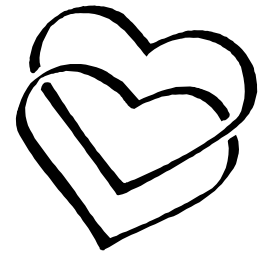


*Love is an irresistible desire
to be irresistibly desired.*
-Robert Frost



EAP ACCENTS

Addicted to Love?

Addictive behavior is not a new phenomenon. We can be addicted to caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, food, and even exercise. Addiction occurs when a person gets attached to a feeling associated with a certain behavior and feels compelled to constantly acquire that feeling. But who ever heard of being addicted to love? Well it's definitely possible and happens often. Rush Limbaugh, so recently in rehabilitation for drug addiction, stated on his daytime radio show that love and sex addiction patients were one of the largest groups admitted to the treatment center.

Often love and sex addiction are perceived as less threatening because we think of love as a good thing. However, the reality is that this addiction is extremely harmful and can be dangerous for both the addicted individual and others involved. Domestic crime typically is related to obsessive, controlling behavior often labeled "love". Stalking is another example of "love" gone haywire and the behavior controlling the person. Suicide commonly relates to a sense of hopelessness, not being loved or having been hurt by someone perceived to be a lover.

Our media and society don't portray relationship building, friendship before love, and the mundane daily life of true life, with sacrifices and the work involved in maintaining a healthy relationship. Instead, we find people falling in love at first sight, emotional manipulation, unrealistic passions, and "happily ever after". The relationships often portrayed in books and film are tragically love addiction rather than healthy love. Even Shakespeare had his *Romeo and Juliet*, which sadly, is one of the most common plays and films shared with high school students in

our public schools. The ending doesn't exactly promote the kind of relationships we like to see our children develop, does it? Novels, music and television also promote the idea of fast and furious passionate relationships (after all, they have to meet, fall in love, have a problem, solve the problem...and all in 250 pages, 3 minutes or 2 hours!). But, life isn't like that, right? Everybody knows that. Well, maybe not. When we're lonely and feeling unloved, it's amazing how much that media can influence our thinking.

Love and sex addiction ruins lives. Addicted individuals lose their identity and their sense of worth is completely derived from others' responses to them. Love addiction doesn't ever end up in "happily ever after". At best, it ends up in professional therapy getting help and at worst, death.

Love addiction has to be dealt with like any other addiction. If you see yourself or someone you love in this newsletter, call your **Employee Assistance Program** today!

1-800-899-3926

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Symptoms of Love Addiction

Some of the symptoms of love addiction can only be noted by the addict, but all of the symptoms become more prominent as the unhealthy behavior progresses.

Symptoms include:



For the love addict, the thought of being alone is frightening beyond belief.

- ◆ **Feelings of detachment with family and friends.** Often, love addicts were not loved and nurtured as children. They did not have the benefit of a healthy, loving family to model such behavior. As they grow older, love and sex addicts will withdraw more and more from family and friends as they search for the “perfect” relationship.
- ◆ **Inner rage** as a result of the lack of love from childhood. This anger may not be evident in everyday life, but can suddenly appear when the person perceives him/herself to be victimized or rejected. Prior to anger, the rage may appear to be passion.
- ◆ **Inability to trust others.** The addict searches for that one person that can be trusted with feelings and emotions, but the expectations are so unreasonable that the search is doomed to fail.
- ◆ **Depression.** Mood swings are not uncommon for love and sex addicts. When having that euphoric sense of a new relationship or the excitement of attracting others has worn off, the addict often becomes severely depressed.
- ◆ **Emotionally manipulative and controlling of others.** Control is one of the strongest urges for the addict. Feeling that something is missing (lack of childhood love), as an adult, the addict struggles to control and manipulate others to replace those feelings. Physical flirting, seductive language and revealing clothes often draw others to a love addict. Once drawn in, emotional manipulation such as tears, temper tantrums and even threats of suicide is used to hold onto the person. Physical manipulation, in the form of sex, is another method addicts use to maintain a relationship.
- ◆ **View sex and/or love as necessary as food and water.** An addict cannot perceive what it would be like to live without sex or love. The thought of being alone is frightening beyond belief. This is primarily due to the fact that the addict’s identity is defined by others, and the thought of being alone is the same as not existing, in a sense. The addict feels worthless without a partner. He/she believes that having a relationship makes a person whole or complete.
- ◆ **Escalating desire for high-risk behavior.** As time goes by, addicts develop the need to be more bold, often expanding their experiences, both sexual and emotional, outside of healthy realms. Love and sex addicts, such as the characters in the movie, *9 1/2 Weeks*, become more risky and even dangerous in their relationships and activities. In the midst of this time, they begin to view the entire world differently. Often, they see their behavior as “normal” and question previous values as even necessary.
- ◆ **Other addictive behaviors.** It’s not uncommon for love and sex addicts to have chemical dependency issues, pornographic addiction, and/or obsessive-compulsive behavior. An addictive personality is often attracted to more than one addiction at a time.
- ◆ **Confuses sex with love.** Women, in particular, suffer from this symptom. They believe that having sex with a man immediately implies a relationship, whether there has been any discussion of such or not. The movie, *Fatal Attraction*, is an extreme example of this symptom. Also, part of this scenario is that the addict will trade sex for “love” or some sort of relationship. Sex is simply viewed as another method of manipulating behavior.
- ◆ **Living a “secret life”.** Addicts may appear to be healthy, in control individuals, particularly to colleagues and distant family members. As the addiction escalates, the secret side of the individual will become more apparent.
- ◆ **Refuses to acknowledge problem.** Few love and sex addicts can see their own weaknesses. They have designed their own reality and convincing them that their lifestyle isn’t healthy is sometimes near to impossible. Without such acknowledgement, treatment isn’t relevant.



If you believe that you are involved with someone addicted to love and/or sex, contact us to get help in dealing with your relationship and loved one.



Addictive Love vs. Healthy Love



Addictive:

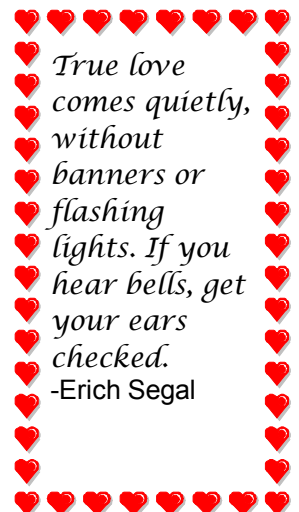
1. All consuming and obsessive.
2. Fears risk or change.
3. Lacks true intimacy.
4. Dependency on partner.
5. Emotionally and/or physically manipulative.
6. Fear of being alone.
7. Non-trusting.
8. Closed system of communication.
9. Requires proof or evidence of love on a continual basis.
10. Sense of identity and self-worth is determined by partner's reactions.
11. Possessive and jealous.
12. Neglected friends and family.
13. Few hobbies or other interests, except possibly those shared with partner.
14. Continual need for reassurance.
15. Feeling good is more important than being honest.
16. Depression; mood swings.
17. Threats of suicide and other personal injury.
18. Thoughts only revolve around partner and the relationship.
19. Other relationships, such as work or friendships, not tolerable.

Healthy:

1. Not threatened by thoughts and activities outside of the relationship.
2. Understands that change can improve a relationship.
3. Desires intimacy and friendship with partner.
4. Emotionally independent; does not require partner to feel validated.
5. Communicates honestly rather than being manipulative.
6. Enjoys occasional time alone.
7. Trusts the partner to be concerned about the best interest of the relationship.
8. Communicates openly and honestly, without abuse.
9. Unconditional trust that the partner does love without repeated evidence.
10. Self worth is determined outside of the relationship.
11. Give each other room to grow without being overly concerned or possessive.
12. Has strong relationships with family and friends.
13. Enjoys hobbies and activities with and without the partner.
14. Content, not needing constant reassurance.
15. Understands that honesty is essential and leads to a healthier relationship, even if it hurts momentarily.
16. Balanced emotional state.
17. Doesn't use threats of physical harm to manipulate partner.
18. Expanded interests and ideas beyond the relationship.
19. Develops healthy relationships at work and with friends.



Healthy relationships leave room for the development of professional relationships without fear of jealousy.



True love comes quietly, without banners or flashing lights. If you hear bells, get your ears checked.
 -Erich Segal



Are you constantly on the look out for Mr. or Miss Right?

*We're here to help! Contact your **Employee Assistance Program** at 1-800-899-3926.*

Love Addiction Quiz

If you answer yes to any of the following, you may have a love and/or sexual addiction. Contact us today...we're here to help.

1. Are you unable to stop seeing someone even though you know the relationship is emotionally or physically unhealthy?
2. Do you believe that an intimate relationship is required for life to be "complete"?
3. Do you get "high" from sex and/or romance?
4. Do you think about sex and/or love, or your spouse, more than anything else each day?
5. Do you flirt and act sexually suggestive without even thinking about it?
6. Are you more concerned about what others think of you than what you think of yourself?
7. Are you constantly on the look out for Mr. or Miss Right?
8. Do you regularly view pornography, or seek books and movies that include vivid descriptions of sexual activity?
9. Do your sexual actions, thoughts or desires go against your spiritual values?
10. Do you have difficulty committing to one relationship?
11. Are you estranged from family and have few friends?
12. Are you afraid of being alone?
13. Do you find yourself depressed, even suicidal, when not in a relationship?
14. Are you jealous of the time your partner spends with colleagues, friends or family?
15. Do you go to parties and other events solely for the purpose of finding a sexual partner?

Have you checked out your EAP Website?

You'll find articles and quizzes on a variety of topics designed to help you be healthier! As well, there are tips on how to make the most of your Employee Assistance benefits. Visit the website today at:
theemployeeassistanceprogram.com

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Publishing Information

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