

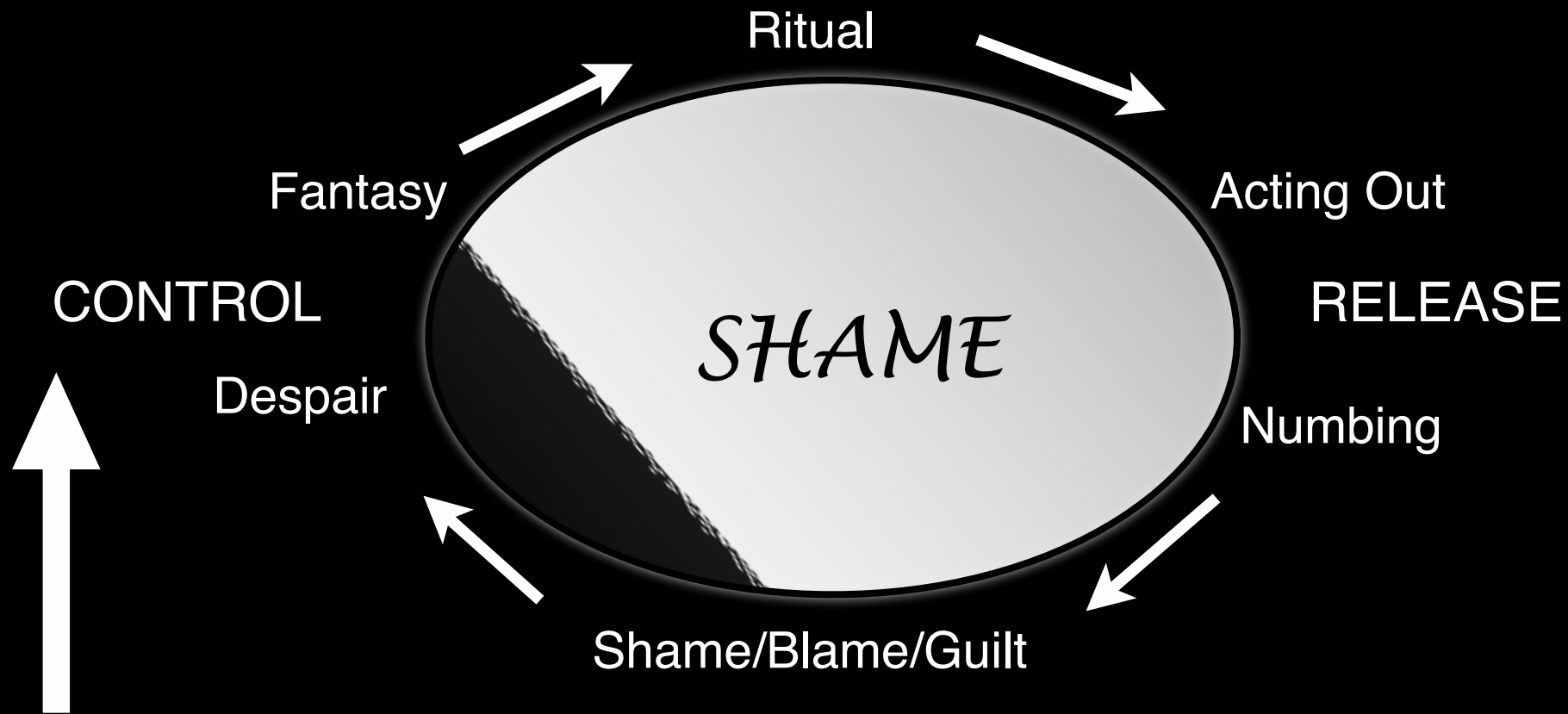
What if Love Never Comes:
**Addictions and Detachment
as Emotional Survival**

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(Typical) Addiction Cycle



All strong emotions generate and stimulate our dependency needs

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 asking others to meet our needs.

Being fully known = Intimacy = RISK

- Shame is the felt experience 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 being the problem.
- Shame is **the antithesis of self-esteem**

Examples of Shame-Based Core Beliefs *

- No one would love me as I am
- If you knew all about me, you would abandon me
- Underneath I am a deeply flawed (unlovable) person

In adult life this is a form of narcissistic self-obsession. To get my needs met AND be safe, I must be in an emotional relationship with people, substances and behavior where I feel in control - even if the situation appears the opposite

* Patrick Carnes- "Out of the Shadows"

Development of the Inauthentic (Shamed) Self

- ▶ Genetic or Predetermination—
Personality, Affect Management Skills
- ▶ Non-responsive or overly responsive environment
- ▶ Abuse—Psychological, Physical, Sexual
- ▶ Environmental / Cultural Factors

***All of which can reinforce the idea that
“I’m better off not needing anyone!”***

**How does the self
get shamed?**

Primary Narcissism

So Who is the Problem?

Not Mom

Not Dad

My Needs are the Problem . . .

The Self is Shamed :(

Attachment and Addiction

Early attachment disturbances appear to be a key root cause of both adult narcissism *and* process addictions. Compulsivity and obsession offer some relief from the pain, rage and fear of the disrupted, empty self in those who never learned of the comfort provided within healthy intimacy. These compensating compulsive and impulsive behaviors eventually take on a life of their own.

“The child who is used and/or abandoned 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*

There's Nothing
More Painful than
Loving into a Void

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”

Essentially- my needs are SHAMED, BUT—I still have to get them met - because I'm human

Narcissism and addictions help us to suppress, avoid and distract from our deeper needs for intimacy and love - by offering the illusion of 'control'

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

Adaptive, survival-based emotional coping skills temporarily provide

- ▶ Self soothing
- ▶ Calm
- ▶ Distraction / Dissociation
- ▶ Stimulation

In the absence of and/or limited experience with healthier, more integrated relational means of self stability.

In Other Words ...

- ▶ Addicts Don't Learn About Their Emotions
- ▶ Addicts Don't Learn From Their Emotions
- ▶ Addicts Learn to Disavow Their Needfulness
- ▶ Most Addicts Would Rather *Eat Dirt* Than Ask For Help (acknowledge need)

**This should guide every stage
of treatment**

At-A-Boy!

Living through it ...

- 12-Step and/or Faith Based Support
- A Safe Therapeutic Relationship (intimacy)
- Psychotropic Medication (reduced reactivity)
- Residential Treatment / Trauma Work (shame reduction and social-self skill building)
- Encouraging Stable Life Circumstances (work, 12-step, family, relationships)
- Alternative Therapies - EMDR, Mindfulness Practice, Somatic Experiencing, DBT etc.
- Spirituality

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