

Workbook

# Surviving the Addictive Love Cycle

The Online Recovery Program  
to Heal the Heartbreak  
of Rejection

HELEN MIA HARRIS

# Surviving the Addictive Love Cycle

**A self-help workbook of empowering exercises and strategies to support you through a painful break-up, unrequited love and loss**

Helen Mia Harris

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Helen Mia Harris is a registered therapist but offers her insights and advice for guidance only. All dates, place names, titles and events in this account are factual. However, the names have been changed in order to protect privacy and respect patient confidentiality.

It is also wise to have face-to-face grief counselling or relationship therapy as this program is by no means the absolute cure for the acute despair one can experience at this devastating time. If you are experiencing: panic, depression, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, anxiety or separation distress, it is vital that you also make an appointment with your local General Practitioner; this can be coupled by seeing a therapist or psychoanalyst in your local area.

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## **Introduction**

This workbook and the exercises within it have been created by Helen Mia Harris, relationship and Love Addiction expert, and are designed to help teach you how to survive a painful breakup.

It is for those who have, or are currently, experiencing insecurity, powerlessness, neediness, love and loss, possessiveness, separation, abandonment anxiety, anxious attachment, lovesickness, unrequited love and rejection. It is for those who are addicted to love or the euphoric highs that go with the feeling of falling in love, or for those experiencing grief-like withdrawal as a result of a break up, relationship loss, divorce, or a relationship that is nearing an end.

While this workbook is not the cure and is not a substitute for all aspects of treatment and recovery, it offers essential insights, tools, practical exercises and strategies to help overcome and adjust to the acute discomfort of love withdrawal and abandonment anxiety.

In this workbook I am going to share with you powerful strategies, exercises and tools that will help you through the primary stages of overwhelming desolation that is often felt after a painful breakup from someone you have experienced a deep and profound love for.

I am a psychotherapist trained in relationship and couples therapy and have specialised in the area of love addiction, the grief process and bereavement for over 23 years. I owe the development of this recovery program to many couples and individuals I have seen over the years who have suffered desperately at the hands of abandonment, love withdrawal, separation, rejection and love addiction.

Throughout this book I will draw on my own personal experience of love withdrawal and loss. All of the research in this workbook was born out of the feeling that, when I was going through this debilitating time in my life, I felt utterly alone, helpless and isolated. So rather than being diminished and destroyed by this experience, you will instead be in a position to call upon the knowledge, understanding and practical steps required to move beyond your grief and loss so you may heal the wound of abandonment.

This can be achieved by gaining wholeness, individuality and going through the process of change; making personal contact with the intuitive, the trustworthy, authentic, courageous, reliable, wise, vulnerable, strong and healing self.

**“First comes all the pain and rage against the wound. Then, with acceptance of the wound come the tears of transformation and a natural healing that can lead to love and compassion.”**

*--- Linda Schierse Leonard, The Wounded Woman*

An addiction to romantic love is not a “love story”, although it may definitely feel like it is at the very beginning.

It is a story about powerlessness, longing, rejection, abandonment anxiety, anxious attachment and an addiction to the feeling of ‘being in love’ which can often resemble the exact same craving and yearning that a person would experience whilst being addicted to a drug.

It's about unrequited love, unfulfilled dreams, romantic fantasies; a longing to attach oneself to that one special and unique person who we believe will complete us, as if we have found our soul mate; the one that imbues our lives with a profound sense of meaning and purpose.

An addiction to romantic love is about losing ourselves in the beloved; it's about obsession, separation anxiety, helplessness, grief, sorrow, loss, and the yearning for that love to be mutually reciprocated.

In my practice I see how the debilitating effects of love addiction can obliterate all sense of reality in a split second. For some it can begin with just a glance across a crowded room or an online encounter.

The love addict can be catapulted in to a dark, insidious and fearful world, one where he or she can lose all grip of reality and decline into a deeply anxious state where they begin to experience the most primal of all fears, rejection and abandonment; spiralling out of control, unable to eat, suffering from panic attacks when the person of addiction fails to phone or make contact. This is Love Addiction in every sense.

Stanton Peele the founder of Love Addiction writes in his book: *Love and Addiction*:

*“When a person goes to another with the aim of filling a void in himself, the relationship quickly becomes the centre of his or her life. It offers him solace that contrasts sharply with what he finds everywhere else, so he returns to it more and more, until he needs it to get through each day of his otherwise stressful and unpleasant existence. When a constant exposure to something is necessary in order to make life bearable, an addiction has been brought about, however romantic the trappings. The ever-present danger of withdrawal creates an ever-present craving.”*

**--- (Stanton Peele and Archie Brodsky)**

*“Someone who is dissatisfied with himself or his situation can discover in such a relationship the most encompassing substitute for self-contentment and the effort required to attain it.”*

**--- (Stanton Peele and Archie Brodsky)**

## **Who Is This Book For?**

- Couples (married or not) in a co-dependent relationship (insecure anxious attachment)
- Individuals experiencing co-dependency, toxic/inflammable love, rejection, insecurity, lovesickness, abandonment, anxious attachment, possessiveness, jealousy, heartbreak, obsessive love, etc.
- Those who lose themselves the moment they fall in love or feel an intense chemistry/attraction to another
- Individuals who feel they can't leave their partner, and have become trapped in patterns of behaviour which are damaging and destructive to themselves and others
- Those who are caught in a painful on/off relationship whereby love seems impossible, unrequited or not reciprocated
- Those who feel they love too much and experience powerlessness and heartache
- Those who become most unlike themselves when they desire another person
- Those who experience unfaithfulness, infidelity and dishonesty, yet can't find the courage to leave
- Individuals in same sex relationships
- Individuals experiencing narcissistic abuse – who return time and again to damaging and abusive relationships

## **Why Do People Become Love Addicted?**

- To feel a sense of purpose and meaning in life
- To escape loneliness and human isolation
- To feel wanted, lovable and needed
- To feel fully connected to a person
- To experience themselves reflected in the person of desire
- To experience a sense of self and identity
- To feel familiar and fully themselves with the person of desire
- To experience, human warmth, tenderness and recognition
- To fill the void of emptiness and desolation
- To experience an emotionally responsive attachment bond
- To escape emotional deprivation
- To block out every day reality as a survival mechanism
- To seek a “soul mate” like quality
- To relieve the feeling of anxiousness of being alone and single
- To feel fully alive and connected to life
- To experience a sense of worthiness and self-esteem
- To experience a sense of completion and wholeness

The onset of difficulties or the actual break-up of a relationship can cause serious emotional and psychological anguish, leading to acute anxiety, abandonment anxiety, separation distress, anxious attachment, love withdrawal and even depression.

The move from being in a troubled relationship to suffering alone as an individual can be one of the most isolating and painful experiences someone can go through. Akin to a bereavement but with additional factors such as; anger, resentment, helplessness, humiliation and shame to be dealt with alongside the loss of the other person.

This grief-like experience is made worse by the fact that the person of addiction is still very much alive but for one reason or another has chosen not to be with you.

I want to assure you this doesn't mean you are not lovable, not good enough, or attractive enough, although it might feel like this right now.

These strengthening exercises and tools are going to question that core belief and replace it with something more resourceful, which will help you to transform this awful sense of despair and find a way forward.

Remember, my entire recovery program was created to enable you to move through this painful experience so that you could become your own person again, where you're able to recognise that you are not alone, even if right now it feels that way (being separated from someone we have experienced a great love for can awaken such acute anxiety that we truly believe that we won't be able to find a way through the loss and emotional devastation).

## Why is this?

Much of it can be explained by how much some people invest emotionally into a partner during the early weeks and months of being together. These passionate and powerful emotions are sometimes referred to as being "crazy" or "mad" about another person; a literal feeling of "falling" in love.

To invest so much so quickly of oneself into another person can indeed feel crazy, as often it has no bearing on our normal reality. Moreover, nothing feels "normal". You feel alive, ecstatic and living in a state of euphoria, as if anything and everything is possible.

In contrast, when the relationship is threatened by the impossibility of mutual on-going reciprocation, it can be truly catastrophic.

*"The sadness in you is no longer without a name and has found its voice. When sorrow finds a name and a voice, it is like the lightning you see calling and the thunder speaking after it to say that soon the rain will fall on you again."*

**--- Laurens Van der Post (A Far-off Place)**

These feelings are often associated with adolescent crushes or infatuations with people in later life that appear distant, emotionally withholding, withdrawn, absent and unavailable, or someone you may never see again. This is no accident, because the desire for someone unreachable operates as a defence against the possibility of losing that person.

When, however, these feelings are invested in a long-term partner, the investment of

oneself is made for real, and disappointment is therefore inevitable because the relationship was based on too much 'need' from the start. Love sours, with painful and debilitating consequences.

Co-dependency and loving too much is difficult to shake off whenever we are confronted with the possibility of abandonment. We fear being rejected, so we cling onto our partner even tighter, and of course, the more clingy and needy we become, the further away the other will flee.

The person of addiction feels engulfed and pressured by the expectation we have projected on to them, as an addiction to love is all about the yearning to complete ourselves, so that we no longer feel alone and separated from the world.

It's also possible for the particular dynamic of a relationship to affect our level of dependency, and suddenly we are merged with the other, joined at the hip and unable to know where we begin and the other ends.

*“Attachment is an integral part of human nature from the cradle to the grave.”*

**---John Bowlby**

The reason for my writing this workbook is because although I created the 15 Step Love Addiction Recovery Program, I felt passionate about including a self-help manual to support you through the initial stages of the overwhelming love withdrawal symptoms and the devastation and rejection that both woman and men experience in the aftermath of a relationship break-up, and the intense loss and sadness that accompanies it.

Having studied in various fields of psychotherapy and psychoanalysis, I have acquired an eclectic approach to my work combining Jungian, Lacanian, D. W. Winnicott, CBT, EMDR, Humanistic and Existential Counselling.

Even though I am a trained relationship and couples therapist and have a background in psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, NLP life coaching, grief and loss counselling, I acquired my most useful training by going through my own personal addiction to love and the devastating symptoms of abandonment. So in short, I know exactly how you feel!

As a result, I have a unique empathy for women who have suffered this devastating affliction of the heart.

Back in the late 80s when I lived in Australia, there was no-one who specialised in this area of love addiction. I was on my own. I chose instead to keep Robin Norwood's book, *Woman Who Love Too Much*, close at hand, along with Stanton Peele's and Archie Brodsky's book, *Love and Addiction*.

Being able to read something that identified exactly what was happening to me saved my life in many ways. (To read more about my personal story please read: *Surviving an Addiction to Romantic Love* in my recovery program eBook.)

Whilst I was training in Jungian Psychology in the late 80s, I worked in a women's prison, with people who had committed serious crimes and were serving long sentences (I will talk more about this in a moment). During this time I was struck by the amount of women whose crimes all related back to jealousy, betrayal, possessiveness, chronic insecurity and rejection, all in the name of love addiction.

Many of these women ended up sabotaging their own lives in a split second of fury, blind rage and uncontrollable emotion that I believe came from feeling unwanted, discarded, abandoned, and most of all, a profound sense of hopelessness and internal devastation.

I decided there and then to dedicate my life to the task of understanding the meaning behind such suffering and despair. Now, I truly believe that sorrow and anguish is all part of our journey on the path towards self-development and change, and rather than ignoring these desperate and painful experiences in our lives, the key to survival lies in how we respond to them, and grow as a result.

I know, and I'm sure you do too, that when we fully "understand" something; when we work through this process of grief and loss, we emerge stronger, more competent and begin to acquire a feminine wisdom that means we no longer lose power and identity in our relationships.

After all, most emotional pain comes from being dependant, fragile and insecure, without ever knowing our own opinions and values.

So for now, we will accept this wound of loss and begin to take a look at how exactly we lose ourselves in a relationship...

A person loses themselves in a relationship when they become addicted to the feeling of being in love. This particular feeling is one of the most powerful experiences we will ever have, which is why it's so all-consuming. It's arguably more addictive than an actual drug, so it's little wonder that when that person leaves us, we are totally devastated and ravaged by the most extreme sense of grief, despair, helplessness and sorrow.

When we fall in love, we all have a natural propensity to surrender ourselves, rescue the beloved or become completely preoccupied and emotionally consumed by our relationships. Many sacrifice themselves and everything that they are in the name of love, giving away their individuality and entire sense of self.

*“The emotion that can break your heart is sometimes the very one that heals it.”*

**--- Nicholas Sparks**

If the love addict has given all that they are to the significant other, and that love is not reciprocated, is unrequited, or is impossible, they are left feeling impoverished and empty. This may lead to the symptoms of co-dependency, love addiction, abandonment, rejection and anxious attachment, which are some of the most painful emotional wounds that we can ever experience.

## **Why I Understand Your Pain**

I have spent over 25 years working as an expert Relationship Therapist, specialising in helping people cope with loss, heartbreak, insecurity and rejection, and how to survive love withdrawal, abandonment and love addiction.

However, my knowledge isn't just gleaned from training and books. It comes from my own personal experiences.

During my early thirties, I experienced the most disturbing condition of the heart – loving too much and all the anxiety that went with it.

To give you some background, I was working as a Grief and Bereavement Counsellor

whilst studying for my Jungian Psychology and Psychotherapy degree.

I was also a Counsellor in an Australian prison working with women who had committed various crimes, including domestic violence, GBH and fraud, and many of these crimes were carried out whilst suffering from drug and/or alcohol addiction.

The common theme amongst these women showed that these crimes were often triggered by a variety of emotional relationship breakdowns which included a collapse of a relationship, separation, desertion, co-dependency, anxiety and depression, agoraphobia, powerlessness, immense physical, psychological and emotional abuse.

This caused families to fall apart and sometimes led to unwanted pregnancies.

These women's lives had collapsed in every way imaginable, leading to a complete breakdown of logic and rationality, resulting in jealousy, social exclusion, rejection and abandonment at the heart of their despair.

Often, the breakdown in a relationship led to them committing a crime which in a split-second transformed their life and landed them in prison.

Listening to their stories and going deeper into my studies, I knew then that I had to understand how ONE PERSON could destroy another person's life to such a degree.

It was as if this one person held the key to their entire existence and purpose; their self-esteem and self-approval, and if he or she was to abandon or reject them, it would lead to a downward spiral into nothingness and despair.

Little did I know it at the time, but that “one person” was about to find me, and turn my entire life upside down.

## **My Story**

It's important to say that for the first two months of this relationship, the one which later caused such grief, our love was completely mutual. In fact, we were deeply in love. My anxious symptoms only began after his behaviour became erratic, distant and unavailable.

This is the key factor, as it's the unresponsiveness and emotional unavailability from the one you adore that sits at the core of love addiction, and creates the feeling of anxiety, agitation, rejection and abandonment.

By the third month of this relationship, I had begun to sense something quite worrying, as one moment he'd speak of a joint future with marriage and children, whilst the next moment he would completely cut off from me.

He'd be there, but not quite there, telling me that he needed to be free of commitment and all responsibilities, requiring long breaks away from me.

## **Why Didn't I Just Walk Away?**

I continued to believe that things would change one day and we'd walk off into the sunset together.

I would tell myself that he would see the light and it was just his fear of closeness that stood in the way.

I encouraged him to read self-help books, in the vain hope that he would see himself more clearly and understand his fear of commitment and closeness.

Ironically, he was possessive and jealous of me, so I learnt to adapt my behaviour around his needs so he didn't feel insecure.

However, the more I became attentive, expressive and present with him, the more emotionally distant he became with me, before finally shutting down entirely.

I was the one who was shut out and rejected, yet I blamed myself for "feeling" too much. It was bewildering. All the yo-yoing back and forth felt cruel and heartless.

Friends kept telling me he was a narcissist, but even with all my training, I couldn't see it.

## **Who Had I Become?**

To cope with the fear of losing him, I became someone most unlike myself...

I decided to hide my true feelings from him, as even loving him a little would cause him to close down on me. I would go to great lengths to avoid seeing him for two weeks at a time, as I wanted to avoid him rejecting me first.

Over time I learned that two weeks was his deadline, literally. I'd pretend to be preoccupied and fabricate a busy 'full' life as I knew that this would gain his attention and release him from feeling pressured and engulfed.

Little did he know I'd spend those two weeks unable to function, falling apart,

drenched with the most debilitating sense of emptiness, grief and sadness.

After two weeks, on the very day that he'd agreed to see me, he was happy, elated even, and more than "emotionally responsive" towards me. I remember thinking that this was the "bonus".

This would make the two weeks of longing for him worth it. The ecstatic high I felt far outweighed the loss that I experienced without him.

He would be passionate, completely present, and overjoyed to see me. But within a few days of euphoric love and romance, the cycle would repeat itself once more, as very quickly he would pull back and abandon the relationship again. Even the smallest amount of warmth seemed to make him recoil further away from me.

I could not be 'me', so over time I turned myself into a different woman; a woman that felt nothing at all. Yet inside I felt powerless and vulnerable beyond belief.

The man that would eventually take me so close to my own disintegration met me as a very strong and powerful woman; someone who gave all her love and compassion to her patients. But that person had now disappeared, frail and immobile beyond belief.

He would pursue me, but only whilst I played the "ice queen game", which was so far removed from who I was.

His constant mixed messages caused me to fall apart. This is no exaggeration I literally felt as if I was falling apart. The irony at the time was that I was training to become a psychotherapist and counsellor, yet I couldn't work out the contradictions

in his messages. I was Jealous of his freedom to live spontaneously, shameful of feeling this way.

**I now know him to be a Love Avoidant.**

He wanted no pressure, no responsibility, and he was a perfect hook for my own loss of self.

## **The Rapid Decline**

Towards the final months of the relationship, my physical and emotional well-being declined at a rapid speed. I felt as if I was hanging over the edge of a precipice, not knowing how far I would fall, yet still unable to let go.

I became most unlike myself and had difficulty understanding what was happening to me. I was so confused and lost, I even changed my appearance, the colour of my hair, my clothes and much more, anything that could make myself more attractive to him but none of it worked.

I was unable to either eat or move and every muscle in my body ached. I became an empty shell of a woman who previously had everything going for her. It was as though a dark cloud had descended upon my entire life, or a light switch had been turned off.

My once joyful soul felt as if I'd come face-to-face with my demise. I felt an incomprehensible void beyond words.

I was forced into taking months off work, but I had to lie about the reason, saying that

there had been bereavement in the family. I felt so ashamed and embarrassed to tell anyone the truth, and that it was me who was dying inside.

I even hid it from close friends and my parents, as I knew they would encourage me to leave him. “What on earth are you doing with him, Helen? You must get out of this!” I could hear them saying.

### **I couldn't escape the pain, because I didn't know HOW to leave him**

I couldn't even listen to the music we shared as that acted like a “trigger”, throwing me back into the deepest grief.

I still longed for him and no matter what anyone would say, I believed I could make ‘us’ work.

The only thing I wanted to do was “understand him.”

I thought that if I could get to the bottom of this bewilderment, all would be okay.

I thought that surely my therapist training could achieve this! And if not, then how could I become a therapist myself? I could see how this one person was destroying everything I aspired to in life – even my role as a Grief Counsellor – yet I couldn't stop it.

I knew all this was my own doing. I kept asking myself why I couldn't trust my own intuition and instinct.

I knew more than anything that I had to get my life back on track yet I felt this

ravaging sense of internal disintegration consuming me, something so overwhelming took precedence, if I didn't get myself together somehow, then this would really be the end.

I knew I wasn't strong enough to go through any more emotional pain, and thankfully, after several months passed, reality hit me like a powerful bolt from the blue.

I finally realised something...

**“This was NOT love”**

## **Regaining Control**

From this moment on, I began to slowly plan my exit... to gradually wean myself away from him.

And my determination to hold onto my own life was what kept me going.

I knew that if I was going to survive, I had to find something in myself that was going to reverse this self-abandonment, an unstinting drive to escape this insidious obsession that took reign over any kind of normality and happiness.

I had projected all that I was and wanted onto this ONE man, and as a result, my own identity was corroding and I knew I had to break free from this affliction of the heart, an indelible injury to the soul that had such an almighty power to blur all sense of reality and stability.

## **It was time to bring her back.**

I read everything there was to read about my condition. And the more I read, the more I understood, and the stronger I grew.

And crucially, I realised that I wasn't alone.

I ordered every book on the subjects of abandonment, women who love too much, self-empowerment, reversing self-abandonment, chronic rejection, and books written around the topics of projection, self-identity, attachment, symbiosis, fusing, enmeshment and what it meant to have an emotionally secure base within oneself.

I watched every single film around these topics and read and re-read Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* constantly.

A key line in this classic piece of literature is written in the voice of Cathy when she speaks about Heathcliff, and has resonated with me ever since.

*“He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.”*

Every day I would write in my journal, turning this raw experience of love withdrawal, loss and grief into a therapeutic process.

Every time I longed to speak to him or be with him, I would take my pen and write down what I was feeling.

I realised that this was comforting and helpful to me, because by speaking to myself

on the page; it reduced the longing to make contact with him.

Slowly, I began to make sense of what had happened.

My training to become a psychotherapist and grief counsellor required me to be in therapy and psychoanalysis as part of the process, which allowed me to gather more knowledge and gave me an even greater insight into the condition I was experiencing.

**I eventually discovered that I saw in him MY OWN POWER.**

This is the sharp end of projection.

I had, in fact, projected all that I was onto him. I had given my POWER away to him, and I had turned him into a type of God-like figure. So it was no small wonder that I felt as if I was dying without him.

In fact, losing all that we are in the beloved describes 'Love Addiction' completely.

I look back now and think, he was just getting on with his life and doing what fulfilled him, it wasn't about him I know this now, it was about a lack of something so fundamental within myself, a profound sense of unyielding emptiness that felt as if only he could fill/or fulfil. He awakened me to the most immense longing for meaning and purpose so in many ways I should have been happy for the direction his life was going in, yet it felt anything but at the time.

# Writing Down the Bones of Your Emotional Experience

The reason I mention writing in my journal is because creative writing can be an extremely therapeutic tool to aid personal development, helping to uncover hidden or repressed feelings and experiences that hold keys to an individual's emotional trauma.

Creative writing is a powerful way of exploring our unexpressed feelings, especially when it involves revealing emotions associated with love and loss, the trauma of separation and when love seems impossible or extremely painful.

The writing process acts as a catalyst to express and release our problems to the conscious mind. It is accepted that the process of writing down one's dreams allows communication to flow from the unconscious and allows the healing process to begin.

Through creative writing we can find a way to form dialogue with our 'inner self' and gain access to emotional blocks. This can be done through writing, poetry or recording our memories, reflections and dreams.

It encourages people to gain an understanding of themselves by writing about their experiences, as genuinely as possible, describing their internal murmurings, thoughts with imagination and detail, whether it be a monologue, narrative, memory, poetry, or any other form of writing.

The healing power of expressing our emotions on the page is very real: *"problems that had seemed overwhelming became circumscribed and manageable when I saw them written down"* said one of my clients who was experiencing love, separation and loss.

*“One sheds one’s sickness in writing books”*

**--- D.H. Lawrence**

*“The territory of the self is a vast, unexplored, and prohibited geography... our experiences; feelings, insights and understandings are often off-limits. As often as we are imprisoned inside ourselves, so often are we actually living in exile outside ourselves. One can say that one of the basic conditions of contemporary life is the unfulfilled longing of the self for itself.”*

**--- Deena Metzger, (Writing For Your Life)**

Creative writing as a therapeutic art also helps release untapped areas of creativity and spirituality, helping to build self-confidence, self-validation and one’s own creative ability for rich and healthy relationships and connection to one’s life.

*“I always prepare myself for the sight of myself.”*

**--- Virginia Woolf**

*“That is what learning is. You suddenly understand something, you’ve understood all your life, but in a new way.”*

**--- Doris Lessing**

*“We write to taste life twice, in the moment and in retrospection”*

**--- Anais Nin**

## **Listening to Silences**

For you to take the time to be alone and write, to be deliberately engaged in another way of self-communication and expression that goes hand in hand with silence, feels far more aligned with a real sense of authenticity and self-truth. In silence, contemplating neither distracted nor beclouded; exploring a language that is your own brings you closer, not further from yourself.

This journey is propelled by your own creativity and veracity, whether mature or nascent, and you discover strength by witnessing your own truth, leading to a profound solace emerging out of the silence.

What is of utmost importance through your process of writing and expressing yourself, is the larger sense that, you, the writer are able to 'make' of what happened during an emotionally painful experience of loss and abandonment.

I want to say here if you do not enjoy writing, much of this workbook is full of self-help tools and strategies to support you through this sorrowful time so please don't worry if writing is not for you, just slowly move through this process one step at a time.

In a face-to-face client session, the person may bring his or her writing, if she wishes, and we would explore together, through that writing, some of the underlying issues around the traumatic events that would otherwise be too raw to speak about.

But the core is the writing, and getting things down on paper is powerful, liberating, and can be truly revelatory.

To begin this process, take a journal or the worksheets in this workbook, and a pen. I

truly think there is something quite visceral to writing on paper, so while it may be easier and more convenient to write on a computer, I recommend pen and paper.

Somehow, the physical act of writing and holding a pen seems to connect people much more to the words they write. Of course, if you feel you would rather use a computer, then feel free to do so. It is your unique journey (perhaps experiment by making preliminary notes on paper before working on a computer).

While many exercises are “writing” exercises, you can always draw, paint, or illustrate your feelings, thoughts and emotions with the use of images, sketches, collages or montages. So if that sounds like you, then make sure you also have the necessary brushes, crayons, pens and art paper to hand.

It may also help if you played some soothing, peaceful and tranquil music; something that will accompany you through this process, something you begin to identify this time in your life with. This will encourage and enhance relaxation, focus, solitude, concentration and inner harmony.

A very gentle choice of music might be: Zen Music for wellbeing: Inner Peace, Meditation Music, Relaxing Music by Yellow Brick Cinema, all of which can be found online on sites like YouTube or Spotify. I’m sure if you Google these names you will find something deeply soothing and calming. It is important NOT to listen to music that evokes painful, yearning or romantic memories of your ex-partner.

This is why yoga, meditation, mindfulness and spa therapy music is wise as it will lower your stress hormones released through the loss. Some people also find it better to avoid music with lyrics so that the only words they hear are their own words, flowing creatively. If you would prefer to work in silence and solitude, then follow your intuition and decide what feels best for your emotional sense of wellbeing and comfort.

Some of you may prefer piano music, and if this is so there is a wonderful composer called Ludovico Einaudi you might like to try. Again, if you find this music too provocative, then choose music that resonates with you on a “neutral” level, not music that provokes sadness.

Throughout the workbook you will find guided journeys, affirmations, visualisations, meditations and exercises which you may wish to record by reading them into a Dictaphone or even your mobile phone if it has a voice recorder.

That way you can listen to your own voice when you want to self-validate, reclaim positive affirmations and release negative self-talk. This is a truly empowering way to reclaim your sense of self-worth and esteem; lie in a quiet place and let your own voice go with you.

Keep some water or camomile tea at hand and drink plenty throughout each day.

Try to choose some fresh fruits and integrate these in to your daily diet along with some green leafy vegetables, salads, pulses and nuts. I say this as many who are going through this debilitating loss, stop eating or binge eat to fill the void of loss and despair.

A kind way of beginning this healing journey is to find a quiet room of your own. If it is in a state of disarray (which is often the case in a time of loss), have a sort out, declutter, and put some order in to the room or your home. This will be your room of solitude and peace, a place of transformation.

Find a desk so that you can write or put your computer on; make a nice warm bed up for yourself, change the sheets, and choose some artefacts that represent you. What makes you feel familiar? What could you do to this room to make it feel serene and safe?

No matter how weak, sorrowful or sad you feel right now, tell yourself that you are going to make this room or your entire house feel fresh, clean, special, spiritually warm and cosseted.

Some people may not have the luxury of a room as they are house sharing, have a roommate, or spend time away from home on shift work, for example.

I tell them to have a special cushion, blanket or something that symbolises “their private space”. One client made her car her sacred space; another greenhouse! It's finding what works for you.

If you neglect your personal space and allow chaos and clutter to creep in, it will affect you, and perhaps encourage further neglect. Positive feedback loops should improve your life, not detract from it.

*“You can't prime yourself directly, but you can create environments conducive to the mental states you wish to achieve.”*

**--- David McRaney**

Tell yourself the following:

- “I am beginning my first day to take care of myself.”
- “I am lovable whether or not my ex-partner told me so” (no matter what tell yourself, “I am lovable”)
- “I am responsible and capable of nurturing my own financial, spiritual, physical and emotional wellbeing.”

- “I can care for my own soul and what has happened will not last forever.”
- “My first step in my own recovery is to understand as much as I can about some of the patterns in my relationships that have brought me to this place in the here and now. By doing so I will gain a sense of direction, hope, inner strength, self-validation, focus and self-awareness. This then will become my own personal story.”

*“It is only when the mind is free from the old that it meets everything anew, and in that there is joy.”*

**--- Jiddu Krishnamurti**

We are going to make this experience a life-affirming exploration of your authentic self, whereby you can be as vulnerable, open and honest with yourself as possible.

*“The demand to be safe in a relationship inevitably breeds sorrow and fear. This seeking for security is inviting insecurity”*

**--- Jiddhu Krishnamurti (On love)**

## **Grieving the Loss of a Loved One**

Before I begin the next part of the workbook, I would like to share an email with you from someone who has purchased my program and read my “No Contact Rule” eBook. I truly believe that the question asked here is a question many of you would like to ask.

For confidential reasons I shall call her Tara.

Tara's Email:

*“Dear Helen, thank you so much for your words, your recovery program and your eBooks. I have been in an agonizing and painful relationship for nearly three years. I have been in therapy for a year, and am still having difficulty letting go. Your “No Contact Rule” article is the best information that I have read on the topic to date. I finally feel like I have some hope. In your article, you never really say how you broke free from your painful relationship 20 years ago. What ultimately happened?”*

Of course, for my own private reasons it would be difficult to go into “exactly” how I broke free, as it's very complex. I was with this man for several years in an on/off and truly agonising relationship, but I will do the best I can!

**For the sake of this workbook, I will call him Josh.**

Firstly, it's important to note that I had no idea of the “No Contact Rule” at that time, and even if there were such a book on the subject, I couldn't even contemplate imposing any distance between him and myself for the literal fear that I could not live without him.

The desolate void in our on/off relationship was proof enough that an entire absence of time together would be too much to bear.

I also had no idea that in order to survive, I'd have to stop seeing him completely. In fact, the very thought of that back then would have been the most frightening destabilising thing I could ever imagine.

It felt like he was my oxygen. I know I've mentioned this phrase a lot in my eBooks, but this is the only way I can describe it. Without him, I experienced a physical sense of not being able to breathe properly, accompanied by an anxious panic in the pit of my belly that wouldn't calm down until I saw him again.

It wasn't a matter of how I would survive, but more that I was disappearing metaphorically and physically by the day, I couldn't eat, sleep, function, continue working, see friends and family, and if I did, they would urge me to break all contact with him as they could see it was destroying me.

Like many love addicts, I became very wary of seeing anyone if I felt that they adamantly disagreed with my seeing him. I became "acutely" aware of anyone who would disapprove of the relationship, so I became quite secretive and protective about it (this in itself sounds like I was a drug addict!).

Of course, it was only because they cared about me, but I could not hear it, and quickly worked out that if I didn't see them, I could close my eyes and ears to any demands to prise me away from him.

What I would like to mention right now is that I absolutely do NOT want you to follow in my footsteps!

I am telling you this because I want you to understand that I know *exactly* what you're going through, and that there is a way out. This is an escape route from the unbearable symptoms of love withdrawal, grief and loss.

**So how did I free myself from Josh, and in the end, leave him?**

Well, let me first tell you that there was no magic pill, although I distinctly remember screaming to myself; “please give me something to take this pain away”.

However bizarre this might sound, I thought about going to a Church whereby he could be “exorcised” out of me, as it was like he was lodged in my head. I just couldn’t stop thinking about him, and these constant thoughts took supremacy over my emotional life.

I even thought about Hypnotherapy for the very same reason, and did go for a couple of sessions.

Yet when I left the consultation room, I found myself phoning him again!

I contemplated the idea of going to live in India, and finding a guru or a Buddhist master to follow. I couldn’t survive what was happening without the “idea” of a spiritual leader of some sort. The thought that I would fly far away and surrender to some kind of higher power gave me some hope. I felt so utterly powerless and helpless, as he had become like a gigantic security blanket for me.

Yet prior to meeting him, I was so emotionally independent and had a firm centre of my own. This is why throughout this workbook, I refer to; “Losing all that we are in a relationship” as it feels exactly like this. It feels as though we live “beside” ourselves rather than “within” ourselves and the significant other takes up occupancy within our core self.

Due to my being in training to become a Jungian psychotherapist in the late 80s, I found myself a very good psychoanalyst, as the one thing I knew then was that this affliction of the heart wasn’t an easy cure. But what I didn’t know was that it was not

about the other person, although of course, back then, I completely believed it was.

It was my own longing and yearning that took the shape of a powerful projection. It felt as though it was only him that could bring me back to life, and I'd projected my entire sense of self on to him.

That is why I felt so utterly "powerless". I gave all my power away to this one man, which I now speak of as the "significant other", the object of my desire, and the cause of this most desperate longing for love and union. My hunger for him was like that of a ravenous lion. I couldn't endure life without his love, his warmth, his natural scent, his beautiful face, his hands.

But then my mind started to question something so very important, and I truly want to describe this to you, as it really helped me to change my thinking and make the first tiny steps towards breaking free. It was a minuscule chink of light that shone through the oppressive darkness.

I remember at the time being completely destabilised and confused, how is it that I felt such an intense feeling of love and soul connection, yet he was fleeing in the opposite direction?

In fact, for him it wasn't like that at all; he remained intact, independent and unequivocally clear that he wanted his own autonomy and freedom, and of course "rationally", I wanted that for him too. I admired this in him, yet "emotionally" I felt the biggest sense of rejection imaginable.

### **And this is key...**

I truly believe that if the love equilibrium between us was balanced, I wouldn't have

been so overwhelmed and devastated. He used to say; “What you feel for me is not real, it’s not about me, it’s not me you love, I’m just a fantasy”.

Imagine what this felt like; to hear him say this – because it felt nothing but REAL at the time.

Having been researching love and addiction for several years, I now know that often the person prone to love addiction will begin with an intense attraction and chemistry towards someone who fits their unconscious fantasy and then project on to the person of addiction a lifetime of unfulfilled wants, needs, emotional connection, aspirations and desires, which usually take the shape of being rescued, or even validated entirely, as if the significant other awakens something deep within them.

It really was as if Josh woke me up from a deep sleep; as though I experienced a heightened sense of meaning and purpose as if the world were melting underneath us, losing all sense of orientation.

In an instant I felt seen, known and understood, yet this enigmatic experience was NOT mutually shared, and this incongruence is the very recipe which procreates love addiction in every way possible.

### **Here lies the core of the problem...**

The person of addiction soon becomes annihilated by the hungry partner’s demand for an emotional response and quickly becomes unavailable, walled in, shut-down and non-relational in response. It is as if in many ways they are protesting against the “fantasy” that has been put on to them, and this is exactly why they can be entirely oblivious to the fierce emotions you may be experiencing.

Here is an example of projection and fantasy, given with the full consent of a client I saw a year ago...

## **Projection and Fantasy**

A receptionist of a company felt extremely attracted to her boss. She wakes in the morning and wants to make herself look desirable, adorns herself with jewellery, beautiful clothes and scents.

She arrives at the office, but finds it impossible to make eye contact with her boss. She feels anxious, embarrassed and agitated, as she doesn't want him to find out just how much she longs for him... yet her boss has absolutely no idea that the receptionist has been planning their future together, imagining where they might live, imagining them travelling to some far distant place, just the two of them.

My point here is that this woman's powerful and all-encompassing fantasy of sharing a magical future with this man is exactly that - a fantasy.

But the crush she experiences takes on a life all of its own, and here lies the core of the problem. Soon it will be apparent that he is married with three children and has no intentions to leave his family, and he doesn't know anything about her powerful feelings for him, and this is my point.

At this very moment, Cinderella's entire vision will soon be shattered.

All she longed for was for this "feeling of love" to be reciprocated, yet hearing the words "I am not interested, I am married" completely crushes any possibility of it ever becoming real.

In fact, in this case, and in my story above, it is as if you are on your own personal euphoric high; you literally can't believe that your love is unrequited, because if we feel so strongly, how on earth can they not feel exactly the same?

This is why projection/projective identification is so powerful, and so destructive. "I feel this, so how can it not be the same for you?"

*"What you meet in another being is the projection of your own level of evolution."*

--- **Ram Dass**

Of course, my situation is completely different, as I had been with this man for several years, and on many levels, and at different times, he *did* reciprocate the love we shared.

But my pivotal point here is that, however ecstatically powerful my love for him was, it was clearly different to what he felt. And ironically, even if he did feel the same, his tendency to withdrawal and become emotionally and physically unavailable fuelled my desire for him even more, as over and over again my dreams of what it could be between us were dashed.

Now, I'm not saying that what we feel for another person isn't real. It is.

But what happens is that the beloved activates a part of us that has been lying dormant for years; and the feelings we have for them are experienced as a deep soul connection, as if we are looking at ourselves in the mirror of love, which makes it so highly addictive and hard to argue with at the same time.

It was “as if” what I felt about Josh in my emotional heart was completely “incongruent” to the reality of what it was all about. I sentimentalised beyond belief how I imagined it was, when in reality, it was the most painful encounter I had ever experienced in my entire life.

I have always been a very romantic and passionate woman. Even at the age of 15 I remember thinking that I “feel” too much; I want to give too much. With Josh, I wanted to have a future with him as it felt so right (to me).

My point is, people who suffer from this affliction of the heart often have a very vibrant imagination, as if there is something about the person of addiction that unleashes such a colourful surge of intensity that is ONLY experienced with the beloved.

It can be experienced as childlike, naive, playful, ageless, devoted, sacred, seductive, enraptured, honest, unrestrained, thoughtless and expressive; a kaleidoscope of colours reflecting a mirage of splendour as we fall deeper and closer to this person who appears to hold the key to our heart and soul. That in itself is a miracle, until finally, we awaken and are jolted out of that dreamlike state and hear loud and clear, “I don’t feel the same way about you”.

*“The most painful goodbyes are the ones that are never said and never explained.”*

--- **Anon**

After 3 years with Josh, I remember thinking how connected I felt to him; he felt like my soul mate, a perfect fit. We’d talk for hours and hours. I wanted us to create a

beautiful log cabin in the middle of the forest made out of wood and glass and cherish him forever. I wanted to bake our own bread and eat organically grown food. I wanted to get a black Labrador dog.

I imagined we'd sit all night by a log fire reading poetry to one another, making lovely food and going for long walks in the countryside.

I imagined that during the daytime, as we were both deeply involved with our work, we would part in the morning and live very separate and independent lives, and at the weekends we'd both have our own office to do our research, write, play music and then join each other for dinner.

These were my highly sentimental thoughts and feelings.

Even now I ask myself; what is actually “wrong” with dreaming such a wondrous and wholehearted vision of the future? Feeling our imagination drift to beautiful moments together and apart?

My point here is that maybe there was nothing intrinsically wrong with me, but perhaps I was with the wrong person to actualise this physical, emotional and spiritual place.

Now I look back and absolutely know for sure that he was a love avoidant. He could never, ever respond to me emotionally, and this is the CORE of the problem.

## **Maybe it is about the person we choose?**

This is the main point I will be making throughout this workbook.

So now, I want you to have your journal close at hand and write down anything that occurs to you as we go through the following.

The most powerful exercise I did was to ask myself: “What was it about him that I loved so much?”

When I asked myself this question, I had to be really rational, objective and truly honest with myself – and you need to be too.

I now want you to do a very simple exercise; I’m going to ask you a set of questions and in the spaces provided write your answers. But I’m also going to write mine so that you will see a set of “thought distortions” that I had invented myself.

These thoughts triggered the grief-like emotions that ruled my heart and soul, and this is the problem with love addiction. There is most definitely a fantasy like quality to it, and that is what I’m getting at here. I want you to ask yourself; “how real and true are my thoughts and feelings for this man/woman?”

## **Emotional subjective thoughts at the time: (Fantasy)**

Helen's Example (here I speak in present tense from the past).

*“You are a good man, I look up to you. You are kind, deep, intelligent, creative, affectionate, caring and compassionate. We shared everything together. You are like my soul mate and we could have the most wonderful future together. The passionate times we shared were unbelievable and you really mirrored my deeper self like no-one I have ever met before. I genuinely care about you and wanted to give to you and make you happy. You are attentive to my needs. I feel so familiar with you, no longer alone. You and I were like two twins joined at the hip, a united team. It was the most perfect relationship that I could ever wish for as we connected intellectually and spiritually and it just felt so right and familiar. I feel like I have known you a very long time and that we were meant to meet.”*

In the box on the next page (and if you need to, feel free to continue on other sheets or in your journal) write down your emotional subjective thoughts that you had at the time about your person of addiction.

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small, faint graphic resembling a heartbeat or pulse line is visible at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Rational objective thoughts in the here and now: (Reality)**

Helen's Example (I am saying this in my reality in the here and now):

- *When we were together you were preoccupied and disregarded me.*
- *You were unavailable, cold, withdrawn and dismissive.*
- *I never felt safe with you nor did I have any real sense of a future.*
- *When I wanted to give to you, like buy you small gifts, you rebuffed them and said it made you feel trapped.*
- *I had to “act” like I didn’t want you so I could never really be myself*

As you compare the two, you will notice I contradict all that I imagined he was. The power of this exercise back then “squashed” any illusions I had of him. I was wisely advised to do this exercise by my therapist as the despair and grief I was experiencing was fuelled by these romanticised thoughts when I “remembered” our time together.

Having done the exercise I was utterly shocked at how much I put him on a pedestal, completely oblivious to the shattering emotions I actually felt when we were still together. I wasn't angry at him; this is not the point of the exercise. It's not about shifting blame to them, but rather to realign our view of the person from fantasy of the heart to reality of the head.

It's healthier when we find the mid-point between the two, allowing the heart to enjoy the relationship and fantasize, but to also keep the head and reality in the equation.

Now in the box below, write from the here and now, the un-distorted real world view of your thoughts about your ex-partner or person of desire:

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Remember, the end of a significant relationship or of a marriage is an enormous loss, and understanding your loss can help you to clarify the absence of your partner.

*“Knowing how you feel is the most potent form of clarity you can get.”*

**--- Danielle La Porte**

## Grieving the Loss of Love

The world can seem so deeply unpopulated and desolate by the trauma, loss and separation of a loved one, as if life itself seems empty and loses all meaning and purpose; whether by betrayal of the beloved, insecurity, love addiction, rejection or unrequited love.

Loss is an emotion that can fill our hearts with grief, acute vulnerability, sadness, despair and sorrow, and can leave us in a state of disbelief, fear, confusion and disorientation, whereby the emotional attachment bond that you once shared with another has now been severed leaving you with an escalating sense of trepidation and abandonment anxiety.

You feel as if you have lost an essential part of yourself that not only activates your recent heartbreak, but an accumulation of losses and disappointments from the past.

*“A broken heart is the worst; it’s like having broken ribs. Nobody can see it but it hurts every time you breathe.”*

---Anon

These losses could possibly go back a long, long time ago. It’s as if your emotional self is completely destabilised, helpless, and the only way you can foresee ever surviving this emotional catastrophe is by longing for the loved one to return and anticipating their voice when they do.

This can take the form of waiting for the phone to ring, longing for a text or an email to know they have returned, that they have made a terrible mistake, no longer away

from you but close by, yearning for the departed to come home to you, to return in to your arms whereby their scent, their touch and their kiss will bring you back to life, and once again you will be able to feel the sun upon your face with all its warmth and tenderness.

This expectant anticipation is synonymous with the grief process, and has been has been researched by many pioneers at length, including John Bowlby, Elizabeth Kubler Ross, and Deborah Salmon.

It is frequently referred to as “searching for the lost object” when the disappearance of a significant attachment figure no longer provides you with a sense of security; a safe secure base that you have come to depend upon.

This “disappearance” of a loving and secure attachment bond once shared with the beloved can trigger “separation distress” and this in turn can make a separation from the loved one feel completely devastating as it shatters the foundations of our sense of self, and all that has been reliable and certain, leaving us feeling alone, empty and completely isolated.

John Bowlby, the founder of the attachment style theory, proposed the following:

*”This mechanism, called the attachment system, consists of emotions and behaviour that ensure that we remain safe and protected by staying close to loved ones. The mechanism explains why a child parted from his or her mother becomes frantic, searches wildly, or cries uncontrollably until he or she re-establishes contact with her. These reactions are coined “protest” behaviour.”*

**--- John Bowlby**

Bowlby's son reported a 1958 conversation where his father said:

*“You know how distressed small children get if they're lost and can't find their mother and how they keep searching? Well, I suspect it's the same feeling that adults have when their loved one dies, they keep searching too. I think it's the same instinct that starts in infancy and evolves throughout life as people grow up, and becomes part of adult love.”*

--- Bowlby, 1980 in Shaver, Frayley, 2008:47

Bowlby alleged that “each individual's response to loss stems partly from the way his or her attachment system became organised during childhood”. I will be discussing this a little later on in this workbook but I do want to mention here that Parkes and Bowlby's model of bereavement, which they discuss in *The Four Stages of Grief*, consists of four prevalent reactions to the loss of a loved one:

- 1. Numbness:** Shock and denial with a sense of unreality and confusion
- 2. Yearning and Protest:** Can evoke waves of grief, sobbing, loss of appetite, sleep and concentration
- 3. Disorganisation and despair:** Low mood, sadness and hopelessness
- 4. Re-organisation:** Letting go of the attachment and investing in the future

In your own time, come back to the following pages and take each of these four stages of loss in order. Use them as titles to write, draw or paint so that you are able to move consciously through these stages by the end of workbook. This is a powerful

exercise that will help you achieve a sense of “letting go” and investing in your own future interests, goals and aspirations.

## **Moving Through Bowlby's Four Stages of Grief**

### **1. Numbness:**

Write or draw your experience of the stage of “Numbness”...



## 2. Yearning and Protest:

Write or draw your experience of the stage of “Yearning and Protest”...



## 3. Disorganisation and Despair:

Write or draw your experience of the stage of “Disorganisation and Despair”...



#### 4. Re-organisation:

Write or draw your experience of the stage of “Re-organisation” and investing in the future...



The most important thing right now is to make sure you are not entirely alone. It's important to have a few close friends at hand or a network of people around you that know and understand what you feel and what you have been experiencing.

This is perhaps the most important thing throughout this workbook, as when we are left abandoned or deserted, loneliness and isolation can prolong the grief-like symptoms felt during withdrawal from the beloved.

It's also important that you know you are not alone either because people, like you, have experienced similar, survived and come out stronger. It was this very experience that started me on this journey to help people just like you.

**If your symptoms are acute, it is absolutely crucial to seek a Grief Therapist or a registered psychotherapist that works with attachment and separation anxiety. Also it is important to mention any panic and anxiety symptoms to your general practitioner.**

**Remember, this is a self-help personal development program and consists of exercises and strategies to support you through a painful breakup of a significant relationship, so be really honest with yourself and seek professional help to nurture yourself through this loss.**

The separation anxiety you feel is because the security and emotional attachment you experienced with the beloved has been taken away from you, leaving the ground you walk on extremely precarious. Right now, we are going to begin by reaffirming to your deeper self that you are safe and you will survive this loss, even though, at this moment in time, you can't believe that this could be true.

But it will be. Little by little you are going to invest in your future, find things that are good and wholesome for you, explore things that inspire you and give your life a sense of purpose, meaning and most of all self-validation (self-esteem and self-worth is deeply affected by this kind of addiction).

What sits at the core of love addiction, abandonment and rejection is loss of the fundamental connection with the desired loved one, an attachment bond that provided you with a sense of certainty and reliability, which may have now been severed.

The relationship may have created a template, a passage of time from which you imagined a future; a carved out landscape that gave you a sense of purpose; a familiar

dream that felt right and meaningful; a reason to exist and experience the joy of togetherness.

But now I want you to imagine that you are your own guide. You are your own nurturing parent and will carve out a story of your own, an internal solace, and a place of quiet reflection, solitude, self-generosity and love.

The first thing to affirm to yourself is that there is nothing wrong or shameful about having ‘needs’.

After all, you may have been thinking; “if I were not so needy, if I didn’t need anything, then he or she might still be with me today.” I listened to a wonderful speaker and addiction Practitioner, Robert Weiss a few weeks ago, and something he said touched me so deeply...

*“There’s nothing more painful than loving into a void”, he said.*

I thought, yes, that’s exactly it. That’s what it feels like, loving in to a void, whereby the love we feel for the other is not responded to, and not reciprocated. This is the sharp edge of an addiction to romantic love and all the grief-like symptoms that accompany this feeling of loving too much.

## Daily Affirmations

It is important to reaffirm to yourself on a daily basis...

- “We are meant to be pair bonded”
- “It is natural to be in a relationship”
- “We are meant to be in a community or have a network of people around us”
- “We are not meant to be isolated, we are not solo beings”
- “No man or woman is an island, we need others to bond with”

### Now why am I saying this to you?

I’m saying this because when I went through my own experience of heartbreak, love sickness and love withdrawal, I truly believed there was something very “faulty” about the way I was thinking and feeling. I remember thinking that I ‘felt’ far too much, and I remember feeling utterly ashamed and embarrassed about my own needs. I thought I shouldn’t need anything. I thought if I didn’t have any needs at all I’d be stronger, I wouldn’t hurt so much, I’d be self-sufficient in every way. What I derived from this was; there is something wrong with me as the emotions were utterly overwhelming, a far cry from feeling normal or stable.

But it was my “level” of needs that were the problem, not the needs themselves. In other words, there is nothing wrong with having needs, but when we reach out to the beloved like a hungry, ravenous grown up child searching for love, closeness, emotional responsiveness and recognition, and then lay ourselves at their feet (even

symbolically), something intangible happens in the POA (person of addiction) that will make them run in the opposite direction.

This workbook addresses this elusive dance between the unavailable, withdrawn love avoidant and the insecure, anxiously attached love addict.

Isn't it ironic how these two very different attachment styles create such a perfect storm?

But my main point is finding a way to have a deeply fulfilling and responsive relationship whilst enabling emotional self-reliance and independence.

The journey from loving too much and losing ourselves in the beloved, to healing the wound of the unloved, the "unchosen", all begins with understanding where this profound sense of sorrow and helplessness originated.

Once you know this, you will have the key to unlocking this painful cycle; you will be able to change; appreciate who you are, what your needs and wants are, what you value, and most of all, you will realise that just because this one person has not chosen you, you are NOT unlovable.

I encourage you at this very moment to affirm to yourself that you are identifying your priorities for personal growth, self-development, self-awareness and self-discovery.

Right now, you are taking your first step on the road to freeing yourself from love addiction.

It is so important to understand that what sits under the umbrella of an addiction to love is grief, sorrow, abandonment anxiety, abandonment distress, rejection, separation anxiety, fear of being alone, powerlessness, loss of emotional independence, helplessness and the shattering symptoms of loss and sadness.

This following self-help tool is designed to help you make sense and the emotions you are feeling, so that you have a deeper understanding of this loss and what it means to you.

Remember, grief is a cyclical process. It is not a linear process that moves in a straight time line with a beginning, middle and an end.

The grief cycle is often experienced in waves; one minute you might feel something has lifted and that you've returned back to the world, the next it can spiral downwards. It feels as though these emotions keep returning, and punishing you, but if we understand it is a cycle, then we can find a better way to cope with it.

Of course, everyone's way of coping with grief is particular to them, but it can be of huge support just to know that you are not alone in this. You will be free of this, and one day you will look out of the window and feel the heavy looming cloud that has been hovering over you, creating a veil between you and the world, has finally lifted.

*“Love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation.”*

**--- Kahlil Gibran**

Grief is a roller coaster of intense emotions. It is not something we have control over, but if we can understand that “grief is the emotion of loss and separation from those

we love and have loved”, then we have in our hands the ability to be watchful over its cycle.

For instance, grief often expresses itself through regret; “If only....” I had been different. “If only I had been more patient, he/she may be here right now.”

But no matter what you feel during this time, you need to understand that in every single case of grief and loss “grief stems from attachment to something or someone outside of us combined with a refusal to let go.”

I say this with absolute passion and certainty, because when we are rejected in a relationship, or the beloved doesn’t feel the same way, it is one of the most devastating causes of acute loss and sadness anyone can feel.

When it happened to me and Josh was unable to reciprocate my love, I went through the exact Four Stages of Grief that I have mentioned above, which is why I mention it again here.

To begin with, I felt...

- The shock of hearing that he was going away for a long time, and the feeling that nothing in the world was not “normal” anymore. There was no certainty, nothing was safe and secure. I felt numb and completely disorientated.
- The yearning, the longing and the protest that this couldn’t be happening. I believed we “may” be able to have a future together. I felt waves of grief, loss of appetite, sleep, loss of concentration, loss of all meaning and purpose. It was just a deep, empty and bottomless void.

- Complete disorganisation, despair, sadness, devastation and hopelessness.
- But then - and this is the most important stage of all - I survived it. This is John Bowlby's stage of re-organisation: letting go of the attachment, and most of all, investing in your future.

Now, there's probably another question that you'd like to ask me right now...

### **How long did it take you to get through this Helen?**

I truly believe that the answer to this question is different for everyone, but the main difference is that YOU have this workbook.

If it had been available back then, maybe I would have got through it sooner, or at least gained the strength to let go and break the addictive cycle I was in. But no matter what, I couldn't have got through it without a therapist/psychoanalyst.

If love addiction is an attachment disorder, then seeing someone face-to-face and reading everything about it was absolutely crucial for me, and that is exactly why I am writing this book.

The more we truly understand something, the more we bring to consciousness all of our longings and yearnings that have been there for many years. Going into therapy isn't for everyone, but if your symptoms are acute I definitely recommend it, because unfortunately, there is no magic pill to "get rid" of love addiction or love withdrawal no more than there is a magic pill to ease grief.

But this self-development program will certainly support you in every way through this debilitating time, so please never ever feel it will last forever.

*“Grief is like the ocean, it comes in waves, ebbing and flowing. Sometimes the water is calm, and sometimes it is overwhelming. All we can do is learn to swim.”*

--- Vicki Harris

## **The Cycle of Grief**

Now I want you to find a quiet place of your own; are you inside or outside? What sounds do you hear? What do you see? What are you doing? Are you alone or with other people? Do you notice any sensations in your body? Now gently take some deep breaths; inhale and exhale. Find that quiet centre within and then...

### **1. Find a few words that describe your grief right now.**

your notes

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Describe this on an emotional level, i.e. how you ‘feel’. Don’t be rational, just describe the feeling. If you do not feel loss or grief, please don’t worry, as for some loss can also be experienced as depression, shock, guilt, regret, shame, disbelief, denial or anger. If this is so, write down what your immediate emotions are right now... how would you describe it?

For Example:

*I feel like this pain is more painful than I can bear. I feel like I am being sucked in to a well of sorrow – I am looking over a precipice and there’s no-one there.*

*It's indescribable. My heart actually hurts and aches, he/she was everything to me and I don't think I will ever get over this pain.*

your notes

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**2. In this feeling, how old are you? Is this loss familiar? Is it an accumulation of losses or is it the absence of this most recent loss?**

For Example:

*I am 15, it feels as if the loss has been there since I was a teenager.*

your notes

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### 3. What expectations or dreams did this loss represent for you?

For Example:

*I thought we'd be together forever. We talked about marriage; I wanted his or her children. I thought he/she was my soul mate and that we'd have a future together. He/she was everything that I could imagine and he/she shared exactly the same aspirations and future dreams, but now I'm wondering if it was all a lie...?*

your notes

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### 4. When I was with him or her, what role did they have in my marriage/ relationship/ connection we shared?

For Example:

*He/she motivated our relationship, organised social events, took charge of the money, managed all the bills and played a huge part in the children's lives, taking them to sport, music and dance classes. He/she was my first love since I was seventeen, I can't ever imagine life without him or her. It was like my security blanket would be there forever and now they have left me for someone else.*

your notes



**5. What have I lost in myself since the relationship/marriage has been over?  
How will my life be different now he or she is gone, and what did I lose that was important to my sense of wellbeing and how has this affected what I feel now?**

For Example:

*He/she gave me a sense of belonging, security, status, self-esteem and self-confidence. When I was with him/her I felt secure and that life had a purpose. He/she was very outgoing. I feel lost without them.*

your notes



## Healing Guided Visualisation

Next, I want you to find that quiet centre within your inner being, and breathe through those feelings. Some people imagine the breath internally, circling around and around their torso, taking unwanted feelings and emotions from deep within and releasing them up through the head and out the top, letting go of any pain and loss.

Now, every time you breathe out imagine any emotional pain and feelings that you no longer need or want, spiralling up and away. You are letting them go. Just keep breathing in healing energy and breathing out any sense of loss. The more you let go, the more you will know that you are safe and secure and that your reaction to this loss is a natural part of the self-healing process.

Remember, there is not a “typical” loss and no “typical” response to loss. Everyone’s experience is different. We are all unique in the way we grieve for the beloved. But know that to grieve is natural and there is a purpose.

*“You never know how strong you are until being strong is the only choice you have.”*

--- Anon

Now, with every breath, I want you to become more present in the here and now, in the moment, allowing thoughts to be there, to come and go, but for YOU to be here, right now within your stillest centre, the stillness within.

I will ask you questions and as you reflect on these questions you will remain within that peaceful core, deep inside of you at the centre of your being. What would it be

like to feel, hear or imagine a veil of light energy around the inner you, separating you from any pain so that you can witness your feelings without having to experience them?

You don't need to fight any emotions. Instead, you can safely go deeper and deeper within to explore the loss in your own protected sanctuary. This inner place, where you are safe and secure, a place that is peaceful and calm, is your sacred centre; a centre free of fear, anxiety, despair and sorrow.

It is always there, and has always been there, and the more you simply relax into the here and now, the more you can easily learn to sit within it.

Right in this very moment there is only the awareness of being entirely alive in the here and now, connected to your inner self. No-one can hurt you here; no-one can take anything away from you because here you are connecting with your true inner self.

There is no-one that can reject you or abandon you, as right now, in this calm serene place, there is only you – and you are safe.

I want you to imagine a curtain, a very large heavy curtain. What colour is it?

As you open the curtain you take a deeper, slower breath moving deeper into your safe centre. Imagine your jaw becoming softer and your mouth free of any tension. Breathing slowly and deeply in to your centre, where there is no interruption and no energy for anxious thoughts.

This is your gift to yourself. Allow yourself to explore any sensations that may arise

from your loss, and let each anxious thought pass as you breathe slowly outwards. Observe your feelings and what it feels like to simply let them move on, and release them. Just for a moment, take notice of the stillest, calmest part of your inner self. The more you notice this, the stiller you will become.

Become stiller, remain still and centred, and now ask yourself the following:

**Where are you right now?**

your notes

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**How old is the inner peaceful you?**

your notes

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**What is different about where you are right now, and what peaceful memory, if any, does it evoke?**

your notes

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**Does this loss have a message for you, and if so, what is that message?**

your notes

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**Does this loss have any wisdom to share, and if so, what might that wisdom be?**

your notes

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**If you could contribute anything to your own life now, what might it be?**

your notes

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**Move your imagination six months into the future. What positive changes have you made for yourself?**

your notes

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**How has being in this relationship affected your self-esteem and self-worth?**

your notes

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**Day by day, what might you give to yourself that will symbolise you taking care of yourself?**

your notes

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**What can you contribute to your life without him or her that will result in you feeling more self-confident, self-validated and worthy of feeling lovable again?**

your notes

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**Describe how this place inside your centre is different than before?**

your notes

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**Are there any intrusive thoughts or do you feel quite peaceful? If you have intrusive**

thoughts, separate yourself from these self-sabotaging thoughts, breathe in, exhale and apply a positive self-talk exercise.

I will answer your questions throughout this workbook, but for now I want you to return to this precise moment in time...

**Describe what your experience is at this moment in time.**

your notes

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**Ask yourself how this exercise (of being more centred, calm and sitting within inner peace) might be of use to help you through this experience of heartbreak, loss and rejection?**

your notes

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**In your quiet centre, ask yourself who could I send gratitude and generosity out to in the next few days? Who might need my support, my care, my attention, and my help?**

your notes

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From your quiet centre, imagine sending your love out to this person now.

If you like dogs, cats, horses or any other pets, but don't have one to hand, then imagine being close to them, stroking them, playing with them and caring for them. If you don't have a pet but you have a close friend that has one, arrange some time with them so you could experience this warmth and affection.

**Write out what you plan to do with respect to giving love/care to an animal/pet.**

your notes

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Right now, in this peaceful place temporarily free from sorrow and loss, breathe deeply in to this safe refuge.

This is your very own silent sanctuary where the turmoil you have been experiencing is melting away so that you never feel alone again... it is melting... melting... melting... any pain in your heart is calming, easing, soothing. It's a gentle peaceful place... it's as if you are fully present in the here and now, validating and affirming

that you are good enough as you are; that you are fully validating yourself in this very moment and any outside interruption is fading into the past.

Come back to the room you have created to feel a deep sense of ease and calm and take out your pen. Without thought, write down in the following box everything you have experienced from this guided exercise.



If you need more space to write, please use the back of this page or your journal.

*“If there is any possible consolation in the tragedy of losing someone we love very much, it’s the necessary hope that perhaps it was for the best.”*

--- Paulo Coelho

## **Exercise 1**

In the following exercise we will begin to allow ourselves to better understand how we were affected by our experience with others.

It is an important step towards become whole again. On the following page (Exercise 1), write, paint, draw, or in any way you like, express the ways that, on reflection, you lose yourself in a relationship with another person. Take your time and be honest and open, without editing or judging. Just allow yourself to express whatever comes to mind as you ask yourself “How do I lose myself in relationships?”



## **The Art of Mindfulness through Words**

Can you relate to any of the following? It is important here to see each of these key points as ways many women and men who love too much lose themselves in their relationships, which often lead to an addiction to love.

When you have read through these statements please choose 5 specific points that you can relate to the most and copy them down in your journal or on the worksheet provided.

### **The “How Do You Lose Yourself in a Relationship” Statements:**

- I tend to put my partner’s needs ahead of my own for fear that they might leave me if I have my own needs.
- I have neglected my friends, family, career, interests, even my health, for the opportunity of entering a love affair, or at the cost of an ongoing relationship.
- I frequently fall in love with a person’s potential as a romantic partner, rather than accepting them as they are, and therefore feel constantly disappointed by them.
- Whether I am in a long term relationship or have just recently met someone, I find myself feeling anxious, suspicious, agitated and panicky when they fail to return my text messages or calls; for fear that they no longer care about me.
- I feel overly dependent on my significant other, as if I couldn’t survive without them or their approval.

- I am continuously choosing unavailable partners, whether due to their emotional unresponsiveness or personal circumstances; i.e. married, engaged, cultural, sexual identity
- I experience feelings of possessiveness, jealousy, rejection or insecurity.
- I make my partner in to my project, supporting them financially or creatively, giving them my entire recognition, validation and encouragement, yet fail to take care of myself, my own interests, professional and personal life.
- I re-establish the beloved's life, rescue them, make their life inspiring, productive and life enhancing, reduce "their stress" levels, whilst my own needs for fulfilment and meaning seem completely excluded from any kind of love, connection, empathy and commitment.
- I experience a mounting feeling of emotional intensity and agitation if my partner fails to text or make contact if there has been a long absence during the day.
- I find myself constantly thinking about my love interest, rather than getting on with my day to day routine.
- As soon as I meet someone I have intense feelings for, I become destabilised and disoriented, so much so that I can't think of anything else other than him or her

- I have seen somebody at a glance and immediately developed a crush and intense desire to be with them, as if I was catapulted into a world where only the two of us existed.
- I am returning time and time again to an emotionally withholding, neglectful, impossible or toxic relationship.
- I crave my partner's full attention, reassurance, giving them responsibility for my emotional well-being.
- Once in a relationship I find that I lose my self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem.
- I have fallen in love with someone I've met online, via dating agencies or in chat rooms before ever physically meeting that person.
- I feel as though I simply can't imagine the future without my significant other for fear of being completely alone.

## **Exercise 2 Part A**

On the next page, in Exercise 2 Part A, you will choose five of the statements above that you most agree with, or resonate with you, and write them down in the boxes provided. Start by taking a deep breath to relax, go through the statements above again and select the ones that speak to you most.

## Exercise 2: Part A: How I lose myself in relationships



“

*Take a moment to stop, close your eyes and breathe deeply in and out. This helps us to relax and let go. Imagine everytime you breathe out you let go a little more. Now choose the 5 statements above which you most relate to and write them in the boxes provided below.*

”

Number 1

Number 2

Number 3

Number 4

Number 5

These statements will give you an insight into how so many of us submerge ourselves in a relationship, losing all sense of our individuality, independence and uniqueness when we fall romantically in love.

This list is only some of the ways we begin to lose our identity and give our power away the moment we enter into a relationship or intense physical and emotional attraction.

The next part of the exercise is to take one of the points that you most relate to and write down a conversation with yourself about that particular statement.

But for now, read about the writing approach I used and then my example below, which is based on my own real life personal experience. Afterwards, I'll provide a chance for you to work through the exercise yourself.

## **My Process for Writing**

- Allow yourself to go into 'free flow' with your thoughts. The main thing is to express what you feel fully on the page. This can take up to 10 to 20 minutes or as long as you want.
- You may want to start with something short and come back to it when it feels like it is connecting.
- Keep going and avoid pausing to look at what you have already written. It isn't important for you to understand or make sense of it. Leave everything you have written without crossing anything out and don't worry about spelling, structure, or punctuation; just get it all down.

- Pour your emotional pain on to the page and as you are writing try to make a distinction between your rational self and your emotional self.
- Don't be logical or rational when you do this, lose complete control and let your thoughts roll on to the paper.
- Let your emotions seep through in the writing process. Many people find this liberating and helpful.
- Let the grief you feel fly on to the page, notice it, be aware and fully awake as if the writing process is re-writing you, reclaiming all that has been lost. Go into details, for example; if you were writing about a fruit, describe in detail what kind of fruit it was, was it a kiwi fruit, a mango, etc.? What associations come to you when you feel fear, loss, abandonment or anxiety? Where does it take you and what does it remind you of? You may be thinking right now "why is this important?" The answer is that this process will start to release you from the emotional turmoil you may have become identified with, so the more you "objectify" your internal experience, the more you are writing yourself out of the addictive negative cycle.
- If something deeply emotional comes up, just keep going with it and don't stop to read it back. By now you will be lost in the "here and now" moment, nothing will distract you. If it does, then come back to your core centre as if this very act of conscious mindfulness brings you closer to your entire senses.
- When this most painful experience pierced my heart, I remember that I needed to practise something like Buddhism and mindfulness on a daily basis, so through the writing process I would scan my senses. What was it that I could

feel, see, hear, taste, touch sense etc.? It was a deliberate way to just stay present in each and every moment and this writing process managed to keep me way out of my head, and if I did have thoughts I'd pour them on to the page until my right arm ached as I just couldn't stop writing. It seemed the only thing that could help me through this ravaging grief that consumed every cell in my body. It was literally as though writing through what happened allowed me to gain some distance from the acute grief, as if through this process I would be "observing" it rather than being pulled down into a vortex of helplessness.

- There is only this moment which is "nature's sanctuary" free from emotional pain.

## **Exercise 2 Part B – Helen's Example**

Below you can read my example, in which I have chosen a particular statement that I resonated with. I then write about a specific time I recall acting and feeling the way the chosen statement describes. For this example, I will choose the statement:

*"I am returning time and time again to an emotionally withholding, neglectful or toxic relationship."*

I knew I should have been able to leave Josh, yet it was as though some powerful magnet kept me tied to him. It was so destructive to me, but unfortunately I didn't believe I could survive without him. This took place for me in the late 80s.

As you write, just let your thoughts pour out of you, flowing straight from your heart onto the page. For many, it is the region around the heart and lungs that feel most of the trauma, and people will often say things like:

*“This pain feels like a knife through my heart”*

OR...

*“When I think of him/her not wanting to be with me it is as though I cannot breathe.  
He/she is my oxygen”*

On the next page you will see my example of **Exercise 2 Part B**.

*“The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears”*

**--- Laurel Perch**

## Exercise 2: Part B: How I lose myself in relationships



Statement

“ Write down your statement in the box and then below, write down whatever you recall starting with “I remember when...”, using extra pages if needed. Write it like a conversation and include what you felt, saw, heard, and even what you thought to yourself. ”

*“I am returning time and time again to an emotionally withholding, neglectful, or toxic relationship”*

*I remember when... “We organised the most special afternoon together; it was to go to the beach on the North Shore just a few miles from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, we ordered a seafood platter and planned to eat it near the sea front, it was a very hot day and I’d wear my lovely new bikini that I bought especially for you, it was a red and white polka dot one, and I wore it with my deep crimson Indian scarf around my tummy to cover up a little. Then down at the beach front as we ate, you seemed pre-occupied, in a world of your own not at all engaged with me and the fresh bream fish we’d ordered that was caught from the sea that day – I follow your gaze as I saw beautiful girls strolling across the sand right in front of us, I was trying to make conversation and be close to you but you seemed far away, there but not there. I remember looking at the girls in there early 20s and noticed they all had long dark hair; brown eyes and a dark complexion, one was a beautiful Indian woman, I was blonde and blue/green eyes, I began to wonder how I could change the way I looked so that you’d want me as much as you wanted them – I left the beach and stood in a near by cafe waiting for you to notice I’d gone, I felt invisible, I was invisible, I felt as though I was disappearing, everything felt surreal as I felt this surge of red panic ravaging through me, blurring all reality. I’d gone home saying to myself I will never ever see you again but then of course I’d see you again as when I left you, you draw me back. I felt utterly powerless and weak, you rang that evening and asked to come round, you did, I tried to act disinterested until I had to say what I felt....*

*continues on next page.*

*I remember I felt completely destabilised even though I was working in a women's prison, nothing could ever explain the devastation when everything I had ever wanted from you had suddenly gone, disappeared, I knew it was over but I just didn't know how to let you go let alone survive you being with me one minute and the next would be down to a 2 week wait, ticking the days off the calendar until it reached the 2 week trial and when I did see you it would be for a whole day never staying for muesli in the morning. You wanted to "take things slowly" and after every 2 weeks were up you would give me the verdict, never knowing if we'd meet again or not. I felt an avalanche of grief in my heart and soul and every time I told myself it's over I knew it wasn't over as in a way I felt this heavy magnet drawing me to you and you to me, I had no control of it, the more you rejected me the more I tried to change myself in to what I felt you wanted in a woman. I was a disappearing woman, utterly shattered and unable to know how I was ever going to survive this loss."*

HELEN'S EXAMPLE



During this time, I'd lost so much weight. I was an empty shell longing for this one person to reciprocate my love. I couldn't leave him. I am censoring what I write at this moment for my own self-respect as it was by far the most difficult, humiliating addiction I had ever experienced.

It actually felt like some ravaging sickness was gnawing away at me from the inside and below is the actual exercise I used to begin to free myself from the grip of this insidious addiction to love.

The main thing to understand is that it is not love, as if it were, I would definitely not allow myself to be reduced to something more similar to a tiny worm of a woman, crumbling like pastry in his arms.

I'd never been like this before, yet with this ONE man I was.

So here's what I did...

I began to write in my journals every single day and night, whenever I felt a feeling or the temptation to call him.

I wasn't going to find myself reaching for the phone in desperation again. NO, I knew this time I would not return. There was no negotiation, this was IT!

*“We become attached to what’s familiar, and sometimes we hold onto things that are safe and predictable, even if they are bad for us”*

**--- John Bowlby**

When I experienced the loss of someone I deeply loved and began to write everything in my journal, I felt for the first time a sense of solitude, a quietness that was still and comforting, completely concentrating on the here and now of my writing.

This process allowed me a distraction from the most sorrowful and fearful thoughts, as somehow it felt like I had an imaginary friend that I could dialogue with on the page, even though it was me writing. I could feel my sense of self screaming out on to the page and somehow afterwards it felt as if I’d been on a long journey, as for the first time I didn’t need to suppress anything, I didn’t need to fabricate, I felt relieved to speak, and each and every word I wrote just poured through.

This not only helped me to be “still” in the moment, but also helped me to self-validate and become emotionally self-reliant, especially when I read back what I had written.

*“Freedom is what you do with what’s being done to you”*

**--- Jean-Paul Sartre**

The purpose of this exercise is so that you write an imaginary conversation in your journal, or on the worksheet; as if an inner advisor is counselling you through this time of transition.

Often it is a good idea to speak what you have written in to a recorder so that whether you are in your car or sitting at home quietly you can draw on your own words for validation and internal solace.

## **Exercise 2 Part B**

So now that you have seen my example and read more about the writing process, it's time to begin the exercise. On the next page you will find a blank worksheet ready for you to fill it in.

First, choose any one of the 5 statements you chose and wrote down in Exercise 2 Part A above. You don't have to choose the first one in the list of 5 above and, if you wish, after this exercise you can always redo the exercise for the other four.

Write the statement you've chosen in the top box of the exercise worksheet below. Then in the ruled lines part below it where it says "*I remember when...*" start writing your memories associated with the statement you have chosen. If you need extra space you can use the back of the page or additional pages.

NOTE: Recently, I discovered that the word 'mourning' literally means, 'to remember' in Latin. It can apply to a person we have lost; a feeling or expression of sorrow or grief, a misfortune or loss, or anything we might regret. This warmed my heart as when we "remember" the beloved; it truly is as if we lamenting the loss of them in every way possible.

In this following exercise please keep this in mind, as I remember when I was mourning the loss of Josh, I found myself not only remembering the times we spent together, but also found myself having many regrets; "If only I had given him more space", "if only he didn't feel so confined by being in a relationship", "if only I had

understood him more”, etc.

Just use this gentle exercise to express some of the things you remember. They may be light, spontaneous and positive memories or sorrowful recollections. But whatever form they take, just let yourself convey whatever comes to mind and be kind, soothing and generous with your thoughts, rather than self-blaming, self-deprecating or critical. Most of all, remember that what has happened is not your fault.

*“It is only when we no longer compulsively need someone that we can have a “real” relationship with them.”*

**--- Antony Storr**

*“The truth is like a lion. You don’t have to defend it. Let it loose, it will defend itself”*

**-- St. Augustine**



Now that you have finished Exercise 2, you can always go back and look at the other statements, but for now, read on as you will find many more useful exercises and techniques in this workbook.

## **Writing Myself Well: Looking Back in Retrospect**

In this exercise we are going to start by looking at a particular situation and acknowledging the hurt and pain it caused. We're then going to use that energy and turn it around to create a way of helping ourselves to heal. It may sound strange to think that what has hurt us, and the resulting negativity we felt, can actually help us, but it is true.

First, we will write a brief description of the incident that triggered the emotional pain. Then we will write out the ways it has made us feel and think negatively about ourselves. I understand this may be hard to do, but it is worthwhile because we will take these unhelpful things and use them to create positive and healing affirmations.

I'm reminded of a friend who described a form of martial arts. He explained that sometimes the opponent is stronger, faster and bigger, and it may seem like there is no way to win this confrontation, but if you use the opponent's strength, speed and energy by redirecting it, then you can change their attack into your defence.

So when they hit you, instead of blocking it, you move aside and push them in the same direction they are moving, which causes them to fall over! By redirecting the energy in their attack, rather than denying it, with a little effort you have turned things around.

I have been through this myself so let me share a real example with you first, which I hope will make it easier for you to explore the exercise for yourself.

## **Exercise 3 – Helen's Example**

Please remember that if the exercise sheets in this workbook are not big enough, you can always use extra paper, or your own journal/diary. I want you to write as much as you want and although it may be more convenient to write on a computer, please use a pen or pencil.

This is important because writing by hand involves more mental focus and the physical act of writing helps calm down the stress hormones that are triggered in love withdrawal and abandonment anxiety.

It also helps you make a stronger connection to the positive changes you are creating as you work through the exercises.

On the next page you will find my example:

## Exercise 3: Creating Positive Affirmations: How pain and hurt can become positive and healing



“

*Write a summary of an event you remember which caused you pain. Then write out negative things this made you feel or think about yourself. On the right, write out positive affirmations which counter each of those negative self beliefs. Take your time.*

”

I remember when...*we were on a dream holiday at the beach, but you paid me no attention and left me alone. You were looking at other women and seemed distant and uninterested.*



### Negative beliefs & Self Talk:

*“I feel unlovable”*

*“Unwanted and rejected”*

*“I want to change everything about myself so that he will want me more”*

*“I shouldn't have started, I should have walked away it's my fault”*

*“I am an inadequate and worthless”*

*“I will resume my Egyptian Dancing so that he will want me more”*

*“No matter how distant or emotionally abusive he is, I still love him”*

### Positive Affirmations:

*“I am worthy of love and will not be with someone who is ‘there but not there’ ”*

*“Just because he rejected me it DOESN'T mean there is something wrong with me”*

*“My mind, body and spirit is who I am and I will never change this to be good enough for you or for you to want me more”*

*“I did what I could as nothing that I could have done differently would have made things different, it was who he was and I have no control over that”*

*It is not true that I am inadequate and worthless and I must stay away from men that are not healthy for me as before I met you I was full of charisma and joy*

*“I will dance as I am passionate about it, but I will do it for me rather than try getting a response from you”*

*“If someone is emotionally abusive, unavailable or distant I respect and honour myself enough to walk away”*

## **Exercise 3**

Now that you've read my example, I want you to draw on your own experiences and apply this to your situation. Even when it is painful, the experiences we have ultimately provide resources and opportunities to grow and heal.

You don't have to use the same example from exercise 2, but you can if you like. You can repeat this exercise for each of the love addiction statements you choose in Exercise 2 Part A if you like. Take your time and be gentle and kind to yourself when filling in the exercise sheet below.

*“We must never allow another person’s limited perceptions to define us”*

**--- Virginia Satir**

## Exercise 3: Creating Positive Affirmations: How pain and hurt can become positive and healing



“

*Write a summary of an event you remember which caused you pain. Then write out negative things this made you feel or think about yourself. On the right, write out positive affirmations which counter each of those negative self beliefs. Take your time.*

”

I remember when...



Negative beliefs:

Positive Affirmations:

## Positive Affirmations

How we talk and think to ourselves is really important and powerful. The exercise above allows us to start the transformation from negative self-talk into positive and healing self-talk. Your positive affirmations above are highly relevant to you.

To get the most from them, do the following:

- Repeat them to yourself on a daily basis.
- If at any time you feel you could change them to be even more positive, then make the change. As you evolve so can they.
- Write them out and put the list somewhere where you'll see it every day. Like the fridge door, or in the bathroom, next to your mirror.
- When you say them, allow yourself to feel congruent with them; allow yourself to believe in them.
- Speak in 1st person as though you are actually saying it to yourself.

Repeat these positive affirmations over and over again so that you begin to feel what is good and nourishing for your soul, not what is detrimental to your spontaneity, happiness and emotional wellbeing.

Here are some more of my own personal positive affirmations. Feel free to use any that resonate with your needs as well as creating new ones of your own.

*“I can take care of my own wants and needs and deserve to be with a partner that accepts me for who I am”*

*“If someone has a negative, toxic influence on my life I will stay clear of them”*

*“I am safe in myself and will find my own security and separateness”*

*“I will survive this loss as I am a fundamentally strong person”*

*“My own sense of self-validation is not wholly dependent on any one person”*

*“I don’t need him/her or any one person to prove that I am of value, worthy and good enough”*

*“This feeling of abandonment and loss is coming from the childlike me, the infant in me; it has nothing to do with reality in the here and now*

*“My sense of self-worth and esteem is constant whether I’m in a relationship or not”*

*“I am good enough in myself whether alone or with someone”*

*“I am strong enough to survive alone and grow a deep sense of emotional self-generosity“*

*“When I am seeing clearly, however much my emotions tell me this is love, I know with all my heart s/he is not healthy for me”*

*“Just because I am in emotional pain doesn’t mean I am in love. I have to admit I am addicted to love and I am in withdrawal”*

*“I will be safe and okay and learn an important lesson from this experience”*

*“I am a worthwhile, good and complete person without him/her”*

*“I will always set healthy positive boundaries and learn from this experience”*

*“I don’t have to earn my sense of self-worth and love when I am in a relationship, I am enough”*

*“If someone is incapable of respecting and honouring my humanness then I know they are not good for me”*

*“I am wholly responsible for my own behaviour and choices and know that I cannot control another’s choices”*

*“I fully appreciate myself unconditionally”*

*“I am a good person and I will never doubt this. It will never waver when I am in a relationship”*

*“Everything that I experience, positive or negative, contributes to personal growth, learning and self-development”*

*“I let go of being needy and possessive as others belong to themselves as I belong to myself”*

*“I deserve good healthy relationships whereby empathy, respect, generosity and gratitude is paramount in a loving relationship”*

*“The way you acted towards me does NOT mean I am unlovable” (this is a key affirmation, repeat this several times a day)*

*“Even if some choose to reject me, I know I am good enough and lovable” (this is another key affirmation, repeat several times a day)*

Can you see here that each and every affirmation is actually the very opposite to what you may write when you list how the painful experience makes you feel or think about yourself?

You must literally go into combat with the false beliefs you hold about yourself...

After all, have you ever considered that it is NOT your fault... that maybe you are a passionate unique individual and you have met someone that is simply NOT GOOD FOR YOU?!

This is my entire point, as never before or since has anything come close to what happened to me back then, and yet this is the “fodder”, the centre of why I have created this program.

This addiction can leave a scar on one’s life and that’s why we need to express the inexpressible in words, art, exercises and every way we can heal ourselves to feel whole, contented, fulfilled and complete.

There is something very important that I want to keep reaffirming throughout this workbook...

Be very wary if you find yourself vacating your own body and soul the moment you experience that all powerful feeling of “falling in love”. This feeling of merging entirely with the beloved is perilous as it literally is like a drug that can quickly pull you down in to a powerful vortex of craving, whilst at the same time feel intoxicatingly sublime.

Before you know it, the compulsion to lose yourself in the other is so strong that it

becomes incredibly difficult to disentangle yourself from the search for approval, attention and self-validation you so long for.

## **Healing Through Creative Writing**

In Exercise 2 Part A you chose 5 statements which resonated with you and your situation. We're now going to explore different ways of thinking and reflecting to help us shift our minds into a more positive mode, helping us to learn more about how and why we lost ourselves in the beloved.

Below you will find different ways of analysing what happened.

These are literally sentence starters. As you read through them you will find boxes to make quick notes and gather your ideas. Feel free to fill in the boxes as you go, or come back and explore them in the future.

**Looking back in retrospect maybe I should have...**

your notes

---

---



**If only I could have...**

your notes

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**The woman/man I used to be before we met was...**

your notes

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**Now that you have gone I can make many decisions for myself and one would be...**

your notes

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**Before I met you, I wanted to...**

your notes

---

---



You can see that how you phrase the start of a question starts to define the way we then think about the situation. The following sentence starters are more in-depth; read

each of them and notice which ones you resonate with the most. You will get to use them in another powerful exercise shortly.

### **I remember when....**

- Now that you've gone I can look forward to... (list every possible goal, interest or activity that you look forward to)
- What would I do differently if I wasn't so dependent on you loving me in return?
- When I was with you what things about you did I hide from friends or family?
- What didn't feel right about my relationship with you?
- How would I behave differently now if I were not grieving to have you back?
- That secret place we shared was...
- What boundaries would I put in place if things were different between us?
- I have an imaginary friend that will...
- When a friend witnessed... (Speak here from a friend's point of view, what they thought of your situation and what they advised you to do)
- Thinking of the future I know I will...
- Looking back I now know I will....

## Exercise 4

On the next page you will find the sheet for Exercise 4.

There is space to choose one of the 5 original statements from Exercise 2 and one of the sentence starters above. You can do more if you wish, and I encourage you to do so.

Fill in the boxes provided and then below write as much as you need, remembering to just let it flow. Write without editing, or worrying about spelling, grammar or even making perfect sense. Just get it all down. If you need more space, just use extra sheets, the back of the page or your own journal.

*“A personal crisis has a purpose of coercing you to find your way.....*

*“In the middle of the journey of our life, I found myself in a dark wood,  
For the straightway was lost”*

**-- Dante Alighieri**



## **What happens when we surrender all that we are to another person?**

Surrendering or ‘abandoning’ yourself to another is the driving force behind obsessive love, when you love someone for what you **want** and **need** them to be, to ease your ravenous hunger for love and connection, rather than WHO that person really is.

As you project your own unmet needs, desires and longing onto the beloved, and ahead of what the significant other’s needs may be, a complete breakdown of reasoning can occur, which drives the love addict’s fate towards her/his greatest fear of all – rejection.

Knowing this, I’m sure you can now clearly see exactly how a person can begin to lose themselves in a relationship, because they are driven by the desire to look for completeness/wholeness in the other, sacrificing themselves at the feet of the beloved for fear that they will never survive alone.

And here lies the problem of loving too much; of loving someone more than our own life.

It’s as if searching for one’s soul in the other takes precedence over everything else.



The psychoanalyst and philosopher Jacques Lacan elucidates this fact entirely, explaining why and how we lose ourselves in the other.

**Lacan talks about how people often speak of the *one*.**

**The *one* represents the romanticized notion of the object of love.**

This *one* may be another person, thought to be the other half of one's soul who is yet to be found somewhere in life's journey; an object or the fulfilment of a dream. A person who loves expects to be united with the object of his love by being loved in return. Thus, he lives his life fuelled by the desire for the other - the one.

This clearly explains why so many are prepared to sacrifice and renounce their self-respect, their time, their professional lives, friends, family etc., if it means that they're able to hold onto the beloved tightly, to reassure themselves that they are wanted, loved in return and finally complete.

In many ways, if there is a constant longing for "the other half of one's soul" then it's little wonder that this is experienced as a profoundly life-changing feeling of grief and loss when love is not mutually reciprocated, and why many people who suffer in this way seek therapy or a religious/spiritual orientation.

The desire to make sense of things in response; to find some sense of purpose and meaning in ourselves is exactly the reason why I felt so passionate about creating the Love Addiction Recovery Program. I wanted to understand what was happening, and discover exactly what was underpinning the causes of this despair.

I truly believe this is the cure, because if we understand something, we can then begin to heal ourselves from within. But if it's a mystery and a frightening traumatic occurrence that keeps repeating itself, we remain powerless; a slave to our own emotional helplessness.

## The Unsent Letter

So far we have been writing things out to better understand ourselves. We have written about ourselves, to ourselves and for ourselves. But relationships are about how we are with others, so now we will expand this process to explore how healing it can be to write a letter to our ex-partner, or person of desire.

Right away I will say that this is a letter we will write, but importantly, it will not be sent, ever! It is the process of writing it which is so powerful.

What you write and the focus and subject of the letter is entirely up to you just allow every possible momentary thought find the words to say what you feel you need to say, this unsent letter is about finding yourself in a story that you can call your own, capturing what otherwise may be impossible in speaking your truth.

To give you an example, some people have written about how it could have been different; or how they felt when they were with that person; others explain what they are now doing and how they have reclaimed their life, projects and interests, and rediscovered themselves.

The unsent letter will help you to grieve your loss, organise your thoughts, feelings and behaviour, and release your anger, sorrow, disappointments and resentments as a way to truly express the resentments, thoughts and feelings you have held back.

This is a great way to achieve clarity and closure - and because you won't be sending this letter (ever!) it is a completely safe way to explore in detail the things you personally need to put to rest.

Like most of us in this situation, I'm sure there were so many things that you wanted

to say but only thought about after the moment had passed. Many clients tell me the things they held back and I'm sure there are things you wanted to say, but feared that if you said them it would have made things worse. And of course, one of the main reasons we hold things back is because of the ultimate fear of all: Abandonment.

Our fear is that if we speak and say what we really feel, the beloved will leave us forever. So unfortunately, all of those “unsaid” thoughts and feelings accumulate over time and we internalise them instead.

Writing this “unsent letter” will help you to express so much of what you wanted to say to your ex or person of desire; to explain how you felt and what you thought, and perhaps more importantly, to make some sense out of any breakdown of communication between you.

Some people regard the unsent letter as a form of therapy, encouraging you to talk directly to the person you felt had been damaging you in some way. It helps break the connections that have held you back from being who you are meant to be. The unsent letter is your chance to speak about your thoughts and feelings openly, so that you get them “out there”, rather than letting them fester again and again in your mind.

Through this writing process, you will have the chance to express whatever you need, whether it's anger, sadness and despair, or even positive things that have arisen. By doing this, raw and painful emotions can lose their momentum, and often transform in to something more thoughtful, internally nourishing, meditative and creative.

There's something healthy and liberating about being brutally honest with yourself, and to say what you need to the person that has hurt you so much, knowing that you don't have to hide, lie or fear the other person's response. There is suddenly no shame, and certainly no anxiety about what it is you feel.

Most important of all, during the cathartic process of writing this unsent letter, there is a conscious part of you that has the opportunity to become aware of when you are speaking about something in “victim vocabulary”. For example, you might write: *“You 'made' me feel like a powerless person”*, when you could say something like: *“I felt deeply hurt when you were emotionally unavailable”*.

This is why the unsent letter exercise is such a powerful one, as it truly allows us to be more objective about our choices, needs and wants.

Fundamentally, creating the unsent letter also gives you the chance to intellectually and emotionally let go. Letting go of resentment, rage, anger, hurts and negative thoughts leave us more cleansed and allow us to get rid of so many debilitating emotions.

Finally, getting things “on the page” and “out in the open” means we are no longer caught in the cycle of mentally ruminating over the same anxious thoughts; the thoughts that have the potential to consume us when they run unchecked.

Writing the unsent letter allows you to resolve unfulfilled expectations and air any disappointments making space for a new way forwards. As you write, therefore, it's important to express your truth “outwards” without any kind of censoring, so that old habitual negative thoughts and emotional loops lose their hold on your internal dialogue. In this way you can escape the trap of those self-sabotaging behaviours and thoughts.

## **Exercise 5 Part A**

### **Getting Ready to Write Your Unsent Letter**

Before you begin to write the unsent letter, use the page below (Exercise 5 part A) to list all the things that you are/were hurt, angry and upset about. Write one experience in the first box of each row under the column labelled “Experience”.

Once you have written out all your experiences, in the box labelled “Date 1” write today's date. Now for each experience you listed give it a score from 0 to 100 showing how strongly you feel about this experience. 0 represents nothing and 100 is an extreme feeling.

Below is an example.

I have only listed some “typical words” for demonstration just to give you a general example, but you could do as many as you like. If you need more paper continue on the other side or use a blank page or your journal.

## Exercise 5: Part A

Listing those experiences you were upset, hurt or angry about.



“ In the column labelled “**Experience**”, write down each event or thing you were hurt, upset or angry about, being specific and concise.  
In “**Date 1**” write today’s date and then in each box below it how strongly you feel about the experience (0 “nothing” to 100 “extreme”). ”

	Date 1	Date 2	Date 3	Date 4	Date 5
<b>Experience</b>	14 Dec 2015				
<i>“You had an affair with another woman and lied to me when I confronted you about it.”</i>	76				
<i>“You criticised me and tried to make me feel insecure and worthless.”</i>	82				
<i>“You were still in contact with your ex behind my back.”</i>	65				
<i>“You couldn’t accept my family and tried to turn me against them.”</i>	70				
<i>“I gave up my dancing because you were jealous of me dancing with others.”</i>	58				

## Exercise 5: Part A

Listing those experiences you were upset, hurt or angry about.



“ In the column labelled “**Experience**”, write down each event or thing you were hurt, upset or angry about, being specific and concise.

In “**Date 1**” write today’s date and then in each box below it how strongly you feel about the experience (0 “nothing” to 100 “extreme”). ”

	Date 1	Date 2	Date 3	Date 4	Date 5
Experience	<input type="text"/>				
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					
<input type="text"/>					

Making the list in Exercise 5 Part A means that you've got a lot of the things you may wish to bring up now recorded on paper. Because they are on paper, it also means you don't have to keep them all in your head or try to remember them, leaving you free to express your thoughts, feelings and ideas.

You probably noticed that there were 4 more “Date” columns.

Well, there's a reason.

Over the next 4 months I want you to revisit your list once a month and write down the new score for each of the things you've listed. This way you can see how your feelings about events will have changed over time. So put a note in your diary, one month from today to revisit this exercise.

You can refer to this list as you work through the unsent letter which you will find space for in a few pages time, but for now, read the following:

### **Where to Begin with Your Unsent Letter**

Begin your letter by explaining why you have chosen to write to him/her. This immediately sets the stage for one of the most important things you need to do so that you can find some closure.

Explain in detail how the relationship felt so hurtful to you and what was it about their actions and behaviour that affected you so much. Remember, this is exactly why it is so important for you to write them this letter, so tell them this at the very beginning.

## Key Points to Cover in Your Unsent Letter

- How did he or she act, behave within the relationship and how did you feel because of this?
- Acknowledge the role you played in creating or contributing towards key issues. It's not about blaming yourself or your ex-partner, but rather accepting and understanding how certain things triggered your feelings of abandonment or rejection.
- Reflect on how your own sense of self-value is changing as you better understand what happened. How what you may have thought was acceptable wasn't really enough, and that your intrinsic self-worth is something you are accepting, working on and understanding better.
- Were you less like yourself when you were with/around your ex? If so, explain how the relationship left you diminished, weaker or lacking power. What is changing in you as you explore things more rationally?
- In this unsent letter you can literally scream your words on to the page, let go of all those pent up feelings, thoughts, misunderstandings, resentments and hurts, and express yourself entirely as if the person was going to receive your letter – but never send it! Some would say “the gloves are off” and “get it off your chest”.
- You can survive without the POA (person of addiction). Explain this to them and that you can find your own way without their help or presence in your life. If you are feeling that it is difficult to survive without them, then find a way to describe just how challenging it is to move forward.

- Explain that you, as a healthy loving person, deserve more, and that you would never return to a relationship that is destructive or damaging to your self-respect, dignity and sense of identity.
- Explain how you may have lost some of your own individuality in this relationship. List out all the ways this occurred between you, and be completely honest. Describe what you are going to do to reclaim your own strength and individuality. Describe how you will begin to love yourself more than the other, how you will take even better care of yourself. Describe how you will strengthen your self-worth and what the steps are for you to get there. Importantly, put your own needs and wants first.
- As you think about what your honest needs and wants are, list them out and explain your timeline. What will life be like in 6 months, 1 year, 5 years, as you continue to grow in strength, character and self-worth?
- Forgiveness is a powerful thing and without putting yourself into the “Victim role” you can choose, if you want, to forgive them. This isn't pity or judgement. This doesn't mean for one moment that you want them back or need them or anything in terms of reconnection, but if you can do this you may find it easier to be at peace with yourself. Forgiveness also allows closure. Of course, you may not be ready for forgiveness, but for some who do want this, then practising the art of acceptance and forgiveness means that part of the unsent letter will be more to do with how this experience has made you grow and become integrated and self-aware.

*“The person who removes a mountain begins by carrying away small stones”*

**--- Chinese proverb**

## **Exercise 5 Part B**

On the next page you will find the worksheet for Exercise 5 Part B where you can write out your unsent letter. If you need more sheets simply use the back, or write in your journal. It's up to you. Do what works best for you, but remember, it's more powerful if you write by hand, rather than using a computer.



## Exercise 5 Part C

After you have completed your unsent letter you may want to paint or draw your experience of what it felt like to be able to say what you have longed to say for so long. Sketches, drawing, colours and shapes can help to release any residue of what cannot be reached in words. The title for this picture for yourself would be: “The Closure of the unsent letter.”

You will find the next page is blank, so you can draw this picture, but before you start I want you to take a moment to relax a little more; Notice how your body feels, and your breath as it enters and leaves your body.

With every inward breath allow yourself to become more present in the moment.  
With every outward breath allow yourself to accept and let go a little more.

Now, re-read your unsent letter from this more relaxed state.

When you start creating this image to represent your experience, notice how you feel, your thoughts and any ideas and memories which are evoked. Allow yourself to become more creative and let things flow onto the page. Remember, it doesn't have to be artistic to be creative; just express yourself and what you feel.

Feel free to be fully aware of any symbolism and metaphor within your creation. Are you in the picture? What are the shapes like? How do you feel as you look at it? If there are other people in the drawing, who are they and what is your relationship with them?

Now, use the next page to close your unsent letter with a creative drawing.

## Exercise 5: Part C Closure of my Unsent Letter



“

*Not everything can be put into words. Use this space to draw, paint, scribe or sketch those things you need to express, but can't find the words for. You can use other pages if needed.*

”

*“Life will break you. Nobody can protect you from that, and living lonely won’t either, for solitude will also break you with its yearning. You have to feel. It is the reason you are here on earth. You are here to risk your heart. You are here to be swallowed up. And when it happens that you are broken, or betrayed, or left, or hurt, or death brushes near, let yourself sit by an apple tree and listen to the apples falling all around you in heaps, wasting their sweetness. Tell yourself you tasted as many as you could.”*

--- Louise Erdrich

## **Reclaiming Myself**

We are going to leave the unsent letter there, in the past, and have a break from writing. I want you to simply imagine a serene and peaceful place where you feel really safe and secure wherever that might be. In your imagination notice and describe to yourself how that place feels.

Notice how it looks and picture yourself there. Allow yourself to become aware of any sounds and even smells that you find in this special place, and how it makes you feel supported, positive and safe. If you want to, and it feels right, imagine that there is one or more people joining you there.

You get to choose who they are and when they arrive, because you are in complete control.

If you want, you can close your eyes and go deeper into this safe place. Allow the experience to unfold and make any changes needed to feel even more supported. When you want to, you can open your eyes and carry on reading.

**This place exists and it is always there for you.**

Choose 3 to 5 trigger words which describe this special place and write them in the box below. When you think or say these words to yourself you will automatically tap into the positive feelings and resources that you find in this safe space. The more you use these trigger words and practice connecting to the safe place, the easier it will become.

Take your time to allow the right words to come to mind and when you're ready, write these trigger words out as big as you want in the space below.

your notes

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When I did this exercise I imagined I was in the private practice room of the famous Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist Carl Gustav Jung, and the Founder of analytical psychology.

I imagined I was sitting in his practice in Switzerland, because I knew by reading his books that he would understand me if I were with him. He would know why I was projecting on to my partner back then, what a projection meant, and how we transfer on to a significant other what we lack in ourselves.

I imagined Carl Gustav Jung would be able to offer me a profound level of understanding: security, containment, validation, spiritual connection and safety; of feeling known and understood (when I write this how ironic that these qualities are the exact qualities that I longed for from Josh at the time).

For your own exercise, you can imagine anyone that you want to. Allow them to step in to your picture, and ideally, add people who you respect and value you for who you are in some way.

Now I want you to imagine, paint or write exactly where this place is.

Are you in a house, near the sea, a place of nature and solitude? Wherever you are, surround yourself with these positive life-affirming people and create dialogue with them as if you were having a normal conversation.

Instead of them leaving you, I want you to imagine that whenever you feel bereft and helpless, you can call on them; that they are never far away from you, even if this means that through words, painting or drawing they become a permanent fixture in your internal home, so you are never to experience this loneliness again.

The reason for this exercise is that people who suffer the devastating feelings of loss and separation because of an addiction to romantic love often feel alone, helpless and isolated, and they hide themselves from the rest of the world. I want you to do something quite different, as the more you immerse yourself in this art, or creative writing, the more you will begin to believe that you really are NOT alone.

The more you can find positive, life-affirming characters to appear in your story, the more the emotional pain surrounding the loss of the beloved will fade.

Before long, you will be able to open the curtains and fold the duvet away from your head and begin to feel that you are participating a little more with your life, with the knowledge and comfort that you can survive the debilitating symptoms of love and loss.

*“Sometimes our lives have to be completely shaken up, changed and re-arranged to relocate us to the place we’re meant to be”*

--- Siddhartha

## **Fierce Attachment and the Fear of Abandonment**

Abandonment is a loss just as heart-breaking as bereavement. It’s made all the more unbearable as the significant other is not deceased, but has chosen to leave the relationship. The rejection can lead to devastating personal trauma – often repeating an emotional trauma of being left, betrayed or losing a parent early in life.

Being “left” can threaten the very core of our emotional security and self-esteem. The withdrawal of love from a partner can result in rejection of ourselves and turn our rage against us. Subsequently, being abandoned or deserted can lead to damage to our self-image, self-confidence, self-worth and future relationships.

The shame and humiliation of being too needy, insecure, vulnerable or of ‘loving too much’ can often leave many feeling isolated and alone, which only reinforces an often familiar experience from early childhood or past experiences of love and loss.

Often within these anxieties, there is an obsessive-compulsive element when the sufferer phones, texts or emails in order to locate their attachment figure and becomes overwhelmed by panic if they fail to get in contact immediately.

Separation anxiety can trigger attachment issues very early in the relationship, but many often hide it from their partner for fear of embarrassment and powerlessness as if this piecing of the heart is a wide open wound that has to be hidden at all costs. They may love this person too much, yet deep down know that the feeling is

unreciprocated, which can then trigger further abandonment anxiety, and the ultimate fear that they will not be able to survive without the person of addiction.

I'm here to tell you that YOU WILL, and in a moment I will explain where these primal needs and wants come from, so you must hold on to the belief that awareness is the very first step towards healing some of these debilitating emotions that strike you at the very core of your being.

I want to reassure you that when you understand this primal fear of abandonment, it will allow you to strengthen your own sense of emotional self-reliance, enable emotional independence and allow you to turn these needy feelings around!

### **Symptoms of Anxiety in Abandonment**

- Excessive fear of being alone and abandoned without the attachment figure being close by
- Distress when separated from the subject of attachment, a loss of time and rationality when unable to make contact by phone, email or text. This state can worsen if the partner fails to respond instantly. The anxiety will tend to ease when some contact with the partner has been made and there is an immediate return to a state of normality and calm.
- Pretending that you feel less than you do as you fear your neediness will drive your partner away
- As your greatest fear is frightening your partner away, you mask your vulnerability by “acting” in an entirely different way to throw your partner “off track”. You do this as you fear them finding out just how much you need them to feel secure and safe.

- Persistent, excessive worrying about losing the subject of attachment, fearing that they maybe in a car/coach/train accident if they are late home
- Persistent fear or reluctance to go to sleep without being near the attached partner, and an inability to fall asleep unless reassured of the commitment in the relationship
- Masking how much you feel, and acting “as if” you’re not really in love – pretending to be casual about your love, yet feel it as an intense hunger
- Negative thoughts, erratic agitated behaviour, suspicious thoughts if your partner is late home
- Manipulating your partner to guarantee that you feel secure and safe within the relationship, which can often make the beloved feel overly responsible and pressured
- Intense agitation if you see your partner showing interest in another person - a chronic fear that they will choose them over you
- Irrational fear that a significant partner will never come home again without any prior argument or dispute
- Fear that however good the relationship, it will end at some point, and you will never see them again.

As I write this I am wondering what actually happens to us when, as we glance at someone across a crowded room, we are somehow catapulted in to another world of desire, lust, attraction and chemistry, as if we were meant to meet this person?

Why does it dismantle us in an instant? Why even in an instant do we feel most unlike ourselves? Why do we become so needy, insecure and desperate for our love to be mutually reciprocated?

One reason for this is that we all seek to re-establish a secure emotional attachment and are naturally pair-bonding humans.

So when this emotional attachment is broken, it is one of the main reasons why a relationship loses its way, and pivotally, why abandonment is perhaps one of the most painful experiences any one of us can ever experience.

Old wounds are triggered, and however much we think we've freed ourselves from co-dependent traps, loving too much, and abandonment anxiety, we can often find ourselves falling back into old habits for fear of being alone.

But most of all, we fear that without the person of addiction we are not fully alive and connected, and we feel that we won't survive without them; the very thought of this seems utterly unbearable.

But how can ONE person have the ability to put everything around us in to question? This is the power of addictive love.

We grieve for loved ones lost, or yearn for what could have been. We feel as though everyone else is happy and joyful, and we are the ones left behind. We are the 'unchosen', cast aside into the wilderness, resenting the idea that we "should" feel happy, when deep down inside all we want to do is pull the duvet over our heads and shut out the world forever.

**Ok, I'm now going to suggest that you do something quite different...**

So wherever you are right now, I want you to do the following...

Imagine for one moment that the ADULT YOU that's currently in emotional turmoil; grief stricken, and your heart aching for the beloved to reciprocate your love, is instead a small child.

Now ask yourself the following:

*How old were you when you felt anything as familiar to you as you do now?*

Picture yourself at that age. Did you feel abandoned, alone, scared, isolated, unaccepted, disapproved of, panicky, rejected, neglected, sad or helpless due to: loss, separation, emotional neglect or grief of either one of your parents or primary care givers?

Or were they continually arguing, in dispute, resentful of one another and deeply unhappy together, and you were unable to do anything about it, leaving you helpless, sad and in a world of your own?

Picture what was happening at this time, and imagine what you did to protect yourself from those awful feelings.

My guess is that back then you retired to a very similar emotional place. You may have felt misunderstood by everyone around you; you felt alone and isolated from the world or your primary care givers who seemed unable to mirror or empathise with you, soothe your sadness and console you when you most needed it.

And whatever age you were, you sunk deeper and deeper into a well of loneliness and retired to a place internally that was able to comfort and cosset you away from the emotional pain you experienced.

You perhaps didn't believe that you were worthy of being loved and accepted just for being yourself. Could that be right? And it has left its imprint on the way you love.

After all, if we are "hungry" for love and find someone that recreates all that we have lost, is it any wonder that we cling to that person as if we NEED them to survive? As if they were our oxygen and without them we feel that we cannot breathe.

Now, many who have experienced the wound of abandonment or rejection in early childhood want to blame their primary care givers.

But there's something you need to know...

Your primary care givers... your role models... may have also suffered in this way, experiencing abandonment and rejection from their own parents, grandparents and previous loved ones.

So in short...

**It's not their fault, and it's certainly not yours**

This replaying of behaviour has effectively "programmed" you to want to merge with the beloved in an instant and find that closeness and connection that you've always been lacking.

And it's this desire to be loved and to be accepted and WANTED by the beloved which has caused this agonizing pain when that love has not been adequately reciprocated.

So let me repeat...

It's not your fault. And when you recognize this, you'll be halfway towards emotional freedom, and the beginnings of a deeper and healthier love as you will understand just how the past has imbued the present.

## **Regaining a Healthy Balance Between the Inner Child and the Adult You**

Susan Anderson the author of, *Taming your Outer Child* explains; your outer child manifests outwardly what your Inner Child feels inside. It is important to note here that the following is inspired by Susan Anderson's work on abandonment.

For instance, if your Inner Child's core fear is abandonment, it is your outer child that manifests this fear with all sorts of inappropriate behaviours.

When you feel insecure in a romantic relationship, the outer child acts out your vulnerable insecure feelings in ways that can only be interpreted as desperate. You might become panicky, agitated, suspicious, freeze up, or become highly erratic when a new date keeps you waiting more than a few minutes for a call back.

In fact, outer child usually has a "hair trigger when it comes to abandonment fear" – "the nerve that jangles so easily" when any of us feel slighted, dismissed, or rejected. Hence waiting for the phone to ring triggers an overriding fear that you will wind up

alone, empty, bereft of love forever.

Here's an example of this that make things a little clearer...

The adult you might have acted out in the most inappropriate way by sabotaging everything that might be good and nourishing for your inner child. Outer child is the one that says, "Tomorrow I will begin doing some exercise, eat well, do some yoga and buy a juice extractor to make sure I get some real nourishment in me".

The next day comes and the same self-destructive tirade begins all over again. Nothing sticks, nothing is carried through to the next day; a promise to yourself that you won't be the first to call him or her can quickly be dashed, and before you know it you could be pleading with them to call you.

If they refuse, your panic can quickly turn in to a torrential rage against the very person who has triggered this abandonment wound. Dreams are postponed, promises and goals are forgotten as the outer child neglects your better needs and feelings, and 'acting out' behaviour takes hold over everything that might be healthy and good for the inner child.

According to Susan Anderson, this is exactly how this structure works:

"You have an inner child that represents your emotions and primal needs."

"You have an outer child that represents your self-defeating behaviours."

When your outer child begins to act out in the most rage-full way, driven by fury that a person has rejected you, excluded you and deserted you, then you know that this is

your outer child screaming out and acting out, and it means that the grown up you and little you are out of alignment with one another.

In short, that big grown up part of you needs to “re-parent” that little part of you, the “Inner Child” to repair the apparent gulf.

Up to now you may have been seeking all your self-assurance, recognition, validation and self-worth through the beloved. But when you relinquish your own interests, dreams, aspirations and goals, you are essentially abandoning yourself, and this Outer Child is running your entire life, leaving no room for a loving, self-nurturing relationship with your inner child.

In fact, the grown up wounded child is screaming out to be loved and wanted, and drives the beloved away as they feel completely responsible and overwhelmed.

So let’s begin to bring the adult you in to the picture, so that you can reclaim your own power and emotional self-reliance.

And remember, it is your inner child that feels things deep down in your heart. It is the little you that longs for a loving, gentle and compassionate relationship with the adult you and I truly believe that when you access these internal needs and have a wholehearted relationship with yourself, no-one, absolutely no-one, will be able to render you desperate and powerless again.

So let’s give voice to what the ‘big’ you can give to the ‘little’ you so that the adult grown up you can begin to take charge of your own life, particularly your emotional wellbeing.

**Imagine yourself as a small child, and the rejection and abandonment that you may have felt.**

In the box below, write about what you remember about this time; specifically your thoughts and feelings. Of course you can also write in your journal, diary or anywhere else you wish. The important thing is to write down your memories, including how you felt and what you were thinking when you recall being rejected, excluded or abandoned as a small child.



*“Your vision will only become clear when you look in to your own heart. Who looks outside, dreams, who looks inside, awakes”*

**--- Carl Gustav Jung**

This is a creative writing exercise that will get to the root of your abandonment issues and help you to understand and deal with them far more effectively.

I want you to imagine that you are talking to your inner child. (If you have difficulty doing this then imagine you are talking to an unknown small child for the very first time.)

### **The Inner Child and the Adult You**

Create a communication between the inner child and the adult you. The purpose of this is to gain access to your most fundamental needs and wants and to cultivate a sense of self-love and self-compassion.

Begin by asking “what is little him’s/her’s name?”

“How old are you?”

“Do you feel, sad, unhappy, good, alone, hurt, or frightened?”

“What do you need from me right now?”

“What do you/don’t you like about what has happened, my reaction to him/her, how has it affected you, and what could I do to take care of you more?”

“Can you feel that I can take care of you?”

“What could I give you that would make a difference?”

When you create a dialogue between your big self and small self, you will be quite surprised at what you connect to and remember. You are now accessing your internal needs that up to this point you may have been neglecting, as when we give in to ‘love blindness’ we often fail to see the warning signs of impending problems that might have been there from the very beginning of a relationship.

## **The Problem with Logic**

Now keep on writing until you begin to feel moments where you’re connecting to your own story. Remember, writing can connect us with parts of ourselves that are often lost in our subconscious, and as a result, can heal emotional trauma.

We’ll come back to that in just a moment...

Now, as you may well know, when someone for whom you have a deep emotional connection abandons you, or says after a first meeting, or even after several months or years, “I don’t feel the same way anymore”, it “triggers” the original abandonment wound from a long time ago.

**But here’s my point about logical thinking...**

No “logical thinking” can make sense of the emotional despair you are facing, as knowing something “logically” when you are in a state of emotional trauma only reinforces more self-blame, shame and confusion. It just doesn’t make sense that you may have found someone who’s “perfect” in every way for you, yet they feel something completely different and haven’t “chosen” you to reciprocate their love.

**But once again, this does NOT mean you are unlovable and unworthy of love.**

The word “logic” is the very problem, as this is not where our authentic power is.

Our own sense of self-empowerment is “knowing something” through every fibre in our body.

When we understand just how much our abandonment wounds are a direct trigger to re-experiencing the same reactions from our childhoods, something begins to release from us.

It begins to make more sense... what is happening is closer to the original drama than you ever believed – the child inside you searching helplessly for someone to make you feel lovable, complete, wanted and worthy.

**Remember, your subconscious vehemently defies all logic!**

When you clearly see that the abandonment fears are coming from a very old place (your young self, little you) and are triggered by someone rejecting you, something so fundamental begins to shift and you can experience love in a whole new way. You finally realize that loving someone doesn't mean desperately trying to soothe the emotional hunger you felt as a child.

In varying degrees, we all have fears, hurts and wounds that have separated us from wholeness and purpose and the wound that gets triggered when we are rejected or unwanted is the exact same script that repeats itself over and over again from childhood; “You are unlovable, you are not worthy of love, you are selfish, you are not good enough etc.”

But really these words are derivatives of “please don't leave me mummy/daddy,

don't turn away from me, because when you do I feel that I won't ever survive without you..."

My point here is that what you actually experience when someone rejects you is the exact same panic/abandonment that you experienced as a child or even when you were a teenager.

So it's very important that you recognize the inner child within you, and take care of them, because this is the only way to deal with the trauma of your primal abandonment.

In short, you need to heal the child within you before you can start healing your adult self, and that's exactly what my Love Addiction Recovery Program (and this workbook) is all about, and why I wanted you to write down those thoughts and feelings.

## **Simple Affirmations for Gaining Control over Love Addiction**

I hope that this chapter on abandonment is helping you to gain a better understanding of love addiction, how it's impacted on you, and where it came from. I'd now like to provide you with another simple method for gaining control over your love addiction, rejection and feelings of abandonment and grief.

So keep reading no matter how much sorrow you maybe feeling right now.....

Right now you might be in a relationship with someone where it has become co-dependent, and as such, you are unable to let go because of the fear that you won't be

able to survive without them.

Alternatively, you may long to be with someone who simply doesn't reciprocate your love, or you might have had a few meetings with someone, and then one morning they wake up and say "that's enough, it's over, I can't give you what you want."

Yet you won't – or can't – let them go whether they are married or vice versa, but most of all, there is no logic to this and that is what this part of the workbook is all about.

Below I've listed some of the things that your "logical mind" might come out with in these kinds of situations...

- "I think I can change him/her and know he/she will change one day, so I won't give up."
- "I know I will never survive without him/her."
- "The panic of abandonment is so terrifying I will do anything to keep him/her."
- "If he/she has a problem I know I can fix it, then he/she will want me more."
- "I knew from the moment I met him/her we were meant to be together."
- "One day he/she will wake up and realise it is me he/she has wanted all along. They will see the light and know they have made a terrible mistake."
- "If he/she saw me in a more professional work situation he/she would want me more."

- “I have to apologise to him/her for being so weak, desperate and needy and I feel so embarrassed and shameful”
- “I won’t contact him or her, I must try to be strong yet deep inside this grief is all consuming, I will never feel alive again until I can hold him or her close to me”.

Now, I want you to re-write your own logical beliefs from the ADULT YOU and see if they still stand true. And then I want you to affirm two of these several times a day.

For example, “I think I can change him/her and know he/she will change one day, so I won’t give up” might become: “If I feel I have to change him/her to be with me, I KNOW that this is the frightened child within me hanging on in the desperate hope that he/she will reciprocate my love.”

Now affirm to yourself; “I am safe and connected to my own power. I can survive without him/her.” “He or she is NOT the source of my self-respect or self-worth.” “Just because he or she chooses not to be with me it does NOT mean I am unlovable and unable to survive”

Now continue through each point and add your own affirmation from the adult you – the man or woman who is no longer at the mercy of your childlike state. I have re-written each of them below with space to write the adult affirmations:

**“I think I can change him/her and know he/she will change one day, so I won’t give up.”**

your notes



**“I know I will never survive without him/her.”**

your notes



**“The panic of abandonment is so terrifying I will do anything to keep him/her.”**

your notes



**“If he/she has a problem I know I can fix it, then he/she will want me more.”**

your notes

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**“I knew from the moment I met him/her we were meant to be together.”**

your notes

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**“One day he/she will wake up and realise it is me he/she has wanted all along. They will see the light and know they have made a terrible mistake.”**

your notes

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**“If he/she saw me in a more professional work situation he/she would want me more.”**

your notes

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**“I have to apologise to him/her for being so weak, desperate and needy and I feel**

**so embarrassed and shameful”**

your notes

**“I won’t contact him or her, I must try to be strong yet deep inside this grief is all consuming, I will never feel alive again until I can hold him or her close to me”.**

your notes

I want you to do this because you need to understand something very important: it is the old wounds (from your young self) that are being triggered when you are rejected or cast out by someone you want and love, and your feelings aren’t mutually reciprocated. Just one sentence like; “I don’t feel the same way” or “I never want to see you again”, can throw you back to the scared, alone, lost child who felt unsafe and unloved with no security nor certainty that you will always feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

The irony here is that in every other part of your life, you might be powerful, successful and highly intelligent... but no matter how capable you are, these “triggers” can plunge you into a regressive primal state of powerlessness, as the wound of the unloved has no logical reasoning whatsoever.

My point here is that when you recognize your own authenticity as an adult and bring

that solid and powerful YOU to the surface, you will experience life completely differently, a mature and whole self-empowered adult where rejection no longer throws you into a primal state of fear, abandonment and grief.

This will validate your very existence, and you'll finally have the emotional strength needed to recognize when love isn't healthy or at the very least, if someone you love fails to treat you with the respect and honesty that you feel you deserve and neglects the relationship, then you find the courage to say to yourself, "this really isn't good for me, I won't be treated like this any longer", this way, no matter how much loss you may feel, at least you have your self respect and you will feel so strong in yourself when you stand up and say, "No more will my vulnerability be at the mercy of another again!".

You will be able to set new boundaries for yourself and feel an honest and truthful connection to the adult within you, rather than the wounded inner child who wants to always remain dependent and needy.

Remember, this is what has made you so unhappy, but I'm here to say that when you're no longer at the mercy of someone else's acceptance of you, you will no longer feel the devastating effects of rejection and emotional despair.

*“We all have flashes of awareness in which we realize that who we are in all our smallness has to break apart in order for a new self to emerge... I’ve learned that it is only when we are willing to give up the fragile hold we have on our illusions and come apart that we can begin to see the truth, surrender, and begin anew.”*

**--- Baron Baptiste**

A useful exercise here is to list what you can do to protect yourself against further abandonment...

Remember, when you find yourself “anxiously” looking to your partner for security and reassurance you need to redirect your needs, and focus instead on being responsible for your own emotional wellbeing.

To do this, it is important to always remember your fundamental acceptance of your own individuality and separateness as an individual. This will empower you to take full responsibility for your emotional needs so that you no longer pour out all your needs and wants (your insecurities) for your partner to take care of you. Redirect any emotional demands you may feel so that you are responsible for your own emotional self-reliance.

Remind yourself that it is your responsibility to make yourself feel secure, as the moment we look to our partner to make us feel 100% secure, we not only relinquishing our own personal power but placing pressure and responsibility onto our partner which can drive them away.

Building your emotional self-reliance will become one of the most empowering things you will ever do, and if there were deterrence against abandonment and love

addiction, this is it; to have a deep awareness and understanding of the grown up wounded child in you and the adult you that can nurture that inner child.

Whenever you turn to your partner in a highly anxious, agitated state for reassurance that your relationship is safe and secure, redirect your awareness, stand back and reaffirm to yourself that this is the grown up abandoned child within you panicking; turning to your partner for your own internal security.

Once again, as you have done above, have a dialogue with your inner child and give yourself compassion and unconditional love until the fear you feel calms and brings you back in to your own self-assurance.

Don't forget, you are not "weak", so don't judge yourself or move towards shame and powerlessness.

Fear of abandonment will give you the greatest opportunity of all to develop internal strength, emotional self-reliance and the ease and calm you need to feel fully alive without the expectation of another to "save" you from your fears and past hurts.

The most important thing to remember is that you are not the "cause" of this. Somehow you have met someone that has "triggered" an old wound, but it must have been there lying dormant, otherwise it wouldn't have been "activated". It found YOU, you didn't go looking for it, so please hold this dearly to your heart and let that "loving parent" take care of that "wounded grown up child".

If you lay this at the feet of another person to be healed, you will always remain powerless and your security and emotional self-assurance will always be in the hands of another, which is not what will keep you safe and fulfilled.

## **Building Your Future, Free From Love Addiction**

The next step on your journey towards self-empowerment and freedom is to break free from co-dependent and dependent attachment patterns by creating an ideal home; a secure base for yourself from which you can build emotional self-reliance, autonomy and enable emotional independence.

### **A Powerful Visualisation Technique**

To do this, I am going to take you through a powerful visualisation technique designed to support you and move you beyond the devastating symptoms of abandonment, love withdrawal and love addiction. In this visualisation you will be creating your ideal home to live in.

Before we begin, it might be useful for your recovery for you to record this visualisation so that you have the choice to listen to it at any time of the day, so should you find yourself having intrusive thoughts and yearnings for your ex or unrequited love addiction, it interrupts the pattern of thinking and allows you to “anchor” into a more positive space and place.

If you have a good friend, perhaps they can read this out to you the first time, to guide you through the process. You can also read it one step at a time and then do that step before doing the next part. Find what works best for you, there is no wrong way.

This exercise can be used several times a day, and I'd usually recommend 3 times a day (or as needed) to grow your association with a positive experience and the emotional pain will begin to reduce. I have been through this process myself and when I did this exercise I found that whenever any signs of withdrawal symptoms came, I could bring up my visualisation in a matter of moments which always made

me feel safe and contained.

***Step 1: Reinventing a core sense of self and finding a room of your own***

I'm now going to ask you to close your eyes and take some slow deep breaths in and out.

Get as comfortable as you can and make sure you are in a quiet place with no interruptions. As you breathe in, there is a space that you find yourself in. Get a sense of this space, where your body is and the air that's around you. Imagine that you have an abundance of money and resources, without restriction, free to create this new home. And notice how as you breathe deeply you can become even more relaxed.

See yourself walk through the woods. There are trees all around, the birds are singing and you can see and feel the sun shining through the trees.

You're walking along a path and there are rocks along the sides, and as you keep walking you notice the path is rising and you're going uphill. You come to a wooden bench and sit down to rest; all is completely calm and tranquil as you rest there for a few minutes. Finding a deeper sense of peace and silence, let your mind wander until you begin to discover where your new home will be, you're much loved location.

What country is it? Is it in a village, a city, a small town? What are the local people like? Is it in the countryside, mountains or near the ocean? Is it hot and humid, or cold and wintry? It's entirely up to you.

Notice the geography of where your ideal space will be. Now start to become more aware of the home itself. Is it made of stone, wood, glass or some other materials? It

could even be a house boat, whatever you imagine now, bring it to the front of your awareness.

As you breathe in and out, allow yourself to move closer to this ideal place noticing the little details, colours, sounds, textures, and smells. Move around the house noticing whatever catches your attention and keep moving round until you arrive at the front door.

### ***Step 2: Decorate and move in to your ideal home***

You are now able to decorate this house, so look around you. How many rooms does it have? Stroll around your perfect safe home, the kitchen, bathroom, sitting space, and now choose your preferred room. This is the room where you will rest and dream and will always feel safe and contained a secure sanctuary of your own.

Allow the design to flow and create your perfect interior. Allow this special room to become even more uniquely yours as if you were always meant to be there.

Take a look out the window and notice its spectacular view, taking in the entire panorama and the little details too. If you haven't already got one, then you can allow a chair to arrive.

This chair is your favourite place to sit. Maybe it's an armchair, a beanbag, cushions or something different, but notice how it is decorated, the colours, and feeling of it.

This chair is where you can sit to fully recognise the purpose of your existence, draw strength and solitude, and help you through this unhappy time, discovering a sense of unequivocal fulfilment and meaning.

This is the room you have decided to spend much of your time in, and you know by being in this beautiful room, you will begin to feel more alive again.

This place, this home, this room and this chair, are where there is only the moment of NOW, and the past and all its pain are dissolving away. There is only this experience of where you are now and the stillness you feel can speak to you, soothing your soul.

### ***Step 3: Acceptance and letting go of the past...***

Now the home is ready to move into. Let go of all the belongings in your present home that may be cluttering your mind and your life. In this new home you will begin a new collection of furnishings, paintings, ornaments, bedding, and rugs.

Only choose things to bring from your present home that are valuable to your future. Take as much or little as you need; some people prefer to keep things minimal, and you can decide to have things exactly as you need because this is the place where you create a positive and supporting reality.

The most important thing of all is this place is somewhere that you will always feel in control over your life, no matter what you have been going through.

Every time you visit this place, and sit in your chair, you will heal more, and gain a deep and profound sense of your own existence. This place cannot be touched, taken away or changed by anyone else or anything. This house will protect you, and nurture you. Bring all your attention to the here and now.

### ***Step 4: Acceptance of your separateness as you become more and more independent and emotionally stronger***

Imagine that it is several years later and as you sit on your favourite chair enjoying

the amazing view from the window, you take out an imaginary journal and write down all the wonderful changes you have made so far. List all the things you are doing to take care of yourself.

What interests have you fulfilled? What books and films have you enjoyed that reflect this new found life and emotional freedom? What hobbies have you taken up that bring satisfaction and meaning to your life? What are you doing that is making you happier? How do you spend your days? What new things have you experienced? What goals, changes and interests have made the biggest difference in helping you to feel whole and emotionally self-reliant?

Make a list of all the things you have been able to do since the break-up of your relationship? How did you implement these changes? What steps have you taken that have led towards you feeling that there is more hope and a way forward? What if any, self-awareness courses, personal development or workshops, have you partaken in that have helped support your healing process, freeing you from the once debilitating pain of abandonment and love withdrawal?

Make a list below of all the things you put on hold in your life when you were with the person that “triggered” this abandonment wound. If you need more space, you can use the back of the page or your journal.

A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate line is visible at the bottom right corner of the box.

What are you doing differently that you weren't doing when you were with the significant other?

As you sit in your quiet room, reflect on how far you have come, keeping your eyes closed. Breathe in to your belly, and as you exhale, feel a warm glow circling around your heart.

As you do this, think of people who you feel emotionally close to; family, friends and those that have been kind to you throughout your life.

In your mind's eye, send a generous amount of love out to each and every one of them. One by one, send them a message, as if with all your heart you are letting go of all the love you feel inside, and share it with each and every one of them. Just be hugely generous as if you are whole heartedly giving to them with gratitude, and all the love you have inside your soul pours out to them one at a time. Breathe in and then exhale.

Now it's time to take this part of your experience a step further...

Miraculously, something occurs as you open your eyes.

All of these people are in your new home, and each and every one of them is communicating with you. It's been such a long time since the world has opened up for you and now they are in your special space and your capacity to truly embrace this love feels like it is overflowing with joy and completeness.

It is as though your love is filling every space in the house and pouring in to the hearts of others. This is the love that has been there all along; it's always been there and each of your friends and family can feel your generosity of spirit and love. You are fully connecting to each and every one of them and also for those far away, who weren't able to come today.

This is the YOU that has been on HOLD; the you that disappeared; the you that lost all contact with your friends and family, so just ponder for a while and be mindful of this. Write in your journal everything that you "put on hold", "gave up", while you prayed and hoped that the significant other would reciprocate the love you so longed for.

You were not chosen as THEY weren't right for you all along, and this is SO important to recognise. They weren't necessarily a 'bad' person, toxic or narcissistic, but rather, THEY triggered a wound so deep in you that made you feel dependant and grief-stricken.

Whether they were emotionally unavailable or withdrawn, or it was an impossible love as they were married or otherwise preoccupied, right now you are beginning to

realise that although they are not “choosing” YOU to be with, you can survive this devastating loss, because they are not good for you if they cannot reciprocate your love mutually and unequivocally.

Again, this does not mean you are unlovable or unworthy of love, it just means that this one person is not good for you. In time you will begin to realise how strong you are, as you have found the courage and strength to survive this most catastrophic affliction of the heart when impossible love strikes.

You WILL survive this loss, even though at times it will feel like you won't. I never, ever believed I would, but now here I am at my computer typing this out for you to read with all my heart. I truly mean that, and I want these words to reach deep inside of you, deep in to your soul, to reach under your skin so that you know you are not alone....

***Step 5: I understand now that in the past I abandoned my existence and reality***

As you are nearing the end of your day in your new home, you leave your unique room and notice that very little attention has been paid to one room in particular.

You want to open the door as you are curious as to what's on the other side. You notice your name on the door so you slowly open it and on the other side it is surrounded in artefacts, embellishments, objects and clothing that you have always adorned yourself with that represent you.

Then much to your surprise, a huge blank canvas hangs on the wall and to the left side of the canvas it says:

These 5 steps all represent YOU in your entirety, your emotional needs, spiritual and physical needs; these steps represent your SUBSTANCE, your passionate longings, your goals, interests, hopes, desires and dreams. This was the direction your life was taking before the catastrophic heartbreak. All of this represents who you are and always have been.

## **Exercise 6**

### **The substance of myself and what represents my life**

Now on the worksheet for Exercise 6 below, with pencils, crayons, paint or pens, draw a plan of your unique house. Don't worry about being an artist, just use images, lines, shapes and words if you wish, using all the 5 steps above to flesh out the image of this house.

What are the major features? List your desires, wants, needs, interests and goals. Make everything on the canvass represent YOU; the music you like, the people you are drawn to, the countries that have touched your soul, the interior design you like, and the architecture.

Is it minimalistic or otherwise? Remember, this is 'YOUNESS' and this is about finding yourself in a story that you can call your own, and when that is sealed, no-one, literally no-one can ever take that away from you.

## *The Guest House by Rumi*

*This being human is a guest house.  
Every morning a new arrival.  
A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
Some momentary awareness comes  
As an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
Who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture  
Still treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
Meet them all at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.  
Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond*



## **When do I use this exercise and how often?**

You can bring to your imagination your most desired home whenever you wish, but at least 3 times a day - especially before going to sleep at night - do this every day for 2 weeks and make a note in your journal the experience you felt during this process.

It won't take you long to familiarise yourself with your new home; a place you can identify with and represents the substance of who you are.

I have used this exercise with my private clients, in groups, and especially those who are experiencing the sharp end of abandonment and relationship loss. It is the most powerful tool I have, and establishes a way forward for anyone that has lost their individuality and sense of self through emotional trauma and the shattering affects of rejection.

It is important to make any relevant changes to your safe haven whenever your goals, interests and circumstances change. This way you play an active role in creating the life you need for YOU. And remember, it is our hope and dreams moving forward that creates this visualization, as when we are suffering at the hands of love addiction and withdrawal, the acute pain we feel has everything to do with the fact that hope and our life's direction has come to a close.

## **The Invisible Woman: What is it I Desire and Want?**

I am going to discuss the dynamics here of how women go through love addiction. Although men and women are different, this example applies to all, and you will find this useful whether you are a man or woman, and whether you are referencing a heterosexual or same sex relationship.

I am always completely shocked in my private practice when I see a woman alone for the first time that is experiencing the most traumatic and debilitating emotions brought about by love addiction.

Typically, it will cause her to lose weight, lose all interest in herself and her own personal care, and experience a fading sense of self, a corroding identity that once may have been fully alive with the passion to live wholeheartedly, aspire to a fulfilling life and have her own autonomy and individuality.

I can know that prior to the “emotional devastation” she would have been a highly creative and successful woman, but is now a fading shell of her former self, unable to make any decisions, let alone have any idea regarding the direction of her future.

I am speaking about some amazingly unique woman here; some who are CEOs for huge businesses, some dancers, artists, filmmakers, solicitors, lawyers, shop keepers, mothers who have brought up several children, and all that goes with being a mother.

Yet no matter what their former self was, they feel utterly diminished and without a voice of their own since being with this “one person”, a fading small voice unable to make any sense of the wreckage.

Now she sits in front of me feeling utterly powerless, often helpless and unable to function due to the shattering symptoms of abandonment, acute rejection or betrayal she feels from her husband/partner/love interest.

For this section, my writing has been inspired by Beverly Engel, the author of *Loving Him Without Losing You*.

When thinking about how a woman loses herself in a relationship, I believe it has everything to do with the difference between men and women, whereby traditionally, young adolescent boys are often encouraged to be acquainted with clarifying their objectives, interests, skills in preparation for their work life, future aspirations and direction, whilst adolescent girls are encouraged to focus on the way they “look” how they are “viewed by others”.

For example, the questions they asked themselves are: “will I fit in?”, “am I attractive enough?”, “will boys find me attractive?”

All of these core beliefs are therefore directed outwards to the needs of others, i.e. “what is it that I can give to others and what should I do to fulfil the requirements of **their** needs?”, whilst males are able to focus more on their own needs.

What I have spoken about above would make for a precarious hold on life, especially when it comes to romantic relationships which are often fraught with emotional pain and loss.

There is always the underlying fear of being abandoned, deserted and most of all, rejected, which can cause them to become overly needy, possessive and insecure, as the compulsion to bond and receive a mutual emotional response far over rides any sense of logic or proportion.

This is because the ultimate fear they have is of being alone in the future, and it is this fear of being alone that can then lead in to an addiction to love, and before they know it, they will surrender all their own needs and sense of self, individuality and interests in the name of love.

If you are reading this workbook right now, there's a very good chance that you feel grief stricken, abandoned by your love interest, empty and sad, so I am going to list some of these behaviours whereby you can identify some of the ways that you may have lost yourself in your current situation.

It is important to have your journal to hand to write down anything that some of these points may trigger. It may be useful here to form a dialogue between yourself and the significant other.

## **Expanding Your Needs and Wants through Writing**

When you first began the relationship that is currently causing you to feel emotional pain, did you get involved really quickly without spending time thinking about this person first, and whether they would be “good” for you?

Did you at any stage ask yourself what it was that you wanted, what you liked and what you didn't like, and what is it that you need for yourself now?

Did you at any stage in the beginning long for a secure commitment, one of certainty and reliability whilst overlooking whether or not you might be compatible with the person of addiction?

List below these needs, goals, aspirations and interests. I say this as many women/men who suffer at the hands of this infliction are broken-hearted right now, as the beloved has chosen not to be with them, but it is important to realise, once again, that this does NOT make YOU UNLOVABLE!!

**Your needs, goals, aspirations and interests:**



When you were with you ex-partner/love interest, did you maintain your own separate life from him or her, or did you give up all of your own interests, goals, friends and family because you wanted to spend as much time as possible with the love interest?

Did you at any stage try to change yourself for them so that you would become someone who “they” wanted you to be rather than who you are?

Continue to list other ways you may have lost yourself in your relationship.

I’m sure you will be able to identify with some of the things I mentioned above, but for this exercise, review all your past relationships that have caused you to be where you are now emotionally, and when you have finished writing, re-read it so that you

can see if there is a pattern between your present situation and the past. There is space below to write this out.

**Other ways you may have lost yourself in your relationship:**



**The Balance of Power**

Please think about the equality between you and the love interest. Who had the power in the relationship?

Write out your observations below. I don't like to use the word "power" but it is a key factor in the love equilibrium, especially if the significant other was preoccupied, married, emotionally distant, withdrawn and unavailable.

**If so, you would have been the pursuer and he/she the pursued.**

This would immediately affect the power balance leaving you in the “powerless” position which lies at the core of what you are feeling right now.

This withdrawal from the love interest has thrown you into a state of panic whereby your thoughts and cognitive-thinking process can become negative and distorted as the grief and loss of the beloved has “triggered” such a deep sense of abandonment and helplessness.



Remember, the purpose of this writing exercise is to raise your awareness as to how you have lost yourself in this present break-up, and to recognise if it has been an on-going pattern in previous relationships.

## **Exercise 7: Thoughts Flow Like a River**

The next strategy is a powerful tool that will be most beneficial in helping you to

formulate a healthier way of thinking.

It will help you to put things into perspective, which will then change the way that you feel so that your emotions become manageable. Intrusive, obsessive thoughts are given free rein on the page, enough to break through the debilitating emotional trauma caused by your loss and withdrawal symptoms.

It is advisable to use a pen or pencil for this next exercise, as it will help you to mentally focus on the task of writing down your thoughts and feelings so that you are able to connect fully to the process.

I refer here to “thoughts flowing like a river” because that is what happens. When we think certain thoughts that take a certain direction, then the thoughts that follow will also follow the same flow.

So thinking in one way will always take you down the same route.

But just like a river can fork, you can learn to choose to go down a different part of the river and everything that follows afterwards is also different. Thinking creates feelings so when we change our thoughts we can change the way we feel too; its understanding that you have a choice which matters, and the following exercise will help you to make those more healing and helpful choices.

*“People are disturbed not only by things, but by the views we take of them”*

**--- Epictetus**

On the next page you will see an example of the Exercise 7 worksheet. I've filled it in with an example so that you get an idea. Start at the top and work your way down, first following the red route on the left hand side.

Then go back to the top and re-read what you've written and take the green route which flows down the right side. After my example you will find a blank copy ready for you to explore.

## Exercise 7: Thoughts Flow Like a River

Learning how to change the flow of your thoughts



“

*In this exercise we will explore the consequences of how we think and discover how changing the course of our thoughts can help us to heal, change and become stronger. The red path (left) supports the problem, while the green path (right) helps us grow.*

”

### Traumatic Event Leading to Breakup:

*He said he didn't feel the same way as I did and that he didn't want to be tied down to any one person when he was travelling – It was after a dinner party with friends late at night – we were alone – the next day he was getting a flight overseas to India*



### Feelings and Thoughts Intensity Rate 0-100 Percent. Body Sensations:

*I was shocked, felt faint and dizzy, scared, grief stricken and devastated. I felt as if I was looking over a precipice and was in a void not knowing how I would survive without him. Finding it hard to breathe (Body Sensations).*

98 %



### Unhelpful Thoughts/Memories:

*There is no way I will survive this – He must have been seeing someone else, I trusted him he even discussed children with me – He's flying far away tomorrow for 4 months, I will never be able to know the truth this is the worst thing that could happen as I know won't get through this, it's as though he has just disappeared*



### Facts Providing evidence against Unhelpful thoughts:

*I spoke to a friend of ours and they confirmed that due to him travelling around the world, he didn't want any ties at all and certainly not children for at least 5 years.*



### Facts that Support Unhelpful Thoughts:

*He has been preoccupied for months now, always too busy to see me, I believe he is too scared to tell me the truth and that he is seeing someone else.*

### A More Realistic Balanced Perspective:

*Friends said that I'm better off without him as he will never settle, he'd already been away 4 times over two years but when he does arrive back and wants to see me as he has done for over 3 years now I will not agree, I must get on with my own life and practice very hard to let go as this is who he is and what he wants to do to fulfill himself and his own interests.*



### Outcome Re-Rate Emotion, Evidence to Back-up Understanding of Event:

*I feel I understand his longing to travel because he is passionate about photography, that's why he is going. The most helpful thing I could do is dedicate my life to my studies and return to what makes me feel passionate and alive, many months have been lost grieving so it really is about realizing that I must become emotionally self reliant and independent and know I CAN survive without him.*

10 %

# Exercise 7: Thoughts Flow Like a River

Learning how to change the flow of your thoughts



“ In this exercise we will explore the consequences of how we think and discover how changing the course of our thoughts can help us to heal, change and become stronger. The red path (left) supports the problem, while the green path (right) helps us grow. ”

Traumatic Event Leading to Breakup:



Feelings and Thoughts Intensity Rate 0-100 Percent. Body Sensations:

%

Unhelpful Thoughts/Memories:

Facts Providing evidence against Unhelpful thoughts:

Facts that Support Unhelpful Thoughts:

A More Realistic Balanced Perspective:

Outcome Re-Rate Emotion, Evidence to Back-up Understanding of Event:

%

*“As soon as you trust yourself you will know how to live.”*

--- Goethe

*“We cannot change anything until we accept it.”*

--- C.G. Jung

## **The Rubber Band Technique**

This is a powerful technique that myself and many experienced therapists teach people to help them make lasting changes in their life.

It's simple and yet really powerful, but before I explain how it works I'm going to go ahead and tell you how to do it. All you will need is a thick rubber band which you can wear on your wrist. Make sure it is loose enough so that it doesn't restrict your circulation. You should be able to get a finger in between the band and your wrist.

### **Here's the Rubber Band Technique:**

- 1.** Put the thick rubber band on your wrist. It doesn't matter which wrist, but I'd recommend changing sides every day or two, this way it doesn't become a habit, but stays fresh and mindful.
- 2.** As soon as you think about your ex partner, pull the band back and snap yourself. Do it hard enough so that it hurts a little!

**First, I need to make a disclaimer...**

***Disclaimer:** I am NOT recommending that you hurt yourself in ANY other way aside from using a little rubber band. Be honest with yourself and if you have ANY suicidal thoughts or desires to self-harm then go and contact a mental health professional or helpline immediately and get additional help. This is not a self-harm exercise, and the desire to harm yourself is your way of saying you need to get help. What this is, is a way of “snapping” yourself out of an unhelpful pattern.*

### **So back to the rubber-band technique...**

The reason you are going to be snapping yourself with a rubber band every time you think about your ex or love interest is because up until now you probably don't realize that you've been causing yourself pain when you think about them. I know many individuals who actually say, “I can't stop thinking about him or her, they are on my mind every single day, I wish I could switch these thoughts off.”

It's so natural, and habitual that you don't realize you have been doing it. Maybe sometimes you spot the habit and think; “I really should stop thinking about them” but we don't understand the profound pain that thinking about them causes us. We fail to recognise this pain because it is more of a psychological and emotional pain than a physical one, yet if I said to you now; don't think of a blue door, what do you think about? A blue door so no-one can ever actually stop us from “thinking” but we can implement something so that we become “mindful” about our constant thinking.

So by snapping yourself with a rubber band every time you think about them, you associate the physical pain with the destructive habit of thinking about them, which is causing emotional and psychological pain.

We are leveraging two powerful techniques from a field called Neuro-Linguistic

Programming which is to interrupt the unhelpful pattern and to anchor in the desire for positive change to the rubber band.

To make the exercise even more powerful, you could also write a positive affirmation on the rubber band so that when you snap the band, and “snap” yourself out of the unhelpful behaviour of thinking about your ex/love interest, you are then able to recall the positive affirmation.

This exercise changes your psychology and helps you accept that you are stronger and can move on from this unhealthy relationship, while reminding you that thinking about the relationship was not good for you and was causing you deep pain. Snapping yourself out of this unhelpful habit allows you to retrain your brain!

## **Exercise 8**

### **Your Daily Mood Chart**

*“Grief is not a disorder, a disease or a sign of weakness.  
It’s an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity.”*

**--- Anon**

## Exercise 8: Recording: Event, Mood and Thoughts

Daily record of events triggering moods and feelings.



Write the **date**, describe the **event**, what you were doing at the time. Write down your **mood** and feelings (sad, heartbroken etc) and rate their intensity from 1 to 100%. Write down your automatic **thoughts** at the time.



Date	Event	Mood	Thoughts

## **Why Can't the Other Person Give You What You Need and Want?**

After all, it seems such an easy thing to do from your point of view.

You'll say, "Just show me more attention" ... "just assure me that you feel the same way", etc.

But – and here lies the problem – the more this neediness, insecurity, clinginess, possessiveness and emotional trauma inhibits that natural flow, the more the other person will feel overwhelmed, smothered, pressured, hijacked, engulfed, and will find it very difficult to reciprocate the love you want.

And if this natural pace and rhythm is interrupted, it immediately sets up a push/pull dynamic, otherwise known as the pursuer (love addict seeks oneness) versus the pursued (withdrawer seeks separateness)

### **Pursuer Vs Pursued**

I want you to imagine that you are both on a seesaw and as your love interest rises up, you go down, and as you go down your love interest rises up, and so forth.

Now, imagine that when you go down, you are in the "Pursuer" position and the beloved is the "Pursued"...

My point is, the moment the power balance moves even ever so slightly, the one in the "pursued" position will naturally move away as he or she feels "too much expectation" or pressure.

And as they move away from you, you become fraught with anxiety and fear that the beloved is no longer interested in you.

At this moment you are not receiving the love you want, rejection and panic immediately grips you, and you lose all sense of your own individuality, self-respect, inner strength and self-worth.

As you begin to fragment or become “dismantled”, the love interest will move further away, and all of the effort you have put in to “keeping yourself together” and acting strong and confident, is eroded.

**Suddenly, the beloved has all the power.**

*“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don’t have any.”*

**--- Alice Walker**

Often, what happens next is that the love interest becomes like a god or a goddess to the love addict.

They look up to them and view them as perfect in every way and this projection shifts the power balance even further. Even without words they instinctively know that you want them; you need them, and the ‘love hunger’ you experience begins to tilt the balance too much, which is always damaging to the growth and natural flow of a relationship.

The love addict will then give all that they are to the significant other and flood them

with gifts and attention, but in response, the beloved will often move away, as they feel engulfed and pressured, and thus lose the motivation to reciprocate love.

I remember that this was the core of the problem between myself and Josh and the more he withdrew from me the more I'd go out and spend money on clothes. I bought beautiful 1940s style dresses, stunning skirts and blouses, hats, shoes and silk scarves to match, numerous pieces of hand carved Egyptian and Indian jewellery.

It was as if this was all part of the addiction; anything to attract him more, anything that will jolt his attention towards me. Yet the more I tried to get the emotional response I craved from him, the further he would flee away in the opposite direction, never noticing the new dress I was wearing, nothing made any difference at all, yet the money I spent on feeding this aspect of the addiction alone makes this craving for love and recognition a highly expensive compulsion.

## **The Importance of Attachment Styles**

Next, I want to focus on attachment styles, because this loss of self, helplessness and powerlessness has a lot to do with people who suffer from anxious attachment which is often typical of anyone that experiences love as an addiction by choosing partners that have an “avoidant” dismissive attachment style.

### **The Three Attachment Styles**

There are primarily 3 main attachment styles:

- Secure attachment
- Anxious attachment
- Avoidant attachment

This is the crux of the problem; a person with an anxious attachment style (love addict) falling for a love avoidant. In short, none of these devastating symptoms would occur if both people exhibited secure attachment styles.

But crucially, many psychologists believe that someone with an anxious attachment style is often attracted to an avoidant attachment style.

For example, Alicia, a client I had been seeing who had experienced a deeply painful break-up clearly had an anxious attachment style, while her partner Alex’s attachment style was avoidant.

This is evidenced by his aloof and often narcissistic nature, whereby everything he

required revolved around Alicia's commitment to bringing out his full creative potential, whilst minimizing any form of closeness and attentiveness.

Being as Alicia and Alex's relationship was anxious vs. avoidant, it comes as no surprise that Alicia's sense of uncertainty and preoccupation with Alex began to disrupt any sense of ongoing security and emotional safety in her life.

Many who possess an anxious attachment system with a partner who has an avoidant system have a particular ability to "sense" when their relationship is threatened, as this 'hyper sensitivity' to the significant other involves constant "scanning" and "monitoring" for availability and an attentive emotional response from the attachment figure.

If this is not readily available, and the love addict is deprived of the nurturing and emotional attention needed, the outcome is devastating, and can lead to a total loss of self, which results in unhappiness, sadness, grief and depression.

Without a secure emotional response from the love interest, this emotional deprivation can cause debilitating consequences, leaving the once intact love addict like a flower withering without water.

So it makes complete sense that if we go into a relationship 'blindly' and without any sense of our "own" attachment style, then we are leaving ourselves open to heartbreak, pain and emotional torment.

**And *this* is the cure for love addiction!**

Yes, I'm talking about procuring knowledge of who we are, and understanding

ourselves and what we need in a relationship; our integrity, truth, authenticity, self-worth and self-respect, so that we are consciously able to see what is good for us and what could be emotionally harmful.

A healthy, balanced love equilibrium is based on autonomy, connection and intimacy, whilst being attuned to the needs of both people for closeness and solitude.

This sense of emotional balance lies dormant in many people who lose themselves in a relationship, as they may constantly seek approval of themselves in the significant other, becoming dependent and insecure, searching for any indication or sign that the person of addiction is becoming distant, emotionally unavailable and losing interest.

Unfortunately, when the love interest senses this, they will often pull away, causing a devastating outcome for the relationship.

Love addiction occurs when we let our hearts rule our heads, and because this feeling of love is so powerful and all-consuming, it becomes hard to argue with!

And when a love addict's attentions are not mutually reciprocated, it will never ever end in a happy way.

There can never be any closure, because if another is incapable of loving you back, it will only reinforce the internal shattering symptoms that go with chronic rejection and abandonment.

Pia Melody, an expert on love addiction, states that it is often the case that a person

addicted to love will become attracted to ‘Love Avoidants’.

Consequently, when the relationship ends, it is one of the fiercest and most destructive experiences one can ever have.

In fact, the love withdrawal symptoms are likened to a recovering heroin addict.

Knowing this, it begins to make more and more sense why so many people feel as though they cannot survive this all-consuming wave of emotions that completely erode one’s sense of identity and orientation.

## **Separation Anxiety, Anxious Attachment and Abandonment**

In the case study I have mentioned in my eBook: *Is there a cure for love addiction?* we can clearly see how Alicia’s insecure anxious attachment style was entirely triggered by Alex’s dismissive avoidant attachment style, which in many cases is the underlying cause of abandonment anxiety, and of course, love addiction.

It’s important to note here that this may not have been inherent in Alicia prior to meeting Alex. Someone can literally be catapulted into an insecure intense state of agitation and anxiety with this one particular person.

To take this a step further, the moment Alex withdraws his attention and becomes emotionally unavailable to Alicia, the love withdrawal phase is triggered, sending her into a blind panic, distress and separation anxiety, as the impulse to bond and feel safe and secure has been entirely severed.

**This is exactly why it is so important to create a safe and secure sense of self and to build emotional self-reliance, as the wound of abandonment lies at the core of why we lose ourselves in relationships the moment we fall for someone who is going to trigger deep feelings of rejection and despair.**

Once the abandonment wound is healed and we fully understand these attachment styles, you could say this is the closest we could get to the ‘cure’ for love addiction. However, because love addiction is an attachment disorder, it doesn’t mean that the need to bond and experience a deep and loving connection goes away.

Instead, it simply means that you will begin to understand WHY the withdrawal symptoms are so overpowering – and it’s because your love is being thwarted.

When we gain emotional control and awareness over the “kinds” of people we are drawn to, we soon realise that if someone’s attachment style is dismissive avoidant, we need to stay clear of them, because otherwise the same cycle will continue to repeat itself throughout our lives.

In fact, every relationship Alicia had entered into prior to Alex was with an “Avoidant Attachment Style”. Ironically, she had found secure attachment individuals ‘boring’, so it’s clear that love addicts really are ‘drawn’ to unavailable and distant love avoiders.

**A person with an anxious attachment style needs certainty and availability.**

They can’t live with uncertainty, because it activates the stress hormones that create anxiety, agitation, panic, and the fight or flight response.

This is exactly why women, and in some cases men, feel as though they are falling apart when they don't receive a mutual emotional response from the beloved – whether it be in the form of a text, email, phone call or physical contact.

The anxiously attached will feel that they are “out of control” as the object of attachment seems to be ‘missing’, and often the panic doesn't calm down until contact is made.

It seems clear to me that if an anxious attachment style individual becomes emotionally involved with an avoidant attachment style love interest, this is the actual “cause” of love addiction, abandonment anxiety, and narcissistic abuse.

This is because ‘anxious’ types will stay in relationships far longer than they should, as the fear of not being safe; of being alone, unloved and unwanted far outweighs the fear or threat they feel if the attachment figure is out of reach.

Rachel Heller and Amir Levine, in their book “Attached: The New Science of Adult Attachment and How it Can Help You Find – and Keep – Love”, states that:

*“People with a secure attachment style know how to communicate their own expectations and respond to their partner's needs effectively without having to resort to protest behaviour. For the rest of us, understanding is only the beginning.”*

**--- Rachel Heller and Amir Levine**

My clients who suffer from abandonment anxiety, rejection, heartbreak, love withdrawal, insecurity, possessiveness and more, will always present an insecure or

anxious attachment style.

As a result, they completely fragment and become traumatised because they're drawn to love avoidant personalities; people who will often equate closeness and intimacy with a loss of independence and emotional freedom.

These love avoidants will consciously or sub-consciously forge a distance between the pair as a defence against responsibility, or because they feel trapped and overwhelmed by their partner's need for their love and affection to be reciprocated.

This is what ultimately destroys relationships.

Of course, an anxious attachment individual with an avoidant individual can work, but only if both become conscious of how these two prospective positions can "dance" together, and that somehow both are prepared to fully understand that it is these attachment positions that are affecting the natural flow of the relationship going forward.

*"Love is a process, not a destination... a holy interpersonal environment for the evolution of two souls."*

**--- Daphne Rose Kingma**

As you've clearly seen, an addiction to love can render the most professional, intelligent and successful person so entirely derailed from their usual passionate self. It makes them feel worthless, powerless, helpless, needy, and clinging to the other as if they were their source of oxygen.

It's a sad, debilitating and awful emotional state for any human being to be in, especially when the love avoidant, for whatever reason, desires to be free of such responsibility.

As I've mentioned earlier, the cure to love addiction lies in gaining the required knowledge and understanding of who we are and what we need in a partner.

Before we begin this exercise I will mention some of the key attachment styles that relate to an addiction to romantic love with a Dismissive/Avoidant Attachment Style

**Typical statements from an Insecure Anxious Attachment style adult might be:**

- I'm not sure if s/he really cares about me and certainly don't feel s/he loves me or wants me
- I honestly don't feel I could live without him/her
- I feel so completely dependent on him/her for my emotional support and survival
- When s/he rejects me I fall apart and feel completely powerless and helpless

**Typical statements from a Dismissive Avoidant Attachment style adult might be:**

- If she/he doesn't respond to me I don't care as I like being alone and independent
- I can take care of myself and don't "need" to be in a relationship, I enjoy my freedom

- If you want to stay, stay. If you want to go, I really don't want any complications or pressure
- I feel suffocated and don't want to be tied down to anyone

**Typical statements from a Secure Attachment style might be:**

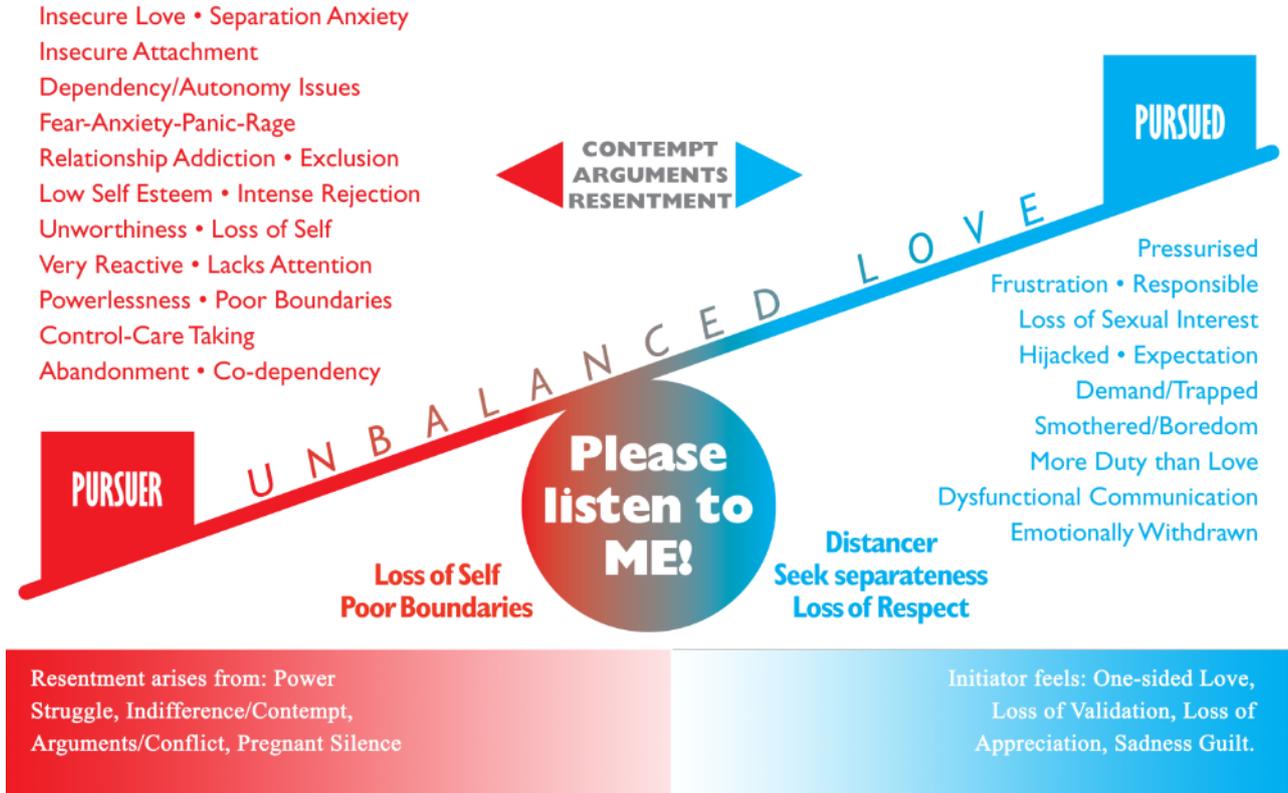
- Let's try and work this out together - that is what a relationship is about
- I know if I need him he will be there for me, and that feels emotionally close, as if we are truly connecting
- If I feel distressed, he is there to comfort me. We are both fine together and encourage communication
- I will never discard your emotional cues

**Love Equilibrium Unbalanced – Pursuer vs. Pursued**

**Anxious Insecure Attachment Style vs. Dismissive Avoidant**

## Attachment Style

*“I love you! I hate you! Don’t leave me!”*



# Passionate Attraction - The Changing Emotional Cycles between Love Addiction vs. Love Avoidance

## Anxious Insecure Attachment vs. Dismissive Avoidant Attachment

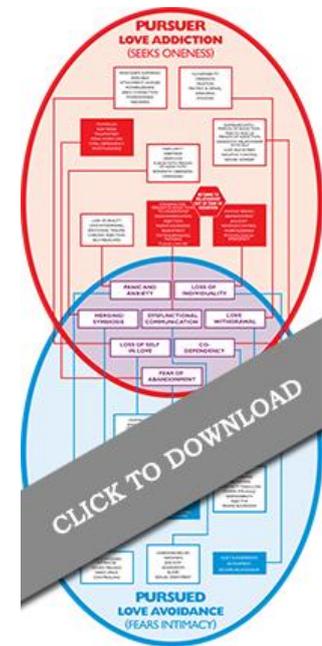
The following table gives just a few examples of how the attachment style behaviour can trigger avoidant style responses; so that the pursuer actually creates the very response they fear in their partner.

<b>Attachment</b>		<b>Avoidant</b>
<b>Pursuer's Behaviour</b>	<b>Leads to:</b>	<b>Pursued Response (Withdraws)</b>
Tries to rescue their partner	Co-dependant behaviour	Overwhelmed by neediness, insecurity and clinginess
Idealises their partner	Love withdrawal	Feels Smothered and Responsible
Fear of abandonment	Loss of individuality	Feeling entrapped, wants to escape the relationship.
Chronic rejection	Panic & anxiety	Avoids feelings, needs more space.

I have given a few examples above and you can also see a full size poster which explains more fully the different ways love addicts and love avoiders interact, often with damaging results. You can click on the image to the right to go to a website where you can download a full size copy of the poster I have created.

The poster shows clear coloured illustrations of every single emotion that the anxious attachment style and avoidant attachment style individual will experience.

This will really help you as it lists the entire reactionary rackets that two people participate in causing a shattering relationship break-down which can lead to a break-up and loss of love.



I list some of these below too. The poster is too big to include within the A4 pages of this workbook which is why I have made it available as a download.

The reason for this poster is so that you can clearly identify some of the emotional cycles that can take place between the love addicted person and the love avoidant person.

From my own experience, the more I could identify Josh's avoidant withdrawer attachment symptoms, the more I was able to truly see how our attachment styles triggered each other. Just from this alone I was beginning to feel exactly WHY we were not good together.

This will make more sense when you tick the following words below that most reflect

both your positions and what you might think the person of addiction would be feeling.

Please note, this model clearly describes how our attachment styles can create a catastrophic reaction in the other. It is important to note that once this is identified and brought to awareness, a more human and emotionally responsive relationship can be possible.

These exact attachment positions were identical to what existed in my relationship with Josh.

**Pursuer (Love Addict)**

**Pursued (Withdrawer)**

**Anxious Attachment Style People**

**Avoidant Attachment Style People**

Insecure Anxious Love

Pressurised

Separation Anxiety/Distress

Frustration/Anger/Rage

Insecure Attachment

Responsibility

Desires Intimacy and Closeness

Loss of Intimacy

Seeks Connection and Warmth

Hijacked/Emotionally Dismissive

Fear-Anxiety-Panic-Sadness

Engulfment/Distant

Emotional Dependency

Implosion

Fear of Abandonment	Expectation/Fear
Exclusion/Helplessness	Demand/Trapped
Low Self Esteem	Feels Smothered
Intense Rejection/ Unworthiness	More Duty than Love
Dysfunctional Communication	Dysfunctional Communication
Protest Behaviour	Emotionally Withdrawn
Lacks Attention/Emotional Response	Emotionally Unavailable
Powerlessness	Wants to Flee/Exit
Poor Boundaries/Attachment	Experiences Confinement
Care Taking/Recuing to gain control	Poor Boundaries
Abandonment	Loss of Engagement
Co-dependency/Enmeshment	Desires Space and Freedom

I am taking it as a given that **a love addict has an anxious attachment style** and a **love avoidant has an avoidant attachment style**. They may not have always been like this, but some relationships can trigger this very experience! Especially as anxious attachment people need certainty/reliability, and avoidants need space and distance.

This is THE CAUSE of love addiction and often the reason behind why a break-up occurs and the heartache that accompanies it. Which is why self-love, personal growth and emotional self-reliance is a KEY factor in the healing exercises all the way through this workbook.

## **Exercise 9**

On the next page you'll find Exercise 9, where we get to explore the relationship that caused you to experience emotional pain.

The purpose is to help you identify the unhelpful patterns, and use this to create momentum for positive change. I have given you a full example to help you focus and get the most from this powerful exercise.

## Exercise 9: Patterns from the Past Finding a better role model.



“

*Read each question and take your time to answer them. Start at the top and do them in the order they are written. If you need more space then feel free to use the back of the page or your journal.*

”

Name/Age of partner that triggered your anxiousness/ insecurity/ abandonment/ rejection

*your notes Josh 37*

What is/was the relationship like? What was the reoccurring pattern that you recall?

*your notes He'd come to stay, he was there but not there, unavailable, withdrawn, and distant. He'd leave and set the terms that we could only see each other every two weeks as he wanted to take things slowly and at his own pace and didn't want anything too serious just casual*

Distress Situation that activated anxious/insecure attachment trauma:

*your notes He'd come to stay and go in to another room and meditate for 2 hours, be preoccupied, silent, far away, unresponsive and dismissive until it came to being intimate, then he'd leave 30 minutes later until the next 2 weeks was due*

What was your reaction to this distress situation? How old do you feel in this distress? I.e. Feelings, thoughts, emotions, actions and behaviour.

*your notes Devastated, abandoned, wailing child, rejected, heartbroken, cruel, powerless, humiliated: "I'm unlovable and unworthy of his love" "There is something wrong with me" "How will I survive the next 2 weeks without him"? I feel about 6 years old.*

What was his/her reaction to your distress and what did they say/feel?

*your notes Shut down, distant, emotionally cold, reactive, withdrawn, hostile, and aloof "You are making me like this!" "I feel responsible for you, I can't give you what you want" Leaves in a angry rage*

Imagine a secure role model, someone who you feel is strong and present, what principles would they/you adopt and do differently what might they say to you?

*your notes Don't stay in the firing line, communicate effectively your needs and wants, have boundaries; don't give your power away! Know that if I am with someone who is unresponsive and cold, it is not taking care of myself, maintain focus and clarity, see that HE is unhealthy for ME and respect myself.*

## Exercise 9: Patterns from the Past Finding a better role model.



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*Read each question and take your time to answer them. Start at the top and do them in the order they are written. If you need more space then feel free to use the back of the page or your journal.*

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Name/Age of partner that triggered your anxiousness/ insecurity/ abandonment/ rejection

your notes

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What is/was the relationship like? What was the reoccurring pattern that you recall?

your notes

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Distress Situation that activated anxious/insecure attachment trauma:

your notes

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What was your reaction to this distress situation? How old do you feel in this distress? I.e. Feelings, thoughts, emotions, actions and behaviour.

your notes

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What was his/her reaction to your distress and what did they say/feel?

your notes

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Imagine a secure role model, someone who you feel is strong and present, what principles would they/you adopt and do differently what might they say to you?

your notes

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**Explain 3 particular situations that you feel/felt activated your anxiety and agitation. You can use your present situation or a past relationship.**

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**In your present or past relationship can you identify an ineffective pattern that is/has prevented you from attaining more security?**

**Helen's Example:**

*I put him on a pedestal, he felt like my soul mate. I felt inferior and small in comparison with him. He was a film maker. I felt I was nothing in comparison with him, and I mistook insecurity for being in love. I thought that this painful roller coaster of intense emotions was love, as the highs were ecstatic and the lows terrifying, as I felt constantly rejected. I was unable to see clearly his cruel dismissive side and would forget it if there was an argument and we made up. I believed that being in love was being in emotional pain, etc.*

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## Love Addictions Core Emotions

Below are some of the core emotions which people who are experiencing love addiction (Anxious Attachment Style) may experience. Tick the box of any emotions you are or have experienced in a relationship/ towards a person of desire.

- Panic and Anxiety
- Loss of Individuality
- Merging/Symbiosis
- Dysfunctional Communication
- Love Withdrawal
- Loss of Self in Love
- Co-Dependency
- Fear of Abandonment
- Rejection and Insecurity
- Separation Distress

Now that you have identified your ineffective pattern(s) have a look again at the Love Avoidant model above (also called Passionate Attraction).

As you think about what has prevented you from attaining security in relationships,

write a list of any reactions or comments that the Person of Addiction (POA) made towards you which left you feeling devastated at the time.

It is important to do this from a detached perspective. One technique you can use is to imagine you are in a room watching television alone. It is a place you feel comfortable. You have the remote control to be able to pause, rewind and play things.

You can also change channels. Each channel is one of the events and you are watching your old self, in the past, play out the event with the POA on the screen, from the safety of the chair.

When you are ready, flick through each channel and watch as those characters play out the past experiences.

You can pause, rewind, watch again, and of course, change channel as much as is helpful, all the while maintaining an emotionally detached perspective. If you find that you start to get emotionally drawn in, simply pause or switch off the “television” for a moment.

Close your eyes and make the television even further away from the chair, noticing the edges of the screen and how the picture is flat and less than lifelike.

## **Helen's Example:**

*“I don't want to be tied down.”*

*“I can't be in any kind of committed relationship.”*

*“If you have relationships with other people I will want you more because then I'd feel free.”*

*“This just proves that we must not be together, I feel like a wound up spring.”*

*“I need my own space, let me come to you as the more space I have the more I'll want you.”*

**Now in the space provided below, list those reactions and comments from your POA which affected you in the past.**

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*“It is only when we no longer compulsively need someone that we can have a “real” relationship with them.”*

**--- Antony Storr**

**Now in the space below, using the diagrams above for reference, list out the key emotions that best describe the reason for the reactions and comments you received from your POA. Imagine what they were feeling or were motivated by emotionally that lead them to act and say these things.**



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I can honestly say that this dynamic of completely opposite attachment styles is at the very core of the problems of every client I see.

They will present their once powerful unique self, as a broken wailing banshee literally diminished, childlike, shattered and powerless. In a small tiny voice they might say, “give me anything, something to take this pain away, it feels like someone has pierced a knife through my heart.”

As I get them to describe the situation that led to this, it will always be the same, whether they’re married, in a long or short term relationship, whether their husband/partner is unavailable, needs more space, is emotionally unresponsive,

distant, etc.

Whatever it is, they live in fear and stark terror that the beloved might eventually leave the family home or the relationship, and because this threat of loss is so great they will do anything and everything to placate their loved ones.

Many would rather accept that he may even be having an affair rather than face the devastation of losing him and most of all falling apart completely.

I now want to give you a clear example of how it's possible to "shift" this ravaging weakness and powerlessness that may be traumatising you.

The following example is taken from a meeting with a client of mine called Patricia. Her name has been changed for confidentiality reasons.

Patricia (30) is most definitely an anxious attachment style woman with a dismissive attachment style partner.

Firstly I spend maybe 15 minutes of the session bringing her down from the emotional trauma; just enough so that she can feel my containment and my complete presence and attentiveness. It is important to say here that when someone is so emotionally heartbroken, it is because they are IN the rejection and love withdrawal phase, and feel desperately alone and overwhelmed.

My quiet practice room brings them a little peace and solitude, enough to process and assimilate my help, compassion and support. Then as I have done above, I use my flip chart and bullet point the avoidant attachment style personality traits.

This is a clear example of how powerful these attachment styles are when they are being played out against each other, and how we have the internal resources to shift this. It can literally happen in one session.

Below is a brief example of how this shift can occur. I will break it down into the five steps I use with private clients. For each step I will give you a real example case study. Afterwards I will recap the five steps so you can apply them to your own situation.

## **Five Steps to Changing Patterns**

### **Step 1: Identifying the Trigger Situations**

**Identify the situations/events/actions which trigger the negative feelings in yourself:**

#### **Client Example:**

*We have been married for 1 year and were very much in love. He had 2 children age 6 and 8 by a previous marriage and had half custody of the children. I thought I could accept this and feel happy. Every Wednesday evening and every other weekend he was with them. They'd all go out but I didn't want to. They resented me and whenever they came around I was excluded and he never ever made me feel I was part of their lives. The resentment from him built and during the week he'd stay out and would come home really late, search the fridge, pour himself a glass of wine and go straight to bed as if I didn't exist. He has mentioned if this atmosphere and my depression and crying goes on, he'd like to move out and we just be friends.*

## **Step 2: Identify the Dismissive Avoidant Attachment Style in Your Partner**

**List out the emotions and reactions of your partner to the problem situation:**

Client Example:

*He was angry with me, and said he felt trapped, confined by my needs and wants. He said I should build a life of my own, that I was too preoccupied with him and his whereabouts. He said he felt smothered by me. He was dismissive, resentful and sexually/emotionally unavailable and completely shut down and withdrawn.*

## **Step 3: Identify the Anxious Insecure Attachment Style in Yourself**

**What were your emotions, feelings and reactions that distressed you?**

Client Example:

*I became suspicious, and used to search through his phone in case he was seeing someone else. I was sure he was. He stopped texting me and making contact. He'd disappear on business commitments and I never even knew where he was staying. I felt desperate, pathetic, invisible and shameful that I doubted him, lost all interest in myself, and couldn't eat as the anxiety of losing him devastated me. I felt like a weak, powerless person waiting for him to come home and when we slept together he'd turn his back on me and ignore me all through the night. I was unable to sleep so begged him to kiss me good night. He was fast asleep; it was easy for him just to fall asleep. I'd go down in to the kitchen as I couldn't sleep, he never knew I wasn't in the bed.*

#### **Step 4: From a Rational Objective Perspective. Identify How You Behaved in Their Presence?**

I asked Patricia, “just for today” to put herself in her husband’s shoes or see the situation how a friend witnessing it might perceive it. It is useful to use phrases like “I am...”, “I was...”, “I felt...”, “I wanted to...”

Client Example:

*I came across as resentful and angry at him, I criticised everything he did as soon as he walked through the door. I was always crying and couldn't stop. I wanted him to comfort me but he'd find an excuse to get away. I was bitter and angry at him. I questioned him over and over again about rejecting me in front of his children and why he didn't text me that day and every day. I was dismissive; I wanted to hurt him like he hurts me. I was helpless, weak, powerless, broken hearted, and miserable. I can't get on with his children, they get all his attention and I am excluded. I exclude myself, I am not included, I am on the outside. I wanted to put my arms around him and tell him I love him but I want him to come to me first. From his point of view he would see me as reproachful, judgemental, constantly criticizing, moaning, emotionally unresponsive, ungrateful, unappreciative, jealous and insecure.*

## **Step 5: Define the Alternative Secure Attachment Principals that Could be Used in These Situations.**

This may feel fabricated or fake, but is a resourceful switch to protect yourself from further abandonment. Just as a person can dress differently to suit a particular situation, so too can a person “try on” a different way of acting in a situation. This literally creates an alternative behaviour resource which strengthens the client’s position.

In the real example I am using as a case study here, I moved my chair a little closer to Patricia. She seemed cold, which often happens when people are experiencing rejection trauma as the “perceived” threat of abandonment and loss triggers the amygdala (a part of the brain) which activates a flight, freeze or fight response that signals the release of stress hormones; adrenaline and norepinephrine.

For this reason I put a warm blanket around her shoulders to soothe her. I said “I want you to do something quite different when you see Joe this evening, however false and unfamiliar it may feel.

Make eye contact with him as he comes in to the house, do the complete opposite to what you might normally do. Switch your feelings of exclusion to something light and generous as if the *inner rejected unloved anxious child* is put in to a metaphoric box temporarily. You are warm and safe and it is the Adult you speaking to your husband.

Take your thoughts back to what you found attractive in your husband before all this awful sense of feeling alone, separated and excluded began. What was it about him that you found attractive?”

She says:

*“We were alive together; we danced and really had fun. We were such a team together and felt so connected to each other like two teenagers. He was kind, considerate and really open with me and there was nothing that we kept away from one another.”*

I asked her to do 4 positive actions and behaviours to counteract rejection, despair and exclusion causing abandonment anxiety. What follows is what she fed back to me in the next session.

*“When Joe came home I kissed him on the cheek and said hello warmly, he responded looking shocked and surprised. I normally walk in to a room to avoid him seeing me upset, but this time I suggest a few things he might like for dinner and begin cooking whilst he lays the table. We chat about his day and plan what to do with his children tomorrow evening” (Wednesday). For the first time in months we sat together for dinner. I had made a mushroom Risotto and he commented on how nice it was. This was the real test for me, to spend time with Joe and the children. Usually I decline any invites with them but we all planned to go and see a movie in 3D and had a pizza afterwards. I can’t tell you how much I enjoyed it, and maybe because I was responsive to the children, they liked me and I liked them, and because of this Joe seemed much closer and warmer towards me. When we got home he told me he’d missed me. I couldn’t believe it and was so happy.”*

I know this sounds far too simple and unbelievable, but because Patricia felt so excluded and unloved with Joe, she was experiencing such acute levels of abandonment anxiety and anxious attachment, Joe in turn responded to this protest behaviour by shutting down, withdrawing and further rejecting Patricia.

The problem here is that an attachment cue, which can be an emotional tone, a phrase, a look, or seeing your partner interact warmly towards another person - in this case Joe's children - immediately activated Patricia's attachment system, which then turned in to her greatest fear of being abandoned and further rejected as her love for Joe felt thwarted.

Because this had gone on for several months, they were stuck in a "react/response" dance, i.e. every time either of them heard a "critical" tone in the other's voice or a hug that was dismissed by the other, a kiss that was rejected by a turn of the cheek, an alarm goes off in the brain signalling; "I'm not safe, I am unlovable, I'm unwanted, he/she has contempt for me, I feel so disrespected, I feel complete contempt coming from you, you have no regard for my ideas or who I am as a person etc."

My point is, if we cut the "supply" to these attachment cues that trigger diminishing insults, you will see how one partner changes their "reactionary response" to their lover's behaviour, and s/he will respond in a similar fashion. This is what builds an emotionally responsive rapport between you.

## **Summary of the 5 Steps to Changing Patterns:**

**Step 1:** Identify the Trigger Situations

**Step 2:** Identify Their Dismissive Avoidant Attachment Style

**Step 3:** Identify Your Anxious Insecure Attachment Style

**Step 4:** Identify How You Behaved in Their Presence?

**Step 5:** Define Alternative Secure Attachment Behaviours That Could be Used.

I fully realise too, that I am speaking here about two people who were able to find their way through, but I know that right now, you may be reading this workbook and wondering how it can apply to YOU.

But believe me, whether you are separated from your lover who has been at the centre of your lovesickness or whether you are still with this person, this information about attachment cues and triggers will be a huge help and support to you.

Many people will naturally do step 1 and maybe step 2, but they won't realise they are stuck there. Noticing the problem and the behaviours doesn't change anything. We need to do all five steps to break free from these patterns.

When we are in a relationship, whether short or long term, if we don't understand just how the anxiously attached love addicted person creates a fight, flight, freeze response in the love avoidant, we will always return to the same patterns of behaviour.

For a woman who is often the anxiously attached one, she will remain powerless,

helpless and completely debilitated by fierce emotions that she has never experienced before, even in a bereavement of someone truly close.

My point is, the more the love interest/person of addiction experiences this catastrophic hunger and need for love and union, the more s/he will close down and flee in the opposite direction through, guilt, an inability to please, responsibility and entrapment.

This is exactly why so many couples in short term, long term or brief romantic encounters often say; “I know I should leave but I can’t let go”, or “s/he is not good for me/not healthy for me, but I feel so attached that I can’t leave.”

Please imagine how it would be if your avoidant partner was entirely responsive to your emotional needs and you’re longing to be loved. I know you may be thinking that this was all you wanted - for him or her to reassure you that there would be a future between you, that you would have children together, and that s/he does love you, cherish and respect you.

But no matter how easy that sounds for you, when you are so desperate to get that reassurance (through no fault of your own), desperate for it all to be okay between you and get the love you want, it all seems impossible for the love avoidant attachment style to soothe your pain and anguish if s/he feels “BLAMED” for your emotional downfall.

And you feel that s/he is to blame too, as you haven’t always been like this; you haven’t always felt so much yearning to be loved and wanted.

I remember when it was happening to me with Josh. We were in the kitchen making

some Indian food, and I was chopping the vegetables and herbs.

He was grinding the spices in a pestle and mortar that he brought back from Indonesia. We were listening to Joni Mitchell and Neil Young and he seemed really happy as he played along with his ‘imaginary’ acoustic guitar. The happier he became, the lower I felt, as even though it all sounds lovely and light-hearted, it felt anything but to me.

When I write this I look back all those years ago, and even now I can clearly remember exactly what waves of anxiety I felt charging through my body, because I KNEW he wasn’t really with me.

I should have felt happy that he was having a good time, but I knew I was on the verge of something that had the power to grip me in seconds, like a bubbling stew of emotions all because I KNEW this one thing; he was not emotionally in any way responsive with me.

There he was in the kitchen grinding the spices, but not there. I felt this in every fibre of my body. It’s hard to describe so I said; “Do you think there is a future between us?” This was like a huge clanger in the midst of a fun time for him. Even the music was blaring through the hi-fi system, everything became steely quiet, and the silence was palpable and eerie.

It was a totally incongruent question under the circumstances, and it just came out of the blue.

Before I knew it, he flew into a blind rage, so much so, that he abruptly switched the music system off and threw the food in the bin followed by; “you’ve destroyed

another evening, this is why there can never be a future. I thought tonight was going well and you have just ended it. I've told you where I stand once every two weeks but now I'm off!"

He picked up the keys to his motorbike and went to open the door. Without going in to details I begged him to stay. I pleaded with him not to go. I even said "I'm sorry" over and over again. "I will never ask you again", I said. But he left.

This is what I mean! How could one question set off such an apocalyptic response? But this is what is important! There was nothing, absolutely nothing, I could have changed about myself and the "WAY" I responded to him would have made no difference. No difference at all, as he was most definitely a man who had "engulfment" issues. Therefore, and I need you to really get this, it was NOT my fault!!! And is NOT YOUR FAULT either.

Someone like me was most certainly with the wrong attachment type.

He was so completely shut down and emotionally unavailable that it drove me mad, but after my understanding this and learning everything I had to in order to create this 27 Step Surviving the Addictive Love Cycle Program, I now know that in Patricia's case above, it certainly can work to switch from being emotionally unresponsive to responsive. But sadly in my case there was no chance at all of anything working.

I now know that never again will anyone reduce me to a small, diminished slave-like worm, as that is what I felt like when I was with him. Why would anyone want to stay in a relationship that reduces us to a mere nothing? Yet I did exactly that, and I would put up with anything if it meant we could be together and have children one day.

## **So what happened next?**

Well, 10 days after that episode, he calmed down and wanted me back. Of course, it's a long story but that is when I implemented the NO CONTACT process.

I was literally petrified to ever see him again.

There is so much more but I don't want this entire workbook to be about this man, but what happened with him in the late 80s has inspired me to create this entire program. Without that experience I wouldn't be sitting at this computer now sharing it with you. And telling you the following...

I know, with every bone in my body, that you **WILL** survive this loss, even if right now you don't believe that you can.

One thing that's hugely important for you to know is that since finding the strength to let go and undergo all the self-understanding, development and research for this program, I realised that I was in a narcissistically abusive relationship.

I found out everything I needed to learn and gained a profound understanding about what it actually meant to be stuck in an excruciatingly painful narcissistic relationship; their charm, their attractiveness, their manipulation, and most of all, how it feeds an extremely unhealthy way of loving.

## **Co-dependency and Narcissistic Fierce Attachments**

Co-dependency plays a large part in relationships where couples are narcissistically attached to one another. They intuitively feel that they should leave, but have no idea how to let go, and in many cases, don't want to let go as they keep trying to make it work.

The "soul mate" like feelings have a powerful hold over their toxic attachment and it can feel like you are "prised together" like two Siamese twins joined at the hip. Two people can be bound together by constant arguing, dispute, hysterical pleading, blame and misunderstandings.

This type of interaction can feel very addictive and almost impossible to break once a couple is caught in a co-dependent, narcissistic cycle.

When I was together with Josh, arguments used to happen out of nowhere, especially if we planned to go out somewhere.

So I used to tell myself that this time I wouldn't react, as I felt I must be doing something to set him off. It was like being with Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde, as one minute he was caring and tender towards me and spoke about a future, and in the next moment, suspicious in regards to other men I might be seeing.

It all felt totally unpredictable and possessive, yet he set the rule that we could only see each other every 2 weeks! I remember feeling like my head was in a mincer, and I

felt confused and totally powerless as if I were a puppet on a string.

Emotional abuse is so silent and so hidden because in public the narcissist is often charismatic, persuasive, exciting and confident.

However, within the relationship the narcissist can show little sign of empathy and sensitivity. Somehow, you can feel that their personality just doesn't seem to add up as it's fraught with dishonesty, blame, control and manipulative games which can leave many in a constant state of despair, helplessness and confusion.

One minute the relationship is over and the next, back together.

The victim of the narcissist will always be “anticipating” the fall out, never quite knowing where it is going and in what direction. Many try to leave and look for a way out, but this kind of toxic attachment is extremely difficult to break as the victim of narcissism feels so powerless.

This type of relationship leaves the victim little choice but to stay stuck in a cycle of neglect and control.

You may recall the Rubber Band Technique we mentioned earlier. Many people who are stuck in this kind of situation find that the rubber band technique is particularly helpful at literally “snapping out” of the negative cycle.

## Signs that may be in a narcissistic relationship

As you read this list, tick the box next to any of the statements that apply to you.

- Do you lie to others about your partner's real behaviour?
- Do you feel helpless because you're constantly trying to "understand" your partner's behaviour?
- Do you make allowances for your partner with others, i.e. he/she isn't feeling well today?
- Is your partner unpredictable so that you fear/dread going home in case he/she is in one of "those moods"?
- Do you feel as though you can't do anything right unless he/she approves of your decision?
- Does your partner withhold sending you a text message or phoning in order to "make" you feel anxious or even jealous? (Please note that this is by far one of the most punishing games a narcissist can do to gain control and render you powerless)
- Does rejection play a huge part in your relationship, especially after an argument? And as a consequence, do you fear abandonment?
- Does your partner keep you from seeing friends and family?
- Does your partner disapprove and speak lowly of your friends, acquaintances and family?

- Do you leave with good intentions to begin a life alone, yet return to the relationship as soon as he/she promised it will be different?
- Do they minimise, mock or insult what you think or say in public or together?  
(Note: this can be done to keep you small and lower your self-confidence)
- Does your partner tell you that no one else would ever want you? (Please note, this is to keep you weak and dependent on them)
- Are you checked or picked up on the slightest thing that he/she disapproves of?
- If you are potentially running late from work or miss a train, do you panic and become anxious for fear that your partner “thinks” you are lying to them?  
(Please note, the narcissist is paranoid about being lied to)
- Are you continually accused of having an affair or being promiscuous? If yes, does your partner call you “unacceptable” names that no one has ever called you before?
- Is your partner’s behaviour worse if they have been drinking alcohol?
- If your partner threatens to leave, do you beg and plead with them not to go for fear of abandonment and rejection?
- If you are in a broken state like above, do they become emotionally cold and unavailable as if they “enjoy” seeing you needy?
- Are you always walking on egg shells for fear his/her anger will erupt?
- When you get in to a dispute, do you feel that your “mind is in a mincer” confused as to how the argument began and how to resolve it?

Do you feel interrogated, as if a bright light looms over your every word with “yes” and “no” answers only?

Have you changed the way you are, your natural personality and your spontaneity, for fear of provoking your partner’s anger?

Does your partner have low self-esteem?

Did you have low self-esteem before you met your partner?

Now count how many of the statements you ticked and write the number out in the box below:

your notes

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If you have answered yes to **five or more** of these questions, you may well be/have been in a relationship with a narcissistic partner. If this is so, it will come as a relief to you to know that his or her behaviour is NOT your fault, and it will begin to make so much sense that what was happening is completely beyond your control.

Nevertheless, a co-dependent relationship in itself is so alluring, and can delude you in to thinking that you need this person to survive.

When love is hungry or co-dependant, “need” and “want” can become merged with one another. For example, “I need you to need me” can lead to “I will keep you needy

because, if you ever get stronger, I'm afraid that you might leave me."

The following is inspired by the work of Melody Beattie, the author of numerous self-help books on co-dependent relationships:

"Co-dependency can be defined by functional central patterns of behaviour regarding the body, whereby thinking and feeling is entirely necessary to grow in to a mature adult who is able to have healthy relationships, and be capable of experiencing on a rational level of containment and comfort in everyday life."

When two people become co-dependently attached and either one begins to withdraw or pull away, the symptoms of loss can be overwhelming along with the devastation that your sense of self has become so entangled, attached and merged with the significant other that it really can feel like we will not be able to survive without the beloved.

*"Never allow someone to be your priority while allowing yourself to be their option."*

**--- Mark Twain**

When we have been deeply connected to another person, we feel intrinsically woven into them. I often hear in my practice; *"He or she was a part of me. It feels like something has been amputated, yet they are very much alive, but have chosen not to be with me."* Or... *"He completed me, I'm nothing without him"*.

It is common to feel like you have lost the most intrinsic part of yourself in separation, unrequited love, death or divorce.

But in being separated from the beloved, we give ourselves time to grieve, and in every way this is a time to emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually wean ourselves away from the bond we once shared, although it takes a considerable time to heal.

In many ways withdrawing from an addiction is exactly like the grief process, whereby every waking thought translates in to the cry of “Please come back!” Our energy and life spirit feels totally depleted as we fold ourselves into the foetal position underneath the duvet in a state of disbelief and emptiness.

But here’s the thing...

The loss we feel through unrequited love or rejection can be so devastating, it is often comparable, or in some cases, even worse, because there is no closure.

For many, the beloved has simply disappeared. If you have been with a narcissistic love avoidant, you will know that they can exit out of the blue, without any explanation as they see you falling apart.

This is because detaching and distancing comes so easy to them; it’s the safest option. But there is no doubt at all in my mind that love addiction can be the most soul-destroying of experiences, and is felt deep in one’s body, as it’s not only a loss of one’s self, but a loss of our own soul. This is the sharp edge of heartbreak in co-dependency, anxious attachment and love addiction.

*“The hunger for love is much more difficult to remove than the hunger for bread.”*

**--- Mother Teresa**

## **How Do You Know When to Leave Someone When They're Not Emotionally Good for You?**

Well, before I answer that question, take a look at the following (these types of feelings are typical of co-dependency)...

- I'm in this awful place, acting out of character...
- My complete lack of self-control is driving a wedge between us
- I'm beside myself with anxiety, unable to know what to do or how to get through this
- I can't take his silence seriously, it is unbearable, he/she is so emotionally unresponsive
- I can't hear him/her say "I can't give you anything" or "I don't want a commitment with you"
- It feels like a sickness in me that disables my ability to hold my life together, or participate in anything normal
- I'm hiding it from my friends, parents, and work colleagues

One client explains:

*“I am acting in a way that I never believed I was capable of. For years I have run my own business and even that is crumbling under the strain of holding these two worlds together.*

*I convince myself that we’ll get through this together, that the next time he comes around things will be different. We’ll talk and talk. I hope that we’ll be able to find a way out of this collapse in our communication, and yet after a fiery all-consuming passionate evening, somehow, out of nowhere, he’d shut down, pull away, literally holding back from me emotionally, unable to make eye contact.*

*Any question from me would repel him further into a tiny closed cocoon unable to reciprocate any affection, and the more he shuts me out, the more I crave his love, pleading, begging him not to leave.*

*I display uncontrolled behaviour and a fierce desire to hold on tight, and the more I do this the further away he goes. He leaves, and despite the harm we cause one another, I just can’t let him go and cling more in desperation to have him back. I might wait weeks to see him again and then he’ll make contact and the whole thing begins all over again as if I’m going around and around in some kind of destructive loop that I can’t break free from.*

*I wait for him to arrive in fear and trepidation, and at the same time feel a furious desire to hold him close, yet I know deep down that I must leave him as I know with all my heart that it’s not going anywhere and he is not good for me...”*

**Does this sound familiar to you?**

Many of my clients have recounted such devastating episodes of uncontrollable behaviour with all the panic, grief, anxiety and fear that accompanies it.

This is typically followed by self-blame, confusion or blaming the beloved, moving from demonization to adoration to guilt to a hopeful philosophical view; he/she will change, a leopard can change its spots, I can make him/her see the light, make him/her love me and want me.

Then there are the long phone calls or texts in a desperate plea to solve the problem and finally understand one another – as if you're fighting for your life.

In fact, this is exactly what is happening; people who suffer this kind of attachment to the beloved are literally “fighting for their lives”, and no matter how much the threat of diminished self-worth and emotional fragmentation, they find it literally impossible to either physically or emotionally let go, nor stay away.

**And this is the “key” issue for anyone who is caught in this addictive “love loop”.**

It's as if the rational mind loses all sense of reality and all the risks to oneself that go with it.

They are temporarily taken over by the addiction, whereby the significant other (beloved) is the drug that they can't live without (this is why people keep returning to this seductive, destructive pattern, full to the brim with an obsessional yearning to have this one person, no matter what.)

So how do you escape this cycle?

## **Why Can You NOT Let Go?**

So why is it that you're unable to break free from relationships that are no good for you?

Well to begin with, you may have experienced a lack of nurturing, attention and neglect in early childhood (not necessarily with your primary caregivers) and/or a deficit of support/security/mirroring/love/nurturing which are all completely necessary for healthy emotional, cognitive and behavioural development.

### **Does this sound familiar?**

The sense of feeling invisible in their early childhood and teenage years reinforces a person's need to fill a deep ache in their heart because they never felt validated, and they will typically display a longing to attach themselves to someone who will fill this void.

This way, they no longer feel separated from themselves, and the yearning to feel passion, connection and closeness will finally be quenched.

Of course, both men and women can experience abandonment, rejection, neglect and lack of validation during childhood, so much so that when they are propelled into that euphoric feeling of romantic love they immediately attach and hold on tight to that one person in order to ease and soothe a lifetime of unfulfilled emotional needs.

Consequently, when someone steps in to that empty well of loneliness, it's experienced by the love addict "as if" they are the only one that can make them feel whole, lovable and understood, whilst the "love avoidant" may shut down and run in the opposite direction, which is what makes this "yo-yoing" cycle so painful, because

one response is in direct alignment with the other's reaction.

Similarly, in early childhood or adolescence you may have experienced a complete lack of control. Perhaps your parents fought a lot, yet there was nothing you could do to stop their arguments, so you retired into a world of fantasy and make-believe, longing for a prince or princess to take you away and save you from an intolerable situation.

This can also pave the foundations of love being linked to intense drama, dispute and chaos, as you may not have experienced your parents or primary care givers being loving and tender with one another.

**“So why do love addicts typically end up with people who are not good for them?”**

Well in short, it's because that's all they know. It's not their fault.

### **It's not your fault**

You will instinctively be drawn towards a man or a woman who replicates the kind of relationship(s) you had when you were young. This is why the love addict will gravitate towards a person who is emotionally withholding, unavailable and unable to reciprocate the love and affection that they crave.

Yet you continue to seek out this kind of relationship because it's all you know. It's familiar and it's comfortable, even if the result is entirely destructive.

## **Love Addiction Symptoms: What to look out for...**

Because an addiction to love is a behavioural condition, it presents itself through a series of symptoms when a threat of loss and abandonment is experienced, leading to symptoms such as:

- Chronic feelings of rejection
- A sense of inadequacy
- Low self-worth
- Loss of self-respect
- Chronic separation anxiety
- Chronic grief
- Panic and anxiety
- Disassociation
- Depression and sadness
- Obsessive love
- Love withdrawal
- Denial and powerlessness
- Primal abandonment
- Jealousy and insecurity

- Loneliness and isolation
- Stress-related symptoms
- Lethargy and tiredness
- Anger and revenge
- Emotional trauma
- Not feeling “good enough”
- Self-blame and shame
- A desire to be taken care of
- Co-dependency and low self esteem

To avoid these symptoms recurring again and again, you need to be able to spot the signs of an unhealthy, “toxic” relationship, and break the chains as soon as you can (even though you might feel completely bound and attached to this one person who makes you feel so alive one moment, and so broken the next).

## **Four Signs That Someone Isn’t Good For You**

### **1. They ask you to change**

I’ve had many clients who have changed their hair colour, lost vast amounts of weight, become addicted to exercise or even had surgery (nose, breasts, tummy tucks etc.) in order to look the way their partner wants them to look. It may be hard to resist their request to change, especially in the early stages of the relationship. As a former love addict, I understand that more than anyone. After all, you WANT to please them. You WANT to make them happy. But you should NEVER try to become

somebody else in order to achieve this. Be you. Always. You are good enough as you are. If your partner isn't happy with who you are, then the relationship will never work.

## **2. They are unavailable and emotionally unresponsive**

If you are displaying love addictive tendencies, then an unavailable and emotionally unresponsive partner will only serve to pull you further and deeper into despair, because you'll be faced with feelings of rejection, separation anxiety and abandonment on a constant basis. This kind of emotional unavailability (there, but not there) exhibited by the beloved will TRIGGER the feelings of hungry love and addiction that exist inside you, and set against an opposing force that is forever trying to pull away, the love equilibrium will quickly become unbalanced.

## **3. They are emotionally or physically abusive**

Of course, a physically abusive partner is a desperately difficult thing to have to cope with, particularly for a love addict who finds it almost impossible to end the relationship for fear of being alone and grief-stricken. But emotional abuse can often be just as damaging as physical abuse in the long-term. Love addicts are, by their very nature, insecure, displaying low levels of confidence and self-esteem. They want to please their partner all the time. Unfortunately, some men/women will take advantage of this, and use emotional abuse to manipulate the relationship to get what they want. One way of doing this is to constantly text or phone the other person to keep them hooked – either with the promise that it will be different next time, or blaming them for the breakdown of the relationship (as the partner or love interest can often be addicted to the attachment you share as much as you are).

## **4. They make you feel unworthy and unlovable**

Another danger sign to look out for is if your partner makes you feel unworthy and

unlovable. Many love addicts suffer neglect, lack of nurturing and rejection/abandonment in early childhood, which understandably fosters a yearning for love, closeness and acceptance in later life. If a partner isn't able to soothe you in this respect, and make you feel loved, worthy and appreciated, then it's vital that you find the strength to end this "toxic" relationship as soon as you can, because it's not good for you – and never will be.

## **Co-dependency – The Heart of Love Addiction**

Co-dependency lies at the heart of love addiction. The person of addiction becomes so central in our lives that we believe (wrongly) that we cannot survive without them. We've handed over all that we are. We've given our personal power away, leaving us adrift, clinging to a rock for safety and security.

**This is WHY it is so difficult to let go of the beloved, because they have become the CENTER of your world.**

Their scent, their voice, their body and their soul has become merged with yours, and this is why it's so hard to say "no more".

In order to find the courage and the strength to be able to do this, you need to gain as much knowledge as possible regarding co-dependency and love addiction, and either wean yourself away or sever the ties completely (if that works better for you) in order to avoid the possibility of slipping back into the addiction and adoration that you project onto the beloved.

Whatever decision you make, the key to your freedom is to hold yourself accountable; to take responsibility for your actions by accepting readily that the person of addiction is not present, and they are not good for you.

Remember, love has nothing to do with emotional pain and despair. Love shouldn't render you powerless. Love shouldn't destroy your sense of self, nor should it take your joy and spontaneity away from you.

When you are able to accept that you deserve more, then you will finally be in a position to adopt a healthier way of loving.

Often our feelings which lead to hurt, fear of abandonment and all the aspects of love addiction which hold us back and cause pain, are buried deep within us, tied so closely to the needs of our inner child that it is hard for us to be aware of them, let alone address those needs. We need some way to talk to the inner child and yet help the "adult" us grow and develop.

## **Guided Visualisation**

Imagine that within you there is a small child version of yourself, about 4 years old. This child has all the neediness and relationship fears. Imagine yourself now sitting in a room, and in front of you about 5 feet away, are two comfortable chairs arranged so they face each other.

Your chair is further away. If you are right handed then imagine this small child coming into the room and sitting in the chair on the left (if you are left handed then they will sit on the right). You can give this little you child a nickname if you like. Something that symbolises their needs, wants, etc.

Now in your mind imagine the adult, the mature, grown-up, self-fulfilled, content person you wish to be in the future. Have them come into the room and sit in the chair opposite the child you. Notice how they sit upright and strong, and yet open and caring. They are successful and calm.

You can remember times you have felt successful, having achieved something important and pour those positive feelings into this future you, making them stronger and even more resourceful. Again you can give them a nickname that represents their positive qualities.

Sit back, and leave the adult you to begin a conversation with the child you. The 'you' that is there is there to observe, understand and witness what unfolds.

In a very maternal/paternal, kind, gentle, patient and supportive way, observe as the adult you takes on the role of gently parenting the child you, giving the child the reassurance, love, understanding, guidance, forgiveness and support that the child needs.

This adult is there for the child to turn to, to be heard, and to feel safe with. The child's role is to share their feelings and help the adult to understand what they need to feel more secure.

When it feels like the conversation between them has reached a natural rest point, then the child and adult can say goodbye, perhaps giving each other a big embrace and saying “thank you”. Then each in turn leaves the room and returns inside you.

This exercise should be repeated regularly, at least once a day in the initial stages. Despite seeming relatively simplistic, many people who have done this exercise, even once, report amazing results.

Sometimes a few people feel a little self-conscious at first, but any feelings of resistance are just boundaries to self-growth being challenged. We all have an inner child and an adult self, and this is a beautiful exercise to help those different aspects of our selves become integrated, helping us to become more self-supported and concrete within ourselves.

In the next exercise you will begin to question and become more aware of yourself, how your feelings, actions, thoughts and behaviours have a direct impact on how and why you feel so overwhelmed by debilitating emotions that render you powerless, and without choice.

Self-awareness and understanding is an essential part of your recovery from co-dependent attachment to believing that you can take charge of these devastating emotions that cause you to feel helpless and heartbroken.

This powerful self-help tool will help you to play an active role in writing down some

of the ways that co-dependent behaviour has played a huge role in your present or past relationships, and how your reactions to being rejected/abandoned and dismissed may have been a familiar pattern in your early years.

The purpose of this exercise is to gain an awareness of the similarities between your childhood experiences and how it has framed your present adult life, and accelerate your recovery towards emotional self-reliance, self-fulfilment and self-development.

## **Exercise 10**

### **Breaking the Tie that Binds: Co-dependent Attachment Strategy**

Exercise 10 is in several parts. Here we will work through the process of co-dependent attachment and help you break the tie that binds you.

So be sure to work through the various exercises in the order they are given here.

In each step, I present an example sheet followed by the actual exercise sheet for you to do. Simply answer the questions and if you need more space then feel free to use the back of the sheets or your own journal or spare paper.

Remember to be honest with yourself and before starting each sheet, I'd recommend that you take a special moment to close your eyes and return each time to that calm, safe and supportive stillness you have within you. This will allow you to be more detached and observant of your own thoughts and ideas. Take your time, be gentle and enjoy the process.

## Exercise 10: Part A (DEMO) Co-Dependent Attachment



“

*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** What was the Inciting Incident that Activated your Fear/ Anxiousness/ Love Withdrawal?

*When I am in broken state you become emotionally cold and unavailable as if you “enjoy” seeing me needy, helpless and powerless.*

**QUESTION:** Who were you with?  
*I was with my partner.*

**QUESTION:** Were you alone or together?

*It was just the two of us, there was no family or friends there.*

**QUESTION:** What were you doing?

*We were on holiday together, supposed to be a romantic get away.*

**QUESTION:** Where were you?

*We were on the beach.*

**QUESTION:** When was it?

*Over 20 years ago.*





## Exercise 10: Part B (DEMO) Emotional Response



“

*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** What was your emotional reaction to this dismissive aloof behaviour? What were your automatic thoughts?

*Despair, helplessness, and powerless, weak, alone, pathetic, clingy, angry, hurt, scared and frightened.*

*Automatic thoughts:*

*He is going to walk out, leave me, how will I survive without him?*

**QUESTION:** What was going through my mind just before this incident happened?

*I was planning our future together, thinking he was the one.*

**QUESTION:** What does this say about me?

*I am positive, open and ready for a real relationship.*

**QUESTION:** What am I afraid might happen?

*That he might leave me*

**QUESTION:** What does this mean about me? My life? My future?

*I'd built my future and my happiness around another person*

**QUESTION:** What is the worst thing that could happen if this is true?

*I thought I wouldn't survive without him. But in reality I was wrong.*

**QUESTION:** What does this mean about how the other person feels/thinks about me?

*I guess he just didn't feel the same as me.*

**QUESTION:** What images or memories do I have in this traumatic situation?

*Feeling like I couldn't breath without him.*

## Exercise 10: Part B Emotional Response



“

*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** What was your emotional reaction to this dismissive aloof behaviour? What were your automatic thoughts?

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**QUESTION:** What was going through my mind just before this incident happened?

**QUESTION:** What does this say about me?

**QUESTION:** What am I afraid might happen?

**QUESTION:** What does this mean about me? My life? My future?

**QUESTION:** What is the worst thing that could happen if this is true?

**QUESTION:** What does this mean about how the other person feels/thinks about me?

**QUESTION:** What images or memories do I have in this traumatic situation?

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## Exercise 10: Part C (DEMO) Earliest Memory



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*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** Your earliest memory that activated a familiar traumatic event? Or whatever memory occurs, what age were you? Speak from the child/adolescent you.

*I was at a seaside with mum and dad, I think I was about 6, there were lots of people everywhere lying on their towels on top of the pebbles and sitting on deckchairs. I was down on the seafront with a bucket and spade; I looked up and couldn't see mum and dad anywhere, I ran up and down the beach in and out of the crowds, I was scared, frightened, crying and couldn't breathe. A lady picked me up and she found my mum and dad.*

**QUESTION:** What feeling and emotions did you experience?

*Utter panic, like I became tiny and the world was scary.*

**QUESTION:** Was there any way you could have stopped this from happening?

*I didn't think I had done anything wrong. No it wasn't my fault, so I couldn't have stopped it*

**QUESTION:** What were you afraid of?

*I had been abandoned, forgotten.*

**QUESTION:** What might have happened if things had got worse?

*I may have never seen my mum and dad again!*

**QUESTION:** What did it mean about you?

*I realised how small I was and how much I needed them.*

**QUESTION:** What was the worst thing that could have happened if this was true?

*I could be lost forever!*

**QUESTION:** What did you feel before the past scary event?

*I was content just playing, I'd forgotten the world around me.*

**QUESTION:** What images or memories do you have when you think back to this traumatic event?

*All the people and noise around me, they seem so big. I'm tiny.*

## Exercise 10: Part C Earliest Memory



“

*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** Your earliest memory that activated a familiar traumatic event? Or whatever memory occurs, what age were you? Speak from the child/adolescent you.

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**QUESTION:** What feeling and emotions did you experience?

**QUESTION:** Was there any way you could have stopped this from happening?

**QUESTION:** What were you afraid of?

**QUESTION:** What might have happened if things had got worse?

**QUESTION:** What did it mean about you?

**QUESTION:** What was the worst thing that could have happened if this was true?

**QUESTION:** What did you feel before the past scary event?

**QUESTION:** What images or memories do you have when you think back to this traumatic event?

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## Exercise 10: Part D Comparing Responses



“ Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself. ”

**QUESTION:** What was your reaction to this distress situation? What thoughts, feelings, and behaviours did you have? please compare the two distressing events; the “big adult you” incident and “little you” incident

*I felt an almost identical distress between Josh being emotionally unavailable, cold and withdrawn as I did when I looked up to find mum and dad disappeared on the beach that day. In both adult me and child me: My reaction was one of panic, fear, helplessness and terror.*

*Thoughts: I'm lost, abandoned, they've disappeared, I'll never find them; maybe this means I am unwanted and unlovable. Feelings: Scared, frightened, and petrified. Behaviours in both adult and child: Trapped, no exit, confined; fight, flight and freeze. As a child, uncontrollable running and searching for my parents as an adult collapsing in frozen defeat and devastation.*

**QUESTION:** What repetitive messages from your previous experiences as a child or young adult follow in to your adult present relationships that have led to co-dependent, anxious attachment? Write them as your own affirmations that have kept you in a negative cycle of attachment, anxiety and fear of abandonment; give an example if one comes to mind:

*If you are emotionally unresponsive I fear that you have disappeared and no longer want me.*

*When you fail to call me or text me I feel anxious and frightened as I thought you'd gone for ever.*

*When you took me out on the boat that day and we camped on an island you went off fishing, you were gone for two hours, there was no-one on the island as I watched your green shirt disappear in to a vast shrub land and I didn't know where you were and if you would return. I had a panic attack and couldn't breathe, you came back and you didn't understand why I was so frightened.*



Write on the separate sheet below (or in your journal) a short story about the adult you experience and the child you experience; use this creative writing piece to embrace both, so that you bring to consciousness just how much the fears of being rejected and abandoned have been triggering an old wound.

For this reason you have to nurture and care for that wounded and vulnerable part of yourself by staying clear of anyone who reinforces that original fear, abuse, neglect or abandonment.

Remember, this exercise is all about self-nurturing and emotional self-reliance.

The power is inside of YOU but you have temporarily given your power away to someone else who I'm sure doesn't deserve you. But first you have to validate this in yourself, so begin that journey now, take some deep breaths and begin by remembering that little you...

If you would prefer to paint or draw this experience instead of writing it down, please do so. The important thing is to express some of these self-deprecating emotions that have been keeping you stuck, diminished and helpless up to this point.

A large, rounded rectangular box with a thin grey border. Inside the box, there are ten horizontal lines spaced evenly down the page, intended for writing or drawing. At the bottom right corner of the box, there is a small, simple line drawing of a heart rate monitor pulse.

## Exercise 10: Part E (DEMO) The Role Negative Feelings Have Played



“ Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself. ”

**QUESTION:** How does feeling helpless, insecure and frightened operate in your life and keep you fused and dependent in an unhealthy co-dependent relationship?

- 1. Being helpless kept me powerless and living in a state of fear and abandonment and I believed I wouldn't survive alone.*
- 2. Being helpless kept me locked in to him because I was to scared to be alone.*
- 3. The more he rejected me and was emotionally unavailable, the more I wanted him to love me but it wasn't working as I became more and more needy and clingy and he went further away in the opposite direction.*

**QUESTION:** What are you gaining by holding on to this helplessness & powerlessness?

*I realise that in the past I held on because I was so scared of being alone and the little girl in me just wanted someone else to take care of me.*

**QUESTION:** How do you see it is keeping you stuck and merged in a cycle of thwarted love and co-dependent attachment?

*Because I give my partner the responsibility for my safety I am not seen by them as their equal and I push them away. At the same time I make myself dependent on them.*

**QUESTION:** How does being powerless and helpless keep you from recovering from a co-dependent attachment??

*When I believe I don't have the power and am helpless then it makes me feel like I need the person I've chosen as my protector even more. When really I need myself to be self responsible.*

**QUESTION:** How was this relationship affecting your own physical health, needs and wants? How has it kept you dependent whilst refusing help & support from others?

*I sacrificed my love of dancing and exercise for him. "We" became more important than family and friends so I turned my back on them. I got sick, isolated and lonely*

**QUESTION:** Explain why you have been so scared to let go of a relationship that is causing you emotional despair?

*I guess it's unchallenged habits and fear keeping me stuck in patterns that don't help. The more I write things down I realise I've just given away my own inner power.*

## Exercise 10: Part E The Role Negative Feelings Have Played



“

*Fill in the questions below. As before if you need more space feel free to use the back of the page or your journal. Take your time and be honest with yourself.*

”

**QUESTION:** How does feeling helpless, insecure and frightened operate in your life and keep you fused and dependent in an unhealthy co-dependent relationship?

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**QUESTION:** What are you gaining by holding on to this helplessness & powerlessness?

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**QUESTION:** How do you see it is keeping you stuck and merged in a cycle of thwarted love and co-dependent attachment?

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**QUESTION:** How does being powerless and helpless keep you from recovering from a co-dependent attachment??

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**QUESTION:** How was this relationship affecting your own physical health, needs and wants? How has it kept you dependent whilst refusing help & support from others?

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**QUESTION:** Explain why you have been so scared to let go of a relationship that is causing you emotional despair?

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## A Guided Journey

What follows is a guided journey to explore the strategy and steps you can and will take to become the person you truly want to be; happy, content, and able to be in healthy, loving and nurturing relationship.

It may be helpful to get a friend to read this out to you, or record it onto your mobile phone and play it back. Either way, read it out slowly and leave pauses between each line to allow you, with your eyes closed to fully explore the potential.

Make sure you have a comfortable chair that is easy to get up from and that there is nothing on the floor or around you so that you can safely stand up at the end and take at least one step forward.

*“Begin by closing your eyes and while sitting comfortably, take a moment to scan your body and allow each part to relax.*

*Follow your breath as you breathe in fresh energy, and then let go of unwanted feelings as you breathe out; Breathing in and out through your nose, deeper and slower into your belly.*

*Imagine someone who is your idol, your role model, who you can identify with, and has qualities you wish you had in relationships and life. It could be someone famous; a person you hold close to your soul with humility, respect and integrity; someone you feel is wise, sensitive and human. It can be someone you know or an imagined person.*

*Allow them to appear a few feet in front of you standing facing forwards so that their back is facing you. They are calm and they are waiting to help you.*

*Spend some time to make them more real, notice their clothes, the way they stand, their movements, their feelings, their smell, any sounds, and how they are breathing.*

*In a moment, but not yet, you will allow your inner you, the YOU that has always been there, to stand up inside, leaving your body, feelings, thoughts and habits behind.*

*YOU will stand up within your imagination and slowly walk forwards so that you enter into the body of the person in front of you. But not yet. As you slowly merge, notice what it is like, how it feels to stand like they do, to breathe like they do, to see the world through their confident eyes, to hear the world through their wise ears.*

*Now get ready to stand up... slowly... Enjoy noticing whatever you experience as you step into your role model, in to the hearth of their wisdom.”*

*- Do not speak - long pause -*

*Pay attention to what you notice and allow their positive energy to flow into YOU. Try on their confidence, their positive qualities and attitudes. Take from them what you need; they are there to help you, support you, comfort you, and validate you. Whatever qualities you feel you need are there for you to experience and integrate.*

*- Do not speak - long pause -*

*Now allow YOU to fully merge with them, taking on all the positive resources you need at this time. Then when you are ready, turn around, and with kindness, love and compassion, face the ‘you’ that is sitting there.*

*Whatever comes to mind next is fine. The YOU that is standing there can give any advice it wants to help the you that is sitting there.*

*As YOU look at you, what advice or direction comes to mind, in order to help you become more YOU?*

*If you want to, you can gently say out loud, or within your mind the advice or direction, even if it is just one word.*

*- Do not speak - long pause -*

*Now keeping these new feelings, resources and understandings, take your physical body, and keeping your eyes closed, stand up from your chair and take a step forwards. As you do so, allow the you that is physically here now to step into and merge with the YOU that has already taken a step forwards.*

*Stand for a while because it's nice to know that you can enjoy standing on your own feet and also experience new things at the same time. When you are ready, open your eyes and simply observe the world with these new resources and understandings.*

*END*

This is a powerful technique and you can repeat it as often as you want. The person (role model) can change each time or stay the same, it's up to you. Go with your intuition and trust this.

## **The No Contact Process: “Going Cold Turkey”**

The worst fear for the love addict who has become completely consumed by the person of addiction is to take some steps to move past the initial separation, the initial few hours, and the first day.

After that, day two, three and four, then week one, two, three, four – all the time the love addict is experiencing the debilitating symptoms of “love withdrawal”, typified by feelings of chronic grief, which are then reinforced by the fact that the person is very much alive, yet fails to reciprocate their love.

At this point, you need a close and supportive network of friends and family to help you over the initial shock and grief, so that you can force a distance between you and your addiction.

This is where the whole concept of “No Contact” comes in.

Crucially, whilst you are withdrawing from the fierce passionate attachment and intensity you shared, it’s VITAL that you display an on-going commitment to yourself and truly participate in your own therapeutic recovery.

You also need to understand how and why this has happened to you, and you always need to bear in mind that if you don’t commit yourself to your own love addiction recovery, you will end up reliving the same pattern over and over again.

You will simply repeat the cycle, and attach yourself to either another person or the same person once again, which will render you powerless and destined to be unhappy and heartbroken.

I'm going to explain exactly why this happens in just a moment...

But before I do, I want you to know that I understand EXACTLY how you feel, and what you're going through.

Right now, I'm sitting here writing this workbook, and remembering exactly how I felt over 20 years ago.

I remember everyone urging me to have no "*No Contact*" with Josh. In fact, I vividly remember a friend of mine telling me very clearly that if I kept having him back, there would be nothing left of me (I'd already lost over a stone in weight).

**Now, I am going to be honest...**

I absolutely did NOT want to let him go, no matter what the consequences were to my own physical and psychological health.

All I knew was that I loved him more than words could say, and without him, I truly believed that I wouldn't survive. I felt truly shattered and heartbroken, in the midst of a torrential storm of grief-like waves ravaging through my body along with shattering thoughts that I was unlovable, unwanted and excluded from his life.

The only thing that would ease this physical pain was to have contact with him. I remember thinking that if I couldn't see him again, or kiss him again; I would most definitely fade away.

Friends would vehemently oppose the powerlessness I felt; "don't give your power away", they'd assert. It was like looking over a precipice knowing I had to jump to

save my life. I couldn't do it. I couldn't risk losing him "completely".

### **But I did!**

And the fear I felt was enormous, as I truly believed that I would not survive the withdrawal symptoms that were identical to grief – except he was very much alive.

But here I am, here to help YOU to finally free yourself from this most frightening of addictions.

### **And if I could do it, then you can do it too.**

Believe me when I say, the grief symptoms will pass, and you will find a level of strength and courage that you didn't even know you had. But most of all, you will find a sense of your own self-worth and emotional self-reliance, a far cry from all the heartache and rejection you may be feeling right now.

## **The No Contact Process**

The ONLY way I was able to begin to "let go" and survive the emotional trauma and loss I went through over 20 years ago, was by literally implementing the "NO CONTACT" rule – and following it, yet at the time this was based on my own instinct as I'd never heard of the process before.

It wasn't even a matter of choice, as I knew that every time I came anywhere near him, I instantly fragmented, became destabilised, losing all sense of myself as if my identity shrivelled away around him.

Most of all, I had to deal with the humiliation and realization that he could not

reciprocate my love. And no matter how much rejection and abandonment I felt, he would keep me “dangling”.

He would keep me hooked; continually saying that he didn’t want to lose me, that if only I’d except that we should only see each other every other weekend and was less passionate, then “maybe” we could have a future together!

Needless to say, the more I heard this, the more desperate and helpless I’d become, the more I’d “need” him, and the further he would flee in the opposite direction.

It felt like something I had no control over. He had the control, not me.

And separation felt like a knife through the heart. Think Cathy and Heathcliff, Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet.

I was unable to even imagine a future without him, as I counted down the days, knowing that on the 14th day the two weeks would be up and I’d be able to see him. I’d survived the “every other week” sentence, and now I could breathe again. I was always so happy and excited to see him again.

**This on/off dance went on for several years.**

I’d spend days trying to get my life back together; “this time I won’t phone him”, “this time I’ll pretend I don’t need him”, and then out of nowhere I’d fall back in to the “loop”, and almost immediately I would plummet into despair again.

All it took was one pager message, phone call or a letter through the mail box, and I was instantly hooked. It was literally toxic to my body and my soul, yet I missed him

desperately.

There were brief moments when I felt I was in complete control of my emotions. I'd promise myself that I would be stronger this time... that I wouldn't cry... that I'd take back the power and "act" aloof.

But then just as before, the power would instantly shift as I gave myself over to him, and out of nowhere the ground beneath me would fracture, ending any glimpse of self-security or safety. I'd fall deeper and deeper into what felt like a vortex of anxiety and fear, as if he were my oxygen and without him I couldn't breathe.

**If any of this sounds familiar to you, then you MUST follow the "No Contact Process".**

Because if you don't, believe me when I say, the person of addiction will continue to have a hold over you.

**NOTE:** If your anxiety, loss, separation and emotional attachment to the beloved is causing you to experience panic, loss of appetite, sleep and grief like symptoms, it is **NOT** advisable to do the "No Contact" process. Instead, it is important that you see your general practitioner regarding any of the above symptoms I have mentioned and seek a therapist that you could see weekly on a one to one basis.

You may not be ready to "let go" of the beloved and it may not be the right time. For some, this "cutting off" mechanism can throw them into an even more devastating abandonment loss, even though they are the ones who have implemented it.

You must be quite calm and at ease with this decision as having no contact will

empower you to move forward, not to make you more distressed and bereft. So please follow your own instinct on this one, do not put an “instruction” on your already precarious emotional sense of wellbeing.

If you do feel that you are ready to do the no contact process, be aware that on many levels the person of addiction may want to stay in contact, because although you might not know it, they NEED you as much as YOU need them!

But up to now, you’ve probably been blaming yourself for what’s happening, without realizing that THEY play a huge part in this on/off dance too.

You are in it together, yet you are the one left powerless, suffering intolerable emotional pain, whilst they are probably going on with their everyday life, “knowing” that you are “there” whenever they choose to see you next.

But when you start to see this, and apply the “No Contact Process” something quite miraculous occurs.

As the shift in your behaviour begins, the person of addiction starts to “realize” that the spell they had over you is no longer working.

Ironically, and sadly, I have seen many people stuck in this addicted “love loop” who have implemented “NO CONTACT” as it is too painful to continue seeing the beloved if they cannot mutually reciprocate your love.

Those that have done it for this very reason can also be surprised and devastated to learn that very quickly, the man or woman of addiction has just “scurried away”, so there were never any real promises in the first place.

The “love addict” had their life on hold, believing that “one day” the other person would be ready to reciprocate their love, but in reality, deep down they knew that it was never going to go anywhere, yet they couldn’t let go of YOU.

When you understand the dynamic taking place between you and the love avoidant during this insidious love addiction dance, you are half way there.

But if you’re unable to recognize what the other person is doing to you, or needs from you, there will never be a resolution. You will never be free. You have to gain back control in order for you to move from feeling utterly powerless and broken, to becoming “self-empowered” and capable of reclaiming your own life again.

### **The importance of the “No Contact” Process**

Why is the No Contact Process so important?

Because if you follow it, I absolutely guarantee that you’ll be able to finally break free from all of the emotional pain, frustration, confusion and heartache that you’ve been feeling for so long. I’m not saying it will be easy, and it’s not a magic pill, but the main thing I am saying is; if you are the one to implement it, you will have more of a sense of your OWN self-empowerment!

You have been feeling powerless and helpless because you have been waiting for the beloved to come to you, choose YOU, want you, and pursue you, so for you to be the one to say, “I can’t see you again”, will really make you feel so much more in charge of your own emotional life.

**“It felt like something I had no control over. He had the control, not me.”**

I know deep in my soul that there can be intense passion, connection and feeling in romantic love, but it should not be at the expense of your own sanity, which is why I feel so passionate about speaking to you about this.

But just realizing the irrefutable “truth”, that there may be no future with this person, will finally give you the strength to cut the umbilical cord that keeps you bound together.

I am writing this because I never want you to underestimate the severity of this kind of emotional abuse/attachment, whether the person of addiction is fully aware of their actions or not.

We all have a responsibility to act with integrity, and to respect another person is to value who they are, their humanity, and acknowledge the suffering that each and every one of us can inflict upon another, especially if we are intimate with that person.

This lies at the core of the No Contact Process, because if your relationship/love interest isn't giving you what you want, then you need to find the strength to walk away.

You deserve “mutually fulfilling love”, not to be in a constant state of feeling unlovable, rejected and abandoned.

### **What you can learn from a girl called Sue...**

A few months ago I was sitting in my practice with Sue, a client of mine (I have

changed her name for confidentially reasons). We were discussing her relationship, and the fact that she felt like her NEED for her partner at the time was turning her into a powerless, pleading, begging, weak, and “slave-like” person.

### **Here’s what she said to me...**

*“I feel like a pathetic worm. We had an argument about his emotionally cut off behaviour and he was about to leave. Before I knew it, I was lying on the kitchen floor crying, holding onto his leg and begging him not go. He just left me there and walked out.”*

I’m telling you this story today because this perfectly sums up EXACTLY why I feel so strongly about the “no contact” process.

For your own self-respect and self-worth, I want to give you all the tools you need to ensure that you NEVER ever feel as humiliated and degraded by another person as this woman felt.

In fact, the story I describe above is not unique to that one person. Many different people have told me that they’ve ended up wailing on the bathroom or kitchen floor, while the person of addiction makes a swift exit.

Yet a few days will go by, and they’ll establish communication again, and the whole process repeats itself.

### **So this is a gentle warning to you...**

If the “no contact” process isn’t put in place by YOU (and followed), this is what

could happen (if it hasn't already). And this repetitive and damaging cycle will continue for many years until your own identity and integrity is completely eroded, and there's nothing left of YOU.

**And I'm sure that's NOT what you want.**

Remember, emotionally healthy and mature individuals don't create what I have mentioned above at the expense of another individual.

In fact, the person of addiction NEEDS you as much as you need them, because your attention; your "supply" of love fuels them. They need to know that you adore them and hold them in high esteem.

But when you begin to implement the "no contact" process, just as Sue did, the love avoidant soon realizes that they are not as important as they believed they were. They are not the most important thing in your life.

And when this happens... when this "supply" is cut off, the power loop switches and shifts to THEM feeling rejected and pushed away instead.

**And at this point, something truly profound happens...**

You realize that you no longer have the same feelings as you did. You realize that you have been "toyed" with for far too long, and you don't deserve it, even if they have not "intentionally" wanted to hurt you which can be the case for many.

And this realization; this "reawakening" gives you the power and the strength to put more emotional and physical distance between the two of you.

## **So how do you do this?**

How do you ensure that you're able to follow the "no contact" process, and more importantly, stick to it?

## **The 6 “No Contact” Rules**

I’ve been talking about the importance of cutting contact with the love avoidant (withdrawer), to ensure that they’re no longer able to “hook” you back in for their own selfish reasons.

### **So what exactly does “no contact” mean?**

Here are my 6 BIGGEST NO CONTACT RULES to follow...

#### ***RULE #1:***

Without meaning to state the obvious, no contact literally means NO CONTACT! In order for this to work, you need to avoid any kind of connection with the other person, and anything and everything that will conjure up thoughts or memories of the person of addiction. I knew one person that couldn’t ever go back to the same town where her beloved lived for fear of bumping in to him. She knew that she couldn’t see his face again. It worked.

#### ***RULE #2:***

No contact means respecting yourself, caring for yourself, understanding everything about your addiction, and knowing that the other person is, quite literally, a drug that you absolutely must avoid. This means if you are addicted to dating agencies or online dating sites in a desperate attempt to find love and commitment, it is still classified as an insatiable need to fill the emptiness and loneliness you may be experiencing. Remember this is a time for you to heal yourself and it doesn’t at all mean you will never have a relationship again, it just means you will be open to love without losing yourself.

### ***RULE #3:***

No contact means no phone calls, texts or emails, and no more time spent looking at his or her Facebook posts or other social media pages. This will only torment you from afar and trigger your longing for love and a relationship, and of course, there's always the possibility of seeing them with someone else, which will do you no good whatsoever. You must cut contact, and let them go. You need to do this for your own sanity and your own chances of self-healing and recovery. Whatever you do, don't leave any gaps for him or her to creep back into your life. Stay strong and persist with your own recovery. This will challenge you like nothing else has ever done, so be sure to constantly remind yourself why you are doing this.

### ***RULE #4:***

No contact means not going to a gathering, meeting or event where it is possible that he or she might be. Again, I knew someone who was desperately trying to stick to the no contact rule, yet managed to find out exactly what events and social gathering the person of addiction was going to, and would then disguise themselves (if it was a large event) in order to just get a glimpse of that person from afar; This was no good for her, not healthy, and prolonged her agony for years longer than necessary.

### ***RULE #5:***

Of course, I understand that if the person of addiction is a work colleague, for example, then there is often no way to physically avoid them and therefore cutting contact is much more difficult. In this instance, try to keep contact to a bare minimum. Keep emails as short as possible. Answer in mono-syllables. Keep it professional and business-like and offer nothing emotional. Keep your tone one dimensional and keep to the bare basics of communication or exchange.

### ***RULE #6:***

Finally, if both of you are inextricably linked, like in the example above, and communication, for whatever reason, has to continue, then you may want to set up a plan that all communications are via a third person (if you can find a third person willing to help you in this way). This will give you a sense of control, and very soon you will begin to discover how the person of addiction is losing their spell over you. They will cease being able to affect you in the same way. And always remember, the more you don't respond to them, the more the person of addiction will lose interest, as they will feel your strength and know that they can't persuade you any longer – because it was your “attention” that kept them connected to you in the first place.

The reason for sticking rigidly to these 6 rules is so that you can “energetically” clear this person from your life in every way possible. You need to remove their scent, their voice, their look and their presence, because if you don't, the moment you set eyes on them again, you will waver. You will convince yourself that “this time it will be different.”

**It won't.**

**Finally, never forget that your love interest knows everything about you.**

They know your weaknesses, your frailties, your vulnerabilities, your insecurities, your passionate nature, your adoration for them, your obsession to be with them, the fact that you always sacrifice yourself for them, your ability to make THEM feel special, etc.

And when this “supply” is severed, they will do everything they can to recreate your need for them.

Staying strong and resisting their demands will be one of the hardest things you will ever have to do, so whenever you feel like they may be breaking through your defences; whenever you feel as though you're weakening, continue to ask yourself this...

“Do I really want to be with someone at the expense of myself, my health and my sanity?”

“Is love supposed to feel like this?”

**The answer is no.**

You can't heal your heart unless you walk away or change your core belief which for many love addicts, is often the following: “I need to be in a relationship to feel whole and complete”, or “I cannot survive without him or her”. Constantly being rejected and in a state of craving and yearning for love is the most miserable, harrowing, humiliating and helpless feeling of all, but your shattered heart will heal sooner than you think.

All you need to do is give yourself a chance to heal by avoiding the person who breaks your heart every time they walk into your life - or leave you.

Being in love does NOT mean being in emotional pain, and experiencing unreciprocated love, abandonment, love withdrawal and grief every time you are left. The no contact process will give you some time to heal the chronic love withdrawal symptoms, and you will be free to love without all the heartache and rejection you have felt in the past.

*Turn the end of a painful break-up into a whole new chapter by enabling emotional independence and to nurture oneself.*

**--- Helen Mia Harris**

# **Exercise 11**

## **Showing Compassion for Yourself**

Self-compassion, not blaming, hating or berating oneself is a vital step towards a stronger, happier and emotionally healthier you. But sometimes it's difficult to understand where self-doubt and negative self-talk comes from.

The following exercise, used as a therapeutic aid, allows you to begin to understand that often the negative thoughts that hold us back are a natural response to a hurt or upset we had earlier in life.

By working through the following exercise to find your own core negative belief, we can understand that we were only trying to protect ourselves, and now it's time to let go of that mechanism of protection as it no longer helps us, but instead holds us back.

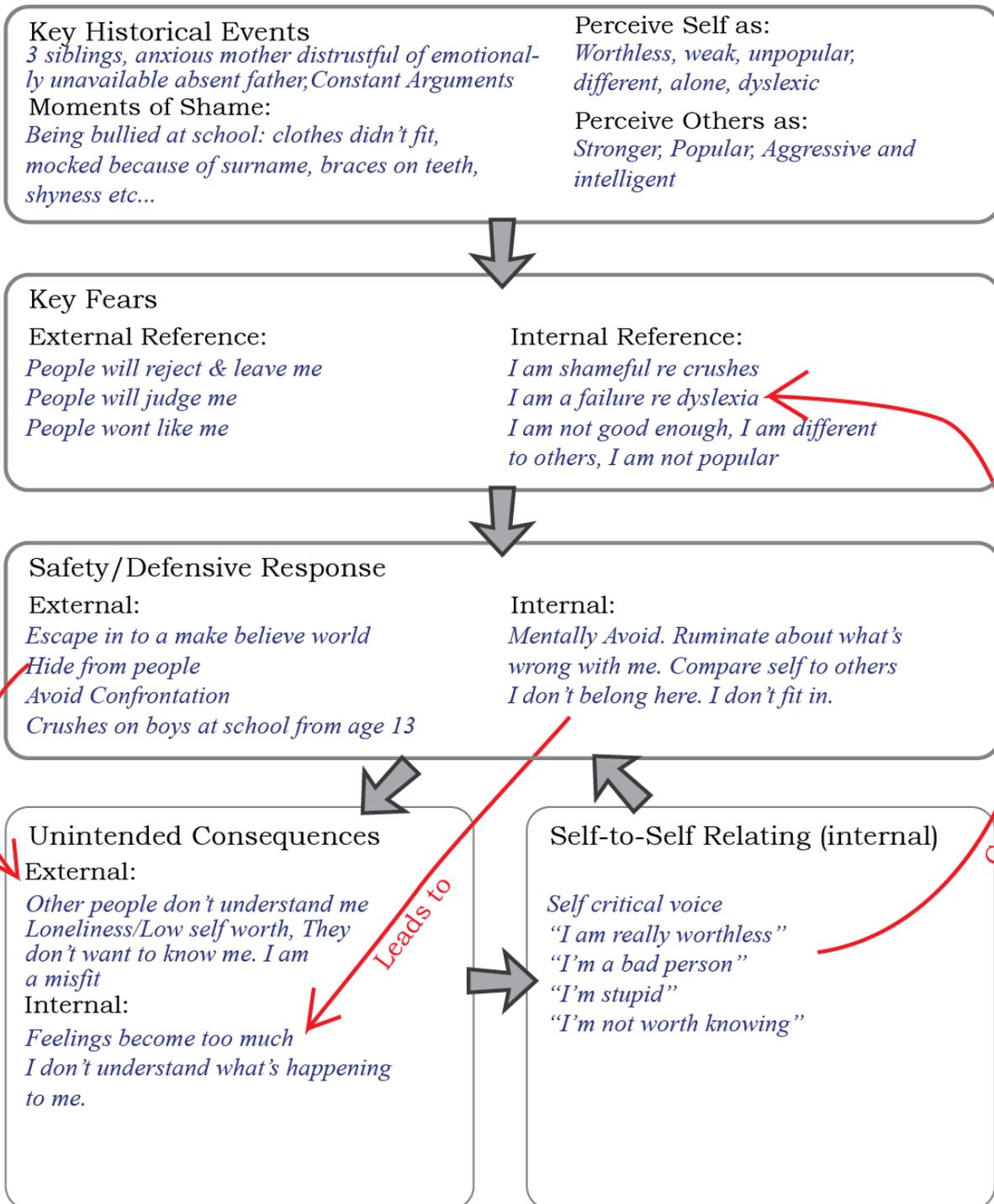
To make the exercise easier to understand I've given a typical/generic example from the early years of a woman who experienced love addiction and anxious attachment. Follow the example through and then complete your own blank sheet for Exercise 11 on the subsequent page.

# Exercise 11: Creating Self Compassion (DEMO)

Understanding how hurts lead to limiting behaviours



“ This is an example of a theoretical person designed to show how when we are hurt we can put in place behaviours to protect ourselves which ultimately may actually hold us back in life. Writing it out helps us break these unhelpful patterns. ”

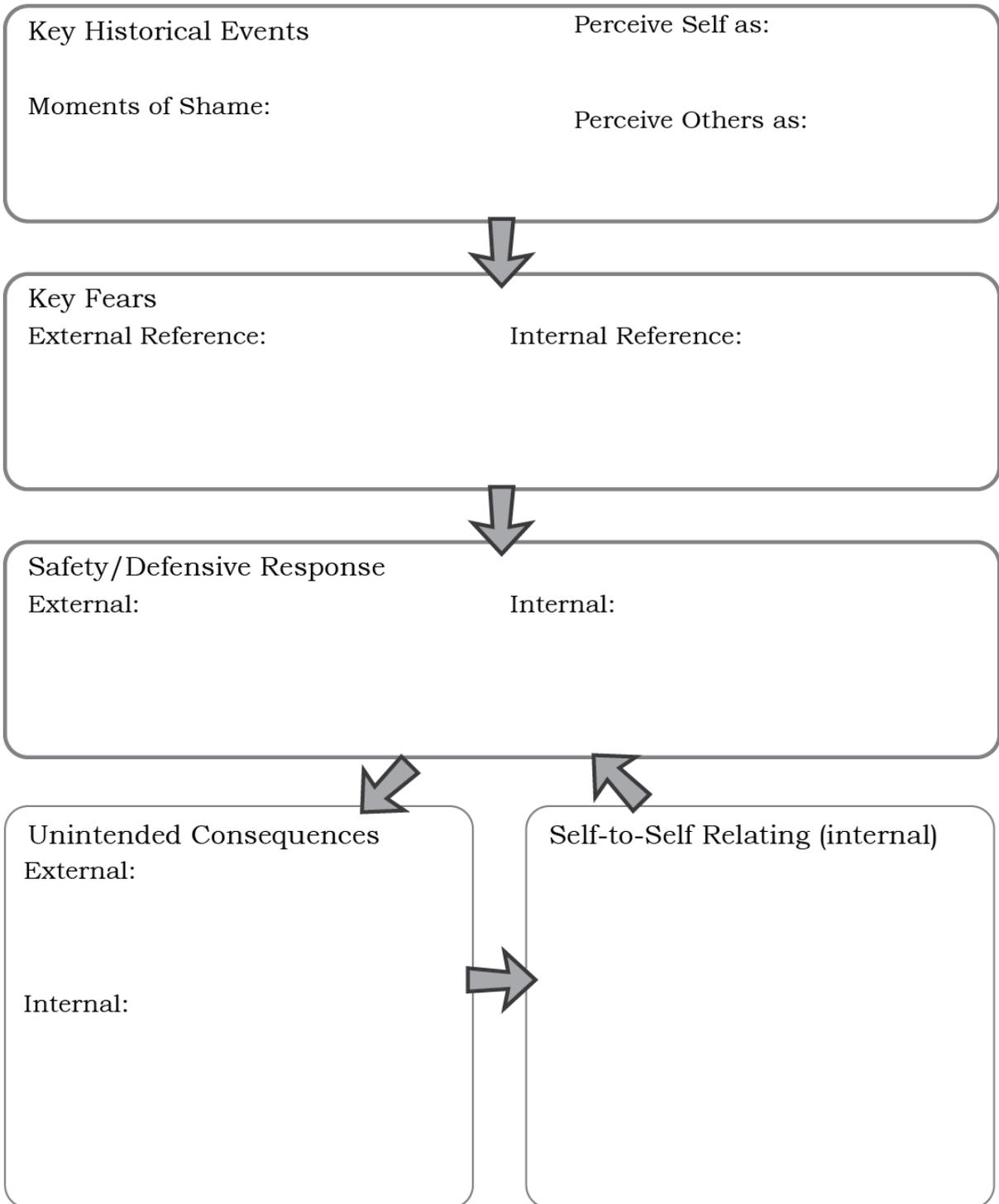


# Exercise 11: Creating Self Compassion

Understanding how hurts lead to limiting behaviours



“ Based on the example on the previous page, write out your own experiences and feel free to annotate it (red lines, like in the demo). Write out your core negative beliefs in the first box and follow the flow down to the end. ”



*It's easy to judge.*

*It's more difficult to understand.*

*Understanding requires compassion, patience and willingness to believe that good heart sometimes choose poor methods.*

*Through judging, we separate.*

*Through understanding we grow.*

**--- Doe Zanta Mata**

I have seen so many amazingly strong, beautiful, powerful and unique women crumble in to a state of devastation, powerlessness, and love withdrawal, with such a hungry yearning burning inside over a breakup.

Yet no matter how much emotional pain it has caused them, the only thing that will ease their despair and internal torment is to have that person back, whatever the consequences may be to their own health, spiritual and psychological wellbeing.

The end of a relationship, divorce, or separation, even an unrequited love is literally unbearable, when all sense of identity is shattered.

They become helpless and weak, without the strength to hold a daily routine together. Many feel that their life is not worth living because they have fallen so low into a state of grief, panic, despair, anxiety and sadness because the beloved has either disappeared, left, or is still with them; “there but not there”.

They sense deep in their soul that it is over, the beloved no longer wants to stay and the anxious self-deprecating thoughts flood through their body and soul; “I’m not good enough, pretty enough, lovable enough, wanted enough”. STOP here, and ask yourself how true this is. It ‘feels’ true I’m sure, but you have the power inside you to

interrupt those negative thoughts.

## **The Secret Power Word**

I'd like to share with you a powerful and yet simple trick I have taught many clients to use in order to interrupt themselves whenever they are experiencing negative thoughts. Whenever they find themselves thinking or saying something internally which was negative, they would simply say the following powerful phrase, and they would say it with energy and a tone of surprise!

***“REALLY?!”***

For example, if they were thinking to themselves “*I am unlovable*” then they would hear this surprised, questioning and friendly voice say; “*REALLY?*”.

Go on, try it yourself. Its surprising how one simple word can literally challenge and interrupt negative self-talk. I've already discussed the Rubber Band Technique, which works really well in this context too.

Now gently take that warm duvet you have been hiding underneath away from your dear face, and read out loud to yourself:

- “I am good enough and vow to never berate myself for someone’s fear of closeness or need for space and distance”
- “This is not just about me. I must always be mindful not to make myself responsible for a person’s psychological, spiritual and emotional anxieties”
- “Self-generosity, love and fulfilment secures me and heals any discord or limited thinking”
- “If my love has chosen to leave me it does not mean I will not survive without them”
- “If my love has chosen to leave I must not spend time trying to find ways to understand their erratic behaviour and blame myself for their angry outbursts”
- “I am in control of my life right now and I will survive this loss!”
- “I need to know deep in my soul that this is NOT my fault”
- “I embody and demonstrate balance and compassion”
- “I may have been too needy, clingy and insecure but it still doesn’t warrant this level of cruelty and rejection”
- “If I am rejected it means that a greater abundance of rightness and truth will come to me”
- “I will find solace in solitude and welcome spending some time alone, being alone does not equal emptiness and more sorrow, but will transform my life into a positive experience of autonomy and peace”
- “What has gone before now is dissolved and not a part of today, I must keep affirming this to myself daily”

- “I deserve and accept the best in all that I can give to others”
- “I am not responsible for his/her acute reaction to my emotional pain; that is something in his/her background that triggers such a pressurising and crawl response”
- “My life is full of limitless possibilities for good”
- “I cannot be his/her teacher, rescuer, therapist, counsellor or mentor; he/she has to take responsibility for themselves. It is not my fault they have such huge issues about feeling trapped and confined,” although I have spent years really empathising with him/her.
- “I love and appreciate myself”
- “I know how our anxious vs. avoidant attachment styles work now, so I will always feel much freer, and most of all, understand how we have made up a little time bomb between us!”
- “I am empowered to express myself, to appreciate myself and to accept myself unconditionally”
- “If someone cannot reciprocate my love, I must leave with dignity”
- “If someone cannot reciprocate my love, that does NOT mean I am unlovable”
- “I am happy and complete today and forever and if I can get through this, anything is possible”

Perhaps one or more of these really stood out for you and resonated with you, and perhaps you have your own positive affirmations.

Use the space below to write out the affirmations from the pages before (or your own) that really empower you and repeat them every day. I recommend writing them on a piece of paper and leaving copies in your bathroom, bedroom, on the fridge door, etc., repeating them with all of your heart and soul, regularly and honestly.



Right now I am asking you, all you beautiful, powerful and unique people out there to lift your dear wounded heart up above and outside of your duvet, draw open the curtains and say to yourself: “it is NOT my fault”, “it is okay to be passionate and vulnerable”, “it is okay to love so entirely”, “it is okay to have a truly intense and passionate heart”, “it is okay to wear my heart on my sleeve, and if someone can NOT reciprocate my love I must leave with dignity, self-respect and inner strength”.

*“THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT THEIR DECISION. IT IS THEIR LOSS, AND IT DOES NOT MEAN THAT I AM UNLOVABLE AND NOT WORTHY OF HEALTHY, RECIPROCATED LOVE.”*

*“I thank all those that have hurt me in the past; they have taught me that pain is not an excuse to quit the fight.”*

--- Paulo Coelho

## **Attaining Solitude and Emotional Freedom**

*“Believe in a love that is being stored up for you like an inheritance, and have faith that in this love there is a strength and a blessing so large that you can travel as far as you wish without having to step outside it.”*

--- Rainer Maria Rilke, **Letters to a Young Poet**

## **Three Ways to Defeat Love Withdrawal**

When a relationship ends, the love addict is plunged into love withdrawal, a state not dissimilar to coming off a drug, because in essence, that's exactly what it is.

Here are 3 ways to defeat love withdrawal and come out the other side stronger, and more emotionally independent.

### **1. Forgive yourself if you are stuck in self-blame cycle**

It is not your fault. You are good enough as you are, and just because he or she didn't return your love, it doesn't mean that you are not a lovable and worthy person. You are.

Remember, when we fear losing someone or something, it is usually to do with our own lack of self-worth and a false belief that we are not lovable, not validated and not worthy, and therefore why would anyone want to have a relationship with us?

### **2. Focus on self-care and self-generosity**

Many of my clients ask me; "but what do I do about the pain I'm in? How do I survive it, because I can't live like this?"

Many of these people are going "cold turkey", so to speak. They are in the midst of dealing with intense withdrawal symptoms, and literally can't get out of bed.

They may stop eating, stop exercising, and even stop going to work. The grief, loss

and overwhelming sadness that consumes them is akin to a light being switched off in their life.

And the answer I always give is that they absolutely **MUST** focus on self-care and self-generosity.

You need to concentrate on becoming **YOU** once again, as this is the only way you will ever break the chains that are keeping you locked to the beloved. People who lose themselves in their relationships find it difficult to recognise their own needs and honour their own authenticity and the direction their life is going in.

Activities and hobbies like Yoga, Pilates, Tai chi, walking, running, swimming, and general forms of exercise are crucial.

Eating good healthy food that's nutritious for your body and soul is vital too; as are things like meditation, massage, homeopathy, alternative therapies, and of course, reading everything you can about your addiction in order to find a sense of purpose and meaning in yourself (many lose themselves in the love relationship to fill the emptiness they feel within).

### **3. Give yourself solitude**

Last but not least, the most important and valuable thing to do for yourself is to embrace solitude and quietness. Try to do four things a day which are specifically geared towards boosting your emotional, physical, spiritual and mental wellbeing.

This may include the following:

**Physical:** a walk in the park, exercise, palates or some yoga. Make a dedicated list of

things you can do to self-heal and remember to be as mindful as possible. Make your home your place of solitude; your sanctuary whereby you can be yourself. And most of all, remember to buy a journal and write down your heart-felt feelings. This will bring things to the service so that you can better understand what's happening, and what you need to do take back control. Writing heals, without a doubt!

**Emotional:** Write in your journal anything that is churning over about the love interest; write an unsent letter expressing things that have been left unsaid, but don't send it!

**Mental:** take a subject that has been preoccupying your recovery and brainstorm it until you begin to make sense of what has happened. If you are experiencing feelings of distress and loss, book a calming massage that will bring you some peace of mind.

**Spiritual:** mindfulness practice, meditation or reading something that brings you a sense of meaning and purpose. Read something that gives you a sense of self experience; something you totally identify with, and rings true for your own soul.

### ***A Guided Visualisation***

Let me walk you through a guided visualization, which is all about solitude and stillness.

The purpose of this guided journey is that many feel so alone at this time of loss and love withdrawal and can feel frightened, sorrowful, and sad, alienated from life. It is as if the world and everything around you feels barren and empty, made worse by the fact that this profound, fearful and depressive mood will go on forever and ever. I know you won't believe me, but it won't. It won't go on forever.

I believed that it would when this happened to me, and that thought alone scared me to death; this was the most significant fear. I believed that when he was gone, my life was nothing, there was no future, and there could never be a future again.

Moreover, I was working as a grief counsellor in a medical centre for 2 days a week, and decided not to see any patients.

Being overwhelmingly grief-stricken and so desperately ill, sad and unhappy, I felt like I would have been dishonest, supporting them through their grief when I felt a mere shell of a woman, so I took some time off.

I remember I was in the most beautiful place overlooking the Opera House in Australia with all the boats bobbing up and down under the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Yes, it was an idyllic scene, with the sunshine beaming in through French glass windows that opened up on to my special balcony full of herbs and tropical plants. Yet nothing, absolutely nothing, would release me from the paralysing void and emptiness I felt deep inside my soul.

I mean this with every fibre in my body. My light had gone out, and everything felt dark, oppressive, lonely and empty. The grief was so acute that if any friends or family contacted me, I was too weak to even put an act on, which normally I felt easy to do.

Everyone was concerned at how much weight I had lost, so I made excuses, and told them that they had nothing to worry about.

I remember most of all hiding what had happened from my mum and dad. No matter

what it meant I HAD to hide and conceal it from them as they lived several hours away, and the last thing I wanted was for them to turn up at my door or worry about me. I knew that the only way I would ever survive this devastation was to be completely alone in my own solitude with a handful of friends around me.

Prior to meeting Josh, who led to my emotional downfall, I was an Egyptian and Indian Classical dancer. That's actually how I met him; he watched me performing one day in the audience.

I remember doing the dance of the seven veils and as my eyes made contact with the audience, I immediately caught his eye. From that moment, I was fixated. His eyes seemed to see straight through me, rendering me both vulnerable and elated, yet it was just a glance in a crowded audience.

It was like there was an immediate passion, connection and chemistry.

That's the woman he fell in love with (or should I say, in lust and desire with), yet now, I was a frail emaciated shell of my former self, unable to eat, let alone feel any joy and passion to perform the dance I most loved; a dance, ironically, of female empowerment, dynamism and passion with the most utmost sense of erotic sensuality and autonomous pleasure, grace and joy.

Now, the woman he fell in love with was temporarily nullified, frozen with grief and sadness.

Why am I telling you this?

I say this because I want you to understand why I created this program. I want you to

know that you have my love; support and deep compassion, and I really mean that. If I had someone like myself to support me through this desolation of the heart back in the 80s, perhaps things would have felt much more bearable.

There were therapists around me at that time, but no-one that specialised in love and addiction, or what I now know as an attachment disorder.

*“I don’t want anyone who doesn’t want me.”*

--- Oprah Winfrey

## **Visualization: Surviving a Breakup and Reclaiming Solitude and Solace**

Note: The following visualizations have been adapted from *Four Tricks to Stop Obsessing* by Vikki Stark.

It is deeply important to know that that we actually have more control over our mind and thoughts than we think we do.

Visualisation is a natural power of the imagination; we all are using it each and every day, whether we are aware of it or not. It may help if you speak this visualisation in to a recording device so that you can sit somewhere quietly and follow your own voice which will enable you to go deeper and deeper into your imagination.

To use it, you don’t have to believe in any spiritual or metaphysical ideas. You just need to be willing to regard certain notions as being possible. The only desire that is needed is to believe it can enrich your experience, self-knowledge and enable you to

experience something new and better.

### **Your emotional pain won't last forever.**

**Step 1.** Believe that this emotionally painful phase won't last forever; although you are suffering right now, life won't always be this difficult.

**Step 2 (part A).** I know you feel heartbroken and your sense of self-esteem, self-respect and self-worth has no doubt been damaged, so imagine that you are reaching out and take hold of all the parts of you that have been lost in this break up. If it helps, imagine the person you were before you met the beloved. Now imagine you are holding a metaphoric basket close to your left hand side. Drape it with a coloured cloth of your liking. What is the colour of this cloth? What is the fabric?

Now take your self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect, imagine a shape and a colour, and gently put them back into the basket, one-by-one. Continue to put any unhelpful and obsessive thoughts into the basket.

**Step 2 (part B).** If you find this difficult to imagine, you may want to do an actual physical image of this as well. Make a mind map by drawing a circle in the centre of a large sheet of paper. Inside the circle write the name of the person who has caused you such heartache and despair. Just underneath the name, write the most significant emotion you feel right now in relation to your loss. Brainstorm your thoughts and draw or paint yourself taking back your self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect. For each one, draw a branch leading away from the centre of the circle and tag it with a few words or sentences. Each time your mind drifts to another related feeling, create a second branch coming from the first branch and continue this until every unhelpful and painful emotion you experience is “outside of your circle”.

## **Surrendering to a higher power within yourself**

### ***Reaffirming emotional statements that reflect an authentic emerging sense of self empowerment and individuality***

**Step 3.** Continued from Step 1. When you have either drawn or visualized your metaphoric basket, filled up with your self-worth, self-esteem, self generosity and self-respect, use one of your daily affirmations to reinstate your position in the here and now. Be mindful and conscious of what self-talk affirmations you choose to draw on.

For example:

- “I will not let anyone define who I am”
- “If someone has rejected me, this does not mean I am unlovable”
- “If someone is unhealthy for me, I choose to let them go”
- “If I am going to get through this, which I will, I will have no contact with my ex if s/he calls me”
- “If I love someone and they can not reciprocate my love, I am learning to let go”
- “I will no long search for self approval through you”
- “I will no longer change myself to try and please you for fear That you may leave me”
- “I will never give my power away again to anyone”
- “I am no longer powerless and I am committed to change”

- “I will no longer sentimentalise what we had/have and live in the reality of the hurt it has caused me”
- “If someone does not choose to be with me I must accept that it wasn’t meant to be”
- “I will take time daily for reflection and solitude
- “I will not isolate myself and I will keep in contact with those who support my decision to do this”
- “I release the past and am becoming emotionally free to let go of you”

**Step 4.** As you have created a clear idea and a mental picture of your situation exactly as you want it, take some deep breaths into your abdomen and reaffirm the affirmations you have chosen. Think in the present tense, as if they already exist in exactly the way you want them to be.

Imagine who you are in the present here and now, without any self-deprecating thoughts left over from your loss. Imagine you are shame-free, emotionally free, and take a deep breath. As you exhale, let go of all the stress, anxiety and fear that is keeping you trapped. Now include as many details as you can as you visualise yourself in a picture that is free from emotional pain and torment.

### **A room of one’s own in solitude**

**Step 5.** Make this picture into a house of solace and calm, and whenever you can throughout your day, see yourself sitting in this place for quiet periods. This way it will become an integrated part of your life; somewhere that is peaceful, safe and contained a place where you experience quiet solitude and harmony.

**Step 6.** Make strong, truthful statements to yourself. Even if it doesn't come naturally, try to temporarily suspend any doubts as if you can physically touch this place in your imagination and practice that what you desire is very possible and real. Turn your entire focus away from the past to the future, and visualize how fulfilled you will feel when you have accomplished even one day of feeling emotionally free.

For example, *“I consciously choose not to identify with being a victim”*.

**Step 7.** Imagine that you are taking off a garment that has kept you powerless, helpless and feeling “as if” you are a victim. On the garment you read the words out loud: “I am no longer powerless nor am I helpless.” After this re-write on the garment of your desire: “I need to keep building a life for myself; this will help me recover from the heartbreak and grief.”

### **Sweep away intrusive thoughts**

**Step 8.** Imagine you are wearing your chosen garment with these newly written words on it. Imagine that your mind is a tiny wooden floored room. This room can be part of your new home of solitude and peace, but the wooden floor keeps getting all dusty and muddy with thoughts that are negative and keep returning back to the person that has caused such a rollercoaster of emotions. Now visualise a small one inch-high cleaning lady that is sleeping in the corner of your room. She has an old fashioned twig broom leaning against her chair. When your thoughts drift back in to painful and dangerous territory, wake her up and urge her to “sweep” away those intrusive thoughts. Imagine her working away furiously, cleaning the floor, sweeping away the unwanted cobwebs out of the door and making the place look new, fresh, clean and spic and span.

## **Banish intrusive thoughts**

**Step 9.** This simple but effective visualisation technique helps you separate yourself from intrusive thoughts. I want you to imagine you are walking down the street and you see an angry dog chained up to a fence next to the sidewalk, barking wildly at you. Continue on your way down the street knowing that the racket he's making, which represents the cacophony of thoughts in your head, can't hurt you any longer. It's just noise. Hold your head up and keep on walking as you know he cannot hurt you any longer.

**Step 10.** When you return to your new home, the place where you find peace and solace, step in to your favourite room and put some relaxation music on (not music that reminds you of your past). Shake off the residue of your day, and rotate your arms. Then move your head in a circle each way towards the left and then the right. Now, as if you were a dog that is soaking wet, shake your body and as you do repeat two of your daily affirmations, or this one: "Each moment of each day that goes by, I am getting stronger and stronger and I am beginning to enjoy my own solitude." Keep it going until you feel a quiet sense of peace and solace.

## **Opening yourself to solitude and calm**

**Step 11.** For this visualisation it may be better to get a large sheet of paper. You can use paint, crayons or pencils and picture yourself vigorously painting all those angry, hurt, pent-up thoughts and feelings in strong vibrant colours on a great big wall. You can use your entire body. The purpose of this visualization is to express every single emotion you can, as if everything you have been carrying around in your heart is externalised on to the wall. You can even use words to illustrate and represent these feelings.

Now imagine standing back from the wall and take a long look at the turmoil you

have been in, staring at you from the wall.

Now imagine grabbing a roller, dipping it into a tray of thick white paint and rolling it criss-cross and up and down until the wall is covered all over with a field of pure white.

Now take some time to stand back again and let yourself exhale. Just let go and surround yourself in the pure white peace of solitude and calm, then inhale and breathe in the freshness of clear white.

Exhale and experience yourself in all your innocence finding more and more clarity each day that goes by, and close your eyes and whisper to yourself; “I will keep doing whatever I can each and every day until this separation becomes the beginning of a whole new chapter in my life, and I will become emotionally free and find solace, serenity, autonomy and peace in new beginnings”.

*“I believe that everything happens for a reason. People change so that you can learn to let go, things go wrong so that you appreciate them when they're right, you believe lies so you eventually learn to trust no one but yourself, and sometimes good things fall apart so better things can fall together.”*

**--- Marilyn Monroe**

*“If you bring forth what is within you. What you bring fourth will save you. If you do not bring forth what is within you, what you do not bring fourth will destroy you.”*

**--- The Gospel According to Thomas**

## Love and Other Drugs

Many people have never heard that there are neuro-transmitters called “monoamines” which are a group of naturally occurring chemicals released by our nervous system when we fall in love.

Together they heighten the intensity of love, attraction and passion, creating a euphoric high as if you’ve finally found joy, meaning and completeness.

It is has been said that "one of love’s most important chemicals, Serotonin may actually 'blur' vision and reality”.

This is why it is experienced as if you see the world through "rose tinted glasses", yet its addictive quality is felt as a real “craving” for love specific only to the beloved. You feel blindly besotted and experience a heightened sense of excitement, passion and desire, as if you have found your soul-mate in the mirror of love and wholeness.

This is because when we first fall in love; our bodies release dopamine, norepinephrine, phenylethylamine, oxytocin, adrenaline and serotonin, all of which give you a euphoric high and intense excitability.

So it is not surprising that we lose our entire sense of self and individuality the moment we brush with this ravaging affliction of the heart.

To quote Helen Fisher, a biological anthropologist at Rutgers University:

*"Romantic love is an addiction. My guess is that our modern addictions: nicotine, drugs, sex, gambling, are simply hijacking this ancient brain pathway that evolved*

*millions of years ago, that evolved for romantic love. The brain system evolved to focus your energy on an individual and start the mating process."*

*"You turn into a menace or a pest when you've been rejected."*

*"That's when people stalk or commit suicide... There's a very powerful brain system that has a dramatic effect on your entire life."*

To test her 'love-as-an-addiction' hypothesis, Fisher recruited 15 college-age, heterosexual men and women still raw and reeling from a recent break-up.

On average, the participants had been rejected about two months prior to the study and said they were still in love.

As the participants looked at images of their ex-lovers, the researchers looked at images of the participants' brains.

The parts of the brain that lit up were the same ones associated with cocaine and nicotine addiction, physical pain and distress and attachment. [1]

*"You just crave this person. You're willing to do crazy things, stupid things,"* Fisher said. *"Just as a person would while fighting a drug addiction, a lovelorn person obsesses, craves and distorts reality."*

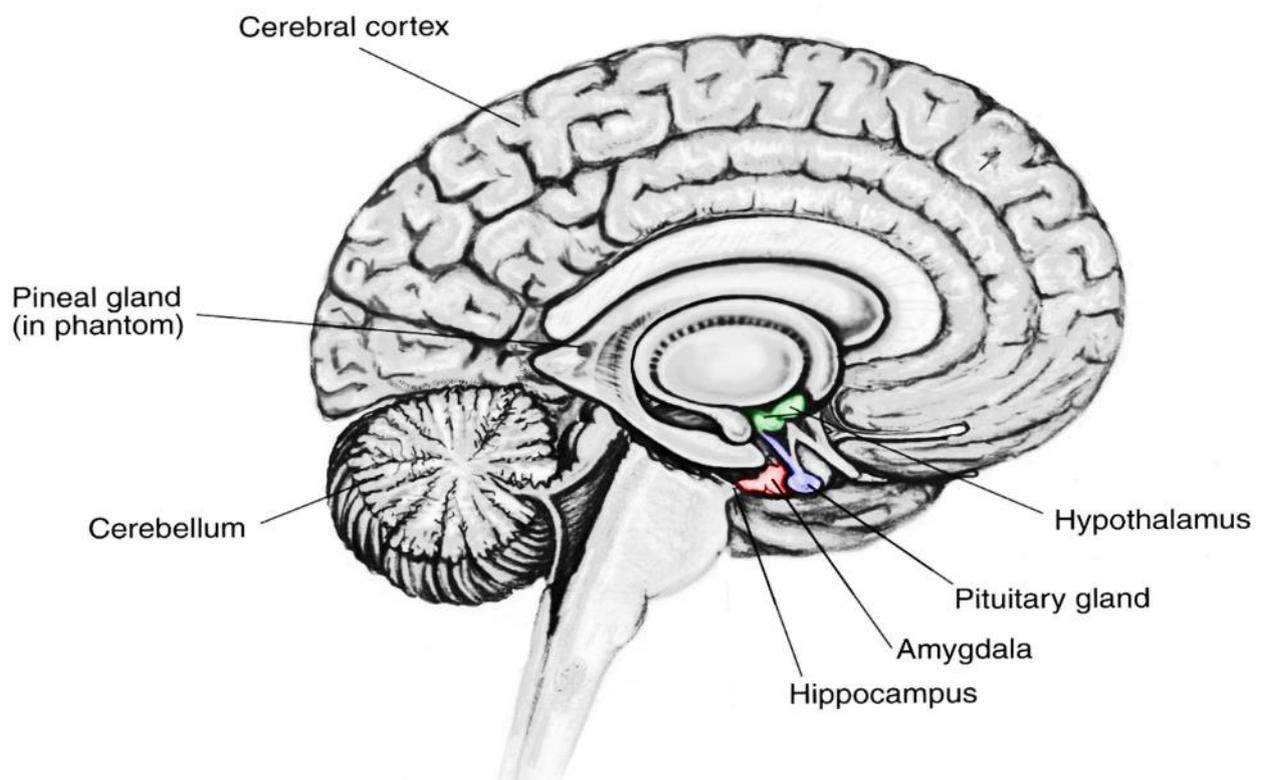
Another article on the subject suggests that anyone 'addicted' to another person is: "literally chasing after the oxytocin produced when engaged in intimacy of any kind with the love object, be it cuddling or sex, to simple acts of proximity and emotional closeness felt between friends or relatives.

When the relationship becomes threatened, when distance is placed between the addicted and the object of addiction, or when the relationship is ended entirely, very real withdrawal symptoms can occur.

His or her body begins to produce cortisol, the very opposite of oxytocin. High levels of cortisol tell the body to react as though there is a mountain lion bearing down ready to attack: preparing it to fight, flee or freeze. This is why we often see people suffering heartbreak react so wildly and irrationally, as though their life is on fire and rather than put it out, they scramble in reaction to the burning.” [2]

**Please Note: If you begin to experience panic attacks, separation anxiety, heart palpitations, profuse clamminess, sweating, fear, dizziness or acute love withdrawal symptoms while attempting to implement any of the strategies outlined in this workbook, it would be wise to consult your GP.**

## **Understanding How Our Brain Chemistry and Emotions are Entwined**



When we perceive a threat or danger it leads to stress and the **amygdala**, which processes emotions, sends distress signals to the **hypothalamus**, the command centre of our brain.

This literally controls and communicates with our whole body and can trigger the well-known “*flight or fight*” response where adrenaline and other hormones are

released to get the body ready for action (to run as fast as possible or fight to defend our life).

Our heart beats faster, blood pressure goes up, our lungs open up and we breathe quicker. Our sight, hearing, and sense of smell are all heightened. Stored energy is released into our bloodstream as sugar ready to fuel our muscles for action.

This powerful brain system works automatically and often without conscious input.

In fact, the process can happen before the more rational part of your brain has figured out why.

Normally, when the more conscious part of the brain has assessed the situation and decided the threat is over, then the parasympathetic nervous system kicks in and applies the brakes. Otherwise you stay in a heightened “revved up” state.

Some people experience difficulties in applying the brakes though, and when the threat is less tangible and more emotional, like fear of abandonment or extreme jealousy, it's often harder for the cognitive mind to step in and apply the brakes at all.

So unless we learn to spot the patterns and become more self-aware (in control of the brake as well as the throttle) then our powerful brain functions can literally run away with us.

Long term stress, and the release of hormones like cortisol can also lead to physical problems, such as loss of bone density, weight gain, muscle wasting, suppressed immune system, higher blood pressure, and also addictions, so the stress caused by an unhealthy relationship or the end of a relationship can actually contribute towards

addictive behaviour, which prevents you from healing and moving on.

But the good news is that your body and brain *does* have an off switch (or more precisely off switches), and there are a host of hormones and brain functions designed to take you into a more healing, calm and relaxed state - the opposite of the stressed out state.

One of these is oxytocin which is secreted into your bloodstream from the pituitary gland and is also sent directly into the brain tissue to interact with other parts of the brain, including the amygdala, thus reducing fear, addiction and increasing trust. [3], [4], [5]

### **But What Can You Do to Reduce Your Stress Causing Cortisol Levels?**

Believe it or not, there are many things you can do right now to reduce stress. The following have been proven to reduce cortisol and stress:

- Eating healthily is a good starting point. With a focus on foods high in Magnesium and Omega-3 [6]
- Dancing and singing
- Painting or drawing
- Listening to soothing music
- Massage therapy
- Laughing and experiencing humour
- Reducing your caffeine intake [7]

- Getting more sleep if you are sleep deprived
- Avoiding further stressful events and environments
- Avoiding fasting or calorie restriction. Do not diet!
- Well known practices like Yoga, Tai Chi, and Meditation are also effective
- Taking a long, slow deep breath, several times regularly

## Is there a cure for Love Addiction?

The answer is yes, but as you've probably discovered, the cure lies within yourself.

You have the resources you need to do this. The cure for an addiction to romantic love and the various things we experience as separation anxiety, rejection, fear of rejection, and abandonment distress, lies in breaking the habit of losing ourselves in love.

We need to be aware of the patterns and no longer give all of our power away in an instant, because we want to save, rescue and adore the significant other, making them more important than our own life, needs and dignity. When you are able to accept that you deserve more, that you need to come first, then you will finally be in a position to adopt a healthier way of loving.

*“Only when we love and accept ourselves on a deep level, is our heart open to truly give love to another person. When we are not in touch with ourselves we try and get love from others. To experience love on a profound level we first need to give love without expectations, demands or desire, because feeling love flow is its own reward.”*

**--- Mark Zaretti, Meditation Guide**

## **Eight Practical Tips to Help You Break Free**

- 1. Do something you are passionate about.** Choose something that gives your life meaning and purpose. Remember, this has happened to you as you have “projected” all that you are, and all your passion onto the person of addiction.
- 2. Stop seeking approval and validation from others.** Remember, it is only YOU who can accomplish this. Self-validation is the only thing that matters.
- 3. Stop “abandoning” yourself in the relationship.** This way you can finally find autonomy and emotional self-reliance.
- 4. Remember that it’s OK to be alone.** If you’ve been stuck in a destructive relationship cycle, it’s BETTER to be alone for a while. And don’t worry; you will survive the pain of romantic love withdrawal.
- 5. Know that you CAN survive without the person of addiction.** Love withdrawal can feel as if a part of your body has been amputated. But believe me, YOU CAN SURVIVE THIS!
- 6. Each day give yourself at least three things to do that will reflect your new-found independence.** Doing this will strengthen your ability to take care of yourself, and build emotional self-reliance.
- 7. Make choices that impact the way you live in a POSITIVE way.** Don’t allow yourself to play the role of victim. Instead, make decisions that reflect your strength as a man or woman.

**8. Surround yourself with a network of people, friends or family that you can turn to and be completely yourself with.** I say this because many people will isolate themselves, which can often cause more distress, and increase feelings of loss and loneliness.

**It is also wise to have face-to-face grief counselling or relationship therapy** as this program is by no means the absolute cure for the acute despair one can experience at this devastating time. Again, if you are experiencing: panic, depression, sleeplessness, loss of appetite, anxiety or separation distress, it is vital that you also make an appointment with your local General Practitioner; this can be coupled by seeing a registered therapist or psychoanalyst in your local area.

*“Just think of the trees: they let the birds perch and fly, with no intention to call them when they come and no longing for their return when they fly away. If people’s hearts can be like the trees, they will not be off the way.”*

**--- Langya Puerto Vallarta**

If you are suffering from this infliction of the heart in love, then it is absolutely crucial that you understand everything you can about WHY you’re experiencing this yearning for the beloved, particularly if the love you have is unreciprocated, or seems impossible to enjoy.

Remember, knowledge is power, and it’s only by understanding the reasons behind your relationship problems that you will find the strength and courage to turn the corner, so you can start enjoying a healthy, stable and secure relationship, free from heartache and emotional pain.

**And please don’t worry, you are not alone!**

By now I have shown you different ways to break these patterns, recognise their causes and rediscover yourself, whether you are currently in a relationship or not. You will learn how to love completely generously and wholeheartedly by still retaining a fundamental connection to your internal self, so that you no longer look for your completeness and wholeness in the other.

Now, I want you to temporarily suspend the limited belief or psychological label you are a “love addict” or “co-dependent.” Both of these statements internally suggest that you will always be like this; you will never find the love and support you need, and will always remain powerless in relationships.

This is NOT the case.

Self-empowerment is the foundation of love, not fear and anxiety. So empowering beliefs will help you to break through these restraints and use your rational mind to counteract limiting beliefs about yourself and develop your ability to attach yourself to joy, expand your aspirations, passion, strengths, and most of all, find a sense of purpose and meaning to live side by side with.

Ok, it's time for the next exercise, and it's important here that you be as honest and truthful with yourself as you can be. When you ask yourself the following questions, try to speak from your rational mind, rather than your emotional heart.

### **Are You Still in Love?**

***“Do you still feel in love with the person you are separated from or going through difficulties with?”***

Now, rather than ask you to describe what that yearning and longing feels like, I will ask you a number of questions to allow you to look at the situation more objectively.

**Question: What was/is missing for you?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like graphic is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What did/does the relationship lack?** Rather than explaining “how” you felt rejected and abandoned, describe it from an objective point of view:

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**Question: What were/are they like as a person?**

A large rounded rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: Were/are they compassionate?**

A large rounded rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What were/are they like with other people?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: Did/Do you like who they were?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: If you were looking through the eyes of a dear friend what would they see in him or her?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: Did/do you respect them?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: Ask yourself what you really loved/love about this person?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: Ask yourself some of the things that you really didn't/don't like or love about this person?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: Were/are they reliable?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: What do/did they bring to the relationship and was/is it enough for you?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. A small heart rate icon is at the bottom right.

**Question: Did/does it mutually give you what you desire and deserve?**



### **Is Your Relationship Healthy?**

We've already talked about how to identify if you're in an abusive relationship, and if you are, then the questions above will take on a different significance.

There may also be patterns that you begin to notice that run through a number of your past relationships. In some of the case studies, I've already shown how a person can unconsciously choose the same kind of abusive partner again and again, even though it's the wrong kind of partner for them!

Above I talk about abusive, in the sense of emotionally/psychologically. If you are in a **physically** abusive relationship then you **MUST** seek appropriate professional help. Before you can address non-physical abuse you must first remove the threat of physical abuse as a priority. Contact a local support group/ police/ counsellor/ professional as appropriate.

## **Taking Back Your Power**

Internalising the lost parts of you in the mirror of love

I want you now to answer another set of questions which are designed to help you see the many wonderful and inspiring parts of yourself that have been projected onto your loved ones for many years.

This task will both validate and comfort your experience of addiction in love. It will encourage you to see clearly how falling in love has essentially maintained your own sense of powerlessness; how you have projected onto the beloved, leaving you helpless and without a life or soul of your own.

***“Do you still feel in love with the person you are separated from or going through difficulties with?”***

Rather than ask you to describe what that yearning and longing feels like, please list clearly everything about this man or woman.

**Question: What was it about them that you most loved?**



**Question: What special attributes did they bring to your life?**

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**Question: What work did they do?**

A large rounded rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like line is drawn at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: Were they academically accomplished?**

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**Question: What were they passionate about?**

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**Question: What did you respect about this person?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like symbol is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: How did they contribute to society?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like symbol is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What was it about their face, scent, voice and look that you admired?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like graphic is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What positive personality traits did they have?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like graphic is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: Were they introverted, extroverted, shy, quiet and reserved, passionate, charismatic or popular?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. At the bottom right corner, there is a small, faint heart icon.

**Question: Were they successful? If so, how and why?**



A large rounded rectangular box with horizontal lines for writing. At the bottom right corner, there is a small, faint heart icon.

**Question: Were they intuitive, perceptive and attentive?**

Lined writing area with a small graphic at the bottom right.

**Question: What spiritual, philosophical, religious or cultural values did they aspire to, if any?**

Lined writing area with a small graphic at the bottom right.

**Question: Were they financially successful? Did they enjoy their work?**

Handwriting practice area with 12 horizontal lines and a small graphic of a heartbeat at the bottom right.

**Question: Were they passionate about life and did they have dreams and goals for the future?**

Handwriting practice area with 12 horizontal lines and a small graphic of a heartbeat at the bottom right.

**Question: Were they a teacher, a professor or in a profession geared towards 'helping' people?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small, faint ECG-like graphic is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What was it about this person you most admired?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small, faint ECG-like graphic is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What activities, work or life accomplishments did you most admire?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like symbol is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

**Question: What was it about this person’s soul and spirit that drew you to feel so connected to them?**

A large rectangular box with rounded corners, containing ten horizontal lines for writing. A small ECG-like symbol is located at the bottom right corner of the box.

After completing this exercise please sit quietly in your imaginary room we previously spoke of. Now draw your (ex) relationship into your consciousness and sit quietly.

Notice what comes up and when you are ready, paint, draw or record your experience, expressing everything and anything that occurs to you from your “calm rational mind”.

You will be surprised at what might come up. Make a point of writing down the thoughts, memories or ideas that occur.



Remember, love addiction and love withdrawal is very much about the “fantasy” of what you feel.

Fantasy is at the heart of the addiction driving your longing. On some level you may already know that everything you have admired in the beloved is all a part of YOU, because we can only SEE what we already know. This means that it is in you, and that is why you felt that “soul mate” quality.

Now I want you to look through everything you have written, and on each point that seems positive and inspiring, write next to it why and how you identify with these

qualities.

I am saying this because everything you are attracted to in this person, is a part of you. They mirror your passion, dreams, accomplishments, and aspirations.

## **Finding Self-Empowerment and Reclaiming Your Own Voice**

*“If we imagine... the individual as a larger or smaller room, it is obvious that most people come to know only one corner of their room, one spot near the window, one narrow strip on which they keep walking back and forth. In this way they have a certain security.”*

**--- Rainer Maria Rilke**

*“True love is not a feeling by which we are overwhelmed. It is a committed, thoughtful decision.”*

**---M. Scott Peck**

*“I think that surviving the loss of a beloved person when he/she is alive but not with you anymore is a very important experience. There are no words for it, it’s just a reality and it’s painful. And yet, it’s very valuable.”*

**--- Eumeny (Peristy), Abbot**

You are now nearing the end of this workbook and I’m sure it has been a challenging experience, but also (I hope), intensely rewarding, and a time of healing and growth.

You no doubt will have heard of the phrase:

*“Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved before”*

**--- Alfred Lord Tennyson**

Those who are addicted to love would vehemently disagree with this statement, as loss and the grief-like symptoms that accompany this loss can be devastating. But Tennyson wasn’t without experience and knowledge. He was writing this after the loss of a dear friend.

When we are too hungry for love, we find it difficult to bear any sense of distance and separateness. It is intolerable to let our loved one go, even for a moment, for fear of losing them forever. And if that love is withdrawn we feel as if we are falling

apart, unable to make sense of the wreckage.

Within the loving relationship there is bound to be an attachment to the very person who makes us feel so alive in the beginning, rather like "coming home to ourselves".

It can lead to an inability to be alone, self-regulated and self-sufficient; only able to exist in the reflection of the other's image, losing all identity of one's own sense of self.

We circle in a state of light-headed confusion, as if we no longer know where our loved one begins and we end, which brings with it a high level of excitement and happiness, yet can easily be coloured by an anxious thought in the pit of our belly: "please don't let this end".

## **Healing the Wound of Impossible Love**

As you already know, it is so easy to fall deeply into the physical state of 'being in love', and if this love isn't reciprocated, we can find ourselves waiting like a hungry beggar at the door of the beloved. "Will he or she choose me?" we ask.

Our love can seem impossible if we haven't been "chosen" by the beloved. We are left with such a profound sense of sorrow; feeling unwanted, unloved, rebuffed, cast out, excluded – desperately struggling to keep everything that we are from falling apart.

It is as if the burning passion to be with this "one" person is all that exists. But what I am here to say is this...

That “one” person may not be in alignment with your love, and what your body, mind and soul needs to flourish, and be truly happy.

It may have had the “appearance” of a shared mutual love, but just as it was for me with Josh, the more the beloved isn’t present with you; the more withdrawn they are; and the more unavailable and absent, the more you feel utterly diminished, powerless and worthless.

Some may be faced with the beloved wanting to change the “title” of the relationship to create a boundary between them. For example, “can we just be friends?”, “can we just see each other with no pressure”, or “I do love you, but I’m not in love with you”, which can often be even more humiliating.

I know more than anything in my heart and soul, that from early childhood and through adolescence and adulthood, each and every one of us need to be around people who are life affirming, who like us, who validate us, appreciate us, empathise with us, and vice versa. Unfortunately, if someone feels pressured or confined by our needs and wants, they simply cannot provide us with the warmth and love we require to build positive and emotionally secure attachment bonds.

Ironically, I have heard many people say the following: “If I knew we were secure together, I would be really independent. I’d feel safe but he/she just won’t give me any sense of certainty, I don’t know where I am”.

This was the same for me. I used to be so strong and fiercely independent prior to meeting Josh, yet as we grew closer together, our connection turned in to something truly destabilising and shattering; an impossible and unrequited love. I was not the chosen one. This feeling wasn’t mutual.

When I was able to accurately “see” this, I knew with the greatest reluctance imaginable that I would “have” to let him go.

So in conclusion, perhaps this burning passion of unrequited love teaches us to have a deeper connection to our own truth and authenticity.

It teaches us that we have choice.

And this word, **choice**, sits at the bedrock of the love relationship.

We cannot make someone “choose” us. But we CAN choose ourselves.

*“Since her first grief had brought her fully to birth and wakefulness in this world, an unstinting compassion had moved in her, like a live stream flowing deep underground, by which she knew herself and others and the world.”*

**---Wendell Berry**

## **Meditation for Healing After Heartbreak**

Finally, I'd like you to find yourself a quiet, tranquil place. Close your eyes and gently inhale and exhale. As you do, experience yourself becoming lighter as if you are falling deeper and deeper into a weightless, uninterrupted trance-like state. You may want to record your own voice so that you can play it back every time you wish to do this meditation, hearing your own voice will deepen this exercise.

Right at this very moment, imagine yourself fully healed and contented.

Imagine yourself feeling and looking how you did before your heartbreak. Imagine your heart breaking open and expanding with love and generosity. Picture all the painful, sad and negative thoughts and emotions unfolding and drifting away, far away. Above you, imagine clouds enveloping your former partner.

Now imagine an umbilical cord that kept you and the beloved tied together, severing. Let them go, release them, and as you do, breathe deeply and slowly. And as you let them go, if you can, wish them well.

As you do this you will discover the most profound strength that you never believed existed.

As these thoughts drift away, imagine your heart embracing everything that your entire life was meant to be. As your heart is opening, expanding more and more, imagine yourself experiencing a deep sense of warmth, solace and peace.

In this very moment, create a space to wholeheartedly allow love back into your life again; a love that is mutual and life affirming.

As you feel this opening of your heart, you will experience an infinite and universal love, a powerful life force of your own. Self-acceptance and self-generosity will always surround you now, with a love that is safe and reliable. You are comforted and begin to know that this 'break' had to happen so that you could begin to experience the fullness of life flowing through you each and every day.

You have become more and more self-aware and through this grieving process you have discovered that there is strength within you that you never ever believed you had. You are now beginning to heal the wounds, and create a safe, internal sanctuary for a new self to emerge.

*“We all have flashes of awareness in which we realize that who we are in all our smallness has to break apart in order for a new self to emerge....I’ve learned that it is only when we are willing to give up the fragile hold we have on our illusions and come apart that we can begin to see the truth, surrender, and begin anew.”*

**--- Baron Baptiste**

*“I said to my soul, be still and wait without hope, for hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love, for love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith, but the faith and the love are all in the waiting. Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought: So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.”*

**--- T.S. Elliot**

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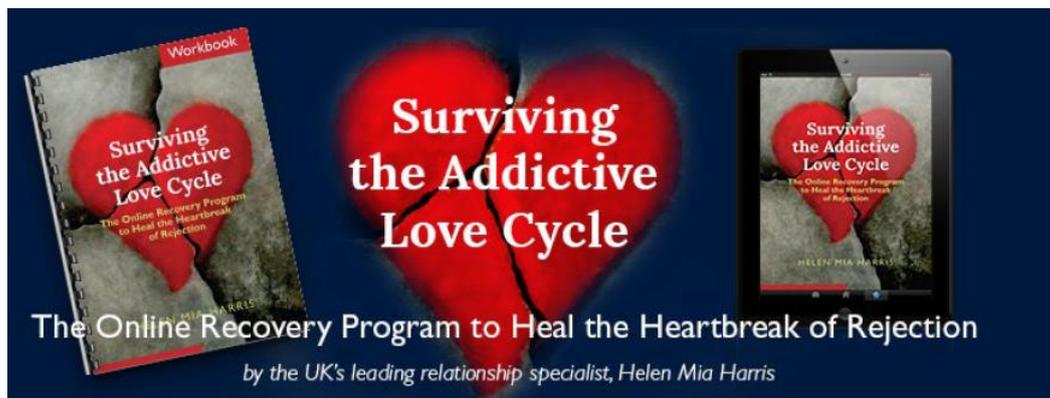
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## Surviving the Addictive Love Cycle online program



This self-help workbook can be used as a standalone personal development program. It was written to accompany Helen Mia Harris' online Love Addiction Program which you can find out about here: [www.lovingtoomuch.com](http://www.lovingtoomuch.com)

