

The Romantic Stage

(Blissful Fusion)

An edited portion from the Romantic Stage

Love Addiction

Love addiction, if it does occur, is most likely to happen in the Romantic Stage. Clients have approached me complaining they feel trapped in what they describe falsely as their “love” relationship. They feel they have become hopelessly in love with a partner who is not fulfilling their needs and they perceive themselves as helpless in the situation. This is most common in relationships where one is involved in an extramarital affair; however, it can occur under any circumstance where passion or loving attention is received only intermittently.

The belief that this person is involved in a “love” relationship is often untrue. They may be experiencing a form of excitement that is associated with love, but there the resemblance ends. What is often the case is that these people are experiencing what is known in the field of psychology as *intermittent reinforcement*. To illustrate this concept, I offer the plight of the typical slot machine gambler.

A slot machine is programmed to pay off intermittently to reinforce the gambler’s desire to keep playing. However, there probably isn’t a person reading

this that doesn't know the player must eventually lose. What happens, however, is that the anxiety of whether or not the next play will "pay-off" or even deliver the "Jackpot" supplies a continuous rush of energy which the player becomes addicted to. This is what keeps them in the game until finally, frustrated and out of money, they are forced to quit.

The addictive relationship is quite similar in that the addicted partner receives a little "pay-off" now and then. For example, these "pay-off's" may take the form of rare periods of understanding and tenderness from your partner or unexpected episodes of erotic sex. During this period, a generalized anxiety syndrome is established; hoping, but never knowing when the next "pay-off" will come. This intermittent reinforcement creates a powerful emotion which is perceived as Blissful Fusion, convincing the addicted person they are "in love".

The pattern of reinforcement between the two participants needs to be broken. The addicted partner must recognize what is going on and get out of the "game" before they spend any more of their life on a losing proposition. It can be difficult to walk away from this emotional addiction but they must find the strength to give themselves another chance at love. The addicted person should also ask themselves why they fell into this kind of relationship and try avoiding it in the future.

Remember, in a true "love relationship" both partners are actively caring and concerned for the welfare of the other. There is a mutual respect for the needs and desires of both and an exchange of giving

that is reasonably equal. Don't be fooled by the experience of intermittent reinforcement. Mature love is a 24 hour a day process which should provide you significant psychological and emotional support in your life.

The Importance of Sex

Although procreation may be nature's primary intent, the desire to make love between two people experiencing Blissful Fusion is intensified in a way that goes beyond having children. Sex is a powerful natural instinct shared by most species of the animal kingdom; however, "making love" is more than just "having sex". Making love requires the desire and ability to show affection and tenderness along with the passion nature usually provides innately. The ability to be thoughtful and caring toward your lover during the sex act is a skill that comes only with human awareness. Most of us are conditioned to seek out, become excited by, and unite with the object of our attraction but it is important to remember that being thoughtful and showing respect demonstrates the ideal concept of love.

Many lovers find they are compatible in every way except when involved in the sex act. Sexual incompatibility can be difficult to overcome in a relationship, but it must be worked out for the relationship to succeed. On the other hand, sometimes it's only during the sex act that some couples feel truly satisfied with each other. This can be an even greater problem. Obviously, the sex act and its momentary

climax can only carry a relationship so far. Without the psychological and spiritual components to go with it, there will eventually be a loss of respect between the lovers.

Within the context of the seven stages I am addressing the issues of mature love relationships regardless of the sexual preference involved. It is not my purpose to judge people who enjoy the rewards of a loving relationship in a way others might regard as unconventional. It is only necessary that their desire to love and be loved be sincere. Above all, both lovers must feel comfortable with the frequency and whatever sexual activity is taking place. In some cases, lovers may choose not to have sexual intercourse but still initiate a physical relationship. In these cases, there are still many ways sexual affection can be expressed.

Physical affection must be a part of the romantic love relationship or else the relationship is better described as a loving friendship. *In the final analysis, it is the sexual aspect of the romantic love relationship that differentiates it from a loving friendship.*

**If you would like to purchase
the book online, go to:
cafepress.com/blissfulfusion**

**If you prefer to order by phone,
call toll-free: (877) 809-1659**