

What is love addiction?

In this blog I shall refer to the Love Addict as female (most common) but males can also experience Love Addiction, (please don't let embarrassment hold you back from seeking help).

Anyone that has read my website information will know that I work with a lot of compulsive behaviour – i.e. to try to stop unwanted behaviour that is causing distress.

People can comprehend compulsive behaviours around alcohol, drugs, food, gambling and Sex addiction – but any mention of Love Addiction produces puzzled faces.

In a nutshell – if we have experienced 'being in love' ourselves – if we recall the very early days of getting to know a prospective partner, the excitement and pleasure we can have and be boosted by and want to have as much as possible of – is Love addiction on a small scale. Multiply those wonderful feelings a zillion times, put them on steroids and we can start to get an insight into the scale of feelings that is experienced by a 'Love addict'. So, this glorious feeling is what the Love Addict eats, breathes & sleeps. Every date they go on, is described as feeling instant love that is overwhelming and special and the object of their desire is elevated into the highest realms. There has never existed a greater love. They then eat breathe and sleep these feelings – literally nothing in life, is as important than the chosen one receiving this adoration and the Love addict wants the world to know how she worships this person. Almost instantly the Love Addict believes that this is the person for her. No other will do as no other will give her these intense, dominating, emotional and physical feelings.

Now if that was the true picture – it would be special indeed. Unfortunately – there are long reaching negative dynamics, at play here.

As I have explained in other blogs, when it comes to romance, we are all consciously and unconsciously attracted to people. Surprisingly, we are often attracted to people that unknowingly, help us recreate a difficult emotional situation previously experienced in our life – that we could not find a resolution for. So consciously we are attracted to his smile, his laughter and the way he looks deep into your eyes when he is chatting. What you are unaware of is the unconscious attraction to his unavailability – either emotional or practical e.g. he currently has a hectic life pursuing his career & he doesn't have any plans to be in a relationship for another 5 years. Or he lives 15,000 miles away, is married with 4 children etc. But attracted we are and in the hot pursuit of this object of desire, – nothing is too difficult or arduous to tackle, in order for her to overcome any difficulties that stand in the way of this momentous love.

So, the unavailable man meets this full on female who hangs on his, every word, gazes dreamily at him and will do anything he wants her to do, nothing is too much. So, he is launched into this dynamic that has a certain level of attraction to him, after all who doesn't want to be adored and worshipped and he is swept away by the tidal wave of intensity that now predominates. Sadly, a Love Addicted female, most often will pair with a Sex Addicted male. In the beginning, he signs up for all of this attention and

sex and it feel great to him too. However, the Love Addicts emotions and logical thoughts have been hijacked by their contact, whilst his emotions and logical thoughts are usually hijacked by sex and rarely come anywhere near those of the female. He is however drawn into the dynamic as he is bold over by her constant need for sex and ability to be available to him 24/7. In no time whatsoever – things start to curl at the edges. Whilst the female does enjoy the sex in the dynamic, it's the emotional and practical demonstration of, (however she defines care) from him that is paramount. So, when obstacles start to interfere with their meet up plans/calls/texts etc – the female launches herself on a mission to clear away all obstacles and 'fix' whatever she needs to, in order to get her drug of choice – which is 'him'.

When a lot of situations have been 'fixed', he then starts to get cold feet. He realises too late that he actually really enjoys seeing his brother and golfing a couple of times a month. He loves his company and golf is a great way to destress from his hectic career, but the female has put a stop to that, by warning his brother off. He notices other situations in his life that are none of her business – have also been interfered with by her. He starts to address this and dig his heels in. He acts to create emotional space between them for e.g. a few days or a week. This then triggers huge panic in the female and with responses that can only be described as hysterical – she starts to call and text him voicing how much she needs him and that he must call her back immediately. This makes the male dig his heels in even more. For God's sake, he has told her till he is blue in the face that he wants time to spend with his friends and family and he needs to see his wife and kids more than once a month. This triggers the hysteria becoming more of a nuclear explosion. The acute and very real emotional pain of the female is unleashed on the male. She has no hesitation in telling him that he is the cause of her pain and upset, saying that he knows she loves him so much, that she needs to see him every day and to keep in constant contact throughout the day. He is unwilling to jump at this, he doesn't cancel his plans and he realises that replying to her texts and calls in that moment, is only driving his mood down. She blames him for her unhappiness and can spout a laundry list of 'crimes' against her that he has undertaken. The sex is great – but as he has told her several times, he is never going to leave his wife for her. His wife and kids are his responsibility – but the demanding female's happiness is not his responsibility. He eventually doesn't really want the sex either, as the drama and chaos she is causing in his life – is just not worth it. He becomes less and less responsive to her onslaught of texts and phone calls. The crushing and searing pain that the female feels at this stage – does not stop her firing off a 5 chapter text about how much of a shit he is to her, (after all she has done for him). When he ignores that text too, as bad as the utter humiliation is – it does not stop her from finding another way to 'get to' the male and demand attention.

And so it continues.

For the female; whereas, she used to eat breath and sleep the gloriousness of her hero – she now eats, breathes and sleeps the misery that he is causing her. She just needs to keep on 'fixing' the situation and all will be well – he is her 'life'.

For the male; whereas, he used to be adored and put on a pedestal, suddenly he is the enemy – accused of all that is causing the female misery in her life. He resolves

to break it off with her, but the next time she offers sex, as an addict, he can't refuse and the cycle of destruction continues.

What on earth is going on?

The main thing to know is that both parties will most likely have had difficult relationships in their childhood. The female commonly has a toxic relationship with her father and she is recreating the dynamics of desperate longing, with a man that is emotionally unavailable. Why do people do this? It's usually not until Therapy that people become aware of their conscious and unconscious processes -so they don't have an understanding of their own actions.

This female has recreated a dynamic that feels normal to her. She may be extremely distressed, unable to eat or sleep or go to work, but as she is 'used' to this, she knows she can survive it.

For the male, he may have been the 'scapegoat' in his family e.g. 'blamed for everything' and again, although he hates how it makes him feel – it is normal to him, he knows how to survive it all. He can get some great sex and if she doesn't back off, then if he has to, he will put an end to their contact.

So how does Therapy Help? (as space is limited a very brief overview is given)

The most important choice the female has to make is, – is she going to continue in this miserable position that worsens by the hour, or is she going to end it? Most females want to 'keep on trying to fix' the situation. They are over responsible and happy to try to do anything and everything to get what they 'need' from the male. Whilst they continue with the same repeating pattern of mostly lows at this point – there is no space for them to reset their emotions, to learn how to cope by using their own emotions and care to nurture themselves. The focus of the work here is to help the client understand herself better. If the relationship ends, often the Therapy ends and the female disappears into another wonderful relationship -doomed with the whole familiar repeating dynamic again. When the female is eventually beaten by the distress this compulsive behaviour is causing – help to change can be made.

In the beginning the focus is on helping the Love addict to understand herself better and to focus 80% of her attention on 'herself' and 20% on the significant other. A battle in itself.

Tools are given to help her survive panic mode when she is not able to elicit 'care' from another. At this stage, what is VITAL to healthy progression is the 'No contact rule' with the fallen hero, at any time. Then there is space for her emotions to re-calibrate again, to start from the beginning and to help her build up her ability to cope with life, emotions, traumas etc on her 'own, i.e. without a man in her life – but with the support of friends & family. With a lot of hard work, the female can turn the situation around and learn how to provide for herself what another can't. When a good period of emotional stability has been experienced, (involving a lot of hard work from the female) – if she eventually feels ready for 'dating', we reinforce healthy coping mechanism and acute self-awareness, to prevent her repeating her destructive cyclic behaviour again.

With time and space, the male will often initiate contact with the female again. – after all he misses the adoration – but most of all the sex!

If any of this information talks to you and you would like help to change your behaviour – I shall be delighted to hear from you.