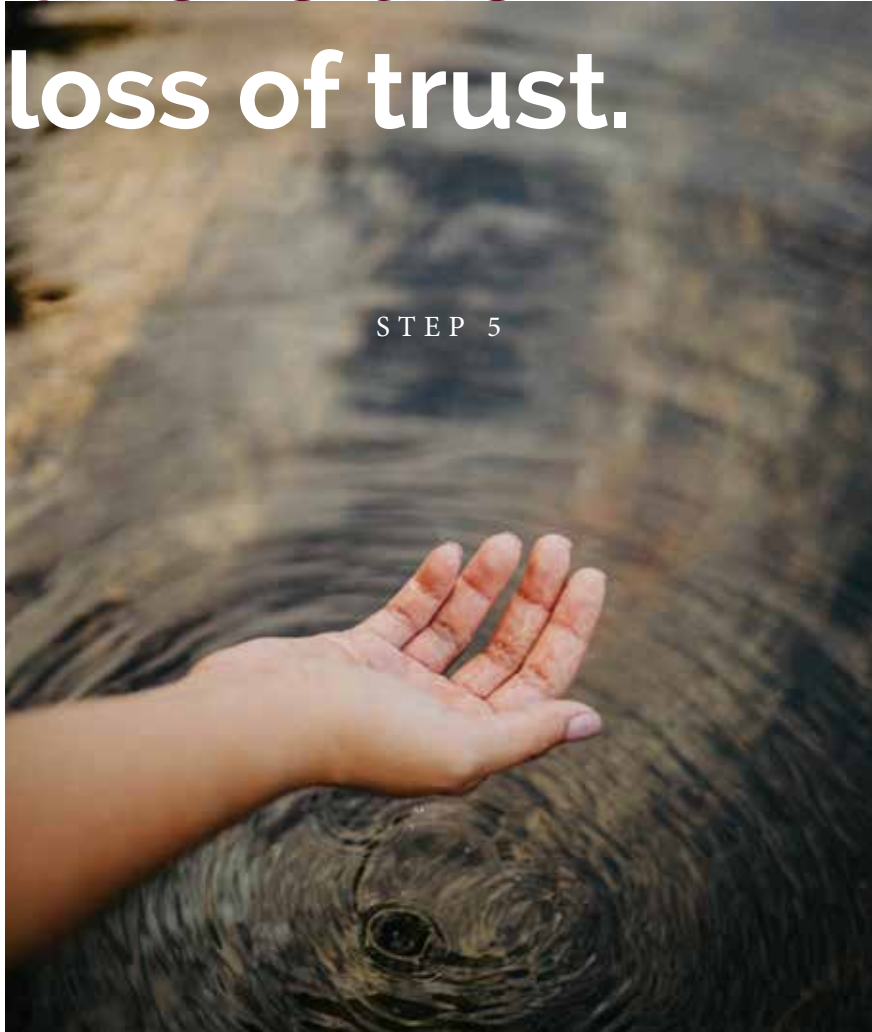
Accused, aggravated, annoyed, bitter, cold, concerned, contentious, controlled, critical, crushed, defensive, devastated, distant, embarrassed, enraged, exposed, frustrated, furious, grouchy, grumpy, hateful, hostile, hurt, icy, incensed, indignant, infuriated, insulted, irritated, jaded, jealous, livid, mad, manipulated, offended, provoked, rage, rebellious, resentful, riled, sarcastic, scolding, scornful, skeptical, slighted, snapped, suspicious, testy, threatened, used, vengeful, violated, vulnerable, withdrawn

## • Surprise

Amazed, astonished, curious, blown away, confused, dazzled, disconcerted, dumbfounded, delighted, eager, enchanted, energetic, enthusiastic, excited, horrified, impressed, in awe, inquisitive, mystified, perplexed, rattled, shocked, startled, stunned

# Grieve the loss of trust.

## STEP 5



One of the most critical steps to healing betrayal trauma is to grieve the loss of trust. It's okay to cry, be angry, be confused, and feel sad about the losses experienced. By grieving the losses your spouse's betrayal caused, you validate the severity of your spouse's actions. This will help you begin to heal more authentically.

# 8 Principles for Rebuilding Trust

**1. I will give myself permission to NOT trust my husband.**

Giving yourself grace takes the pressure off and helps you wait to see what your husband will do. *"Putting confidence in an unreliable person in times of trouble is like chewing with a broken tooth or walking on a lame foot"* (Prov. 25:19).

**2. I will embrace the fact that forgiveness doesn't mean I feel trust but rather forgiveness is one component that prepares my heart to trust again.**

Forgiveness is a choice—it sets you free. *"Forgive, and you will be forgiven"* (Lk. 6:37).

**3. I will allow myself to have boundaries in the bedroom.**

You won't save your husband from addiction by doing something you don't want to do sexually. *"Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one"* (Matt. 5:37).

**4. I have the right to protect myself.**

Protecting yourself will allow you to heal; setting boundaries will help. *"For when a strong man is fully armed and guards his palace, his possessions are safe"* (Lk. 11:21).

**5. I will be aware that triggers have the potential to erode trust.**

Don't let your emotions control you. But if you do feel triggered, don't let it destroy the trust that is in the process of being rebuilt. *"A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls"* (Pr. 25:28).

**6. I will surrender my husband and his process to God.**

Realize you can't change your husband, but God can change him. *"Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God"* (Mk. 10:27).

**7. I will work toward surrendering my process to God (and wait on His timing).**

Begin the process of waiting on God and trust Him to fulfill the desires of your heart. *"Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires"* (Ps. 37:4).

**8. I will acknowledge that God is trustworthy above all and work toward trusting in Him.**

It may seem like there's nothing to be grateful for, but choose gratitude for what God is doing in your life. *"Those who trust in me will never be put to shame"* (Is. 49:23).

# Take Care of Yourself.

## STEP 6



Part of healing is for the betrayed partner to learn to take care of themselves physically and emotionally. Start small by exercising gradually each day by taking small walks. Then, increase exercising each day to at least 30 minutes. In addition, eat healthy foods. And make sure to take time to get enough sleep at night. If the stress of living with an unfaithful partner is too much to handle, consider separation for a while. Separation from an unfaithful spouse can give some much-needed emotional and physical relief.



# Practice Self-Care

Taking care of yourself may be the last thing on your mind right now. However, it's necessary if you want to heal.

Here are some examples of practicing self-care:

- Having healthy self-talk.
- Taking a warm bath.
- Getting out.
- Snuggling on the couch with your kids.
- Praying.
- Getting coffee with a friend.
- Hiring a housekeeper.
- Spending a few minutes in silence.

# Be willing to wait to trust your spouse until they're trustworthy.

STEP 7



Actions speak louder than words. So, an unfaithful spouse must earn trust back by seeing a licensed counselor, understanding what led them to be unfaithful, and making amends. Ultimately, only you can decide whether to trust again. Seeing a counselor for help knowing whether an unfaithful spouse can be trusted again can be the best next step. On the next page, you'll find some steps the unfaithful spouse can take when trust needs rebuilding.

# For Your Spouse: Steps they can take when trust needs to be rebuilt.

## **1. A Sincere Confession of Truth.**

Let's use an affair as an example. Regardless of how the spouse finds out, healing begins when the betrayer confesses the whole truth. The whole truth does not mean every intimate detail—that puts too much of a burden on the shoulders of the betrayed spouse. The rule of thumb on how much to confess is this: If I want to seriously rebuild trust with my spouse, I confess anything that, if it were to be found out later, would undermine the rebuilding of trust. It is better if the whole truth comes out at one time, not in dribs and drabs. Otherwise, each new revelation may feel like an additional wound to the offended spouse.

## **2. Complete Openness on the Part of the Betrayer.**

This is an essential part of the healing process. The spouse who has had an affair has given up control of their life at least for as long as it takes to rebuild trust. He or she gives up control by becoming an open book to their spouse. No secrets allowed. Cell phones, passwords, email, travel itineraries, their whereabouts at any given time, complete accessibility—all of these are part of our becoming open to our spouse about all aspects of our life. Anything less than complete openness restricts the rebuilding of trust. The principle is one of complete openness. There can be nothing that remains hidden or beyond reach; otherwise, when it is found out, and it will be, it will destroy the trust that was re-established. And the second time trust is breached is more serious. There is the old adage that says, "Fool

me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me." Few marriages can survive the "fool me twice" syndrome.

## **3. There Must be Genuine Sorrow on the Part of the Betrayer.**

This also is a key to rebuilding trust. Without it, it's like building a brick wall without cement. The goal of rebuilding trust is that at some point there is genuine sorrow on the part of the one who lived the lie, and genuine forgiveness on the part of the one betrayed. Without both of these conditions, marital reconciliation is going to be very superficial and very unsatisfying to both parties. Again, the principle is the same, even for the little lie of omission, or the little white lie.

## **4. Rebuilding Trust Takes Time and Patience.**

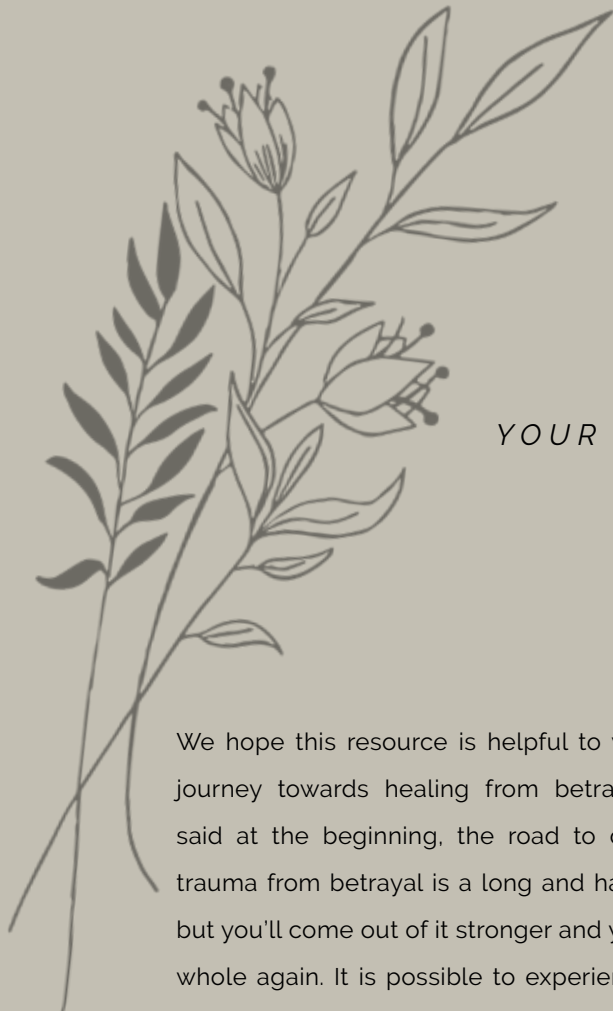
The rebuilding of trust always takes time. The more serious the offense, the more time it will take for it to repair it. A small lie of omission may take a couple of days, whereas an affair may take a year or two to get to level ground again. So rebuilding means both the offender and offended need to be patient with the process. Both also need to realize that in the process, there will be good days and bad days, ups and downs. You should expect some setbacks along the way.

The 4 Steps provided by Drs. Dave and Jan Stoop

FOR YOU.



Don't forget..  
I am loved.  
I am enough.  
I am adored.  
I matter.  
I am worthy.



## YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT.

We hope this resource is helpful to you in your journey towards healing from betrayal. As we said at the beginning, the road to overcoming trauma from betrayal is a long and hard journey, but you'll come out of it stronger and you will feel whole again. It is possible to experience trust in your marriage again, but it takes work from both of you. If you want to continue in your healing journey, we invite you attend Restore. Restore is an intensive specifically designed to help women whose hearts have been shattered by sexual betrayal in their marriage. At this intensive, you will find hope and acceptance from other women who also may feel alone, filled with shame, anger, and worthlessness. We've seen though, time and time again that once they arrive, they discover the support of other women of all kinds and ages who are also struggling. Come to Restore, and you'll feel safe to open up and share.

***Restore is the place where you realize you are not alone. Restoration is possible - if not for your marriage, for you.***



[Learn More](#)

What others have said about Restore:

"It was VERY helpful and honestly amazing! I took notes on everything I could. I have the workbook and there was so much more to learn as the ladies expounded on the topics." - Dori

"The group breakouts were freeing because I was with other women who were hurting like me. I encourage all women who are going through this to attend this workshop. You won't regret it!" - Monica

"This workshop helped me see that I am not the problem. That my husband's choices are not my fault. I am not all of the horrible things I think of myself." - Angelita

"I came alone and broken. I had no hope. I had tremendous fear, anxiety and nightmares. I had no tools and no idea what my future held. I'm going home with tools, a plan and hope!" - Deb

"The degree of acceptance and non-judgmental love that I received from the staff as I arrived for this weekend opened the door of receptivity in my soul."- Sarah

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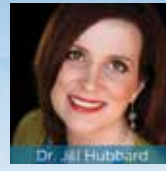


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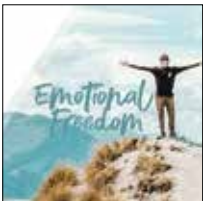
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This curriculum is designed to help you make changes in your life and overcome addiction. Whether you prefer a traditional recovery experience in a formal setting or a small group in your church or home, this program can help you achieve your goals. To find a group, visit [liferecoverygroups.com](http://liferecoverygroups.com).



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### DRUG & ALCOHOL REHABILITATION

If you or someone you love is struggling with addiction, we can help break the bondage of dependency. Our Christian treatment program addresses the practical, physical, and spiritual aspects of addiction, setting the stage for long-term recovery.

**For additional information or help in any way call 800-NEW-LIFE (639-5433)**