

MARRIED TO A SEX ADDICT



Overview:

Do you feel alone in the struggle of being married to a man who has a sex addiction? Learn some important insights that can empower you to fight for a healthy marriage.

Lessons:

1. Destroy the Lies You Believe About Sex
2. Signs of a Sexual Addiction
3. Steps Toward Health and Healing
4. Building Trust Back in the Marriage



DESTROY THE LIES YOU BELIEVE ABOUT SEX

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TALKING POINTS

Sex was never supposed to be a selfish pursuit seeing your partner as a tool to be used for self gratification.

- It's easy to get confused about what sex is supposed to be when you're married to an addict. Sex isn't supposed to be selfish rather it should be an act of selfless love
- The Bible clearly outlines that sex is about joining two people as one. It's meant to be about creating a bond, not taking from the other to fulfill your own desires. Genesis 2:24
- A sex addiction is a progressive intimacy disorder characterized by increasingly pervasive sexual thoughts and acts that create turmoil and pain.

DISCUSSION

1. *What were your expectations of sex in your marriage based on your family history and your personal history?*
2. *Read Genesis 2:24. What do you think it means to be one with your spouse? Do you feel like you are one with him today? Explain.*
3. *How would you characterize your sex life with your spouse right now- selfish or intimate? Has this changed over time? Explain.*
4. *Does/has your spouse asked you to do things in the bedroom that make you feel uncomfortable? Explain.*
5. *Based on the definition provided, do you feel like your spouse has a sex addiction? Explain.*
6. *What do you think of the idea that a sex addiction is an issue in your spouse which has nothing to do with you? How can understanding this help you?*
7. *Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. Women often struggle with not being 'enough' to satisfy their spouse (due to weight issues, body image, comparisons, etc.), Do you believe that only God can show us our identity and our worth? Explain.*

COMMON SIGNS OF A SEX ADDICTION

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TALKING POINTS

If you want to know if your spouse is an addict, look for these signs.

- The first common sign to look out for is “off” sexual encounters. If it makes you feel uncomfortable, it’s probably a red flag.
- Addicts often isolate themselves because they know what they’re doing is wrong. They will go to places where they can hide to do what they want.
- It’s common for a sex addict to normalize their behavior. They will make their spouse feel like they're overreacting and that everything is just fine. 1 Corinthians 7:2

DISCUSSION

1. *What are some behaviors you’ve noticed in your spouse that are making you suspicious?*
2. *Do you feel guilty even wanting to bring up suspicious behavior? Explain.*
3. *Have you ever confronted him on any of these things in the past? How did he respond?*
4. *Read 1 Corinthians 7:2. How has your spouse brought other women into your marriage? Have you noticed his performance has changed in the bedroom? Explain.*
5. *What does your spouse say to you trying to convince you that his sexual behaviors are normal?*
6. *How do you feel when your spouse tries to normalize his behaviors?*
7. *In what ways have you been minimizing the addictive behaviors in your spouse?*
8. *How do you currently feel about the state of your marriage? What might need to change to make you feel more optimistic?*

STEPS TOWARD HEALTH AND HEALING

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TALKING POINTS

There is hope for you if you're married to a sex addict. As with any struggle, it starts with honesty, ownership and solutions.

- Confront your spouse. Secrets keep us sick, so not being honest about it is only perpetuating the problem. Confrontation is uncomfortable, but it's the best way to reach healing.
- Set boundaries. It's okay to take a time out and process things apart from each other. These boundaries will look different for everyone, but find space in whatever way you feel you need it. 1 John 1:6-7
- Find a support system. Seeking out counselors, recovery groups, and mentors for both of you is a key step in finding healing in your marriage.

DISCUSSION

1. *Share how you've tried to confront your spouse in the past regarding his addiction. What usually breaks down in the conversation? Do you ever see positive responses? Explain.*
2. *How can you confront your spouse in the least combative way? What are some behaviors you would need to avoid in order to keep the conversation productive?*
3. *What are some of the boundaries you need to put in place to feel safe and to communicate that there is a problem to your spouse? What will be the hardest part of holding to those boundaries?*
4. *Read 1 John 1:6-7. What does this passage say about darkness and fellowship with God and others? How can talking about these issues in honest ways benefit you and your marriage?*
5. *What resources are available to you and your spouse to help with the issues surrounding sex addiction?*
6. *What are some of the issues you personally need to deal with in counseling or with a mentor?*
7. *If your spouse is still unwilling to acknowledge their issue, what do you do to protect yourself?*

BUILDING TRUST BACK IN THE MARRAIGE

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TALKING POINTS

Once your spouse acknowledges their addiction and seeks treatment, then you can start building trust back into the foundation of your marriage.

- You will respond with trust when you see trustworthy actions in your spouse. In order to build trust, there needs to be full disclosure.
- Suspicion prevents connectedness, and playing detective will only make building trust harder. (Read more about this in the book *Shattered Vows* by Debra Laaser).
- Find ways to have productive conversations and affirm each other. Present your needs and take ownership over the things you need to do better.
- Forgiveness is a big piece in trust, and it's something you choose to do. You have to give your spouse the chance to redeem themselves. Colossians 3:12-13

DISCUSSION

1. *Share your thoughts regarding the definition of trust. Have you given trust to your spouse or others when they didn't deserve it in the past? What happened?*
2. *How have you struggled with trusting your spouse lately?*
3. *How confident do you feel that you know the whole story behind your spouse's past struggles? Explain.*
4. *What are some specific behaviors you need to see exhibited in your husband's life to know that he is fighting his addiction?*
5. *How could having conversations that incorporate affirmation, needs, ownership and sobriety help you grow trust in your marriage?*
6. *How could praying with your spouse help to build trust?*
7. *Read Colossians 3:12-13. Why is forgiveness an important part of healing and building trust? What is likely to happen if you hold on to your hurts instead of working through them?*

