

# Ep # 111: The Price of Convenience



**Full Episode Transcript**

**With Your Host**

**Dr. Marie Murphy**

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Hi everyone, I'm Dr. Marie Murphy. I'm a relationship coach, and I help people who are engaging in anything they think counts as infidelity to deal with their feelings, clarify what they want, and make decisions about what they're going to do. No shame, no blame, no judgements. If you are in the midst of an infidelity situation, and you would like my help sorting it out, let's work together. You can learn about the current coaching packages I offer on the services page of my website, [mariemurphyphd.com/services](http://mariemurphyphd.com/services), and you can schedule an introductory coaching session with me through my website, too. [Mariemurphyphd.com](http://Mariemurphyphd.com). I offer confidential, compassionate coaching via Zoom, which means we can work together no matter where you're located.

Okay people, today we are going to talk about convenience and comfort, and what can happen when we prioritize convenience and comfort above other things. Concerns related to convenience and comfort – or a lack of convenience and comfort – come up a LOT in my work with clients, and this is a topic I've had on my list of things I want to talk about on the podcast for a long time.

Before I talk about the specific ways that convenience and comfort can become relevant to infidelity situations, I want to say a few things about convenience and comfort in general. First and foremost, comfort can mean a lot of different things. Usually when I talk about comfort on this podcast, I'm talking about DIScomfort, and I'm talking about emotional discomfort. Today, I'm talking about comfort primarily in terms of how easy or pleasant we find we find our life circumstances. There's an emotional component to that, of course, and there's so much I could say about that, but for the sake of not getting too far into the weeds I'm going to just say that today when I talk about comfort, I'm talking about the benefit we get from having our lives organized in a way that we find convenient and pleasant.

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Now the second thing general thing I want to say is that convenience and comfort can be GREAT.

As the title of this episode indicates, I am going to suggest that convenience and comfort may come at a price, but that does not mean that I think convenience or comfort are categorically bad, or unimportant. Far from it. If you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you may have heard me mention that I served in the Peace Corps in Zambia. And for part of my service, I lived in a rural village, and I did not have running water, and I certainly did not have washing machine, but I did have clothes that I needed to wash. And so for a while, in order to wash my clothes, I had to get water from a well, carry that water to my house, put the water in a bucket, and then wash and rinse my clothes by hand, and wring them out, and hang them up to dry. And even in the context of being a Peace Corps Volunteer who lived in a rural village, that whole set of tasks totally sucked. I absolutely hated it. And I eventually relieved myself of that inconvenience, by getting someone to wash my clothes for me, which was a dramatic lifestyle upgrade. Even in that context, when I had more than enough TIME to get water from a well, wash and rinse my clothes, wring them out and hang them up, I still didn't want to do it. I much preferred the convenience of paying someone to wash my clothes for me. And although these days, I do my own laundry, I do it in the washer and dryer that are right here in my home, and although I do THAT for myself, there are a lot of household things that I don't do. I pay someone to clean my home. Ain't no way I'm ever vacuuming again. I fucking hate vacuuming, and moreover, not having to vacuum allows me more time to do other things that are really important to me. Like working with my clients. Like creating this podcast. Like having real time off from work to rest my body and my brain and my spirit.

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I'm saying all of this just to make it clear that I think convenience is great. And in fact, I want even more convenience and comfort in my life than I currently have.

Let me tell you that if I could afford to fly private, I totally would. And that's really saying something, because I am very aware of the environmental impact of air travel in general and private air travel in particular, and even if I bought all the wind credits or whatever to help offset the carbon footprint of flying private, I would still feel guilty about it. But I would probably do it anyway, because I really, really value being about to get from point A to point B as conveniently and comfortably as possible. That matters to me more and more, even though a younger version of myself might be horrified by this. As much as I sort of wish I were as tough as I used to be when it comes to weathering the discomforts and inconvenience of traveling, I'm just not. And I'm at a point where I much prefer working with myself than against myself.

All of this is to say that I'm not a militant ascetic hell-bent on taking your comforts and conveniences away from you. I'm not going to make the argument that comfort and convenience don't have any purpose or benefit.

But there is a but, of course. And here it comes. When we over-value convenience and comfort, we may lose out on other things. And those other things may be more important, or more valuable than convenience and comfort.

For example, when we prioritize convenience and comfort, we may miss out on opportunities for growth and transformation. Sometime we can grow within the context of convenience and comfort. But some of our growth and

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evolution may require us to be willing to deal with a lot of inconvenience and discomfort. Sometimes in order to make our lives better, we have to be willing to go through a period of un-better.

Sometimes we have to go through a lot of inconvenience or discomfort in order to get into a state of greater alignment with ourselves. Or to live in a way that's more true to who we are, or more appropriate to who we have become and are becoming. And it's worth thinking about what it's worth to you to live in a way that's authentic, or in alignment for who you know yourself to be. And I have to admit that I kind of hate this kind of language. I have a real problem with the word "authentic," but I'll save that rant for another day. I'm using the word now because I know it IS a word that a lot of people find meaningful, and that's fair enough. You can love that word even if I don't. Whether you love it or not, being true to yourself, or honest with yourself, or "authentic" in how you are living, it's probably going to entail doing some things you find really inconvenient at times.

When I work with people who are married and are involved with someone else, the inconvenience of going through a divorce often weighs heavily on their minds. Now, quite often, folks who are contemplating divorce are concerned about a LOT of things related to divorce, or that might come with divorce, not JUST the inconvenience. But the inconvenience factor IS a really big thing for a lot of people.

This of course is sometimes also true for people who aren't legally married, but are considering what might have to happen if they were to leave the relationship that they've been committed to. Splitting up with someone you've been involved with for a long time can be quite a project, even if you aren't technically married. For the sake of simplicity, I am going to keep talking about marriage and divorce, but what I really mean is, committed

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relationships and the process of extricating yourself from a committed relationship.

So here's what this often looks like. The person who is married and is considering leaving their marriage thinks about things like having to go through the process of getting divorced, and doing all of the legal stuff. They think about having to divide their assets, if they have assets, or deal with their debts. They may not be in the habit of thinking all that much about the specifics of their finances, and they may realize that in order to get divorced, they're going to have to start getting a little more familiar with their finances. And then they may have to think about a whole new financial reality, and how that math might work for them and their life. They may think that they'll inevitably have less money after a divorce, and that might seem like an unequivocally bad thing. They may think about having to find a new home. They may think about having to buy new furniture. They may think about having to work out child-sharing arrangements, if there are kids involved, or pet-sharing arrangements. They may think about having to explain to everyone they know that they're getting divorced. And so on and so on. This is just a partial list of things people think may be inconvenient if they were to get divorced.

And the thing is, it's quite likely TRUE that you might have to do some or all of the things I just mentioned. And you may consider the kinds of things I just mentioned VERY inconvenient indeed. Even if you don't think of things like moving as inconvenient per se, it is a project that will probably take up a certain amount of your time and energy, and it's possible that in theory, you'd prefer to spend that time and energy on other things. Same goes for all of the other things that you may have to do if you get divorced.

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Here's the thing, though. Sometimes it's worth it to do inconvenient things. Sometimes it's worth it to spend our time and energy doing things we don't especially WANT to do because of what we will gain access to as a result. This may sound painfully obvious, and in a sense, it really is a very simple point. But when we are freaking out because we're thinking about what it would be like to have to do a bunch of really inconvenient things, we may completely forget about this. When we're thinking that it's going to be really hard to look at our finances and separate our finances from our partner's finances, and when we're freaking out because we think we'll have less money after a divorce, and we really don't like the idea of that, that may be all we can see. If we're stuck on the idea that we're probably going to have to move, and we're thinking that we don't WANT to move, we may be completely unable to do anything other than focus on that perceived problem, and how much we don't want to deal with that problem. We may not be thinking about the BENEFITS we might get from being willing to deal with the inconvenience of addressing the problem.

So let's walk through this together. Think about something that you don't want to do because it seems like it would be inconvenient, or uncomfortable, to do it. You can pick anything you want. It doesn't have to be something that's related to your infidelity situation, but of course it can be. Just pick something specific. What is the thing you don't want to do?

Now get clear on why you don't want to do it. What exactly is going to be so inconvenient or uncomfortable about doing the thing you don't want to do? And why is it bad for you to have to deal with that inconvenience and discomfort? The answer to that question may be pretty simple. It may come down to something as elemental as "I just don't WANNA." I have a situation like that on my hands right now, and I'll tell you about it in a moment. Getting clear on why you don't want to do something is not a prompt for you to minimize your reasons. You are allowed to think of things

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as inconvenient. You are allowed to “not wanna” do something. You are allowed to not wanna do anything. Just get clear on the WHYs.

After you're clear on why you don't want to do the inconvenient/uncomfortable thing, ask yourself what you stand to gain by doing it, and what you stand to lose by not doing it. Those questions are very much related, obviously, but they are different.

I'm going to give you an example of what this can look like. I have been resisting the project of reconfiguring my office set-up for quite some time. There are a few reasons why I want to reconfigure my office set-up, and perhaps the most important is that the ergonomics of my current desk are TERRIBLE. My desk set-up has been an ongoing source of physical discomfort that is really unpleasant and is totally addressable. But even though I KNOW there is a potential payoff to getting a new desk and making some other changes in my office set-up, I have been resisting/avoiding this project for months. And that's putting it generously. I've been avoiding doing something about this for months, but before that, I resisted even naming this as a problem that I had the power to do something about for at least a few years. Ugh.

You may be thinking, what's the big deal? Just get a new desk. And if this problem of mine sounds ridiculous to you, that's great. This is part of my point: even when we know that making the effort to make change would benefit us, even when we know the effort it would take to make change seems rather limited in scope and duration, we may resist doing it because it just seems too inconvenient. And that is exactly what I've been doing. It's never the objective magnitude of the challenge we're up against, or the things we have to do that causes us trouble. It's always what we think about our situation that makes it seem hard to deal with.

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And quite simply, one of the things that I regularly think about dealing with my desk and my office is “I don’t want to take the time to deal with it.” Another thought that I frequently indulge is, “Finding a new desk isn’t going to be very fun.”

Now in a sense, these thoughts are honest reflections of my preferences. But there are also optional thoughts. It’s also true that I really want the benefits that would come from making the effort to get a new desk and change my office set up. If I had been focusing on those benefits, instead of the inconveniences I think I’ll have to incur in order to get those benefits, I probably would have tackled this project already.

Part of what I’m showing you with this example is that we can make anything into a big deal. Dealing with my desk and my office may not seem like a big project. And in the overall scheme of things, I don’t consider it to be a big project. But yet I’ve made it into one by thinking so much about how inconvenient and unpleasant it’s going to be to deal with it. We can make anything into a big deal depending on how we think about it. And, similarly, we can make anything manageable depending on how we think about it.

Now that you know why I DON’T want to deal with my office and desk, let me tell you what I stand to gain from being willing to do something about it. I stand to gain relief from all of the chronic physical discomfort my current ergonomic setup contributes to. This will hopefully mean fewer trips to the chiropractor, better sleep, and a greater ability to work out harder. I stand to gain not only relief from discomfort, but greater overall ease and comfort in my physical body. And those are not insignificant benefits! Those things are really important to me. And of course, what I stand to lose by not

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dealing with my desk and office is MORE physical well-being than I've already lost, and all of the time and money I spend on mitigating the effects of the physical pain I incur from my current desk setup.

Another thing I lose from not dealing with my office stuff is a sense of self-efficacy and self-determination. I know that I COULD deal with this stuff, and I'm not, and that has an impact on me. Avoiding dealing with something that we think will be inconvenient or uncomfortable can feel A LOT WORSE than actually dealing with it, even if dealing with it IS inconvenient or uncomfortable. And that has DEFINITELY been happening for me. And it's a drain on my vital energy. We may avoid things because we don't want to expend the effort we think it will take to actually deal with them, but avoidance takes effort too! Not doing things that we know will benefit us because we just can't be arsed – forgive my very American pronunciation, there, folks – or can't be bothered doesn't just deprive us of the benefits we aren't getting. It also negatively impacts our relationship with ourselves, and our lives. And that just creates a whole lot of yuck. It's kind of a drain on our life force, and over time, draining our vital energy in this way can feel pretty damn bad.

Okay. Now that you know more than you ever wanted to know about my desk, let's talk about why it may be worth it to forego convenience and comfort as you think about how you want to resolve your infidelity situation.

Let's say you don't want to give up your current home. Maybe you really like your current living space. Maybe you don't want to deal with having to move. Fair enough. But what might you get out of being willing to do these things, and willing to deal with the inconvenience and discomfort that doing those things might entail? If you want to live a life outside of the context of your current marriage, and you want to be able to have a home that is all

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your own, the only way to get those things may be to move out, and move into a new place. Yeah, you might not like that new place as much as the home you're moving out of. That might be true. It might not be as nice, by certain measures. You might really prefer the old dwelling. But you may be able to have experiences in your new home that you cannot have if you stay in your old dwelling. Maybe you love, love, love your affair partner, and you really want to be able to spend time in the same living space with them. Maybe you want to start a new chapter of your life that does not have anything to do with your marriage – and that might or might not have anything to do with a romantic partner other than your spouse. If these things are important to you, moving might be worth it. It might be inconvenient and uncomfortable in many different ways, but it might be worth it.

This is as good a moment to point out that “convenience” is really tightly bound up with a lot of other things, at times. Convenience can also be very closely associated with nostalgia, and familiarity, and emotional comfort, and a sense of stability, and safety, and so on. And this may be very relevant to the matter of whether you're willing to leave your current home or not. You may like the convenience of your current home for all kinds of reasons. It may be set up exactly the way you like it, it may be close to your work or to your kids' school or to other places you go to on a regular basis. And all of that stuff may be important to you, but there may be other layers to it as well. If you're leaving – or considering leaving – the home where your spouse and kids live, you may not like the idea of leaving the home that you shared with them, and that may be a really big deal for you. And it's totally important to take a look at all of that, but what I want to emphasize today is that it may be helpful to isolate the convenience factor and take a look at that, specifically.

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Here's another convenience-related thing that comes up for clients a lot. Money. Let's say you don't want to give up a certain amount of money, or you don't want to have to go through the hassle of splitting up your money with your spouse or your partner. A lot of people lump those two things together into one singular bad thing, but I want to suggest that it's important to separate these two things. Yes, disaggregating your finances from your spouses, or soon-to-be-ex spouses may take time and effort. And there may not be any way around that. Dealing with that process of separating your money may be a process you have to participate in, and you might not especially enjoy it, and depending on your situation, it might take longer than you'd ideally like for it to take. It's fair to not like these tasks and processes. But is avoiding them worth it? Put differently, do you prefer the consequences of staying in a relationship you prefer to leave to the inconvenience of having to deal with separating your finances from your spouse's?

Now let's look at the matter of having less money, or having to "give up" a certain amount of money and the things you could buy with that money. This is a topic with so many facets, but the one that I want to focus on right now is this. If you're concerned about "giving up" a certain amount of money, or having less money, I encourage you to get really specific about how much less money you are going to have, and really clear on what the implications of your new financial situation will be for your life. This will probably require you to do some math, and that may seem inconvenient in and of itself, but if you don't take a clear look at the math, it's really hard to get meaningful traction on this stuff.

Now I want you to think about the specific impact that having less money will have on your life. What changes in your life will you have to make as a result of having less money? In order to consider this in a way that's actually meaningful, you will have to have a good idea of what your

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numbers are, and I realize you may not have those yet. So you may want to get those numbers, so you take a clear use of them. And in the meantime, here are the points I want you to consider.

Number one: a lot of people get very upset about the idea of having less money, before they even know how much less they're going to have, AND/OR even though having less money may not threaten their survival or even their comfort. Plenty of people who have a lot of money, relatively speaking, do not like the idea of having less money. And I'm totally sympathetic to this. We live in a world where money has a lot of absolute value, but we also associate a lot of meaning to having money, and we tend to think that having more of it is fundamentally better than having less of it, no matter how much we're starting with or ending up with. I get it! And if that's your frame of mind, I'm not criticizing you. I just want you to notice that you may have bought into the idea that more money is simply better than less money. And I want you to notice that that isn't necessarily true.

That brings me to the second thing I suggest you think about: Sometimes, having less money does not negatively impact your overall experience of life, even if your so-called "quality of life" goes down a couple of pegs, AND even if your life is not as convenient in some ways.

Money is great, and all of the things money can buy you are great, but there are some things that money can't buy that MAY be worth a lot to you.

Like, for instance, being able to pursue a relationship we really want to pursue.

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Like being able to explore life outside of a relationship we have outgrown.

Like giving ourselves the opportunity to name and claim other desires, and pursue them.

Of course it ultimately comes down to what is important to YOU, and you have to get clear on that. It may be that you consciously decide to stay in a marriage you aren't super enthusiastic about because you prefer to do that than change your financial situation, or move out of your comfortable house, or incur other inconveniences you think will come with getting divorced. That may be a choice you feel great about making, and if it is, go with god! My only exhortation, per usual, is to make your choices consciously. And often, we're not fully conscious of the importance we give to convenience.

It may be a LOT more convenient to stay married than get divorced.

But not wanting to go through the inconvenience of a divorce, or the inconvenience of moving, or not wanting the inconvenience of having less money, is very different from wanting to stay married.

Sometimes the only choice we have is between inconvenience now, or inconvenience later. And although we sometimes think that dealing with inconvenience later will somehow be less inconvenient, that is not how it necessarily works out. We want to aware of what can happen when we avoid things we consider inconvenient. They can get more inconvenient to effectively deal with over time, but even if they don't, time we spend not dealing with a problem is time we deprive ourselves of living with a solution.

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The final thing I'm going to touch on today is that when we are suffering in ways we don't know how to deal with, convenience and comfort may seem like the only life rafts available to us. When we are deeply miserable – or even vaguely miserable – and we don't know what to do about it, we may be desperate for convenience and comfort. So if you find yourself evaluating your preferences for convenience and comfort and you notice yourself trying to cling to these things, it might be time to take an inventory of your life as a whole. The relationship between a desire for convenience and deep dissatisfaction with our lives is a topic we could spend a lot more time talking about, of course, but for now, I just want to flag this as something to be on the lookout for. If you are desperate for convenience and comfort, you may be dealing with deep unease that might be worth addressing.

And with that, I am, in all seriousness, about to order myself a standing desk. Talking about my avoidance of the inconvenience of re-configuring my office has helped me decide that I really don't want to avoid it anymore.

If you are in the midst of an infidelity situation and you are ready to start to find some relief, and you're ready to begin the process of making changes and making choices, let's work together. It's one thing to listen to what I talk about on the podcast, and it's another thing entirely to have me help you apply the tools and concepts of coaching to the specifics of your unique situation. If you're ready to get started, you can schedule an introductory coaching session with me through my website, [mariemurphyphd.com](http://mariemurphyphd.com). I can't wait to meet you.

Okay everyone! Thank you for listening. Have a great week. Bye for now.

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