

Married & Alone



Healing Exercises
for Spouses

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In your hands is the first workbook designed specifically for spouses of intimacy anorexics. Intimacy anorexia is a relationship style that has a negative impact on the spouse. The anorexic almost addictively withholds emotional, spiritual and sexual intimacy from their spouse.

This workbook is designed to help the spouse heal from the impact of their relationship with an intimacy anorexic which may have been experienced over years or decades. The addiction patterns of an alcoholic, gambler, overeater, sex addict or intimacy anorexic have a direct impact on their spouse's life in so many ways. This book will address the impact I have seen over the last thirty plus years of working with the spouse of intimacy anorexics.

The second purpose of this workbook is to expose the reader to techniques or tools to help combat the anorexia in the marriage. Only the anorexic can choose whether to heal or not. You are powerless over this choice but you can better exist in this relationship with the tools presented in this workbook.

I realize your journey is unique and your circumstances may be as well but intimacy anorexia and its impact are not unique. You can feel confident that many of these exercises can help you heal and will assist you in making better choices for yourself as you take this path toward recovery.

Heart to Heart Counseling Center is also available if we can be of assistance to you in your healing journey. My hope is that you heal and learn how better to function in the marriage you find yourself in. Regardless of the choice your spouse makes pertaining to healing, you can choose recovery and the pages ahead can help you with your decision.

Douglas Weiss, Ph.D.



As the spouse of an intimacy anorexic, you may be experiencing a painful lifestyle indeed. The residual of living with an intimacy anorexic as a spouse can be significant, even if you were emotionally healthy when you walked down the aisle.

This workbook can help you with insight, tools and strategies to gain healing for yourself and better combat the anorexic strategies still present in your marriage.

In light of this, you are going to need time set aside daily to do the many exercises in this workbook. These exercises have been proven to work but only if you take the time to do them. This is consistent with the fact that in most areas of life, what you put in to something is also what you get out. You may need to get a Day Timer calendar, put it in your phone or just sit down and have a talk with yourself or your spouse to try to come up with at least 15-30 minutes daily, in order to work on yourself. Fifteen to thirty minutes daily will make a big difference in how long it will take you to experience recovery and healing from the residual of living with an intimacy anorexic.

My Recovery Time:

Sunday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Monday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Tuesday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Wednesday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Thursday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Friday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.
Saturday	_____ a.m.	_____ p.m.



I have talked to many spouses of intimacy anorexics who have prayed at one time or another in their life. Their prayers consisted of, “Oh God, I don’t know what is wrong here!” or “Please help him/her stop... fix this, make this better.” Interesting enough, God does hear these prayers and for some, these prayers have been answered, although not the way they thought they should be answered.

The first thing in the morning, take time out to pray. Prayer, at this point, does not mean that you have to believe in God. It simply means to pray. When the old timers in Alcoholics Anonymous went to their meetings, they didn’t say, “Well if you believe in God, pray.” They said, “Get on your knees and pray.” If you don’t believe in God, imagine a conversation with a grandparent or other relative you love and respect. Say, “God, I don’t believe in You, but I’m supposed to pray. I want to be in recovery today. Would you help me heal today?” From that point on, you can discuss any of your issues that you want to talk to God about. God is able to handle the hurt, anger, fear, anxiety, and any other feelings you have felt that day.

There are some spouses of anorexics who pray regularly. If that is you, then I encourage you to specifically ask God to identify what needs to be healed in you and trust He will guide you in your path of healing from the effects of living with a spouse with intimacy anorexia.



Reading is a great way to learn and grow in many areas of life. As a spouse of an intimacy anorexic, it is good to read what you can on this subject. Currently, there is very little on the subject of intimacy anorexia.

You can incorporate other general readings on marriage, boundaries, codependency (if it is an issue) or any spiritual material that encourages you in your faith.

Daily reading can give you insight that can help you in your day and sometimes help other struggling spouses as well. I encourage you to include reading a little every day.



Calling someone in your recovery group can be liberating and a helpful tool in your recovery. Many of the spouses I have had the privilege of working with report a time, in their relationship with the intimacy anorexic, when they felt alone and isolated from others. These spouses have not been able to talk to anyone about what is going on. No friends or family knew the secrets they kept to themselves. Some of these spouses have moved away from their family and friends because of the intimacy anorexic's behavior, leaving them isolated from family and friends.

Isolation definitely can move a spouse into an emotionally unhealthy state. We often need others to "run things by" to see if our reality is in check. There may be times when red flags in your relationship might not have been ignored if you only had someone to talk to. In recovery, you will need someone to talk to. Ideally, this would be another spouse of an intimacy anorexic who is a member of your support group. In reality, many reading this book will not have these groups in your local area. In this situation, you can:

- ___ Call our office to participate in a therapist led group for spouses of an intimacy anorexics
- ___ Attend ALANON meetings (partners of alcoholics)
- ___ Attend CODA groups (these are for co-dependency)
- ___ Have a close friend walk through this process with you, someone without an agenda for you or your marriage
- ___ Start with an objective therapist who thoroughly understands the issues pertaining to the spouse of an intimacy anorexic

Once you decide how you're going to start and with whom, get started as soon as possible. Phone calls are an Essential part of early recovery. If you are utilizing the support of a group member or friend, I strongly suggest you call daily to check in for the first 90 days. Together we get well; alone we can stay unhealthy.