

# IS CHEATING A MALE PRIVILEGE?

by Innocentia Gaoes • photograph Shutterstock

**GARY NEUMAN IS A RABBI, LICENSED FAMILY COUNSELLOR, FLORIDA SUPREME COURT-CERTIFIED FAMILY MEDIATOR, AND FOUNDER OF THE SANDCASTLES PROGRAMME INC., A NATIONWIDE DIVORCE THERAPY PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN. NEUMAN'S PROGRAMME IS ABOUT EMPOWERING WOMEN AND THIS ARTICLE IS ABOUT ENCOURAGING MEN TO EXPRESS THEIR FEARS AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS.**

There was not much difference in the responses Sister got after interviewing a couple of men randomly around Windhoek as most of them were similar to what Neuman found in his study.

A high number of them said women are under the wrong impression that all men need is sex to be satisfied in a relationship. Worries, stress, lack of communication, feeling unappreciated, emotional disconnection and insecurity were of the main reasons given as to why men cheat.

"She might be the best in bed but if she is not supportive emotionally, it leaves room to go find that emotional support somewhere else,"

said Katchi, a civil engineering student at the Polytechnic of Namibia (Poly).

Katchi said he observed that women hide their emotions and true opinions behind "I'm okay". Their behaviour otherwise suggests something is bothering them. But nothing can be done about whatever it may be that is causing her unhappiness unless she communicates. This unwillingness to share her needs and concerns in turn makes it difficult for the guy to express his own unhappiness. Pretending that everything is fine then becomes the norm until the bombshell drops one day and the relationship is over for seemingly no reason. If women expect men to read their minds then it is time they realise men are not mind-readers.

But then there are also those factors that have little to do with a lack of communication or emotional support.

How women stop taking care of themselves and looking attractive once they have settled in a relationship is viewed as problematic. Men are not expecting women to walk around like models all day long, but there seems to be a significant "letting

go" with some partners.

Also problematic is when the excitement dies in a relationship and it becomes a chore. "Women should make an effort in the relationship, they should be spontaneous and not let the excitement die. I am not saying only women should do that but both parties need to bring their side,"

Shaeto added.

Another man who preferred to remain anonymous said some women allow themselves to be cheated on. With red flags ablaze these women insist on staying put. "Once a man sees that his girl will go nowhere and easily forgive him after cheating, he will continue to



## Research done by counsellor M. Gary Neuman who surveyed 200 cheating and non-cheating husbands shows that 48% of men (96 out of the 200) rated emotional dissatisfaction as the primary reason why they cheated or would cheat.

cheat on her". He mentioned the example of a friend of his where the guy embarrasses his girlfriend by flirting with other women, taking their numbers and actually dating them for a while. The girlfriend forgives and remains. What foolish lies does she tell herself to make his behaviour acceptable?

While it is difficult to understand such behaviour in women, there are other women who invite no respect from men because they seem to have none for themselves. Jackson Nakaambo a third year Economics student at Poly, said, "Some women

are in a relationship with a man for over six months but do not even know anything about the guy's family background, which village he comes from, etc. She only knew his name, sometimes even only his nickname and yet she was willing to jump into bed with him. What kind of behaviour is that?" His advice was that girls should learn to ask questions especially on the first few dates. Don't go out there just to get a boyfriend. Ask questions, use your judgment and first figure out what kind of man you are dealing with" said Nakaambo.

He added that men will always be men and at the start of most relationships most men are just interested in the sex. "Often I don't want to get into a relationship because of love, I just want sex," Nakaambo admitted. So women should be wise. They have heard this from their heartbroken girlfriends. Now they are hearing it from guys. Being naïve and believing in fairy tales will get you hurt, ladies.

John (not his real name) said he has been married for over 10 years and even though he has cheated before, he never gave his wife any reason to be suspicious. He cheated because the excitement in the bedroom died after the birth of their child. His wife would always complain about being tired and postpone sex which became a regular thing. So when another woman started showing interest in him he could not resist but go for it. He quickly say that he did not cheat because he stopped loving his wife or wanted to disrespect her. "Strangely", John added, "after my brief affair I realised how much I appreciate and love my wife". He saw what looked like a better deal outside the home was nothing other than sex and he did not want to lose what he had.

"Most of the married men I know who cheat, do not take off their ring or lie to the mistress that they are not married. The mistress already knows that the wife and kids are back at home but she still

goes ahead and agrees to enter the relationship," John said.

Michael (also not his real name) came to Namibia with work and he spent about a year without his spouse in the country. During that time he met a Namibian woman whom he started seeing. "When I told her that I had a family, she was still willing to continue the relationship, saying she will know her place when my family joins me in Namibia".

One of the most profound responses came from Mandela, "men cheat because women are available".

Then there is the guy who simply cannot resist women despite the wonderful woman he is with. There is no help for such men. They just want what they want and are not interested in any alternatives. They believe cheating is a man's right. They even believe if they married you, have children with you and provide for the household you should not nag them. Their understanding of being a man is to remain a hunter. End of story.

The overall message the men interviewed want women to get is this: Not all men are cheaters, so don't be so suspicious and full of accusations that you turn your man into a cheater. Take every relationship on an individual basis. Be on the lookout for assholes so you don't judge the next decent guy that comes along for the cheating ways of the previous one. ♀

