

## THE PROBLEM (1)

Before coming to Sex Addicts Anonymous, many of us never knew that our problem had a name. All we knew was that we couldn't control our sexual behaviour. For us, Sex was a consuming way of life. Although the details of our stories were different, our problem was the same. We were addicted to sexual behaviours that we returned to over and over, despite the consequences.

Early on, as children and adolescence, we had come to feel disconnected-from our siblings and peers, from parents and ourselves. We felt inadequate, unworthy, alone and afraid. Our insides never matched what we saw on the outsides of others. We lost our ability to trust in others to fulfil our needs for nurturing and security.

To compensate from our loss, we started to develop a reliance upon sexual experiences as a way of escaping the pain, resentment, fear and the emptiness of our lives. Some of us feared being sexual at all – we couldn't see that our sexuality was healthy, and God given.

Looking for love in all the wrong places, we became true addicts. Promiscuity, dependant and abusive relationships, pornography, social media, compulsive masturbation, anonymous sexual encounters and much more besides. We got it through the eyes. We bought it, we sold it we traded it, we gave it away. Addicted to the tease, to the forbidden, to the high, we abused others and we abused ourselves.

In a downward spiral, we acted out to try to take away our pain, but this only increased our self-hatred which, sooner or later, we would try to ease again by acting out. The more we did it the more difficult it was for us to stop. We risked our relationships, jobs, health, freedom, even our lives. We felt guilty and ashamed. We were driven inwards, away from reality and love, lost inside ourselves.

Our addiction made true intimacy impossible. Lust killed love. We took from others to fill up what was lacking ourselves, and, in desperate search of the Big Fix, we turned other human beings in to objects of our gratification. We could never know true intimacy with another because we were addicted to the unreal, the intoxication and the intensity of the pursuit. We looked for the instant hit and the danger, because it bypassed intimacy and true union with another, which we feared more than death, we were really losing our lives.

By surrendering again and again to the discipline of meeting with each other, we find that people, without knowing it, through the honest revelation of their own lives, confront us with our disease as it really is, and by bringing our disease out of the shadows and in to the light of the meeting, we deprive it of its source of power, which is in our secrecy and shame. As time passes, we gradually realise that we are coming to accept ourselves and to recognise that we really do have worth and value. Our healing has already begun.