

## **Withholding the Truth?**

Your friend is cheating on their significant other, someone you know. You recently caught your friend on a date with someone else, and you notice them holding hands. After the date leaves, you approached your friend and confronted them about it. They begged you to keep it a secret as they really like their significant other, but just wanted to try dating someone else to see if they really like their partner enough to stay in an exclusive relationship with them. You are unsure of what to do and tell your friend you'll think about it. Do you tell the significant other, or do you stay loyal to your friend and keep their secret?

Some people believe that telling the truth no matter what is a vital part of human character. They argue that "you should put yourself in someone else's shoes" and say that it's not fair to the significant other to withhold this information. They would ask, "How would you feel if you were the significant other in this situation?" An exclusive relationship does not allow for multiple partners. Failing to tell your friend's partner makes you complicit in your friend's lie. As a practical matter, some might argue that by failing to share this information with your friend's partner is just delaying the inevitability of this information coming out and when it does, your friend's partner will see you as someone who kept this information from them.

Others argue that loyalty to a friend is the most important factor in this situation. The relationship doesn't involve you and is a private matter between the couple. Your friend has asked you to keep this secret, and to do otherwise would demonstrate a lack of respect towards them. The friendship you have built is based on trust, and that trust would be broken if you don't respect your friend's request that you keep their secret. You may not know everything about your friend's relationship or why your friend would cheat in the first place. Some might argue that it is not your responsibility to ensure that your friend's relationship is going well; although you can give advice, is it not your place to step in and disrupt the relationship.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Should you always keep your friends' secrets? Are there times when loyalty to a friend is outweighed by other considerations?
2. Are there times when a friend's behavior obligates you to act?
3. Do people who cheat on their partners deserve to be exposed?