

Intimacy Anorexia

Based on “Intimacy Anorexia:
Healing the Hidden Addiction in Your Marriage” by Doug Weiss

Definition of Intimacy Anorexia

- ▶ The active withholding of emotional, spiritual and sexual intimacy from the spouse/partner.
- ▶ Active means that there is a choice. There is often clear intention to create pain for the spouse/partner, with the byproduct of the anorexic making himself/herself safe, distant, or in control.

Busy

▶ Being so busy you have little time for your spouse

- ▶ Housework
- ▶ Children
- ▶ Projects
- ▶ Readers
- ▶ Sleep

▶ Technology

- ▶ Social Networking
- ▶ Shopping
- ▶ Chat Rooms
- ▶ Games
- ▶ Porn
- ▶ Gambling
- ▶ Research

Withholding Love

▶ To withhold love is to not give love to your spouse/partner the way you know how to, or how they have asked to be loved.

- ▶ During dating, what meant a lot to your spouse?
- ▶ When your marriage is threatened, what do you do to show that you care?
- ▶ How does your spouse feel your love the most?

Withholding Praise

- ▶ To withhold praise is to not share with your spouse/partner about their positive qualities as a person and their positive impact on your life.
 - ▶ How frequently do you praise your spouse/partner?
 - ▶ How often do you praise your spouse/partner in front of their family/friends/children?
- ▶ Anorexia tends to focus on the flaws of the spouse/partner

Withholding Sex

- ▶ Withholding sex is avoiding having sex, sabotaging sexual encounters, or not connecting emotionally during sex.
 - ▶ During sex, do you close your eyes or look at your partner?
 - ▶ Do you think of other things to do during sex?
 - ▶ Do you fantasize about others or porn during sex?

Withholding Sex

- ▶ Withholding sex is avoiding having sex, sabotaging sexual encounters, or not connecting emotionally during sex.
 - ▶ Do you communicate positively during sex?
 - ▶ Are you silent during sex?
 - ▶ Do you act as if you dread sex?
 - ▶ Do you hurry your spouse to get it over with?
 - ▶ Do you leave your spouse emotionally or physically during sex?
 - ▶ Do you shut your spouse down when talking about sex?

Withholding Spiritually

- ▶ Withholding spiritually is withholding spiritual connectedness with your spouse/partner.
 - ▶ This is NOT about religion, but about connecting on a spiritual level
 - ▶ Note: Until we have that connection for ourselves, we cannot give it or see it in another
 - ▶ Trying to live the St. Francis Prayer

Withholding Spiritually

- ▶ Withholding spiritually is withholding spiritual connectedness with your spouse/partner.
 - ▶ Making a personal conscious contact with HP and maintaining that contact as individuals
 - ▶ Developing a daily spiritual practice together - engaging in prayer and meditation together as well as individuals
 - ▶ Shared musical experience
 - ▶ Shared experience in nature
 - ▶ Shared common interest experience

Withholding Spiritually - The St. Francis Prayer

- ▶ Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console,
to be understood as to understand,
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

Withholding Feelings

- ▶ Being unwilling or unable to share feelings with your spouse/partner.
 - ▶ Sharing of feelings can be scary, difficult, or both for the anorexic
 - ▶ Unwillingness can be intentional
 - ▶ It can legitimately be a skill deficit

Criticism

- ▶ Having ongoing or ungrounded criticism which leads to distance in the marriage/relationship
 - ▶ Low-grade put-downs
 - ▶ Noticing what they do wrong
 - ▶ Regularly pointing out their bad ideas
 - ▶ Ungrounded criticism has little to do with reality
 - ▶ Can be unspoken

Anger/Silence

- ▶ Any use of anger or silence to push away, punish or control the spouse
 - ▶ Anger explosion is often over something minor and is used as a tool to push the spouse/partner away and avoid giving their hearts to them.
 - ▶ Silence can last for days or weeks while living in the same house

Roommate

- ▶ The spouse/partner feels like a roommate rather than a partner

Reactive Intimacy Anorexia

- ▶ Reactive intimacy anorexia is a real thing. Sometimes the spouse is actually reacting to the identified Intimacy Anorexic, and over the years and decades, they now have a very similar pattern indicating Intimacy Anorexia. However, these symptoms are reactive to their spouse's behavior.
- ▶ When this is the case, the reactive Intimacy Anorexic can heal very quickly. This quicker healing time is indicative that they attained their Intimacy Anorexia behavior from their spouse. Therefore, if they are truly Intimacy Anorexic, they will have some of the slower growth patterns towards healing. For example, they will continue to blame their spouse and healing will have an arduous task feeling.

Reactive Intimacy Anorexia

- ▶ Reactive Intimacy Anorexia is exactly that. It is reacting to the Intimacy Anorexia of the spouse. The definition of Reactive Intimacy Anorexia is active withholding of emotional, spiritual, and/or sexual intimacy towards one's spouse as a reaction to the spouse's Intimacy Anorexia.

Healing/Recovering from Intimacy Anorexia

- ▶ Pray - Ask your HP to help you in your recovery today
- ▶ Read - Read recovery literature about Intimacy Anorexia
- ▶ Meetings- Go to meetings - Monday 9 pm eastern
- ▶ Phone Calls - Call a fellow anorexic daily
- ▶ Pray again - Thank HP for a sober day

Affirmations

- ▶ Make a list of affirmations
- ▶ Get into a relaxed position - when you aren't going to go to sleep
- ▶ Relax your body - one part at a time
- ▶ Take your list of affirmations and read them aloud
 - ▶ It's not important to believe the statements
- ▶ Another set of affirmations about your spouse