

## **SPIRITUAL RECOVERY**

Spiritual recovery for the sexual compulsive is rarely a smooth gracefully assured process. Feeling uncertain, disoriented, agitated, unprotected and just plain stumped can be expected. Sexual compulsives often feel this way, especially when we are making progress with our greatest difficulties. Our most painful experiences in recovery often entail the shock of vulnerability as our protective masks of obsession are stripped from us. We experience the panic, the suppressed rage and the sense of helplessness, which had compelled us into our cycle. Most frightening of all, they can make us feel stuck in our past.

The roots of our anger, fear and heartache run deep into the earliest layers of our soul's experience. In recovery, as we begin to make the necessary mental, spiritual, and emotional connections, and as our perception opens up to reality, it hurts. But we find ourselves changing in ways that were unthinkable before. The distorted self-image which we formed begins to be challenged daily. Owning up to this past, to these distortions and to the damage that we have all undergone, seems fundamentally to be a process of grieving and letting go.

It is painful to admit how far our lives had been beyond our control. It may seem that it would be easier not to feel at all. We may blame ourselves for our powerlessness, pain and uncertainty, making one last attempt to preserve the hope that, if we "just try hard enough", we will finally be loved. The wish that our every move ought now be a clear step forward, permitting ourselves no further human error, may become a cruel expectation. We all find ourselves, whether we welcome it or not, stubbornly refusing to conform with what we supposedly *should* need or *should* feel.

After a while, we do become more comfortable in our emergence as emotional, occasionally somewhat difficult individuals. And we can take considerable satisfaction in our increasing integrity. Still we may find our emotional landscape in glorious disarray. This is all quite normal for us. Contact with one another can offer the crucial help at these times. It takes courage to reach out, as we are sometimes apt to feel that we have nothing to share but our hurt and our shame; it is tempting to go backwards. But please pick up the telephone or come to a meeting. It often turns out that the deeper our immediate difficulty, the more SCAs we can connect with.

Now we must cease to deny the horrors, which we are leaving behind us as a necessary step toward regaining our own identities. Your spiritual recovery may not be comfortable or controllable, but it is yours, it is undeniably real, and you are certainly not alone.

(Author Unknown)