

Understanding Narcissism **Addictions and Detachment as Emotional Survival**

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The Ranch, Promises, The Sexual Recovery Institute

**What first comes to mind first when
you think of this group of men?**

Fmr. President Bill Clinton (USA)

Fmr. Governor Elliot Spitzer (NY)

Fmr. Governor Mark Sanford (SC)

Tiger Woods

Fmr. Chief Dominique Strauss-Kahn

Fmr. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (CA)

They are men whose sexual behavior
MORTALLY WOUNDED their ability to
lead ... but what if their problem had been
drinking or drugs like Fmr Congressman
Patrick Kennedy?

Why do such smart people in powerful positions make such stupid, self-destructive decisions?

- The intellect and the emotions run on different tracks- think about being hungry when busy.
- People under intense pressure with high stress and poor self-care can “end up” being lead around by their emotions. No matter how high their intellect - the emotions always win.
- Some individuals seek positions of status and power to bolster a preexisting internal sense of inadequacy. Without help, they will not resolve nor soothe this emptiness by high status or success, but it will remain unfulfilled.
- They often end-up feeling like *victims* of their own stressful lives and therefore *entitled* to act out - In their minds, *they deserve it.*

“It is thus impossible for this person to cut the tragic link between admiration and love. In his compulsion to repeat he seeks insatiably for admiration, of which he never gets enough, because admiration is not the same thing as love. It is only a substitute gratification for the primary needs for respect, understanding and being taken seriously”

Alice Miller: *The Drama of the Gifted Child*

Is Sexual Addiction A Mental Health Diagnosis ?

- Was in the DSM III
- Was out of the DSM IV
- Now being considered for the DSM V (Hypersexuality)

Sex Addiction is not

- ▶ Axis I Symptom- we r/o out ADD/OCD/
Bipolar
- ▶ A Moral or Religious Stance
- ▶ Fun
- ▶ Fetish / Paraphilia
- ▶ Same Sex Interest or Activity
- ▶ Crystal Meth Addiction
- ▶ Sexual Offending - non consensual

Addicted to Sex?

- ▶ Increased Heart Rate
- ▶ Shallow Breathing
- ▶ Perspiration- palms, underarms, etc.
- ▶ Pupils Dilate, Hearing Acute
- ▶ “Rush” or “Intensity” Feeling
- ▶ **Reduced Intellectual Functioning!**

Think Fight or Flight

Sexual Addiction is the use of Intense Fantasy to Induce Neurochemical Release

- ▶ Serotonin - mood stability
- ▶ Dopamine - pleasure
- ▶ Adrenaline - energy, jolt
- ▶ Endorphins - calm
- ▶ Oxytocin - love/jealousy

ADDICTS CALL IT...

- ▶ The Bubble
- ▶ The Trance
- ▶ Spaced Out

- ▶ Think ...
- ▶ Dissociative State
- ▶ Trauma
- ▶ Self Soothing

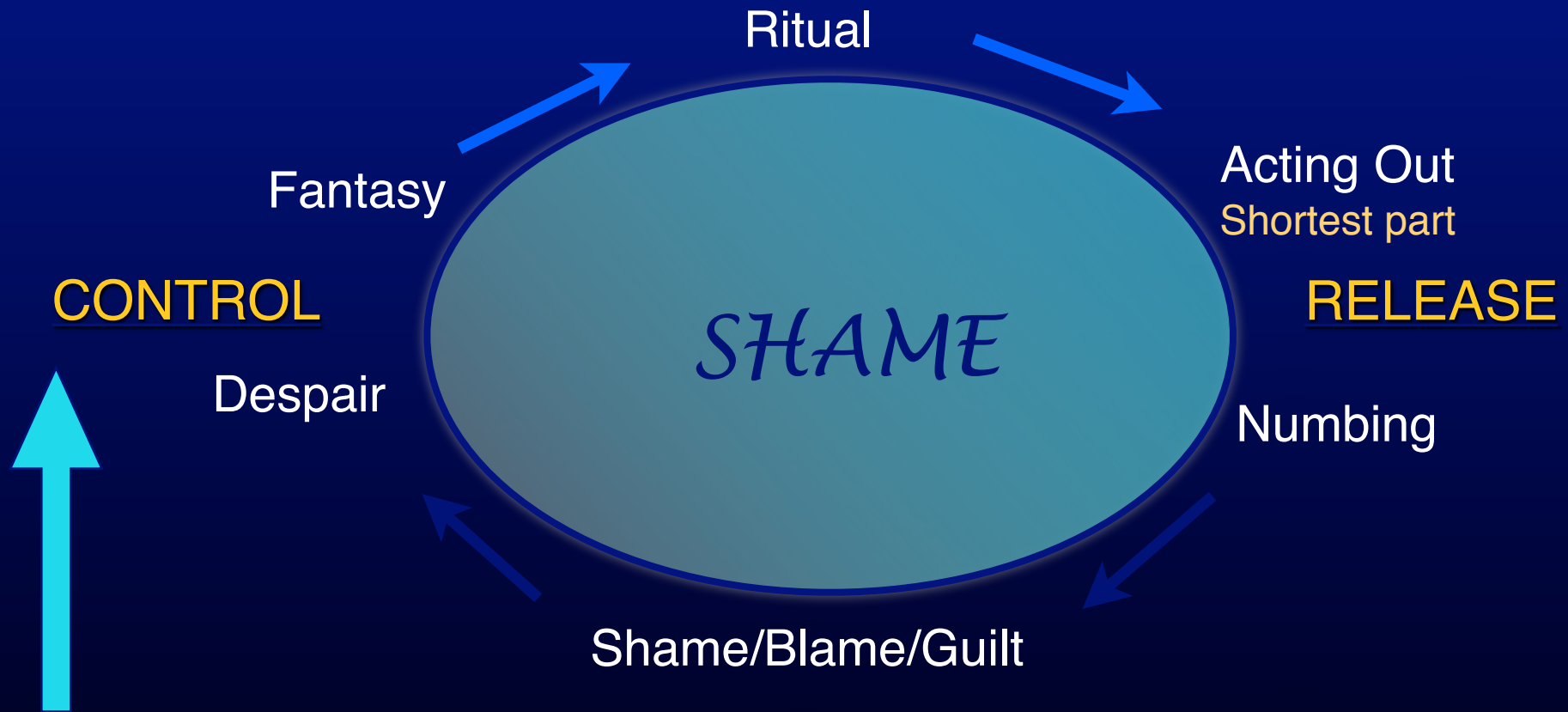
In 12-Step Language ...

POWERLESS!

Sex & Love Addiction are not about sex, intimacy or orgasm. They are about the hunt for sex and desire for admiration and 'controllable intimacy.

They are Process Addictions.

Sexual Addiction Cycle



Any strong emotion generates and stimulates our dependency needs

Fossum/Mason/Carnes/Weiss et al.

Feelings

Inform

Needs

Sadness



Nurturing /
Understanding

Joy



Mirroring

Anger



Echoing / Support

What are the Survival Needs of Infants?

- ▶ Food and Water = Nutrition
- ▶ Dry and Warm = Shelter
- ▶ Holding, Mirroring and Stimulation = Love

What happens to the infant if any one of these three are missing?

- ▶ Absent Food = Death
- ▶ Absent Shelter = Death
- ▶ Absent Love = Death (failure to thrive)

**So how long would any of
us survive today *without ...***

- *Food/Nutrition***
- *Shelter***
- *Love***

**We Need “Love” to Survive
*Throughout the life-cycle***

Shame prevents us from being fully loved

- *Shame is a feeling of being defective* brought about through early attachment deficits and trauma.
- *Shame is learned* as essential dependency needs are denied or subverted and the child turns upon themselves as the source of their own pain.
- *Shame is reinforced* by secretive behavior and acting out - drugs, sex, spending etc.

How does the self
become shamed?

Primary Narcissism

So Who is the Problem?

Not Mom

Not Dad

My Needs are the Problem . . .

The Self is Shamed :(

Development of the Inauthentic (Shamed) Self

- ▶ Genetic or Predetermination — Personality, Affect Management Skills
- ▶ Unresponsive or overly responsive environment
- ▶ Abuse — Psychological, Physical, Sexual

All of which reinforce that I'm better off not needing anyone!

Attachment and Addiction

Early attachment disturbances appear to be a key root cause of both narcissism *and* sexual addiction. Compulsivity and obsession offer some relief from the pain, rage and fear of the disrupted, empty self in those who never learned how to find comfort in healthy relatedness. The compensating compulsive behaviors eventually take on a life of their own.

**There's nothing more
painful than loving into
a void ...**

“The child who is used emotionally by their parent has the chance to develop his intellectual capacities undisturbed, but not the world of his emotions and this will have far-reaching consequences for his well-being.”

Alice Miller: *The Drama of the Gifted Child*

Intensely stimulating activities suppress and distract from unmet dependency needs (love)

- ▶ Addictions (substance and behavioral)
- ▶ Intense Self Focus, Self Blame, Suicidality (shame)
- ▶ Pathological Care-taking /Co-dependency
- ▶ Thrill Seeking / High Risk Activities
- ▶ Dissociation / Fantasy
- ▶ Rage / Abuse
- ▶ Passivity / Helplessness and/or Drama
- ▶ Seduction and Objectification

What does your addict have to say about the need for relationships and intimacy?

- ▶ “I hate myself for being so needy”
- ▶ “I hate my neediness”
- ▶ “I hate my addict”

My needs are SHAMED and the connection between my emotions (call to action) and dependency needs is broken, but I still have to get them met - because I'm human. *Acting out appears as a logical, useful sane solution.*

Maladaptive or Survival Based Coping Skills Provide

- ▶ Self soothing
- ▶ Calm
- ▶ Distraction
- ▶ Stimulation

In the absence, fear of or limited experience with healthier, more integrated relational means of self stability like intimacy & down-regulation (self soothing)

In Summary ...

- ▶ Addicts don't learn about their emotions
- ▶ Addicts don't know what they need or how to get their emotional needs met, they just want any uncomfortable feelings to go away!
- ▶ Addicts learn to disavow their needfulness
- ▶ Most addicts would rather *eat dirt than ask for help* (acknowledge need)

This guides treatment

At-A-Boy!

Getting Better

- Behavioral problems REQUIRE behavioral forms of intervention and treatment
- Problem behaviors have to be contained FIRST before psycho-dynamic therapy and trauma work begins in earnest
- The attachment maladaptations are the slow work of longterm therapy, living honestly and 12-step involvement

Getting Better

- 12-Step and/or Faith Based Support
- Safe Therapeutic Relationships (intimacy)
- Psychotropic Medication (reduced reactivity)
- Addiction Treatment (shame reduction, self/other awareness relapse prevention and skill building)
- Stable Life Circumstances (work, family, relationships)
- Alternative Therapies - EMDR, Mindfulness Practice, Somatic Experiencing, DBT etc.
- Spirituality & Hope

Elements Behavioral Health

Assessment & Treatment Options

- ▶ **The Sexual Recovery Institute (SRI) - Los Angeles**- 2-weeks of Outpatient Intensive Treatment (IOP) - Structured, manualized programming. Clients reside in men's recovery residence - Cost \$7,950 plus housing.
- ▶ Also provide Psycho-sexual and Fitness for Duty Assessment, approx. \$6,500 www.sexualrecovery.com
- ▶ **The Ranch in Tennessee** - 35 Days of Residential Sexual Addiction Treatment with Extensive Trauma and Family Component - cost \$24,500 inclusive www.recoveryranch.com
- ▶ **Promises Malibu or West Los Angeles**- Primary CD Treatment with a focus where needed on Sexual Disorders and access to SRI clinicians or full IOP where needed. www.promises.com

Want to Learn More?

- ▶ *IITAP - International Institute for Trauma, and Addiction Professionals*

www.iitap.com

- ▶ *SASH - The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health*

www.sash.net

- ▶ **E-Summits www.esummit.com**

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