

Breaking Through Sexual Shame — Part One

From My Personal Orgasm Training Journal

This is part of my personal journal documenting my years-long journey to understand and heal my orgasm difficulty after seeing four sex therapists over more than 30 years. These writings capture my experiences, reflections, and discoveries as I lived them and as I began creating my own path toward healing.

This entry reflects on events beginning in **January 2000**, when I entered Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous.

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Breaking Through Sexual Shame, Part One

Shame is one of those things that if you have it, you know it. It's as simple as that. It is not something that needs much clarification, in my opinion. What it does need is to be broken through, and that is something that takes action.

Having had sexual shame for years, I can personally tell you what it felt like and how it affected me. Looking back, I had two major breakthroughs in facing my sexual shame. The first I will share in this post.

The first breakthrough came when I realized and owned that I had what I called a climax addiction. It was not that I was having pleasurable orgasms and simply wanted more of them. I had experienced pleasurable orgasms before, so I knew they were possible. But much of the time, my body would have an orgasm and I would not experience it as pleasurable or satisfying.

Because I knew a pleasurable orgasm existed somewhere within my range, I kept trying to reach it. If one orgasm did not feel satisfying, I would try again. And then again. The more I tried, the less satisfied I became.

That striving became the addiction. I was not chasing more pleasure; I was repeatedly trying to reach the pleasurable orgasm I knew my body was capable of experiencing. Instead of leaving me fulfilled, the repeated attempts increasingly left me frustrated, empty, and ashamed.

It was January 2000 when I could deny the pattern no longer and chose to take action.

The Palm Reading That Changed Everything

I had gone to a Christmas party about six weeks prior to this particular day and had my palm read at the party. I had just broken up with a guy the day before I had my palm read. I had met this woman, this palm reader, one time before at the same party the prior year and had no contact with her at all, so she knew nothing of my life.

I am not sure if she asked me or if I asked her, but I jokingly said, "Sure, you can read my palm."

Within a very short period of time, I was crying as she was reading my palm. She said, "You just ended a relationship." Check. She was completely right about that.

She said some things about the relationship that I do not recall, other than remembering that I felt through her reading that it was not a healthy relationship for me.

Then she said, "I suggest you go to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA)."

Confronting My Addiction

I was completely shocked by her suggestion. I knew that I had this so-called "addiction in my pocket."

I did not have an addiction where I got drunk and fell on the floor. I did not have a "public" addiction where anyone would ever see me. I had a "private addiction," something that only I knew I did.

This kind of private addiction completely feeds on shame and keeps us isolated. It keeps us returning to the addiction.

My addiction started slowly after I started having sex when I was 19 or so and could not climax with my boyfriend. I taught myself to masturbate and found that my orgasms were sometimes pleasurable and sometimes not.

Because I had experienced pleasurable orgasms, I knew what was possible. When an orgasm did not feel pleasurable or satisfying, I would try to have another, and then another, hoping the next one would feel different. The problem was that the more I did it, the less satisfied I felt, not the other way around.

Seeking Pleasure

Trying to find satisfaction.

Compulsive Behavior

Repeating without fulfillment.

Disappointment

Feeling empty and ashamed.

Isolation

Hiding the behavior from others.

The Cycle of Addiction

Eventually, what it turned into was addiction. If I started, I could not stop. It had me, and shame kept me stuck in the cycle of it.

I asked therapists about it, and one in particular told me it was not sex addiction. I knew it was not normal behavior. How could it be? I knew how it left me feeling, and I knew it was not good for me.

So jump ahead to the year 2000, to that Christmas party. I was 39 years old, so I had engaged in that behavior for just about 20 years. A damn long time.

I processed what that palm reader said to me for about six weeks. And one day in particular, I was able to clearly see my addiction.

It had me.

The Moment of Clarity

I was sitting at my computer in the dining room working on some project, and I must have felt uncomfortable about something. What exactly, I do not know. Perhaps I was not even aware of changes in my emotions and how they affected me.

But this particular day, I felt the pull to go into the bedroom and masturbate—to what is called in SLAA, "act out."

It was clear as day in that moment that I was "addicted."

This thing had me.

It pulled me.

It decided.

Not me.

That was the day I decided to go to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (SLAA).

I learned how not to be addicted to masturbation, and I consistently participated in SLAA for 12 years. I will write about this in another post sometime, as it was a huge accomplishment for me that changed my life.

That was the first level of breaking through my sexual shame.

The next level I will write about in Part Two.