

Relationship Advice: Does Time Apart Heal Betrayal?



By Dr. Jane Greer

Tiger Woods opened up about his relationship with ex-wife Elin Nordegren this week. The couple ended their [celebrity relationship](#) and marriage in 2010 after Tiger's cheating scandal, but now they have managed to build an amicable friendship. With time, Elin seems to have gotten past the betrayal of her ex-husband's infidelity, which is a challenge for many couples. Tiger and Elin share two children, so this must be a welcome development for all of them.

While some couples are able to find higher ground and continue to make their marriage work after an affair, others realize that the intensity of the pain of the incident is just too much and that they are better apart, as was the case for Elin and Tiger.

Either way, initially there can be so much anger that it takes effort to not drag the children into it. This can be especially difficult if the spouses have parted and find themselves alone. The one who was betrayed feels that their whole world is turned upside down, and wants to get back at the person who did this to them and caused so much unhappiness. It is tempting to say terrible things about them to the people who are closest to you – your kids. The natural inclination is to want to get them on your side and have them take up arms against the person who caused this upheaval. The impulse to have the children understand what you are going through and why can be powerful.

How, then, can you avoid this urge, and instead let them know they still have two solid parents they can continue to depend on? How can you protect them from your own fury, and the negative energy that is coming from both sides, while navigating your way to a place of, if not forgiveness, at least of tolerance and understanding? How can you lead them to a solid foundation of security so that even if there is trouble between parents, they know they can count on the fact that both mom and dad will continue to be stable forces in their lives?

Consider this [relationship advice](#). To begin with, understand that they are not the ones who should be supporting you through this. They need your support, so the goal is to try not to burden them with your rage. Of course, that is easier said than done. The first step is to find an outlet elsewhere because you will need to talk about it, and choosing people other than your kids to unload on is a great start. You can find solace and confide in anyone from a therapist or counselor to friends and other family members. Work to insulate your children so they don't have to go through the raw emotion that you are going through. Steer clear of sharing the bad things your spouse did to you with the kids as much as you can. Finally, give yourself time which will hopefully lessen the sharpness of the betrayal, and eventually allow you to share at least a cordial relationship.

The hope is to find a way to provide a harmonious family environment despite the rift in your marriage. When both parents can come back together and share an affable connection, as Elin and Tiger have done, this can become easier to do. The distance between Tiger and Elin may have been just what they needed to move past their relationship as lovers, then fighters, and eventually continue forward in a solid friendship.

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