

# Seductiveness in Addiction

What makes the addictive relationship so attractive is the mood change it produces. It works every time, it's guaranteed. No human relationship can make this kind of guarantee. This is where the trust aspect of addiction is meaningful. Addicts trust they will experience a mood change if they perform certain behaviors. Thus, through acting out, the addict experiences a sense of control. This helps to counteract the total sense of powerlessness and unmanageability the addict is feeling on a deeper, more personal level.

There are many seductive aspects in the addictive process. Addiction is a process of buying into false and empty promises; the promise of relief, the promise of emotional security, the false sense of fulfillment, and the false sense of intimacy with the world. It is not only the relationship with the particular object, event or behavior that is dangerous for addicts— it is dangerous to chase this form of dishonesty. Finding emotional fulfillment through an object, event or behavior is an illusion. It's dishonest to believe an object, event or behavior can bring anything more than a temporary mood change. Continued dishonesty of this type can produce a new addictive relationship with another object, event or behavior. As all addicts know, objects, events or behaviors can be easily replaced; shifting from one form of addiction to another is easy for addicts. Highs come in many forms.

Emotionally, addicts get intensity and intimacy mixed up. Acting out is an intense experience for an addict because it involves going against themselves. While in the process of acting out, addicts may feel very much alive, very excited, very shameful, and very scared. Whatever they are feeling they feel it intensely. Addicts feel very connected to the moment because of the intensity, an easy escape from normal reality.

Intensity, however, is not intimacy, though addicts repeatedly get them mixed up. The addict has an intense experience and believes it is a moment of intimacy. An alcoholic, for example, sees his relationships with his drinking buddies as deep and very personal, only to have them slip away when the drinking event does not occur. Or the adrenaline junkie who smokes tobacco for the buzz feels camaraderie with other smokers. Trickier are behavioral addictions. The codependent triangle of roles: victim, rescuer and persecutor. Shifting from one role to another is intoxicating. Busying oneself with anything and everything creates intensity easily mistaken to be intimacy. Another behavioral addiction common in our culture is spending money or using material goods to achieve feeling high. Addiction to control is devastating; wreaking havoc in our personal relationships, distancing the ones we profess to love.

Part of the essence of intimacy has to do with time. Intimacy isn't just a moment, but many moments linked together over time. Just like adolescents, practicing addicts live for the moment. The only difference is that addicts stay trapped in an adolescent stage as long as their addiction remains active. If they are married legally, they are definitely not married relationally. "When anything gets between a person and the behavior of their addiction, they become ugly," stated a recovering addict.