

Lesson 4:

An Intimacy Disorder

“Sexual addiction can keep you trapped where you feel like you are being intimate with people but you’re not. You’re behind this wall hiding, most of the time out of shame or out of fear.”

Jessica Kirkpatrick

Sexual Addiction is Not About Sex

It’s very easy to be concerned about sexual addiction, and the behaviors that accompany the acting out phase. The hurt, anxiety, and stress caused by these behaviors are often hard to miss. But all too often, the acting out behavior itself, the affairs, the cybersex, the viewing of pornography is labeled the “problem.”

Along with that goes the belief that if the sexual acting out behaviors would stop, the “problems” would stop as well. It is true that these behaviors are cause for concern and bring about negative consequences. However, in the vast majority of cases the addiction is the result, the “symptom” of unresolved, unhealed, underlying issues.

The behavior is the attempt to medicate or escape the pain of these issues. So, the core of the problem is not the excessive acting out behaviors, but the hurt that comes from a deprivation of intimacy.

“Sex addiction is not about sex. It’s an impairment of intimacy...and what’s the best substitute for intimacy in our culture...sex.” *Marnee Ferree*

Therefore, merely stopping the behavior will leave someone short of the ultimate healing they are seeking. For true freedom, for true intimacy, the barriers that continue to block the individual from experiencing intimacy with others must be addressed.

Often times these barriers began as wounds, with their origins in childhood. Resolving these underlying issues that have been fueling the addiction will help eliminate the perceived need for medication or escape.

“I call it Christian Intimacy Theology because we are made in the image of God. Because we are made in the image of God we are built to love and be loved back at a core to core level.”

Adrian Hickmon

Questions about Intimacy

1. When you hear the word intimate, what things come to mind?

2. How does the world view intimacy?

3. What is your definition of true intimacy?

4. What does it take to be intimate with someone?

5. Who are the people you are most intimate with?

6. What makes those relationships more intimate than others?

7. What things stop you from being in more intimate relationships?

8. What is the opposite of intimacy? Have you ever experienced this? If so, what was it like?

9. To what surrogates do people escape for intimacy?

10. What's so frightening about being intimate with someone?

Questions about Family of Origin

First, rate your childhood from 1 – 10. 1 is the worst possible childhood, 10 is the best.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1. What examples can you give as to why you rated your childhood as you did?

2. What is your current relationship with your parents? How has it changed over the years?

3. Did you have any events in your life as a child that you recognize as being traumatic?

If so, can you give them titles? For example, "Parent's Divorce."

4. Do you have a hard time remembering parts of your childhood?

5. What examples can you give as to why you rated your childhood as you did?

6. Do you feel like other people understand you for who you really are? _____

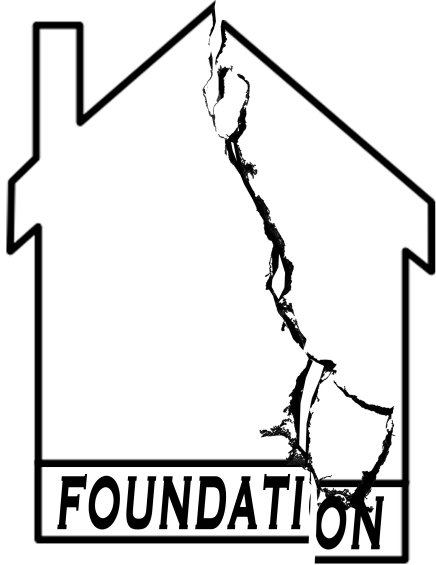
If so, who are those people and how would they describe you?

7. List any experiences from childhood that you have tried to “move past.” How well have you been able to move past them? Rate them on a scale of 1-10? Explain.

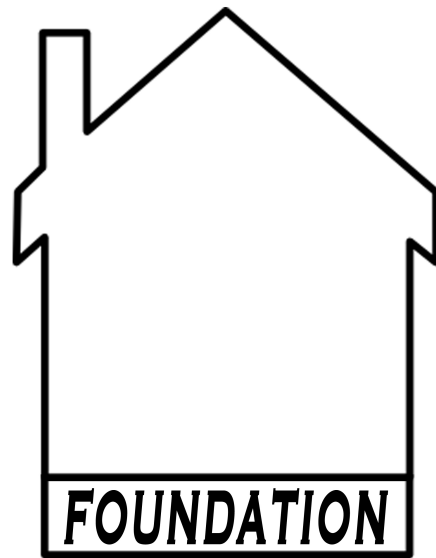
<u>Experience</u>	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
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5. List what needs to be changed, in the family of origin, to provide a stronger foundation.



6. List the things necessary to provide a solid foundation?



7. How well are you providing a solid foundation for your current family? Give Examples.

5. What's the difference between placing appropriate responsibility on someone and blaming them for your choices?

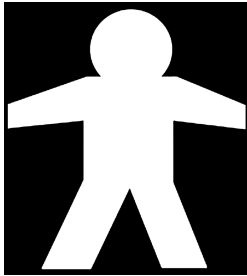
6. Describe yourself as a child.

7. Do you STILL believe things about yourself as a child that were not true? Explain.

8. Are there negative things you believe about yourself NOW that you wish weren't true? Explain.

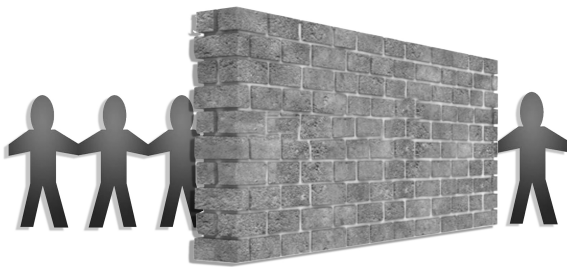
9. Homework: Ask those who know you the best if the negative things you believe about yourself are actually true. (This won't change your beliefs at the moment, but it may cause a crack of doubt that these "Truths" are actually "Lies.") ☺

10. List events or feelings that you have stuffed down inside.



The Wall of Shame

1. What things in your life cause you feelings of shame?



2. What things in your life have you not shared with your spouse or family?

3. What prevents you from writing down all the things that you should share with spouse/family?

4. What are the “pros” of hiding things from your family?

5. What are the “cons” of hiding things from your family?
