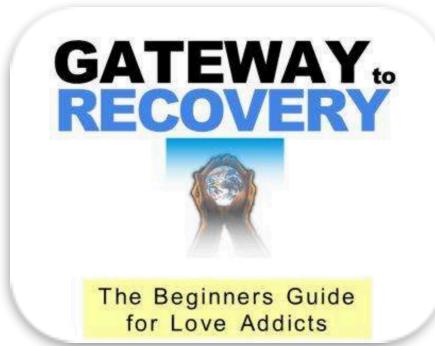


Gateway to Recovery

Beginners guide for love addicts (a summary by Pat Evert)

Chances are you (or someone you know) are suffering from some degree of compulsive love addiction behavior. You Are Not Alone. There is Hope for Change. There are varying levels of compulsive behaviors in love addiction - these may range from problematic unhealthy relational patterns and obsession, to very serious dependency. **Love addiction is an extremely painful relational pattern of loving that leads to the loss of self.** Addictive relationships involve the love addict and avoidant partner, who love addicts like radar, so commonly draw to themselves. Love Addiction lays a foundation for spiritual and emotional impoverishment - and buries the addict's value, power, and abundance. **It leads to a obsessive dependency to another person in the search for self control, intimacy and belonging.** Men and women struggling with love addiction ironically are usually using love as a way to escape from the self.



- **Ground rules for paving a successful path to recovery**

To break this addiction successfully, you need to understand the core issues, including shame/damaged self esteem, boundary impairment, unrealistic relational expectations, and fear of abandonment and intimacy. Inevitably, **blaming will only halt any chance of growth and recovery.** Recovery is NOT about them. The better you are to you, the better your life will be. You have the capacity to change. Human beings have an innate capacity to change even the most difficult conditions. Even with pain you are healing—and know it won't last forever if you stick with recovery. Be mindful when your attention is not in the moment. When your mind dwells in the future or the past, you can do nothing. Remember, the only time you can ever do anything is right now. Avoid beating up on yourself when you make mistakes - because you will... it's all part of the journey. There is no room in recovery for buying into feelings of guilt and shame, as they perpetuate the shame/guilt spiral that often feeds our very dependency and addiction. The feelings of shame are always full of lies. **In recovery, you learn to let your feelings in and accept them for what they are - with no shame.** Accepting and honoring your feelings is part of nurturing self; part of honoring your humanness; part of validating self. Many of our feelings are distorted because of our thinking. So when you have the feelings of unworthiness, un-lovability, not being good enough; feeling that you will never get through this, that you cannot change, etc. — **don't accept the feeling as a reality.** You just validate its presence. One of the most important aspects of living a healthy life is your ability to share your true self with the world around you.

This is engaging in intimacy. You have been in denial - and **recovery is impossible with denial**. Choose absolute honesty as a foundation for how you live your life. Freedom is the capstone of truth.

- **Journaling**

One significant aspect of recovery is learning how **to become more aware and self-observant of our thoughts, feelings and emotions**. Journaling is an excellent tool to start this process. Journaling can help you to gain better clarity of where we are in the moment. This can be an enormous help in developing and **repairing your relationship with yourself**.

- **The power of gratitude**

What can you do right now to begin turning your life around? You can start to focus on gratitude, that is, the positives in your life you can be grateful for today. Studies show that people who focus on what they can be grateful for in life - have higher levels of well-being, and are more satisfied with their lives and social relationships. Focus on the things in life that you can be grateful for despite today's challenges. Your thoughts are powerful; you can change your feelings – and behavior – by changing your focus. **You still can apply energy and focus on positives in your life by writing them down and going back to them frequently**—preferably on a daily basis.

- **Positive self talk: affirming yourself**

One primary core issue for love addicts is a false sense of shame and unworthiness. Positive self talk/affirmations is an easy and powerful tool to start this process. There is nothing wrong with you. It is the relationship with yourself and life that is dysfunctional. This powerful tool is an excellent way to begin the process of realizing your inherent value and worthiness.

Recovery Affirmations

I am lovable

I am inherently valuable, amazing and a worthy human being

I am a perfectly imperfect human being

I am a unique and precious human being... doing the best I can

I deserve love, honor, respect and peace in my life

I deserve to take care of all my needs

The better I treat myself, the better I will treat others

- **Get support - be connected**

You cannot do recovery alone. Without healthy support, recovery will fail.

- 1- Get involved with a 12 Step group
- 2- Find a Counselor/Therapist and/or recovery or relationship coach/mentor
- 3- Seek Support from Family/friends

by Jim Hall MS

Research about recovery from addiction has indicated that 12-step meetings are important for successful recovery. Those who do not attend 12-step meetings have a much more difficult time recovering, if they do at all.

S.L.A.A. is a 12-step program for Sex and Love Addicts. Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous makes a special point of addressing “love addiction” as well as sex addiction. The core issues of sex and love addiction are virtually the same. Plus, there are many who are sex addicts as well as love addicts. Visit www.slaafws.org.

I strongly recommend developing a support network with several friends and/or family members. A sponsor from a 12 step meeting is another one you may add to your support network.

My Support List		
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Time I will call this week: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Time I will call this week: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Time I will call this week: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Time I will call this week: _____
Name: _____	Phone #: _____	Time I will call this week: _____

- **Read recovery literature**

Solid recovery in love addiction is a comprehensive process - so you must make use of books and literature on addiction, love, recovery, relationships that can contribute to your growth and healing. **Daily reading helps keep your focus on recovery.** And if you get one good idea or new insight from a book, it is well worth it.

- **Wellness-Self-Care: Begin to develop healthy habits**

A critical aspect of recovery is replacing unhealthy habits and developing healthy habits that contribute to our growth, recovery and well being.

by Jim Hall MS

- Small amounts of **exercise** — as little as 10 to 15 minutes a day can improve mood in the short term. Walking is an easy activity to do and is an excellent form of exercise.
- Healthy eating and good **nutrition** is not about strict nutrition philosophies, Rather, it's about part of self care, feeling great, having more energy, and keeping yourself as healthy as possible.
- At least once a week, try to plan a **leisurely activity** that provides fun and relaxation.

Find perfection in the imperfection and love yourself through this process. Get excited that you are in the biggest change in your life!!