

# Lesson 6:

## Vulnerable Host - Abandonment

*"I have never known a sex addict who wasn't the survivor of abandonment trauma. A full 100% of those who struggle with sexual addiction, both male and female, experienced some form of abandonment."*<sup>36</sup>

Marnee Ferree

### **Not All Abandonment is Obvious**

Some cases of abandonment and neglect are obvious. When parents fail to provide the basic physical needs of their child it can reach the point that parental rights are terminated and the child is removed from the home.

Other forms of abandonment are much more subtle but, in many ways, just as traumatic and damaging. These types of abandonment include emotional, sexual and spiritual.

In order for children to gain the self-efficacy and self-confidence they need to become healthy, independent, adults, they must be nurtured. A parent who is at home physically but emotionally abusive or unavailable has neglected that basic need. A parent who doesn't appropriately educate a child about sex has abandoned that child and set him up to learn what he can from wherever he can. A parent who has presented an inaccurate view of God, i.e., a legalistic, performance based view, has missed the opportunity to instill and model a personal relationship with God.

Children who have been abused and/or abandoned subsequently develop negative core beliefs about themselves. When the very people who are supposed to nurture a child end up causing excessive hurt, the child has no ability to refute the implied messages. Those messages are, "You are bad, unworthy, not good enough, unlovable, etc." He in turn believes that because he is so "bad," all the negative things that happen to him are a result of his own negative innate qualities. The child then grows up interacting with the world and forming relationships based on this inaccurate belief system.

It is the shame of these perceived "facts" about himself that prevents him from opening up and connecting with others. This eliminates opportunities to develop what his heart is really longing for - true intimacy.

**A parent who doesn't appropriately educate a child about sex has abandoned that child.**

**Abandonment**

1. In what ways have you been abandoned?

Physical      Emotional      Sexual      Spiritual      Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. What messages did you receive about yourself from those events?

---

---

---

---

3. Were those messages accurate or inaccurate? Explain.

---

---

---

---

4. What negative beliefs do you currently have about yourself?

---

---

---

---

5. Are those negative beliefs similar to the negative messages you received about yourself from abusive/neglectful experiences as a child? Explain.

---

---

---

---

6. In what ways have you tried to prove those negative messages false over the years?

---

---

---

---

**Shame**

**7. What is the difference between guilt and shame?**

---

---

---

---

**8. What behaviors have caused/are causing you guilt?**

---

---

---

---

---

**9. Describe a time/s in your life when you felt shame.**

---

---

---

---

---

**10. What role has shame played throughout the course of your life?**

---

---

---

---

---

**11. What prevents you from sharing your feelings of shame with others?**

---

---

---

---

---

**The Double Life**

12. What is the difference between guilt and shame?

---

---

---

---

13. Describe the face you show the world.

14. Describe the face you hide from others.

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

15. What groups of people believe in the “face you show the world?”

---

---

---

---

16. What are the advantages of having the double life?

---

---

---

---

---

17. What are the disadvantages of having a double life?

---

---

---

---

**18.** How would it feel to live a life of congruency where there is no double life?

---

---

---

**Family Rules - Family of Origin**

**19.** What were the “rules” in your family of origin?

---

---

---

---

**20.** What topics were not talked about in your family of origin?

---

---

---

---

**21.** How did your family of origin deal with emotion?

---

---

---

---

**22.** Does your family of origin blame problems on others or take responsibility? Explain.

---

---

---

---

**23.** What issues did your family of origin deny or minimize?

---

---

---

---

**Family Rules - Current Family**

**24.** What are the “rules” in your current family?

---

---

---

---

---

**25.** What topics are not talked about in your current family?

---

---

---

---

---

**26.** How does your current family deal with emotion?

---

---

---

---

---

**27.** Did your current family blame problems on others or take responsibility? Explain.

---

---

---

---

---

**28.** What issues do your current family deny or minimize?

---

---

---

---