



Dr. Saum Yermian, Psy. D.
Life, Career, Relationship Coaching

Dr. Saum Yermian is a professional Life, Career, Relationship Coach with a doctorate degree of psychology. He has devoted himself to understanding the complex dimensions of personal growth, career development, and relationships. Dr. Saum provides affordable counseling on a sliding scale in his private practice in his Downtown Los Angeles Office. Dr. Saum's practice covers a wide range of issues pertaining, but not limited to: personal and interpersonal conflict, relationships, depression, anxiety, addiction, marriage problems, career conflict and confusion, communication skills, sexuality, and grief and loss.

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Dr. Saum Offers:

- Individual and Couples Counseling helping heal damage relationships
- Confidential, No Obligation
- Candid Advice and guidance
- Non-Judgmental and Respectful
- Free Consultation and Treatment Plan



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Addictive Relationships

(Why is it so hard to let go?)



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Addictive Relationships

It is often very hard to end a love relationship even when you know it is bad for you. A "bad" relationship is not the kind that is going through the usual periods of disagreement and disenchantment that are inevitable when two separate people come together. A bad relationship is one that involves continual frustration; the relationship seems to have potential but that potential is always just out of reach.

In such relationships, individuals are robbed of several essential freedoms; the freedom to be their best selves in the relationship, the freedom to love the other person through choice rather than through dependency, and the freedom to leave a situation that is destructive.

Despite the pain of these relationships, many rational and practical people find that they are unable to leave, even though they know the relationship is bad for them. One part of them wants out but a seemingly stronger part refuses or feels helpless to take any action. It is in this sense that the relationships are "addictive."

Are You Addicted?

Listed below are several signs of addiction. Consider whether they apply to you:

1. Even though you know the relationship is bad for you (and perhaps others have told you this), you take no effective steps to end it.
2. You give yourself reasons for staying in the relationship that are not really accurate or that are not strong enough to counteract the harmful aspects of the relationship.
3. When you think about ending the relationship, you feel terrible anxiety and fear which make you cling to it even more.
4. When you take steps to end the relationship, you suffer painful withdrawal symptoms, including physical discomfort that is only

relieved by reestablishing contact.

If most of these signs apply to you, you are probably in an addictive relationship and have lost the capacity to direct your own life. To move toward recovery, your first steps must be to recognize that you are "hooked" and then try to understand the basis of your addiction.

Strategies for Overcoming Relationship Addictions

Robin Norwood, in her excellent book "Women Who Love Too Much" outlines a ten step plan for overcoming relationship addiction. While this book is directed toward women, its principles are equally valid for men. Stated here (reordered and sometimes paraphrased), Norwood suggests the following:

1. Make your "recovery" the first priority in your life.
2. Become "selfish," i.e., focus on getting your own needs met more effectively.
3. Courageously face your own problems and shortcomings.
4. Cultivate whatever needs to be developed in yourself, i.e., fill in gaps that have made you feel undeserving or bad about yourself.
5. Learn to stop managing and controlling others; by being more focused on your own needs, you will no longer need to seek security by trying to make others change.
6. Develop your "spiritual" side, i.e., find out what brings you peace and serenity and commit some time, at least half an hour daily, to that endeavor.
7. Learn not to get "hooked" into the games of relationships; avoid dangerous roles you tend to fall into, e.g., "rescuer" (helper), "persecutor" (blamer), "victim" (helpless one).
8. Find a support group of friends who understand.
9. Share with others what you have experienced and learned.
10. Consider getting professional help.

When to Seek Professional Help?

Some counseling may be called for when any of these four circumstances exist:

1. When you are very unhappy in a relationship but are unsure of whether you should accept it as is, make further efforts to improve it, or get out of it.
2. When you have concluded that you should end a relationship, have tried to make yourself end it, but remain stuck.
3. When you suspect that you are staying in a relationship for the wrong reasons, such as feelings of guilt or fear of being alone, and you have been unable to overcome the paralyzing effects of such feelings.
4. When you recognize that you have a pattern of staying in a bad relationship and that you have not been able to change that pattern by yourself.

Resources:

Some books on addictive relationships are:

1. "Women Who Love Too Much." Robin Norwood. Los Angeles, CA: Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc. 1985.
2. "Is It Love or Is It Addiction?" Brenda Schaefer. U.S.A.: Hazelden, 1987.
3. "Love is a Choice." Robert Hemfelt. Nashville, TN: Nelson, Inc 1982.