



# The Infidelity Recovery Institute

## Your Rituals

The strength of a friendship often can be measured in its rituals—those regularly occurring practices that each party anticipates and participates in. Rituals range from the simple (coffee at a certain time of day in a special place or way) to the complex (an annual vacation or tradition).

Believe me, the infidel and the partner either had a set of rituals or were quickly developing them when disclosure took place. All friendships have them. Your dating relationship and early marriage had rituals as well, but sadly, they have been set aside for supposed "utilitarian purposes" (e.g., because of hectic schedules, finances, schooling, lack of energy).

Use the space below to privately recall and record rituals in your personal and joint history. Do not confuse rituals with traditions that are associated with holidays or significant calendar events. Rituals are built around the people involved and the event, not things, such as a certain way to decorate the Christmas tree. They are habits, such as the wife always hugging her girlfriend hello and good-bye, or the husband (and wife) using little pet names for the spouse, or phrases that are unique between the two and that make you feel warm inside.

You began to learn this ritual behavior in childhood friendships and family relationships, then transferred it to your love in adulthood. We will see that in this homework exercise.

What rituals did I develop . . .

*... with childhood friends (elementary age)?*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*... with family members?*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*... with adolescent friends?*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |



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*...at college age and dating?*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*...dating my spouse-to-be?*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*... early marriage*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*What rituals were initiated and practiced for a brief period, but now have been abandoned? ("Remember how we used to...?")*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*What rituals do you currently practice? (These might be difficult to identify because they have become so habitual, but dig—you can find them.)*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

New rituals I would like to see us develop: Daily:



*Daily:*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*Weekly:*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*Monthly:*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

*Yearly:*

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 6. _____ |

## ***Monologue***

After writing out the overview of your rituals, share your thoughts with your spouse in a monologue first. Ask for feedback at the end.