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SUBJECT: Is my sexual addiction a disease  
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Questions dealing with the first step of the twelve step addiction process. Is my sexual addiction a disease?

To say sex addiction is a disease is to be realistic about what faces me. A disease is an active condition when placed in favorable conditions. When I am depressed, isolated, and self denying, then the compulsion to escape into sexual fantasy is overpowering.

I need to read the illness with the medicine of mindfulness. My role is to limit the conditions that foster the drive to distraction and actively promote healthy mental states. Activities I do every day: First, I need to take my psychological drugs for depression. Two, I need to practice meditation. Three I need to exercise. Four Get enough sleep. Five, socialize with friends. Six, read. Seven, write. and Eight, sing. What I read is important. I should read material that enhances my self awareness every day. I should be carefully with whom I socialize. Some only whine and complain, are cynical and feed the flames of anger and resentment. Maybe some day I can be around these kinds of people and be a calming influence in their lives, but right now I need to focus my energy on healing me.

The way my addiction (disease) exhibits itself is a drive to escape into my head. Being present in the moment meant dealing with emotions and feelings of longing and emptiness. Sexual chat was a wonderful diversion into a never land of gratification. The effects of entering into the distraction is the loss of time. All concerns fade into the background. I could easily spend an entire night or day in front of the computer. Once one session is ended I start a new search for my next partner. One high is never satisfactory. It only wets the thirst for more. The effects on my marriage and work and relationships were measurable. All suffered as I feed my addiction.

Some see the first step in 12-step as very hard. Admitting that your life has become unmanageable. Particularly if you see yourself as in control of your life. I was sure I still had control, even as all the signs were pointing to collapse. My work was subpar and getting worse. My marriage was hollow and unsatisfying. Friendships were in name only. My arrest helped to clarify the situation. I had a problem and I needed to get it fixed. (we can debate whether or not 12 year prison sentence which prevents me from getting professional help until after my sentence is appropriate response by a democratic state at another time).

Another problem I had with the first step is that it seemed to play into the pessimistic victim of my evangelical upbringing (original sin). So using my religious humanist tradition (UU with some Buddhist and Christian elements) and the SAA interpretation of the steps, I began to see the issue could be understood as the problem is bigger than my isolated separate individual self can handle. I need to both connect inward to my core being and outward to others seeking transformation to treat the disease of addiction.

So the first step is another example of taking responsibility. I will acknowledge the suffering my addiction has caused me and my family, then seek to limit those actions that foster the addiction and promote behaviors that strengthen my mental health.

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