

## Self Compassion, Mindfulness, and Sex Addiction

I have worked with over thousands of men and women who experience sexual addiction and one thing that I know to be true is that we have to take self-loathing out of the equation. This means that I want to work with you to increase the recovery tools so that you will know that when you have "addict thoughts" you can normalize them and stop beating yourself up.

**Just know that these thoughts are an opportunity to make healthier choices.**

In addition to making the right choices, it is important for you to know that this is a process addiction which is going to require some mental acrobats that may at first seem huge but once faithfully practiced will become automatic and normal.

When addicts slip or relapse, I ask them to consider what positives are in the experience that they can garner and learn from so that the next time they will not be traumatized but instead feel and believe that this is a chance to practice new skills. I ask them to intervene when they have "addict thoughts and then imagine that they can take a huge hand and move them away in a kind and compassionate manner. In other words, when the thought occurs, I ask them to visualize what it would be like if when they had the thought to visit a prostitute, or the desire to go and expose themselves, they then used positive self talk to say "this is an addict thought and now I need to move it away and think about something healthy like my kids playing outside or my wife and I walking on the beach."

**When you work on accepting the thought and then moving away from it you will be less likely to be traumatized by it and move towards a more normal life.**

This requires accepting the fact that you are going to have these thoughts. They are normal and unfortunately necessary because the trained your brain to think like this and at the same time you can move them away and go on with your life...without the self loathing and disgust.

Your thoughts will seem less intrusive and actually will effect you less because you're not perseverating about them. The key to good recovery is looking at finding techniques that will actually help you manage this disease and live your life normally as possible. So the next time you have a thought spend five minutes imagining this gentle perhaps higher power moving away your thoughts as you do this notice that your anxiety, anger, and shame has decreased because you are in control, you're accepting this "old addict thought" and you are moving on in your journey of recovery. When you are kind and gentle with yourself you're more likely to follow the recovery tools necessary to manage your sexual addiction and create the life you deserve!