

Celebrate Recovery of Allen

Recovery from Love and Relationship Addiction

This group provides a safe place to deal with the depression, isolation, lack of trust, and the unhealthy use of love and relationships as means of achieving worth, that are characteristic of Romance and Relationship Addictions.

The Problem

Addicted to “Love” characteristics are:

- Lack of nurturing and attention when young
- Feeling isolated, detached from parents and family
- Outer facade of “having it all together” to hide internal disintegration
- Mistake intensity for intimacy
- Hidden pain
- Seek to avoid rejection and abandonment at all cost
- Afraid to trust anyone in a relationship
- Inner rage over lack of nurturing, early abandonment
- Depressed
- Highly manipulative and controlling of others
- Perceive attraction, attachment, and sex as basic human needs, as with food and water
- Sense of worthlessness
- Escalating tolerance for high-risk behavior
- Intense need to control self, others, and circumstances
- Presence of other addictive or compulsive problems
- Using others to alter mood or relieve pain
- Continual questioning of values and lifestyle
- Driven, desperate, frantic personality
- Existence of secret “double life”
- Refusal to acknowledge existence of problem
- Defining out-of-control behavior as normal
- Defining “wants” as “needs”

The Solution

The goal of recovery is to achieve and maintain sobriety. In most addictions, sobriety can be defined simply by ceasing the unhealthy behaviors. Stopping and staying stopped are the goals. For most types of problems, the slogan “just say no” is appropriate. Staying sober is more complicated with people addictions. The aim of recovery cannot be the complete avoidance of all forms of romance and relationships. It is similar to the challenge faced by people addicted to

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overeating; they cannot simply give up food. Rather, they must learn the difference between healthy and unhealthy eating. They must eliminate the unhealthy while promoting the healthy behavior. In the same way, for those addicted to love, the goal of recovery is not to become a hermit living in the mountains. The goal is to foster healthy relationships and eliminate unhealthy ones.

Asking the following questions can help you determine if a particular behavior will contribute to a healthy relationship or lead to addictive behavior.

1. Will I later have to deny that I did it?
2. Is it self-centered?
3. Is it abusive to myself or to others?
4. Is it inconsistent with my values?
5. Would I refuse to do it if Christ were standing here with me?
6. Is it an action without an underlying commitment?
7. Will I feel better or worse about myself for having done it?
8. Will someone else feel worse for my having done it?
9. Is this a waste of my time or the time of others?
10. Am I doing this to escape painful feelings of reality?

A yes to any of these questions should be a 'red flag' that the behavior being considered may be unhealthy. When romance and relationships proceed with these types of dynamics, they are likely to be dysfunctional and addictive. Sobriety means establishing and maintaining a balanced lifestyle. At the same time, staying sober is always more than the mere presence or absence of certain behaviors. Sobriety is more than just "not doing" certain things. It involves personal growth. It is not what we avoid, but what we grow toward, that makes sobriety meaningful. As we have seen, growth must occur in several areas of our lives. We must look to our physical health. We must be concerned for our emotional, social, and mental welfare. Spiritual growth must be the foundational block, upon which, all other growth is built and sustained. Balance is the key. Romance and relationships have been the dominant factors in the life of one addicted to love. Recovery is the time for these relationships to find their rightful and healthy place as a part of the whole person, not as tyrants which control and consume a person. Recovery is meant to be far more than survival or another coping strategy. Recovery is to lead to an intimate relationship with Christ, and to a re-birth of the heart. The goal is for the healing of a broken and empty heart and the filling of that heart with a love for God, for others and for yourself. Life's central truth is that GOD LOVES US. Christ sacrificed himself because of His love for us. His sacrifice made it possible for us to be people who love. Entering into God's love, making it our own, and being able to share it with others is the goal of recovery.

Some have arrived at this crossroad. One road, a soft road, lures you on to further despair, illness, ruin, and in some cases, mental institutions, prison, or suicide. The other road, a more challenging road, leads to self-respect, solvency, healing, and personal fulfillment. We urge you to take the first difficult step onto the more solid road now.

Twelve Steps and their Biblical Comparisons

1. We admitted we were powerless over our addictions and compulsive behaviors. That our lives had become unmanageable. *"I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out." (Romans 7:18)*

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- 2. We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.** *“For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” (Philippians 2:13)*
- 3. We made a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to the care of God.** *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.” (Romans 12:1)*
- 4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** *“Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the LORD.” (Lamentations 3:40)*
- 5. We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.** *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16)*
- 6. We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.** *“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.” (James 4:10)*
- 7. We humbly asked Him to remove all our shortcomings.** *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)*
- 8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.** *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Luke 6:31)*
- 9. We made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.** *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)*
- 10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.** *“So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall!” (1 Corinthians 10:12)*
- 11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and power to carry that out.** *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.” (Colossians 3:16)*
- 12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs.** *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)*

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