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ROMANTIC OBSESSION

Sex and Love Addicts
Anonymous



*This pamphlet is S.L.A.A.
Conference-approved Literature*

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Many of us come to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous because of some form of obsession. Romantic obsession is broadly defined as an unhealthy fixation on another person with whom we may or may not have a relationship or even have met. A romantic obsession can be triggered by a sexual obsession, the beginning or ending of a relationship, or for reasons beyond our present understanding. The object of our romantic obsession, for example, can be someone we've heard speak at a meeting, a public figure, or an anonymous person in a magazine ad. In many cases, we may not be clear what triggers us.

The addictive nature of obsession can distort our thinking and behavior and can lead us in a direction that violates our dignity and personal integrity.

We who are plagued with romantic obsession have found hope and recovery in S.L.A.A. The program shifts the focus from the idealized romantic relationship that our disease craves to a working relationship with a Power greater than ourselves. By working the Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A., we counter the destructive behaviors and self-hatred that accompany obsession and begin to experience a gradual yet persistent return to sanity.

Once we become willing to surrender to our powerlessness and take healthy action, we can be guided safely back to sanity and released from the bondage of romantic obsession. The following are some ways that obsession can affect us.

Engaging in Romantic Obsession Distorts our Perceptions

In the height of our obsession, we may

- see the object of our obsession as someone other than who s/he really is.
- idealize, glorify, and give power to the other person.
- demonize or resent the object of our obsession.
- project qualities onto the person that s/he doesn't have.



- delude ourselves in our thinking and deny our disease.
- convince ourselves that we'll die without the other person.

Romantic Obsession Obscures Reality

While obsessed we may tell ourselves

- the object of our obsession can make us feel secure and content.
- our peace of mind depends on them acknowledging us or giving us what we want.
- we “love” the other person even though we may not respect his or her limits, shortcomings or boundaries.
- the other person represents a lifestyle we want but are being denied.
- our current friendships are flat and meaningless.
- the other person is judging us and has found us a failure, inadequate or pathetic.
- we should be loyal to the other person even if s/he ignores, hurts or violates us.
- other people can't understand our pain.

Romantic Obsession Promotes Self-Destructive Behaviors

While obsessed we may find ourselves

- trying to rescue, fix or control someone with the expectation that we will get commitment, loyalty or obedience in return.
- lying about our motives, trying to manipulate or coerce others, initiating or engaging in power games or violating people's privacy and personal boundaries.
- using sex to get attention, to manipulate, to exploit, to reward or control.
- having sex even if we don't want it.
- engaging in sexually compulsive behavior, pornography, multiple sexual relationships, dangerous behavior, or sexual anorexia in an effort to escape emotional pain.



Romantic Obsession Stops Us from Fully Engaging in Life

While obsessed we often

- prevent ourselves from setting goals or moving towards them.
- cut ourselves off from other people.
- restrict our behavior, narrowing it to a few monotonous routines.
- lose our interests and our interest in life itself.
- find ourselves feeling impotent, flat and lifeless.
- subvert, derail, undermine and block ourselves from emotional growth.

Romantic Obsession is Self-Negating

At the height of our obsessing we may

- tell ourselves our life has no purpose, value or future.
- deny our real accomplishments and abilities.
- tell ourselves we're undesirable, unlovable, sexless and unworthy.
- isolate ourselves from others and experience loneliness and pain.
- compare ourselves with those who appear to "have it all".
- tell ourselves we're helpless and defeated.
- destroy any sense of purpose or mission we may have had.
- distort our personalities, making ourselves victims, liars, cheats or even violent.

Romantic Obsession is Fear-Based

We open ourselves to fears of

- abandonment and rejection.
- loneliness.
- humiliation.
- undesirability and uselessness.
- destruction.
- being responsible for ourselves.
- committing to others.
- committing to our recovery.



Obsession invariably leads to

- denial.
- delusional thinking.
- personal acts of dishonesty (e.g., manipulation, intrusion on others' privacy, etc.)

Here are some strategies that we have used to overcome obsession.

We

- work the 12 Steps.
- practice humility and admit we're powerless over the object of our obsession and the feelings of obsession themselves.
- pray and meditate knowing that God wants us to live free of shame, isolation, self-hatred and fear.
- ask our Higher Power to relieve our obsession.
- make an inventory of our fears.
- make a list of our accomplishments, strengths and talents.
- detach and avoid the object of our obsession "one day/one hour at a time".
- request a temporary no contact agreement.
- practice healthy vulnerability by sharing at meetings, getting and regularly calling a sponsor, and providing outreach "to the addict who is still suffering".
- engage in self-care by pursuing interests we enjoy.
- welcome healthy interests and healthy people into our lives.
- set top-lines for ourselves by focusing on what we want to add to our work, home life, and relaxation.
- find and re-confirm our purpose or mission in life.
- seek opportunities to be of service.

In our experience, there is a common pattern in sex and love addiction of delusional thinking and self destructive behavior that is fueled by obsession.



We Have Found There is a Common Solution.

We

- stop acting out on a daily basis.
- abstain from self-punishment and self-rejection.
- go to meetings.
- surrender to the pain and discomfort of withdrawal.
- work the 12 Steps of S.L.A.A.!

Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.*

1. We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with a Power greater than ourselves, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.



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THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Twelve Traditions of S.L.A.A.*

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. Any two or more persons gathered together for mutual aid in recovering from sex and love addiction may call themselves an S.L.A.A. group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or S.L.A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sex and love addict who still suffers.
6. An S.L.A.A. group or S.L.A.A. as a whole ought never endorse, finance, or lend the S.L.A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every S.L.A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. S.L.A.A. should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. S.L.A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly



responsible to those they serve.

10. S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues; hence the S.L.A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy. 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



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PUBLICATIONS

Available from:

1550 NE Loop 410, #118
San Antonio, TX 78209 U.S.A.

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BOOKS

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous: Basic Text

A State of Grace: Daily Meditations

WORKBOOKS

The Step Questions Workbook

***For a full list of available S.L.A.A.
literature, visit our website at:***

