

***ALICE R. BERKOWITZ, PH.D.***  
***A Professional Psychology Corporation***  
**Clinical And Forensic Psychology**  
**9107 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 301**  
**Beverly Hills, California 90210**  
**Office: (310) 659-3824 Fax: (310) 659-9217**  
**E: dralice@draliceberkowitz.com W: draliceberkowitz.com**  
**Web: [www.jurispro.com/AliceBerkowitz](http://www.jurispro.com/AliceBerkowitz),**

January 25, 2014

## **LOVE ADDICTION**

### **WHAT IS LOVE ADDICTION:**

Love addiction is in many ways the absolute opposite of healthy love. Love addicts are often really terrified of intimacy and choose partners who are either unavailable or “love avoidant”.

Love addicts seek connection to make themselves feel whole and to try and resolve childhood issues of abandonment and other trauma’s, through choosing a partner that is unavailable or “love avoidant” with the hope that:

“If I can get him to love me, than I am loveable and worth loving”.

- Completely focused on the other, to the exclusion of true self-care or self-nurturing.
- At the beginning of a love-addicted relationship, the L-A feels great, whole, special, and absolutely high. It is all based on the attention and focus from the person who is the focus of the L-Addiction.
- Nothing else matters- all past injuries are gone, the L-A feels happier than ever in his/her life.
- How she dresses/ talks/walks/ sees the world is all based on what will make the object of the L-A happy and more in love with the addict.
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- All is great until the first fight or pressure from the L-A for more time or commitment. Since L-A are always attracted to partners who are either unavailable or Love Avoidant, the first conflict is usually met with by anger and/or withdrawal from the Partner.
- L-A feels like they are going to die. They are obsessed, cannot sleep, cannot function- until they can rejoin or makeup with the partner.
- This becomes a cycle for a period of time- like a roller coaster. Up's and downs. Friend's of the L-A become tired of hearing the chaos, so more ISOLATION.
- ISOLATION –MORE DEPENDENCY ON THE PARTNER  
MORE DEPENDENCY ON THE PARTNER, MORE  
DESPERATION. CYCLE.
- The Love Addicts entire Identity becomes based on whether the person they are addicted to loves them or doesn't.
- When the end comes- and it always does, The L-A feels like they are going to die! Panic, Can't think, Can't work, - even for someone who is normally very competent and seems well rounded to the rest of the world.
- Horrible Agony- that goes on and on until they meet someone else to start the cycle with or they go into a period of what I call "pseudo-independence". Feel better, get their lives back, friends back, success back....
- Until she/he meets the next person.
- 6<sup>th</sup> sense that the L-A has for unavailable or "Love Avoidant" people.

## **HISTORY**

Love Addicts history of:

1. Narcissistic parent or parents who really can't love, but when a young child adores them, they show love, but inconsistent.
2. Abusive parent
3. Absent parent
4. Alcoholic or other addicted parent

Issue is that as young children do: Omnipotence- It must be my fault. If I was only smarter, prettier, a better athlete, Mom or Dad (the rejecting parent) will love me. History of abandonment, inconsistency, trauma.

- As a result, never really develops “the good enough mother” inside. No Self- soothing; no real understanding of the give and take in relationships. Love means hurt and giving up of self- so terrified of intimacy themselves.

### **HOW TO BEGIN REPAIR:**

- ADMIT YOU HAVE A PROBLEM
- BEGIN JOURNALING EVERYDAY ABOUT FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS
- TAKE A BREAK FROM ALL DATING AND SEX
- TRY TO PINPOINT THE EARLY TRAUMAS AND WHO THEY WERE WITH
- LEARN YOUR OWN STORY... IF I COULD ONLY BE..... THEN.... WOULD LOVE ME AND..... I'D NEVER BE ALONE AGAIN.
- SEEK OUT PROFESSIONAL HELP IF YOU CAN AND A SUPPORT GROUP. SLAA IS THE BEST, BUT IF CAN'T FIND ONE, EVEN CODA OR AA WOULD HELP
- BEGIN DAILY AFFIRMATIONS ABOUT YOURSELF THAT ARE TRUE
- SEEK OUT FRIENDS WHERE THERE IS MUTUALITY- IF YOU ARE DOING TOO MUCH- GET OUT
- LEARN THE DANGER SIGNALS: LIKE THAT WHEN YOU START TO DATE AGAIN, IF YOU START TO GET THAT OLD FEELING...RUN AWAY QUICK
- IF IT SMELLS LIKE A SKUNK, AND LOOKS LIKE A SKUNT, IT ALWAYS IS A SKUNK
- TAKE TIME WITH YOURSELF TO LEARN WHO YOU ARE, WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO YOU IN YOUR LIFE.
- TAKE BABY STEPS TOWARDS GREATER EMOTIONAL INTIMACY WITH FRIENDS – (SHARE MORE, TRY TO BE IN THE MOMENT, DON'T OVER CARETAKE)

- WATCH OUT FOR OTHER ADDICTIONS. YOU WILL BE DEPRESSED WHEN YOU START TO BREAK OUT OF THE ADDICTIVE CYCLE- BUT IT WILL NOT BE A DEVASTATING DEPRESSION LIKE YOU EXPERIENCED WHEN A RELATIONSHIP ENDED. MORE LIKE AN EMPTINESS THAT YOU CAN TOLERATE.
- Exercise, Smell flowers, Make sure you eat well; take baths; read; sit by the beach and try to remember there is a world out there for you.
- Make sure that you stay sober- meaning no more lying to yourself, no more trying to find someone that makes you feel whole.
- Learn your danger signals.
- When you are ready to date again, take it slowly. If you are bored with someone on the first date- but they seem like they meet the shopping list, don't run away... give it a try.

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN REAL LOVE AND LOVE ADDICTION:**

- No unrealistic beliefs that this relationship will solve all your problems.
- Real love is about two people who can be alone, like their lives, but being in love adds to their lives (doesn't give them their lives).
- Can be separate and not fear abandonment
- Can have differences of opinions, without love changing
- They work at their relationship through time and communication
- Real love grows deeper over time/ no instant love
- Can admit intimacy can be scary, but willing to be vulnerable and intimate anyway... but appropriately with time.
- No enmeshment; no merger; no twinning