

# The North Fulton Marriage Newsletter

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## Triple Bogey

I was struggling to think of a newsletter topic for December until, unfortunately, an opportunity presented itself this week. Tiger Woods. Wow. I've been a big fan of Tiger throughout his career, and honestly I have really admired him. He just appears to have a mental toughness that is second to none. His ability to focus under ridiculous pressure is well documented. This newsletter will not come off as judgmental toward Tiger. He is human, but there are lessons to be learned from the mistakes he has apparently made. In case you have not heard, Tiger wrecked his car outside his house after an apparent domestic dispute with his wife, and at this time it appears he is admitting to having been unfaithful to his wife and his children. In short, it is ugly. At the very least we can learn again what we should already know: Money can't buy happiness. Tiger has more money than most can imagine and yet it appears he was/is very unhappy with his personal life. He is married to a former Swedish model who also worked as a professional nanny, and together they have two very young children. Last year I wrote a newsletter entitled "Looks are Deceiving." Seems to ring true, eh? On the outside, Tiger appeared to have it all together but looks were truly deceiving. A female counseling colleague of mine, who is also the daughter of a counselor, once told me something that I will never forget. Her father very wisely cautioned her that no one is immune from having an affair. Even the best, brightest, well-rounded, spiritually grounded folks can be subject to giving into temptation. This is very sage advice. When folks become vulnerable, that is to say unhappy, depressed, stressed out or over-burdened, their relationships can suffer and their vulnerabilities can become exposed. This in NO way excuses cheating or having an affair—everyone has free will to make decisions, even bad ones. But, please understand that you must be aware of your own state of mind and emotional well-being and take preventative steps to improve your life and marriage before seeking out someone else to soothe your unhappiness.

I believe the other lesson here is that our relationship with our spouse is the most intensely emotional relationship we have, and therefore sometimes the most difficult relationship to manage. Tiger is a cool cat (pun intended) but even he, with all the money, resources and support one could ask for, is struggling with his most intimate relationship. When I was in graduate school my interpersonal skills professor (yes we took a class on interpersonal skills) used to tell us that if relationships with coworkers, friends or acquaintances are the "minor leagues" of interpersonal relationships, then our relationship with our spouse is the "major leagues" of interpersonal relationships. So, when you argue or have disputes with your spouse, cut yourself some slack. Intense emotions are quite natural.

My hope for Tiger, and anyone else in a similar position, is that he learns from the trauma he is putting his family through, repairs his relationship with his wife and begins to focus on raising their two beautiful children. All is not lost, lessons can be learned, and forgiveness can be found. This, in my mind, is the season of both giving and *forgiving*. May you have the opportunity to do both these next few weeks.

Merry Christmas!

John H. Pruett, Jr., MS, EdS, NCC, LPC  
Founder & Owner  
Georgia Professional Counseling Center, Inc.  
**Locations in Alpharetta & Peachtree City**

*Georgia Professional Counseling Center, Inc.*  
602 Abbey Court, Alpharetta, GA 30004  
[www.licensedtherapy.com](http://www.licensedtherapy.com)  
Phone: 770-656-9711