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NARCISSISTIC PARTNERS & OBSESSIVE LOVE

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Narcissism And Love Addiction

Understanding the complex issues around obsessive love (love addiction) and the relationship to narcissism is an important part of breaking the cycle and finding healthy, positive relationships in the future. Knowing how to identify a narcissist if love addiction is present is one of the first steps in becoming aware of the danger of the narcissist and love addiction codependency.

An Overview of Narcissism

Narcissism is a term that is often used incorrectly in general conversation. It is typically used to describe a person that is self-centered and has an inability to have compassion, empathy or understanding of the emotions, experiences, and challenges that others may be going through.

In psychological terms, narcissism is a personality disorder. It does include the symptoms listed above, including that a person sees him or herself as the most important in any relationship. In addition, a narcissist needs to have constant adoration or admiration from those around, while, at the same time, offering no empathy or support as found in a positive, healthy and loving relationship.

The symptoms or signs of a narcissistic person will vary between individuals, but there will be a distinctive pattern of symptoms. These are often individuals that may appear to be supremely confident and capable, but carry it to the level of belittling others or bragging and exaggerating their own achievements and abilities.

Often the narcissist is able to moderate this behavior when meeting new people. In this case, he or she may seem very appealing, almost charming, but there will still be issues with needing to the be the center of attention and claiming all positive occurrences are a result of their abilities, talent, skills and expertise.

He or she will constantly talk about self and not about others unless the discussion of others is to show their inferiority to the narcissist. Often, if the narcissist is rebuffed or perceives he or she is being slighted there will be significant anger, depression or moodiness and withdrawal.

In addition, the narcissist will:

- Constantly look for a "perfect" partner, but never find anyone as good as they are. All past partners will be evil people that were damaged or inferior.
- See his or herself as one a very small group of "special" or "gifted" individuals without any achievements to back it up

- Demand control and authority over everyone
- Take advantage of others with no remorse or concern
- Constantly envy those around them
- Expect to be treated differently (in a superior way) and not follow standard rules, guidelines or expectations
- Constantly be concerned about how others make him or her look rather than any depth of emotion or relationship

It is important to understand that some narcissists come across as self-assured and in control, but in reality, they are very fragile individuals. In addition, people can have some of the traits listed above but not all to still be considered on the narcissism spectrum.

Love Addicts and Narcissists

Love addicts are often codependent, which means they are attracted to the very characteristics of the narcissist. They see only the strong, confident, assertive individual who is a foil to their feelings of low self-esteem, lack of confidence and their inability to see themselves as independent and strong individuals.

In addition, the codependent love addict also sees the narcissist as someone who just needs support, care and a bit of "fixing." This results in the codependent love addict trying desperately to create the relationship that is ideal for the narcissist, which means providing love, admiration, and complete focus to feed the impossibly demanding needs of the narcissist.

In return, the narcissist often becomes more demanding, abusive and uncaring. The more the codependent love addict try to create the "ideal" relationship to make the narcissist happy, the more then narcissist demands.

This cycle continues in a downward spiral. The codependent love addict holds on the relationship using more and more self-destructive behaviors. At the same time, the narcissist becomes more and more abusive, often to the point of significant and damaging emotional and physical abuse. The narcissist will use threats of leaving and may even disappear or cut off communication with the codependent love addict as a form of punishing, knowing the emotion and mental distress this causes but simply not caring.

It is also possible for a love addict to be a narcissist. This creates an individual who will resort to whatever is necessary to meet their own needs at the expense of all around them. They will be dominant in the relationship and demand to make all

decisions. The will see themselves as superior to their partners, and they will resort to extreme forms of behavior to prevent the partner from leaving, even though the other partner will shoulder the blame for all the relationship problems.

The Outcome

Without counseling and supports in place, the relationship of a codependent love addict and a narcissist will become more and more dangerous for the love addict. The narcissist will often have multiple affairs and partners as he or she is unable to see their spouse as anything but a possession.

His or her focus on self and the constant demand for attention and adoration will never change. It is very rare for a narcissist to make any effort to change the behavior as the personality disorder simply prevents them from seeing themselves as anything but superior and justified.

It is the codependent love addict that is more likely to seek support, often after the relationship reaches a level of emotional or physical abuse that causes significant harm. This counseling and support will typically last for an extended period of time, allowing the codependent love addict to address their misperceptions and understandings of themselves and how a healthy relationship functions.

Through counseling, love addicts that are codependent will also learn coping strategies to be comfortable by themselves. This ability to see a unique individual without being defined by a relationship can be challenging for codependent people, but it is a critical step in gaining self-confidence and the inner strength to be able to finally leave the narcissist.

It is very common for the narcissist to actively undermine the efforts of the codependent love addict to gain personal strength and change behavior. As he or she sees the change in the partner, he may become more abusive or go back to the original seductive, charming type of behavior to try to stop the codependent from leaving.

It will be critical for the codependent to see this behavior for what it is, simply an escalation in the narcissism. Through staying in counseling and becoming educated on the past dynamics, codependent love addicts can change their thoughts and behaviors around relationships and find a healthy, positive and supportive partner in the future.

About
Sherry Gaba

Sherry Gaba is a Celebrity Life Coach, author, and Psychotherapist specializing in individual, couples, family and group psychotherapy with a private practice in California.

Sherry has over 20 years of experience as a clinician and she is a graduate of USC, specializing in addiction, trauma, anxiety, depression, relationship counseling and life coaching. She is currently serving as a private practitioner working with a broad spectrum of clients. She is also a consultant for several high profile Malibu Rehab Centers and has worked with numerous celebrities in her career.

Sherry appeared on Celebrity Rehab where she facilitated psychotherapy and life coaching as well as their subsequent spin off Sober House and Celebrity Rehab's Sex Addiction. Sherry is a practical, interactive, solution focused therapist. Her treatment approach is to provide support and practical feedback to help clients resolve current problems and long standing patterns.

Sherry is the author of the 2011 award winning book *Infinite Recovery* and *Love Smacked: How to Stop the Cycle of Relationship Addiction and Codependency to Find Everlasting Love*.

Sherry sees private clients and lectures and speaks at various venues throughout the United States. Her books, CDs and events can be found on her website SherryGaba.com. She can be reached through her website or via email at info@sherrygaba.com.

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