

## CHARACTERISTICS OF ADDICTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

some excerpts from material supplied by Tice Elkins, L.C.S.W., Rosville, CA

1. **SHORT TERM GRATIFICATION** I need to feel **GOOD** right now!! Even brief periods of boredom, lack of intensity or discomfort are unacceptable.
2. **COMPULSIVE INVOLVEMENT** I feel the irrational need to become involved or maintain involvement in the relationship in spite of my knowing of the predictable pain and predictable problems.
3. **THE NEED TO HAVE A PERFECT RELATIONSHIP** I believe that I must be perfect, my partner must be perfect, and we must have a flawless relationship.
4. **OVER CONTROL** I must make this relationship go my way at all costs. The only way to feel secure or comfortable is to maintain absolute control.
5. **SELF CENTERED FOCUS** I can only love & feel good about my partner if she or he enhances my self concept (i.e., makes me feel good about me).
6. **DEMANDS OF INTENSE, CONTINUAL SATISFACTION** I can only love my partner if she or he provides continuous pleasure and satisfaction.
7. **OBSESSIVE FOCUS ON THE RELATIONSHIP** The relationship only counts if I can make it the major focus of my life. I must be able to think about the relationship instead of thinking about myself, my fears, my weaknesses and insecurities...or something is wrong with "us".
8. **COMPULSIVE NEED TO "WORK THE RELATIONSHIP"** I'm afraid that if I stop **WORKING** on it, the relationship will fail.
9. **MAGICAL EXPECTATIONS** I believe the relationship should make **ME** better -- without having to invest time or energy in working on anything except the relationship ("they" will fix "me", if I work on "us" and I don't have to focus on myself, think about myself, or be responsible for looking at myself by myself)
10. **PERIODIC DOUBTS THAT MY PARTNER IS GOOD ENOUGH** At times I believe I am too good for them. At other times I believe that they are too good for me.
11. **SHAME & GUILT ABOUT MY ROLE IN THE RELATIONSHIP** The sense that I'm doing something wrong that will cause the relationship to fail, i.e. not living up to my expectations, for being involved with an inadequate partner, for being unable to change my partner.
12. **DENIAL ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS** Can't think clearly or talk openly about my view of the relationship. I avoid or evade clear, logical thought and talk. Instead I engage in wishful thinking, become dishonest or omit important aspects when talking with others about the relationship.
13. **REPETITIVE CYCLE OF PAIN** Efforts to **FIX** a dysfunctional relationship result in periods of intense pleasure and periods of intense pain, over & over.



**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING  
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**