**Should I pick up the pieces or throw in the towel? Part 3 –** [Shirley Glass](https://amzn.to/3AnCgyH)

* Guilt or Duty? – Would you be staying out of a sense of guilt or duty? If the only thing that holds you now is a sense of obligation or duty, that’s an OK place to start but not an OK place to end. If you feel stuck in your relationship because of financial pressures or religious/cultural barriers to divorce, you are signing up for an empty-shell relationship. Your obligation should be to enhance your marriage/relationship so that good comes out of the suffering you’re now in.
* For the Children – Would you be staying only for the sake of the children rather than for the relationship itself? Research indicates that many children of divorced parents experience negative effects throughout their adult lives. Nevertheless marriage as martyrdom is a poor role model for your children’s future relationships. Don’t dedicate yourself to a life of misery. If you’re staying only because of the children, then start connecting to your partner through family activities, but don’t let that be the end point. Ultimately your children will benefit from parents who show them how to be a loving couple.
* A New Perspective – You might be noticing certain traits in your partner now that attract you or repel you before the current crisis or affair occurred. You may make your decision according to how they behaved in the aftermath of the disclosure, rather than basing it solely on the crisis/infidelity itself. Couples tend to cope with crises using the same patterns of interaction that have characterised the relationship. Individuals who have been mostly self-serving may appear more entitled than ever before. Their narcissism becomes so unmistakable that it’s hard to continue to like them enough to stay. On the other hand, compassion & sensitivity that may have been taken for granted before can now be seen as a strong reason not to leave.
* Repair Work – Leaving a bad committed relationship without trying to repair it first is like trying to sell your house right after a rainstorm flooded your lounge room. Once you have finished cleaning & redecorating you might decide not to put it up for sale. If you leave your committed relationship when you’re feeling devastated, depleted & demoralised, you’ll always wonder whether you made the right choice. Fix it up first & you’ll have a better idea of how the finished product suits you.
* Strength or Weakness – Don’t stay because you are too weak to end it & too afraid to be on your own. Stay because you are strong enough to handle the emotional roller coaster. Stay because you are independent enough to take care of yourself while your partner isn’t able to be there for you. Don’t leave because you’re running away from conflict. Leave because you’ve done everything possible for many months & there’s absolutely no sign of progress.
* Reality Check – For most people, leaving a marriage or committed relationship is not the best answer. People tend to carry their psychological problems with them to the next relationship. Old, destructive patterns are perpetuated unless you deal with them, plus second marriages may have the added strain of blended families & stepchildren. Statistically, there is a 50% divorce rate in first marriages & a 60% divorce rate in second marriages. If you marry/commit to your affair partner, the probability that it will work out is even worse than the divorce statistics in second marriages (unless you’re committing to an old flame from your youth. The statistics in these cases are very positive for relationship success). Relationships that began through betrayal & broken trust end up having their own problems with trust.