

## The Characteristics Most of Us Seem to Have in Common

1. As adolescents, we used fantasy and compulsive masturbation to avoid feelings, and continued this tendency into our adult lives with compulsive sex.
2. Compulsive sex became a drug, which we used to escape from feelings such as anxiety, loneliness, anger and self-hatred, as well as joy.
3. We tended to become immobilized by romantic obsessions. We became addicted to the search for sex and love; as a result, we neglected our lives.
4. We sought oblivion in fantasy and masturbation, and lost ourselves in compulsive sex. Sex became a reward, punishment, distraction and time-killer.
5. Because of our low self-esteem, we used sex to feel validated and complete.
6. We tried to bring intensity and excitement into our lives through sex, but felt ourselves growing steadily emptier.
7. Sex was compartmentalized instead of integrated into our lives as a healthy element.
8. We became addicted to people, and were unable to distinguish among sex, love and affection.
9. We searched for some “magical” quality in others to make us feel complete. Other people were idealized and endowed with a powerful symbolism, which often disappeared after we had sex with them.
10. We were drawn to people who were not available to us, or who would reject or abuse us.
11. We were sexually anorexic: in despair about our lack of physical and emotional intimacy with ourselves and others, yet unaware of how much we feared and avoided it.
12. We feared relationships, but continually searched for them. In a relationship, we feared abandonment and rejection, but out of one, we felt empty and incomplete.
13. While constantly seeking intimacy with another person, we found that the desperate quality of our need made true intimacy with anyone impossible, and we often developed unhealthy dependency relationships that eventually became unbearable.
14. Even when we got the love of another person, it never seemed enough, and we were unable to stop lusting after others.
15. Trying to conceal our dependency demands, we grew more isolated from ourselves, from God and from the very people we longed to be close to.