

Is There Happiness in Recovery?

They say that sexual addiction is baffling and may be perhaps the toughest addiction to recover from because of all the triggers in society that may set up a person to succumb to urges and cravings. What I know for sure is sexual addiction recovery starts with total honesty and it is that rigorous honesty that keeps a person living one day at a time and being filled with gratitude. These 2 elements are essential in breaking the denial and maintaining the foundation for good recovery.

What is equally interesting is that these two life skills are also in the formula for happiness. Marci Shimoff in her book *Happy For No Reason* found that there were 3 traits in happy people that were a part of daily functioning.

- Staying in the moment
- Gratitude
- Reframing

These 3 qualities were essential in a person's ability to be happy and make life better. I find these same traits are critical in an addict's recovery. The slogan "One day at a time" keeps sex addicts focused on living in the moment and not ruminating in the past and not fearing about the future. When a sex addict focuses on today they are less likely to become overwhelmed with their sadness about their past or their anxieties about what lies before them. The process of living in the future assists an addict with looking at the present moment which is much more manageable and attainable. It keeps the fear factor down and assists them in realizing that they can only control what happens in the present day.

Having gratitude is a life skill that keeps addicts focused on what is working in one's life. Think about it. Are you more likely to feel better about what is working in your life or what might be your current struggle? Did you know that what you appreciateappreciates? In other words, when you focus on what is working in your life you are less likely to get bogged down with what seems to be the

insurmountable barriers that will keep you having a negative attitude. Recovering addicts manifest the attitude of gratitude because they know that when they are working on recovery; their life is authentic and transparent. Choosing to live in honesty and gratitude brings about freedom that builds self esteem and confidence. Most addicts remember what it was like to hate their impulses, their behaviors and their addiction so recovery means liberation which increases gratitude. No matter where you are in your recovery right now...are you able to list 50 things that you are grateful for? My speculation would be that you are more likely to list gratitude moments as your recovery grows stronger because you appreciate life more because you can appreciate your own personality strengths and accomplishments.

The 3rd factor in happiness and in recovery is being able to reframe your journey.

Reframing is the life skill that allows you to look at your life and ask yourself how did you become stronger and what did you have to learn from it. It takes you out of the victim role and allows you to feel empowered by the lessons that you have learned. This is imperative for the addict who feels much shame about their sexual behaviors and falls into the "I hate myself and I can find nothing redeeming from this horrid, despicable behavior. Well the truth of the matter is that your addiction has taught you how to change your life and live it more authentically! Recovery is a lifelong process of living and when you use your reframing skill you are able to recognize what life has taught you and how far you have come in becoming a genuine person.

You are only as sick as your secrets and you are choosing to no longer live in the chronic lies, deceit and secrecy of addiction. It frees you up to be the person you were meant to be and when this occurs ... you are much more likely to live up to your potential.

So stand up for yourself and live these 3 life skills and thank your addiction for teaching you about true recovery. You are going to live an awesome life in recovery because the real you is going to show up!