

II. THE CAUSE OF SEXUAL ADDICTION

By Rev. Dr. Jerry Schmoyer

We've seen several lies that feed this addiction. There are lies that deny or cover up the cause as well. One is that 'It's just the way I am.'

A. SECONDARY CAUSES

LIE: IT'S JUST THE WAY I AM. (I can't help it. It's a disease.)

TRUTH: It's not a disease or something we can't help, we are responsible and CAN change!

Sexual addiction is not a 'disease' whereby someone is a helpless victim. There are victims, of course, and the addict himself may have been victimized when young, but as an adult is responsible for his choices and behavior. Calling it a 'disease' implies we can't control it and that we are therefore free to let it go. This can be justification for the addict and an excuse for their mate. While sexual addiction does have great power over us, it can be overcome!

National surveys reveal that most sexual addicts come from severely dysfunctional families. Usually at least one other member of these families has another addiction. This is true in 87% of the cases.

Inconsistent parental nurturing and love definitely can contribute to sexual addiction. It destroys a child's natural desire for intimacy and makes them suspicious of the 'good times.'

A sense of parental betray when they need to feel emotional and spiritual love and support can make a person susceptible to turning to sex to find security.

Insufficient parental teaching and modeling can leave a child without a solid foundation of love and respect. When they are taught that intimacy brings pain then they soon learn it is safer to withdraw emotionally from others. Substitutes are needed to meet needs for intimacy.

Stress can contribute as youth seek to escape or avoid stress by use of sex. Often this is modeled by their parents and passes from generation to generation.

Early sexualization by sounds, sights and touches that are inappropriate can cause a child to assign an improper place to sex in life.

Child abuse is a major contributor to sexual addiction in adults. Research has shown that a very high correlation exists between childhood abuse and sexual addiction in adulthood. 97% of sex addicts have been emotionally abused as a child, 83% have been sexually abused and 71% have been physically abused.

Some children are impacted more than others by child abuse. This is influenced by the innate personality differences of various children. Also, some have a strong supportive relationship with an adult that helps them grow through the abuse.

While these things contribute to causing sexual addiction in a person, there is a deeper root cause that needs to be understood

B. ROOT CAUSES OF SEXUAL ADDICTION

Remember, sexual addiction itself isn't the problem, although it can cause multiple problems. Sex addiction is just a symptom of a far deeper problem. Cures don't come by treating symptoms!

Sex addiction is a byproduct of loneliness, pain and the need to be loved and accepted. It is a substitute for these, a counterfeit way to meet legitimate, real needs. However it fails to really meet these needs so greater and greater amounts are sought in a futile search for what is missing.

Addictions are reactions to gaping holes in a person's life. These are caused in childhood when proper love and security isn't given to a child. Babies are born with a great need for unconditional love and security. They need to be loved and cared for. We all have a deep inner need to be held and told we are special and important. We need our parents to hug us and tell us they are proud of us, we are unique and will have a great future. We need to have this happen over and over and over. If it doesn't, or if mixed messages are sent, we get the message that we are inferior and unlovable. Children assume it is their fault that they aren't loved and cared for. They feel something must be wrong with them for their parent or guardian to be unable to love them in the way they need. As we mature we know in our minds that this isn't true – often the adult had their own issues that made it difficult or impossible for them to show unconditional love. By the time we are old enough to realize that the damage has been done, the messages have been sent and believed, and patterns of behavior to compensate have become firmly established.

Everything in life is then geared to bring safety and security, to answer the question, "Am I lovable?" Where can I find acceptance and security? How can I handle the hurt and loss inside? What can I do to get rid of my pain and fear? This leads to all kinds of substitutes and counterfeits. Sex addiction is one of many ways of 'coping.'

When a person is unable to have real intimacy with another, to really give oneself without reservation, to overcome feelings of rejection or failure, sexual compulsions often compensate. Sex becomes a way of escaping pain and substituting reality with a fantasy world. Society conditions us to this, for everywhere around us we see lust replacing love and substituting for real closeness. Satan works with this, too. His demons magnify openings we give him and keep working on them, putting thoughts and desires into a person's mind. Often this follows family lines, going from grandfather to father to son.

MALE SEX ADDICTS

Male sex addicts invariably feel powerless around women. They have a very hard time relating emotionally so they only relate sexually. In their fantasies or acting out they are in control of women, who are objects for their use. This causes them to feel superior and in control, to seem like they are needed and a woman can and will respond to them as a male, even if just sexually. A sexual object can't hurt or reject them, nor can the object make demands of them or have needs they can't fill. They are what they have always sought to be: safe, secure, in charge and needed. In degrading women they are paying back all women for the hurt they received when young. Sex becomes a substitute for intimacy.

In addition, the chemical lift that was described earlier gives them such a pleasurable high that all pain and fear is temporarily removed and, often for the only time, they feel 'good.' When over, though, men feel trashed and terrible about themselves. They often

promise to change their behavior but, because they feel even worse about themselves than before, they end up reverting to their only means of escape – sex.

WOMEN SEX ADDICTS

For most people, having sexual relationships, fantasies, and behaviors would be normal human behavior, but for the sex addict, they cause problems. Most women who are sex-addicted don't have role modeling from their mothers and/or fathers for how to have emotional intimacy in nonsexual ways. Research has shown that there is often a combination of rigidity of some kind and a lack of emotional support in the sex addict's family of origin. Also, there is a high incidence of sexual abuse (with and without touch) in the histories of women sex addicts. Thus men give love to get sex and women give sex to get love!

IN SUMMARY:

EMOTIONALLY for the sex addict sex isn't really about sex, they just use sex. Sex is involved as a means to an end but is not the end itself. It is really about emotional intimacy – lack of it, need of it, fear of it and the drive to attain it. The addiction provides an illusion of affirmation, a veneer of control and connection in a 'safe' environment.

PHYSICALLY sex activates the natural opioids and dopamine producing intense pleasure and euphoria which accentuates the addiction.

SPIRITUALLY sex feeds the delusion that fulfilling comfort, love and security can be experienced on a strictly human level apart from God. That can't happen. All addicts and addictions are basically self-centered and demanding. Real spiritual needs can't be met in that way. Only in humility and real submission to God can our deepest spiritual needs be met.

LIE 1: I'M NOT WORTHY OF REAL ACCEPTANCE

LIE 2: NO ONE WOULD LOVE ME AS I AM

LIE 3: OTHERS NEVER MET MY NEEDS

LIE 4: SEX IS MY MOST IMPORTANT NEED

1. I AM A BAD, UNWORTHY PERSON	2. NO ONE WOULD LOVE ME AS I AM	3. OTHERS WILL NEVER MEET MY NEEDS	4. SEX IS MY MOST IMPORTANT NEED
Distorted concept of SELF	Distorted concept of OTHERS	Distorted concept of GOD	Distorted BELIEFS
INTERIOR WORLD Addicts conclude from their family experiences that they are not worthwhile persons. Feelings of inadequacy and failure predominate. Addicts often see humiliation and degradation as justified or deserved. The desperate struggle around sexual compulsivity absolutely confirms this belief and	INTERIOR WORLD Addicts believe that everyone would abandon them if the truth were known. They have a constant fear of being dependent on others. Addicts perceive their sexual behavior as so bad that everyone becomes their 'fault.' Addicts assume	INTERIOR WORLD Addicts feel unloved and unlovable, which means other people cannot be depended on to love them, so their needs will not be met. The resulting rage becomes internalized as depression, resentment, self-pity; and even suicidal feelings. Because they	INTERIOR WORLD Addicts confuse nurturing and sex. Support, care, affirmation and love are all sexualized. Absolute terror of life without sex combines with feelings of unworthiness for such intense sexual desires. Sexual activity never meets the need for love and care, but continues to be seen as the only avenue to

<p>enhances feelings of low self-worth. Addicts are committed to hiding the secret reality of their addiction at all costs because of their unworthiness. Yet the addiction guides almost all behavior & decisions.</p>	<p>responsibility for all the pain in loved ones. Honest guilt and remorse cannot be expressed because that would require honesty about behavior. Addicts become progressively more isolated.</p>	<p>have no confidence in others' love, addicts become calculating, strategizing, manipulative and ruthless. Rules and laws are made for people who are lovable. Those who are unlovable survive in other ways.</p>	<p>meeting those needs. Addicts have a high need to control all situations in an effort to guarantee sex. Yet there is a secret fear of being sexually out of control. Addicts promise themselves to stop or limit sexual behavior because of this fear.</p>
<p>EXTERIOR WORLD Addicts create a front of 'normalcy' to hide their sense of inadequacy. They may even appear grandiose and full of exaggerated self-importance. As consequences to behaviors emerge, the front contrasts with actions that seem to be degrading or self-defeating or both. Others see decisions or behaviors as irrational, incomprehensible, or even self-destructive, but not 'normal.'</p>	<p>EXTERIOR WORLD Addicts create the image of being in charge of life and in no need of help. They appear unaffected by any problem, but will often do extreme or indulgent things as if making up for something. No explanation is offered, however. Some addicts may continue to be charming and sociable, but all addicts become 'unreachable' personally as they close off all avenues of vulnerability.</p>	<p>EXTERIOR WORLD Addicts rage about unmet needs in the past prevents the possibility of expressing needs now because they anticipate being rejected. Addicts appear not to want or need anything. They are purposely unclear about their intentions in relationships and are thus seductive in behavior, i.e., they try to be affirmed or cared for without expressing that they need it so they will not risk rejection. Addicts make extensive efforts to show how respectable and law-abiding they are.</p>	<p>EXTERIOR WORLD Sexual obsession pervades lifestyle and behavior. Addicts make maximum effort to ensure all possible sexual opportunities. Addicts at all levels of behavior feel the need to control sexual access, protect their 'supply.' Seeking degrading or humiliating sexual experiences simply extends internal feelings of unworthiness. Addicts publicly profess extreme sexual propriety, however about some sexual matters. Cover-ups, lies, and deceptions are made to conceal personal sexual behavior.</p>
<p>FAMILY & FRIENDS Close friends and family members become angry and frustrated with the addicts' egocentricity, especially when there is insensitivity to others. Not knowing the interior world of an addict, they are troubled by what looks like destructive or curious behavior that does not fit the image the addict's project.</p>	<p>FAMILY & FRIENDS Significant persons in the addicts' lives start to feel pushed away, useless, neglected and unnecessary. They become confused at seemingly generous gestures, but in the absence of any personal warmth or presence. Anger and hurt accumulate with a sense of abandonment in reaction to the addicts' contradictory behavior.</p>	<p>FAMILY & FRIENDS Those who are close start to see the double life, the Jekyll and Hyde, in the addicts' worlds. The addicts' ups and downs remain difficult to understand. Worse, distrust and disbelief in the addicts begin. Things appear to be so smooth, yet the intuition is that they are not. Inconsistencies between the addicts' public and private lives confirm these intuitions.</p>	<p>FAMILY & FRIENDS The addicts' protestations of high sexual morality obscure the impact of sexual obsession on friends and families. Close family and friends tend to reject suspicions of sexual compulsivity because of the addicts' values. Evidence of powerlessness over behavior and unmanageability mounts, these persons become confused, not knowing what to believe. They do not wish to intervene in something so personal. Since they don't feel close enough to become involved, they choose the other option, which is to withdraw.</p>

-From "Out of the Shadows" by Patrick Carnes