

Leaving the Enchanted Forest: The Path from Relationship Addiction to Intimacy

Workshop Overview

Historically, addiction has been viewed as dependence on a specific substance, such as alcohol, drugs, or food. Today, our expanded understanding of the process underlying all addictions has resulted in a greater awareness that many relationships have an addictive nature as well. Although we have been socialized to think of these obsessions as love, the compelling allure of obsessive attraction lacks the depth and enduring quality of true caring. Those at high risk for relationship addiction include recovering alcoholics/addicts who use relationships as a form of substitution, and/or individuals who grow up in alcoholic/dysfunctional family systems. One does not need to be a relationship addict to question and struggle with what constitutes a healthy relationship. Due in part to socialization, women in particular are vulnerable to “loving too much.” Many traditional ideas of romantic love, fueled by fairy tales, music, and movies, are no longer functional in changing world, yet they persist and frequently encourage relationship addiction.

This workshop moves beyond mere awareness of the dynamics of relationship addiction to offer participants an opportunity to understand the source of addictive relationships, develop appropriate treatment techniques, examine the elements of healthy relationships, and explore the elusive qualities of intimacy and love.

Workshop Topics

- Dynamics of addiction and addictive relationships
- Source of the problem: family and society
- Treatment strategies
- Stepping-stones to healthy relationships
- Mutuality: the cornerstone of intimacy
- The relational wheel and circle of love

Workshop Objectives

- Understand the dynamics of addictive relationships
- Identify the impact of family and society of intimacy and love
- Develop treatment approaches
- Examine characteristics of healthy relationships
- Explore concepts of love and intimacy

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