

# Subconscious Inadequacy

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# Chapter 1: Shame

In the previous book, we learned that the cuckold fetish forms from 'subconscious inadequacy' - a fear or sense that you're not good enough. The cuckold fetish is a scenario where you're made to feel the most inadequate you could possibly feel. By doing so, you can overcome these feelings and fears.

Some people refer to this deep-rooted inadequacy as 'toxic shame'. That is, shame for no reason, about nothing in particular, simply for being you. Shame about yourself, at a fundamental level. It's the same as subconscious inadequacy. I'll refer to these terms interchangeably, because they're the same thing, worded in different ways.

## **Subconscious Inadequacy = Toxic Shame**

Remember this.

When we phrase it as 'toxic shame', a whole new world opens up where we can compare it to normal shame. Really, toxic shame is just normal shame that has stopped functioning in a healthy way and has started to apply to ourselves. It is shame which has been internalized, transferred from the conscious to the subconscious, and

has become a state of being. And when this happens, **we lose our healthy sense of shame.**

This usually happens in one of two ways: The first is where every bit of shame becomes automatically magnified and internalized. We accept our low status and find ways to cope with it, feeling worthless or subhuman and simply giving up, surrendering to the sense of inadequacy. We start to live an awful life, because the shame is accepted, magnified, and internalized.

The second is where we *suppress* the healthy, conscious shame, block it out, ignore it, push it aside, and deny it. This makes us feel like we can transcend the limits of humanity and be better than everyone else. We start to have delusions of grandeur if shame isn't felt and experienced normally but instead is blocked out and suppressed. And that's very, very bad.

Healthy, conscious shame is a normal human emotion. In fact, conscious shame is *necessary* in being a well-functioning human. We evolved to have it for a reason; it has a purpose.

We feel shame when we make a mistake or act in a way that contradicts our values. Or, more simply, we feel shame when we do something wrong. Shame is there to help us to not make the same mistake twice. It's an unpleasant feeling, and that acts as the deterrent to stop doing the same wrong thing again and again. It makes us feel bad, and so it should, because that's what helps us to

grow into better people. We want to avoid that bad feeling - that's the drive that makes us want to stop making mistakes. Without shame, we would keep making mistakes forever with no drive to stop.

For example, if you're carelessly playing around with a glass, and you drop it and it smashes, you might feel a tiny bit of shame. That's a normal healthy thing to feel; that's going to make you want to be more careful next time. You feel shame because you did something bad. Shame makes you take a long hard look at yourself and be more careful next time.

If we start getting overconfident and carried away, when we make a mistake shame is there to remind us that we have limits. And we do have limits - we all make mistakes. We are not God. We are only human, and to be human is to be limited. It is to be finite, needy, and prone to mistakes. We are not perfect; that is a guaranteed part of being human. Shame keeps us from making mistakes by trying to act more than human, as if we don't make mistakes, as if we're unlimited.

### **Unlimited**

Many people with this fetish have some very good qualities. They may be very intelligent, talented, creative, muscular, rich, successful, unique, funny, or nice. They may have exceptional abilities. They may be able to do things that no-one else can do. It is easy to get

carried away with this. But you're still human. You still make mistakes.

And actually, that feeling of toxic shame is what can drive you to get all of these good things. By going to the gym, earning more money, studying harder, being nicer, or being funnier etc., you can have a sense of control over that subconscious perception. It feels good. So frequently people become obsessed with that good feeling and chase that, getting quite far as a result, driven by that feeling of not being good enough just as you are.

It's driven by toxic shame, and the resulting lack of healthy shame leads to you having no clear limits. You have no boundaries; you fantasize about affecting things that aren't anything to do with you. Perhaps you want to become president despite having no political experience, or become a famous writer without ever having written anything, or make a new scientific discovery out of your sheer unrecognized genius. A lack of shame leads to a lack of limits. When you are unlimited you want all of these things and more; you end up with no clear direction, trying to move in all directions at once, wasting energy on things you cannot change.

Toxic shame - the root of the cuckold fetish - causes a lack of healthy shame. We lose our healthy sense of humanity and either feel sub-human (different from normal people, flawed, defective), or super-human (different in a good way, uniquely intelligent, destined

for greatness), but never human. We lose our healthy sense of shame which keeps us grounded in humanity. Superiority and inferiority are two sides of the same coin.

### **Limits**

There's a movement on the internet called 'NoFap'. It's a huge group of men who abstain from masturbation for as long as possible. They claim a number of benefits to this - increased energy, increased mental clarity, better hormone levels, clearer skin, confidence, etc. When this is used for young single men to give them drive to get a girlfriend, it's surely a positive thing, and these benefits anecdotally seem to be true for most people. As a step to develop greater self-discipline, or to kick yourself out of a rut, it can also be great.

However, for those who consider sexual activity to be an imperfection, a waste of time, or a pointlessly hedonistic activity, it's not a good thing; it's a sign of a lack of healthy shame. Unless they replace masturbation with sex, they deny the fundamentally sexual nature of humanity and their need for sexual expression - they deny their limits and try to transcend them, somehow perpetually wondering why they keep failing.

To have a sex drive is a normal, healthy, human trait, and a fundamental human need. We all have sex drives, and we all need to fulfil our sexual desires. If you don't value pleasure and would



rather spend that time more productively, it doesn't matter. You are limited. To deny that limitation is to *lack healthy shame*.

### **You Are Human**

Often, the problem is not masturbation itself but rather the guilt around masturbation. Coming from toxic shame, which creates a lack of healthy shame, they feel awful about something so simple and inconsequential, and unable to understand why they cannot permanently abstain from sexual pleasure (the answer is because it's a universal human need!).

You will always be driven to masturbate, and that's ok; even if you think it's less than perfect to act that way, *humans are* less than perfect. You will never be a god - you are only human. And your sex drive is one of the most basic human drives along with hunger and thirst. If you attempt to transcend your human needs to reach something 'better', just like carelessly throwing around glasses, at some point you'll fail.

It's like anorexia, but for sex. Denying your sex drive is akin to denying your hunger - it's stupid (and grounded in toxic shame).

It's true that some people need to masturbate less, just as there are people who need to eat less. Masturbation can become an addiction, or it can become an unhealthy obsession and a coping mechanism in times of distress (just like food). Some people need to cut back on the

amount they masturbate (more than once a day for men aged 18+ is worth a deeper investigation).

Some people want to replace masturbation with sex, and that's totally fine - as long as you're making sure that your sexual needs are being fulfilled.

Likewise, it's also true that some people experience short term benefits from 'nofap'. But, to repress and deny your sex drive and feel shame about it is wrong.

Some people attempt to abstain from masturbation in the hopes that their fetish will go away. There is only one study that I'm aware of about this, which found that 'sexual sobriety from masturbation failed to control the pedophilic fantasies of pedophilic clients'.<sup>1 2</sup> So, no, it probably won't remove your fetish.

However, there is anecdotal evidence that abstinence from masturbation makes you more sensitive to softcore stimuli (it makes you horny). Therefore, some people may benefit from masturbating less, to increase their sex drive, so they can channel it into healthier avenues of pleasure. However, trying to *never* masturbate is akin to trying to *remove* your sex drive. It's essentially shaming one of the most basic parts of being human.

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<sup>1</sup> Brown, C. M., Traverso, G., & Federoff, J. P. (1996). Masturbation prohibition in sex offenders: A crossover study. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 25, 397-408. Cited in: Walters, G. D. (1997). The paraphilias: A dialectically informed review of etiology, development, and process. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 4(3), 221-243.

<sup>2</sup> Pedophilia may be different from other fetishes.

Abstinence is ok in order to cultivate a healthy sex life, but not ok if it's used to *deny* a healthy sex life. It's ok to try to masturbate *less*, if masturbation is a problem for you. It's not ok to try to *never* masturbate, and to repress your sexual energy.

### **Healthy Shame**

We feel shame to remind us of our limits. Without shame, we have no limits. This could lead to delusions of grandeur - thinking we can do anything, creating elaborate fictional fantasies of power/success/fame/glory. If we don't know our limits, we have no direction. We'll try to go everywhere at once, resulting in no net movement. We might try to be the jack-of-all-trades, and end up as the master of none. Shame is what tells us our limits, and signals our direction. With healthy shame, we can use our energy more effectively, and not waste ourselves on goals we cannot reach or on things we cannot change.

More importantly, having normal healthy shame lets us know that although we're limited, we're still human. It's ok to be imperfect. Conscious shame is the psychological foundation of humility. Humility is a very beneficial trait in life, so conscious shame is *beneficial*. Conscious shame keeps us grounded. It is a yellow light warning us that we are essentially limited. It is the emotional energy which signals us that we are all imperfect and we make mistakes,

and it stops us from getting carried away into potentially damaging situations.

But when this shame becomes internalized, and when it stops functioning as a normal, healthy, human emotion, it becomes a subconscious sense of inadequacy. Toxic shame is the sense that we are flawed as a human being, that we are fundamentally inadequate. It is no longer an emotion that signals our limits and that we make mistakes, but rather that we *are* the mistake. It becomes a state of being, a core identity. Subconscious shame gives you a sense of worthlessness, a sense of failing and falling short as a human being.

**Conscious shame** tells us we make mistakes. We are imperfect, just like everyone else.

**Toxic shame** tells us we *are* a mistake. We are imperfect, but should be perfect.

And, as before, when this toxic shame exists in the subconscious, it is the cause of this fetish. We eroticize those painful feelings to help us deal with them.

### **Mistakes**

A lot of this centers around how you deal with mistakes. People with healthy self-esteem deal with their mistakes in the same way. They recognize their mistake, without any suggestion that it's due to a deficiency in them; rather, they recognize that everyone makes

mistakes. They don't block it out, hide it, or deny it. They may even draw attention to it, laughing at their own essentially imperfect nature, and then moving on.

However, people with a sense of toxic shame do not acknowledge their mistakes. They try to cover it up, deny it, or blame others. Perhaps in some situations they even might try to make it seem like their mistake was actually on purpose, inventing an elaborate rationale to justify it, so they can escape from the pain of knowing that someone else thinks they're imperfect.

Here's an example from the book 'No More Mr. Nice Guy' by Dr Robert Glover (also a book about toxic shame):

'When my son was nine years old, he accidentally poked some holes in our kitchen table with a ballpoint pen. When he realized what he had done, he immediately showed his mother the damage. Our son had appropriate, healthy shame about his mistake. He knew that his actions had caused damage to the table. He also knew that he had to take responsibility.

Most importantly, he knew he wasn't bad. If I had done the same thing as a child (or even as an adult), I would have had an attack of toxic shame and tried my best to hide or deny what I had done. I would have been convinced someone was going to be angry at me and stop loving me. I would have lived with the secret as well as a constant fear of being found out.'

In my student days, I shared a house with 4 other people. One day, when opening the fridge door in a particularly hurried manner, the handle came off in my hand! The right thing to do would be to admit my mistake, and work out how to fix the handle or get a replacement. But I didn't have appropriate, healthy shame. So instead, I jammed the handle back in where it was, knowing that the next person to open the fridge would then rip it off and I would be free from any wrongdoing, without having to face blame, criticism, or the feeling of shame. Not that my housemates would have been likely to criticize or shame me for such an innocent mistake, (and if they did, they'd be wrong to do so,) but my subconscious perceived that as a possibility.

Toxic shame leads to an avoidance of shaming situations. We will do everything to prevent mistakes. We are unable to accept our mistakes, and need to be perfect. Instead of accepting that we make mistakes, we think we are the mistake. We reject all healthy shame, and cannot feel a healthy sense of being human and having limits.

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## **ACTION: Self-Compassion**

Self-compassion means accepting that you can and will make mistakes, that you're only human and all humans do make mistakes, that you are imperfect and all humans are imperfect. This stops shame from becoming toxic shame; it lets you know it's ok to feel shame. This directly heals the source of the fetish - toxic shame.

Self-compassion means being kind to yourself, accepting that you're only human, everyone suffers, everyone has flaws, and it's ok to not be perfect.

This mindset is something you might struggle with, because if you have unhealthy shame, you won't have this sense of being only human and having limits, and you'll always try to transcend that and be perfect. Others go the opposite way and instead of being more than human, they will be *less* than human; they lack the humanity of healthy shame, and they will live their lives coming from a place of feeling subhuman and worthless.

It's ok to be imperfect. It's ok to have limits. Don't suppress the shame that tells you this. Give yourself some self-compassion.

For best results, do this regularly. I like to express self-compassion daily before bed. I think about in what way I'm being hard on myself,

and then I consciously acknowledge that everyone makes mistakes and everyone is imperfect. It's part of my routine now, and that's the best way to incorporate this into your life. You can write a note to remind yourself and leave it somewhere you'll see every day. Or, set a daily reminder on your phone. Incorporate it into your daily routine and practice it regularly.

Often, the greatest problem is our habit of talking to ourselves. We can be unfairly harsh, always criticizing our own flaws or pushing ourselves to an unreasonable standard of perfection.

Our internal self-talk can be a big problem, but the bigger problem is not even being aware of it. We're not aware of the way that we treat ourselves, because we don't know that there's any other way. When we feel inadequate, we feel as if we are right to be self-critical - as if it is correct. That is because our perspective is formed under the assumption of inadequacy. Perhaps the best thing you can do is offer yourself self-compassion beyond limits; unlimited and unconditional self-compassion. Forgive yourself to what may feel like an unreasonable extent at first (because that is just your perspective).

Whatever you choose, take some time to consciously acknowledge that it's ok to make mistakes and to be imperfect. Be kind to yourself. Pro-actively and intentionally love yourself, unconditionally.

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## What If You Really Are Worthless?

This section is for people who think they are *actually* inadequate.

They say this to me: 'It's all very well telling me I *feel* like I'm worthless, but you don't understand, I really AM worthless! I'm a piece of crap! I'm an awful person! I have no life and no hope! It's more than a feeling - it's true!'

I usually reply with some harsh truths, along the lines of the following:

Firstly, it is probably true. People rarely get things totally wrong, at least not to this extent. So maybe you are a piece of crap. Maybe it's been that way for a while. This is how it can play out in those cases:

Subconscious inadequacy can form in early childhood, so you probably started your first day of school with a deep-rooted sense that you weren't good enough. Perhaps that made you a little less confident, or you didn't try very hard to make friends. You took a quieter role in the background.

That, of course, would make you feel more inadequate, because in a very small way, you *are* more inadequate. You now aren't the popular one, the others aren't treating you like the leader, and perhaps that makes you think that that's your place in life.

This perception of your place in life plays a role in everything, from the way you talk, to the way you carry yourself, to the way you present your appearance. Perhaps as you started puberty, you never made an effort at your appearance - out of a sense of not feeling like there was much point. You didn't feel good enough. You weren't popular enough to have any pressure to keep up your appearance. No-one would shame you for being scruffy, because you weren't in a position where you should be anything else.

That, of course, just reinforced the sense of inadequacy. When you stop making an effort with your appearance, people treat you like you're worth less than you deserve. And you start to treat yourself that way too. That leads to lower confidence perhaps, or lower self-esteem, or lower self-respect, and lower respect from others too, which only makes you feel more inadequate. Your actions make you become more inadequate. When you don't make an effort with your appearance, you become uglier for that period of time, and then people treat you like that, which reinforces your self-perception.

Maybe you did that too. Maybe, because in school you weren't being treated like anything more than a background character, you felt like it would be laughable for you to start acting like a hero. Perhaps you made less of an effort in that respect. You stopped trying. You sunk into the background of life.

To make up for the lack of attention, it can be common to embrace weirdness. Being different feels good when you feel inadequate; it makes you feel like you're right and everyone else is wrong, and most importantly it makes you stick out from the background and be seen. Unfortunately, weirdness makes it even harder to fit in, as humans are evolutionarily predisposed to reject weirdness.

Weirdness means you're from a different tribe, and you're here to steal our tribe's resources. Normality is the force that makes us fit in. Weirdness leads to a subtle unconscious rejection from everyone you meet. And that makes you feel even more inadequate.

Others go the opposite way, and do everything they can to be normal and fit in. They disown all parts of themselves that don't meet that requirement, and lose who they really are. Their fake normal self fits in, but they know it's not their true self. The longer they go like this, the more they assume that their true self will be rejected and they must do everything they can to repress their true selves. They feel like their true self is inadequate and they must hide it to fit in.

As you carried this sense of inadequacy into adolescence, the time came for you to start dating. Which, you inevitably failed to be successful at, because that requires self-confidence and high self-esteem, and as the non-popular weird kid who doesn't make an effort with his appearance and who feels like he's not good enough, you lacked that, so you didn't do very well. And this failure, of course, made you feel like girls didn't like you, or that you simply

lacked what it takes to be with them. And because of that feeling, you never really tried. You never believed it was possible. You felt even more inadequate, and now that you're not developing the skills in dating, relationships, and women, you are once again slipping into an even greater state of inadequacy; you are literally becoming more inadequate by missing out on these skills. And it's because of that *feeling* of inadequacy.

So, then came the time to get some useful qualifications and enter the world of work. Perhaps the same thing happens again. You don't fulfil your potential. You don't get the grades you want, or you don't pursue the career you want, or you don't even study the subjects you want, because you don't feel good enough. So, you don't do as well as you could, because you don't even believe it's possible. Maybe you give up entirely, or maybe you do just well enough. Either way, you don't fulfil your full potential. You become more inadequate, because you felt inadequate.

This endless line of one mistake after another obviously leads to an incredibly bad life. Perhaps you develop coping mechanisms - overeating, alcohol abuse, or other addictions. These are bad things - you literally *become* more inadequate, to cope with this *sense* of inadequacy! And being an alcoholic does not make you feel good about yourself. It makes you feel even more inadequate. Which

makes you want to drink more, which has negative effects on your life, *becoming* literally more inadequate as a result.

Then what do you? With this newly-strengthened sense of inadequacy, you find cuckold porn to eroticize these painful feelings and masturbate to your heart's content. Do you feel good about this? No, you feel inadequate, once more. You feel like it's you, like that's your place in life. You *feel* even more inadequate. Then things get progressively more humiliating and darker and it doesn't end well - you *become* more inadequate.

And after all that, are you going to be a friendly, happy, well-adjusted member of society? Of course not. So, on top of that, you just won't be a great person to be around. You won't make people feel good. You'll be so deprived of social validation that you'll be too needy, and trying to take people's time, attention, and validation, instead of being able to give. It's all *take take take* at that level. People really won't want to be friends with you as a result. And so you don't have friends, you're not happy, you're not even a good person. You'd be an idiot to feel even slightly adequate after that, because you're simply not.

So, yes, you really might be inadequate in real life. Your life has been a failure, and it's because all along, you've had this same feeling of not being good enough, from the first issues in childhood, through adolescence, school, work and now. It's spiraled downhill to the

point where the issue is not that you feel bad, but that you literally are bad. Your life is literally inadequate.

And that's why people say 'you don't understand, I really AM worthless! I'm a piece of crap! I'm an awful person! It's not a feeling - it's true!'.

From the first days of school, a simple lack of healthy self-esteem created a downward spiral of acting sub-optimally out of a sense of inadequacy, which in turn made you *become* more inadequate, which made you *feel* more inadequate, which made you act sub-optimally, which made you *become* more inadequate, which made you *feel* more inadequate, which made you act sub-optimally, which made you *become* more inadequate etc. Can you see the downward spiral? And it's all because of that initial subconscious feeling of inadequacy.

Your feeling of inadequacy repeatedly led to *becoming* more inadequate.

A sense of inadequacy creates real inadequacy.

The only way to heal this is to realize that it all initially stems from that subconscious feeling. Your life is bad because you *feel* like you're bad. Your sense of inadequacy has made you that way. It's all caused by that feeling.

Break this downward slope by intentionally feeling healthy, conscious shame. Feel shame about the opportunities you've missed and the mistakes you've made. Mourn your deficiencies. Allow yourself to feel sad for the life you've missed out on.

But most importantly, keep it directed away from the feeling that it's your true nature. Understand this downward spiral. Feel the shame about *making mistakes* and not yourself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Note: if your life is a *total* mess, don't expect it to be all ok tomorrow. Change takes time. But there's nothing in you stopping you from doing it in a matter of years. Nothing. Take it one step at a time. If you're seriously depressed, the first step is to see a doctor, and do whatever they suggest.

# Chapter 2: Insecurities

Sometimes, that above explanation is not enough for people to accept that they really aren't fundamentally flawed. Usually, they'll then hit me with an *unchangeable, lifelong, permanent* thing as justification for their inadequacy:

- 'I am too short',
- 'My nose is too big',
- 'I have a small penis',
- 'I am going bald',
- 'My eyes aren't symmetrical',
- 'My hands are tiny',
- 'My penis isn't perfectly straight',
- 'I have bad teeth',
- 'My skin has blemishes/moles/freckles',
- 'I have ugly scars on my body',
- 'My hips are too wide',



- 'I have a lazy eye',
- 'My neck is too long',
- 'Thin wrists',
- 'I have a weak jawline, girls will always choose a guy with a strong jawline over me, I just am inadequate and always will be'

These are insecurities. I compiled this list from experiences with other men and by reading this on online forums. Each item on this list is a genuine insecurity that is preventing someone out there from feeling good enough (yes, even Mr. Tiny Hands).

Insecurities can be pretty brutal sometimes. Their clearly factual nature combined with their unchangeability makes them seem hopeless. Not only are they true, but there's nothing you can do. Insecurities offer the clearest and most undebatable evidence of inadequacy, and as a result, they can be crippling - they can stop you in your tracks.

Not only that, but we often don't think of them as 'insecurities'. We think of them as 'true flaws that matter a lot'. The act of naming something as an insecurity is the first step to overcoming them.

Although insecurities are usually true, the importance that we give them is what makes them insecurities. We overstate their

significance, and think they matter so much more than they do, even thinking that they are genuinely holding us back.

If you have an insecurity that's preventing you from feeling good enough, read that list again and pause at every item. Try to imagine how they feel. These people think that no-one will ever love them because of this. Some may even give up completely. Imagine that feeling, over those insecurities.

Hopefully you'll see that these are ridiculous, and a stupid way to prevent yourself from being happy, no-matter how true they are. With a certain environment, and particular experiences, combined with a certain mindset and interpretations of those experiences, someone can care a lot about the size of their hands and think they're genuinely held back by it. The weight we give to our insecurities is what creates them. An insecurity is a disorder of focus, and of perceived significance.

Most importantly, this still comes from toxic shame, and the resulting lack of healthy shame. Remember, healthy shame involves accepting that you're not perfect, and that no-one is. Toxic shame is accepting that you're not perfect, but you should be. Toxic shame is the feeling that you're flawed, and that's not ok. Healthy shame is the feeling that everyone is flawed.

Insecurities come from toxic shame too.

## **The Small Penis Insecurity**

The most common insecurity for men is the size of their penis. This can cause a sense of sexual inadequacy, which can be eroticized by this fetish. Insecurities like this can cause a disproportionately large amount of pain.

The pain of this insecurity comes from extrapolation - taking a small issue and applying it to other things. The insecurity about penis size comes to be synonymous with your capability to sexually please a woman - when this is not true. Sex has hundreds of different variables which affect pleasure. Extrapolation means you start to feel like penis size is the only thing that matters, or the thing that matters the most, and all the other hundreds of things don't matter; that a small penis means you're unable to sexually fulfil a woman.

Extrapolation sometimes goes one step further, and instead of your penis size making you feel inadequate in bed, it makes you feel inadequate as a man. It becomes synonymous with your self-worth.

In all cases, men overestimate the amount that penis size matters. In fact, women are far less concerned about physical characteristics than men are, and men neglect the emotional side much more.

Studies have shown women to be most aroused by emotional and relationship factors: commitment, caring, consideration, desire,

intimacy, and safety.<sup>4</sup> Physical sensations did not make that list! Furthermore, the penis itself plays a small role in physical characteristics; it is one of many factors. Thus, it is neither something which matters a lot, nor something which plays a large role in something that matters a small bit.

Most insecurities have an element of rationality. Perhaps it's true that a small penis doesn't hit the same spots as a large penis. Maybe a woman might want that sensation if she's aroused. The irrationality comes from thinking there's nothing you can do about that. If she desires to be deeply filled but your penis is two inches long, a large sex toy will make up for any of your shortcomings. It really is that simple. The lack of size can be compensated for, with ease. It is a problem with a very simple solution.

If she still isn't satisfied by a big dildo, she really didn't want size at all - she wanted something else, such as the confidence that we may associate with having a large penis. All problems are solvable.

Regardless of how small your penis is, it is neither an issue which is reflective of your ability to satisfy a woman, nor is it a deficiency that can never be compensated for with the right tools. Don't extrapolate.

Open, honest communication is more important than anything; the *fear* that your partner has unfulfilled needs because of your penis

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<sup>4</sup> Sims, K. E., & Meana, M. (2010). Why Did Passion Wane? A Qualitative Study of Married Women's Attributions for Declines in Sexual Desire. *J. Sex Marital Ther.*, 36(4), 360–380.

size is what's really hurtful. Uncertainty is where the pain lies, because knowing the truth about how she feels – even if it's negative – means you can find solutions. Certainty is less painful than living with the agonizing self-doubt and constant fear that she's unfulfilled, which doesn't go away. The *fear* that your partner is craving something more is most painful.

Confront this fear by developing open, honest communication where your partner can be truthful about your penis size, it's significance, and her needs. You can do this by asking her honestly (if you're worried that she'd lie to avoid hurting your feelings, it helps to communicate that your *fear* and uncertainty is the problem). Then, you can find mutually agreeable solutions, like using a large sex toy, and rest in the knowledge that she has no unfulfilled needs and isn't secretly craving anything more.

The point is that insecurity is a mental phenomenon, even if it's truthful. The bad feelings about your penis size are caused by your perspective, not the size of your penis. It's possible to have a small penis and not feel bad about it.

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## **ACTION: Feel The Shame**

Insecurities are usually truthful - only rarely does someone have a total misconception about themselves - but the negative feelings

come from our interpretation of them. Thinning hair becomes a reason why you would be rejected. Tiny hands become a reason why people will exclude you. Scars become evidence that you will never fit in. Wide hips become a reason why no girl will ever truly love you. Of course, all of these feelings are created by our interpretations, not the physical imperfections themselves.

Unfortunately, some people fail to make this distinction. They don't think of their insecurities as 'insecurities' - they think of them as unpleasant facts. They detach from their *feelings* about these unpleasant facts as a way to cope - and accept the feelings as true, because their imperfections are.

If this sounds like you, the first step is to become aware of your feelings, and acknowledge that you're insecure about it (even if it's something which is true). Understand that our interpretations come from our experiences and our environment. Insecurities are caused by flawed interpretations and skewed observations.

Rodrigo was a 19-year-old sales advisor who spent a lot of time on an internet forum which made a big deal about height - posting pictures of women claiming to like tall men, or mocking short men. A 5'9" man in the USA, Rodrigo became incredibly insecure about his height, despite being average for that country. He told me that anyone under 6'2" is too short - a 'manlet' - and will 'lose out'. It is clear that Rodrigo's insecurities came from his environment. Rodrigo

couldn't accept this though - repeatedly telling me that he is truly too short, and that girls will never be fully attracted to him, and instead they'll secretly wish to have sex with a taller, better man. Rodrigo couldn't differentiate between his height and his feelings about his height. Don't fall into this trap.

Then, Rodrigo told me about his 'wide hips' which are 'feminine'. It's utterly ridiculous to think of someone ever noticing or even caring about his hips, but to Rodrigo, he couldn't understand that. Every time he looked at his body, he looked for the width of his hips, and judged himself. It's not normal to do that!

Rodrigo had read some things on the internet which made him question the width of his hips, and somehow associate it with masculinity. Once he had started questioning his hips, he started *judging* them, focusing on them, grossly overstating their significance, and becoming insecure about them. His mind caused a small issue to become large enough to stop him from even bothering to go on dates, and he was unable to feel secure in a relationship because of a secret suspicion that his girlfriend is secretly hoping for someone with thin hips. Perhaps you, as a reader, might now question the size of your hips while reading this. If I talk about this enough, I'm sure I can make you insecure!

Our environment - the things we see/read/experience - causes us to interpret facts in different ways. Two people can have the same

width hips, and one can be incredibly insecure about it. Two people can be the same height and one can be insecure about it. Two people can have the same size penis and one can be insecure about it. Insecurities come from interpretations. Even when the insecurities are true, it is purely our interpretations that make these little problems seem so big.

Insecurities are not only physical. You can be insecure about not being confident enough, for example. Or not being successful enough, or not being enough of a 'man', or not being able to sexually satisfy a woman, or being left out and excluded. These are insecurities that can directly cause this fetish. These are the individual fears, feelings, and beliefs that determine the type of your fetish.

For example, an emasculation-based fetish is rooted in the pain of emasculation - being robbed of your masculinity. So, why is that so painful to you? Most likely, you focus on 'manliness' a little too much, or think it's very important, whether that means masculinity or being a leader/in charge/responsible/honorable. Look for the ways in which you think particular things are important; that will tell you where you place too much focus. Focussing too much on any characteristic is what creates insecurities; it's a disorder of *focus*.

A fetish revolving around sexual inadequacy turns that painful concept of not being good enough in bed into pleasure. So, what



creates that pain? Sexual insecurity is created simply from focussing too much on sex. That makes you feel like sex is really important in a relationship, and if you're not good enough in bed, your partner will leave you for someone who's better in bed! It makes you feel like sex matters very much, which in turn makes you focus on your own sexual ability. Even if your sexual ability is pretty good, that focus will create the *fear* of sexual inadequacy - and that's what's eroticized.

Work out your insecurities. See if you can become aware of what it was that made you insecure. What did you experience to cause your insecurity? What made you focus on it? What made you overstate its significance?

For example, focussing too much on sex can come from watching too much porn. Porn can make you see women as sex objects, and men as sexual competition. Porn can make you see relationships as sex-based, and make you think sex is crucially important. The more porn you watch, the larger the role of sex in your life, and the more you focus on sex.

Once you've worked out your insecurity, and how it formed, become aware of how it makes you feel. Even when we get past our interpretations, insecurities always tend to have a truthful, negative core. Does that make you feel ashamed? Inferior? Inadequate? Flawed? Defective? Imperfect? Insufficient?

All of these feelings are things that we naturally try to avoid. Subsequently, they get pushed down into the subconscious and become a state of being. Healthy shame gets transformed into toxic shame.

Insecurities become crippling when healthy shame gets transformed into toxic shame. You lose the sense of having normal imperfections, and come to feel like you will be permanently excluded for your unforgivable flaws.

Most importantly, remember the difference between healthy shame and toxic shame. Healthy shame is knowing that everyone is imperfect. Toxic shame is thinking that everyone else is perfect, except you. Toxic shame is the feeling that you're flawed, and that's not ok. Healthy shame is the feeling that everyone is flawed, and your insecurities are flaws just like the ones that everyone else has. Everyone is flawed in some way. Only some people become insecure about it.

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## **ACTION: Talk.**

If you have an insecurity, see if you can find out other people's insecurities. You'll be amused at how silly they are, and how crippling they can be. Once you truly understand that everyone has insecurities, even the people you look up to, you'll stop feeling restricted by them.

My client Adrian told me a story about a female friend of his, who he respected very much. She was the sort of girl that most men would go crazy over; stunningly beautiful, socially confident, successful and happy. During one of their more introspective conversations about insecurity, she told him that she was insecure about her 'fat vagina'. She couldn't have sex with the lights on and didn't feel comfortable during sex. She found a picture on google images of what it looked like and showed it to Adrian, who described it to me as just a normal vagina - imagine a vagina that's on the puffy side. That's not something that matters - at all - to ANYONE. Most people will be absent of all opinion, because it's just not important. I remember thinking, 'is there such a thing as a fat vagina?'. For her however, it was interfering with her life. She was genuinely upset about it. Adrian was surprised to find out that a woman like her could have such an insecurity, and it changed his viewpoint on insecurities.

As he spoke to more women, he realized that actually, women can be INCREDIBLY insecure. (That's not to say it's unique to one gender of course - we all are). Other women are insecure about the size of their labia. As if their boyfriend would see it and think 'maybe we should just be friends'! Others are insecure about having frizzy hair, or low cheekbones, or short legs. They too can get so caught up in their insecurities that they feel inadequate. It's very comforting to know that everyone else has stupid insecurities. Adrian never took his own insecurities seriously after that, knowing that everyone else is too busy worrying about their own silly things.

In fact, it made Adrian comfortable enough to share his own insecurities in response, and the reaction changed his perspective forever. Adrian was most insecure about his balding head. His female friend politely informed him that he was stupid.

He realized that there is nothing stopping him from feeling good enough apart from his own mind. The least attractive thing about him was his lack of confidence, far more than his balding head.

We are all imperfect. Toxic shame makes you think that's unique to you. Toxic shame makes you think it's not ok to be imperfect, and you should be perfect. Insecurities come from toxic shame. The inability to accept your imperfections as a normal part of being human comes from toxic shame. Talk to other non-shaming people

who you trust; if they're able to be open or honest, it'll open your mind.

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# Chapter 3:

## Internalization

Now that we've established the difference between healthy shame and toxic shame, it's useful to understand the ways that toxic shame can form. One way is through a process called 'internalization'. This is where healthy shame gets repressed and absorbed into the deeper parts of the mind, which store it indefinitely so that it becomes toxic shame. There are two ways in which this can happen:

### **1. You Don't Allow Yourself To Feel Shame.**

When we brush aside feelings and ignore or suppress them, they don't get dealt with in a healthy manner. Emotions naturally come and go, but when you brush them aside, they come, but never go. And they get buried in the subconscious and stick around forever.

Here's an example. How do you feel when you masturbate to this fetish? Obviously, it's pleasurable in the moment, but after that, when you've finished, and you've come back to the real world, and realized what you've been watching, the most common feeling is shame. Although, we don't have much time to *feel* it, at that point our

focus is just on what we're going to do next, so we brush it aside and get on with our life.

But deep down, there are these feelings that you've ignored. You've brushed aside how you've felt, and that feeling gets buried in the subconscious because you never *deal* with that. Indulging in this fetish probably creates shame - and when you brush it aside it turns into toxic shame - a sense of inadequacy. And as you'll remember, the fetish is caused by inadequacy too; it eroticizes those feelings. So, every time you indulge in this fetish, you strengthen the cause. The fetish leads to toxic shame and toxic shame leads to the fetish. It's a loop, and it's one that gets worse every time. It's a self-reinforcing shame spiral.

You can break that spiral by stopping that shame from being internalized. By allowing yourself to feel shame instead of denying it and brushing it aside, you take back control. You rob the shame of its power over you.

Stop brushing aside feelings, especially shame. Let them come and go naturally.

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### **An Exploration of Shame**

Have you ever wondered exactly *why* cuckolding is shameful? What is it, specifically, that creates shame? And why do some people *not* feel shame from cuckolding?

We previously learned that shame comes from ‘doing something wrong’. Different people have different concepts of ‘wrong’ - it’s largely an opinion. Some people are raised in a polygamous culture of free love, swinging, and open relationships. These people obviously won’t see anything wrong with cuckolding, because it’s pretty normal relative to the environment that they’re used to. They won’t feel any shame, because it’s not ‘wrong’ to them, it’s normal.

The same applies to anyone who doesn’t object to polyamory, and doesn’t have the same associations of cuckolding as others - such as the sense of disrespect or dishonor. Those are not universal feelings, and some people simply don’t feel that when they think of cuckolding. They don’t associate sexual exclusivity of their spouse with respect or honor - they have no reason to. Again, it’s largely an opinion, formed by values, experiences, and perception of normality.

Others, however, do not share those same experiences and perception of normality, and they value different things. Usually, it’s your *values* that determine what’s ‘right’ and what’s ‘wrong’.

Therefore, because shame comes from ‘doing something wrong’ and your values determine what’s ‘wrong’, shame comes from acting in contradiction to your values. For people who value monogamy,



sexual innocence, and exclusive relationships, cuckolding creates feelings of shame - because it contradicts those values. It feels like it's wrong. These are values shared by the majority of people, and is why a lot of people with this fetish feel shame about it.

It is also why society, as a whole, shames cuckolding, where 'cuckold' or 'cuck' is an insult; the fetish contradicts the most common values of society, and thus is seen as 'wrong' by society. Common values become a cultural norm, and monogamy is encouraged by society and all deviations from it are seen as shameful - because shame is 'doing something wrong', and common values of monogamy make it 'wrong'.

That is why you might feel shame from cuckolding; you don't value the same things that this fetish promotes, so it's wrong to you. You also might feel shame which comes from society.

Generally, it's best not to pay much attention to shame that comes from society, because other people shouldn't choose how you live your life. The societal standards of right and wrong are not universal, nor are they even 'correct' in some sense, they are simply created by a majority, and it would not be wise to listen too hard to that. You should only pay attention to *internal* shame - shame that comes from acting in contradiction to your values, not other people's values. There is not much point in living your life as other people want.

However, it's still important not to exclude and isolate yourself from society, and to make some effort at fitting in. Although societal values shouldn't dictate someone's actions, it's important to bear it in mind when interacting with others, as flagrantly disregarding the majority will unfortunately lead to rejection and isolation.

To reduce internalization, make sure not to suppress or deny this shame from within. Feel it naturally and healthily, without repression. Societal shame should be irrelevant, but shame from within isn't. Feel it in a healthy way, consciously without suppressing it, so that it doesn't become toxic shame and the sense that you're fundamentally flawed, but stays as a healthy human trait.

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## **2. You Relive Shameful Memories And Dwell On Shame Experiences.**

Reliving and dwelling on shaming experiences is another way to increase the sense that they're a part of you, not just something you feel.

Everyone has bad memories involving times we felt shame. If we repeatedly go over these memories in our heads, it internalizes the sense that we are the mistake.

Here's an example: in my school days, I remember walking into my classroom, sitting down and getting my books out, only to notice that everyone around me had gone quiet. I looked around and quickly realized that this was the wrong classroom and I had just walked into someone else's lesson! I got up and left to the sound of a whole room laughing at me. I felt such shame!

It's an innocent mistake of course. It's something that anyone could make. But over the years I've noticed that memory come back into my head. And each time that happens, it internalizes the shame further. Perhaps you have memories like this; a feeling of shame that pops up in your head over and over again throughout your life.

Furthermore, individual experiences are never too far from each other. Usually thinking of one triggers another, and we get stuck in dwelling. The aforementioned fridge handle fiasco is sure to pop back into my head at times of reliving and dwelling on shame.

Here's another silly example: I remember when a woman said hello to me in the street, so I said hello back. How nice of an attractive woman to say hello to me, I thought. I must look quite handsome today! It turned out she was talking to her friend behind me. She looked at me in such a disdainful way. I felt so ashamed! Another innocent mistake - and who *hasn't* replied to someone only to find out they weren't talking to you - but when these memories are

relived over and over again, they stop being innocent mistakes and become evidence for our inadequacy.

All these little things form a collage of interconnected shame experiences in the brain which, when we dwell on them, only serve to internalize shame further. We come to have the sense that we are flawed. We never consider if that woman on the street also had experiences like that, it feels like those things are just us, and we must be inadequate, instead of the healthy feeling that we all make mistakes and we are only human.

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## **ACTION: Become Mindful Of Your Thoughts.**

Identify any shame-based thoughts that pop into your head. It's usually either remembering a mistake you've made, or imagining someone in your life criticizing you. Or perhaps we'll imagine someone shaming or debating our values, culture, beliefs, or anything we stand for.

Our daydreams can be responses to that; we might spend time being angry at the imagined criticism, or defensive, or explaining why they're wrong. We might get into imaginary arguments in our head. This just internalizes shame (and puts you in a bad mood). Become aware of these thoughts when they happen - you'll then have the ability to choose not to follow them. Awareness is the hardest part; when we get lost in thought, we are not *aware* that we're lost in thought. Try to increase your awareness of your own thoughts. Mindfulness meditation is a very useful way to practice this skill.

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# Chapter 4:

## Control/Escape/Release

This toxic shame is painful to the subconscious. It's hopeless. It's one of the most painful things you can possibly feel because it's like you're a failure. It's like your life is pointless, and nothing you ever do will be good enough. It's not conscious, so you don't feel it, but when this exists in the subconscious, it will drive you to find ways to cope with this. There are 3 main ways of dealing with this: by blocking it out (escaping), improving in some way so we'll eventually get better (controlling), or giving in and giving up (releasing).

Escapism transports our attention away from ourselves and into something completely separate. If we immerse ourselves in a particular activity, we are distracted from the pain of inadequacy and occupied with the activity. Video games are a common 21st century method of escapism - by immersing yourself in a virtual world, you can disconnect from the real one. Video games create such intricate and detailed worlds, characters, and stories, so they are very appealing as a way to escape from the burden of this life and enter a different one. Other methods of escapism include internet, books, TV, Films, obsessive hobbies, and intellectualization

(thinking about everything in analytical ways, so that we avoid *feeling*).

But there are other ways of dealing with this pain of toxic shame, particularly with the soothing comfort of release. This fetish is one of them; it is a way to feel good in a state of low self-worth. It is a way to give in to your subconscious inadequacy, and accept it. Then, you can release the pent-up anxieties by surrendering to it. Porn addiction is the same - it's a method of release (and in my experience it's common in people with this fetish because of the shared root cause).

All addictions are like this - methods of release. And as it happens, all addictions can be caused by this subconscious inadequacy. Alcohol and drug use can be a way to feel better, temporarily; a fleeting indulgence in a life of toxic shame, an altered state to cope with a dislike for your current state. Alcohol makes you feel fun, creative, talkative, and confident. When you don't feel good enough, you feel like you need that. Alcohol becomes a way to be better, temporarily. That temporary improvement becomes something that you start to want all the time, and find it hard to be without it for a minute.

Drug use can make you relaxed or energetic, or just escape to an altered state. Marijuana becomes a soothing way to let go of the burden of self-awareness and release the pressure of life by temporarily avoiding it all and getting high. When you are unable to

accept your current state just as you are, it becomes very appealing. Being high is 'better', and once you've experienced it, you don't want to go back. You want to be better all the time. It comes from disliking your current, sober, life. Addictions tend to be rooted in subconscious inadequacy.<sup>5</sup>

Overeating is another common method of release. If you give in to the subconscious inadequacy, there seems to be no point in having an average body. You're already inadequate, you might as well enjoy it. You feel like 'screw it, I'm bad already'. The nice taste of food and satisfied feeling of fullness will temporarily divert your internal pain away from your concern. And nothing's holding you back; you have no perceived reputation to uphold, no attractive appearance to keep up, low standards of what you should be and an inaccurate perception of what you *can* be. It seems like it's your natural place.

These are all ways to let go and surrender to the control of your subconscious mind, *releasing* the toxic shame and letting it take over.

However, there's another way of dealing with this toxic shame too, and that is by attempting to *control* it. Control means to get better. We control the inadequacy by improving. By improving ourselves, we can have hope that one day we'll be good enough, even if we aren't right now.

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<sup>5</sup> Addictions can have a great many causes and is a complex area of study. Every case is unique, but, in my opinion, and based on everything I've read, it is at least the majority.



This may take the form of dieting and bodybuilding. It feels really good to lift weights and exercise, because it soothes the subconscious perception of inadequacy and offers a comforting sense that you can get better, that you won't always be inadequate. The very process of bodybuilding is pleasurable - to be at least on the right track is a very good feeling. It feels great to be on that path, to go to the gym, to eat right, and to try. It can be driven by a sense of inadequacy; a need to improve, without reason. There may be a correlation between fetishes and eating disorders<sup>6</sup> - they come from the same place.

Obsessively working is another one. It can be easy to attach your self-worth to your career success and think that by getting promoted or achieving a lot, you'll be good enough. Others create detailed fantasies of being a famous writer, musician, comedian, or actor, and think that if they can achieve that dream, they'll finally be good enough. For some people, it's just about money, and if they earn enough money - or maybe at least if they just don't spend it - they can battle their subconscious inadequacy that way. Others have a perception of the 'best' career, a perception usually formed in childhood. If their parents idolized doctors, then they need to become a doctor to be good enough.

Overachieving is therefore a common side-effect of toxic shame.

Achievements are things that prove your high self-worth, and a good way to mask negative feelings. Compulsive self-improvement and

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<sup>6</sup> McElroy SL et al. (1999) Psychiatric features of 36 men convicted of sexual offenses. *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*, 60:414-20.

addiction to self-help material is something that feels good; to improve is to control. Improvement can be addictive to those who have toxic shame. It's a method of control over inadequacy.

At the same time, underachieving is also another route that some people go down. They often prevent their own success. Either by feeling that their attempts to be better will fail because of a sense that they're simply unable to ever be good enough, or because of fear, or trying to do everything perfectly (perfectionism), or trying to do everything themselves, or self-sabotage, or needing to stay stuck in familiar but dysfunctional situations. Often, people can be experienced at *looking just good enough*. Good enough for other people to accept you, but not too good to invite unwanted attention and scrutiny. It's a method of release over inadequacy. Attempting to maintain total abstinence is a method of control. Likewise, excessively indulging in porn is a method of release. There is no healthy balance with toxic shame.

<b>Control</b>	<b>Release</b>
Dieting/Exercise	Overeating
Working/Achieving/Career	Underachieving/Procrastinating
Money/Frugality/Hoarding	Excessive spending/Gambling
Puritanical/Stoic	Sex/Porn addiction

Needing to seem nice	Allowing partners/others to mistreat you, and mistreating others yourself
Mental detailing, knowing, learning, righteousness	Emotional outbursts, blaming, contempt.
Perfectionism	Alcohol/Drugs
<b>Compulsive Self-Improvement</b>	<b>Compulsive Self-Harm</b>

Either by ‘controlling’ or ‘releasing’, we attempt to temporarily deal with this toxic shame in these ways.

Here’s where it gets worse: control triggers release, and release triggers control. The more intensely we control, the more we require the balance of release, and the more abusively or self destructively we release, the more intensely we require control.

Every method of release makes you feel bad about yourself. When you become addicted to food, alcohol, or porn, they all have negative effects on your life. They make you feel even worse about yourself. They STRENGTHEN the sense of inadequacy.

And as for the control side, it can also make you feel worse too.

When you get what you want, when you become a better person, and

you still don't feel any better, you strengthen the sense that it's just a part of you, that there's something about you deep down that's flawed.

Both sides strengthen the underlying toxic shame and both sides trigger each other. It's a never-ending spiral.

The solution is to heal the underlying toxic shame, of course. Then, there is nothing driving these behaviors. In the case of some addictions, there may be separate things that drive them, such as the chemically addictive nature of alcohol or drugs, or the dopamine spike from porn, so healing the toxic shame should not be the only solution to these problems.

The aim of this section was to try to make you aware of any parts of your life which may be driven by toxic shame. I've listed a whole bunch of possible behaviors that may be driven by toxic shame. This is not a complete list by any means. You'll need to work out what parts of your life are driven by this toxic shame. Work out the ways that you control and release.

It's important to note that, just because they're driven by toxic shame, doesn't mean you need to change them. Some of these are good things - achieving, earning money, exercising, learning, improving yourself, etc. Some of these are bad - addictions, underachieving etc. And some are merely neutral such as video games. By understanding the subconscious drive behind these

behaviors, you can begin to do things simply because you want to, as opposed to some faulty attempt to control, release, or escape, which ends up perpetually repeating itself to no end, and spiraling downwards in a self-reinforcing spiral of toxic shame.

Whatever you choose, be careful not to feel even more toxic shame just from reading this section. It would be easy to feel a certain amount of self-contempt and regret upon discovering the drive behind your behaviors. Be careful not to internalize that.

# Chapter 5:

## Disconnection

The most annoying thing about all this is that it's got nothing to do with how inadequate you really are, or even how you consciously feel - it's a subconscious perception. Maybe you're not inadequate in the slightest - it doesn't matter. It's subconscious.

How do we know that we're good enough? How do we judge what 'enough' is? Usually, we sense this in social settings. We assess our self-worth relative to those around us. Other people are mirrors for us to see who we are. We only see ourselves through the eyes of others.

More accurately, the social validation we feel just from having normal, open, honest conversations with others will give us a sense that we're good enough. Just by talking, the response from other people will let us know that we're good enough. If they at least respond, listen, and engage in a secure, fair, and predictable manner, then we get a sense that we're good enough. If they just look us in the eyes and reply to what we say, we'll know deep down that there's nothing wrong with us and we can fit in just fine. If they ignore us,

avoid us, criticize us, or neglect us, then we come to feel like we're not good enough.

We gain social validation just from having conversations, having secure friendships, and being social. By feeling a sense of belonging and acceptance - which can come simply from having friends - we feel good enough. So, for those who don't have many friends, improving your social life can be a shortcut to healing this sense of inadequacy.

However, if you already have enough friends, and enough of a social life, there is still a way that you can be deprived of social validation. That is by *acting differently* from who you are.

Repeatedly, all through life, we may learn that we need to act in a certain way to be 'good', to fit in, or to be liked. We learn the 'right' way to act and the 'right' things to say. We might learn that being funny is 'good', or being nice is 'good', or being cool, or being unique, or being normal, or being manly and masculine, or even being sensitive and feminine.

All of these things contribute to the creation of a 'false self' - a learned way of acting and being that we present to the world.

*Everyone* has some sort of false self, although it's usually minor. We will all act in a certain way at certain times. The extent of this varies from person to person; in some cases, it can be quite significantly different from their true selves. And when we have a sense of

inadequacy, when we feel like we're not good enough just as we are, we will struggle immensely to present our true self to the world - because we think that's not good enough. We try to present a different image to the world.

When we present this false self to the world, it is the false self which receives social validation, not our true self. Our false self is accepted and has a sense of belonging, but our true self does not. When we cover up our true self, it never gets social validation. And so, once again, we have another mechanism that causes a sense of inadequacy; the inability to receive social validation and thus the complete lack of it. We lack the socially-formed sense that we are good enough.

A sense of inadequacy leads to not being able to be fully yourself. Which strengthens the inadequacy. This can be hard to relate to, so here are some examples.

### **Perfection**

By appearing to be perfect, we think people will respect us, admire us, or like us, and we'll feel as if we can be good enough. It comes from believing we're not good enough just as we are. A common example is the 'Nice Guy'; many people learn early on in life that niceness is 'good'. It is - in fact it's great, and we need more nice people in the world. It's a very admirable quality, to be able to be



nice in every situation, and give time and effort generously to others, even if they don't appreciate it.

It also *feels* good to be angelically nice through every situation. To bear other people's problems and react with unconditional kindness - sometimes at the expense of your own welfare - gives a feeling that you're a great person, and not really inadequate. Even letting people walk all over you (becoming a pushover) can become validating. This is the Nice Guy stereotype. Most of the time it comes from thinking 'if I am nice, people will like me'. It comes from the belief that you *have* to be nice in order to be liked, because people won't like you just as you are. Niceness becomes a tool to get what you want, a way to covertly and innocently manipulate others into liking and accepting you.

Niceness is only a single method of using this principle of doing something or saying something or acting in some way to be 'good', to be liked, and to fit in, because of a deeply held belief that you need to do something to be good, because you're not good enough just as you are. Aside from niceness, it can be being funny, being well-dressed, being cool, being different from other men, being clever, being correct, never getting angry/having unchanging emotions, or whatever your idea of 'perfect' is. In social interactions, you might try to understand the right way to act, the right things to say, the right things to do, instead of just being you. Your text conversations may be carefully thought through, considering the 'best' things to

say, instead of just being yourself. It all comes from a belief that you're not good enough just as you are.

Covering up your internal toxic shame can also involve blame, criticism, contempt, or control. All of these are ways of desperately trying to avoid feeling healthy shame.

### **Walls**

We might build walls to prevent others from getting too close, always staying slightly distant or cold. Counterintuitively, this distance is contrasted with the desire for approval, meaning that everyone is kept at arm's length, not too close and not far. To prevent people from getting too close we may use humor, sarcasm, intellectualism, perfectionism, isolation, or even addictions like work, saying things like 'I can't spend time with you, I need to do \_\_\_\_'. This is probably most noticeable in relationships.

### **Hiding**

From this sense of inadequacy, we feel like we must hide everything, because everything about ourselves is just evidence of inadequacy. This might be hiding ourselves, hiding our emotions, lying without much of a reason to lie or anything terribly bad to lie about, or simply lying to be different, to avoid reality.

Adam, a 49-year-old office worker, would leave work a little early every now and then to catch an afternoon movie by himself before

heading home. A little treat for a hard week at work. However, he feared his wife's disapproval, so he never told her about his little film trips. He would pretend he had a normal day at work instead.

Furthermore, he would always have a cover story ready just in case she questioned his colleagues. He was a good liar; he'd had a lot of practice in similar scenarios. He would be prepared for his wife's question and confident that he could bluff a normal day at work.

Ironically, there was absolutely no reason for him to hide this from his wife. There was nothing wrong with going to see a movie, nothing wrong with leaving work early if he had his management's permission, and nothing wrong with going by himself if that's what he wanted - in fact some would even say it's a good thing that he's independent and can enjoy himself - but his internal toxic shame took over. He felt guilty, wrong, or bad for this aspect of his character, and was unconsciously compelled to lie.

Toxic shame makes you feel like the things you do are bad, even if they're not. Sometimes he would even invent a completely different story - maybe saying he went shopping, or went for a walk, or spent some time in the park. He would lie just to be *different*. Toxic shame makes you feel like you are wrong, and by being different - even if that's not any better, just different - you can seem good enough. You feel the need to escape from yourself.

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## **ACTION: Identify Disconnection**

Think of the ways in which you're trying to present an image of perfection to the world. In what ways do you lie to yourself? Maybe you deny your emotions. Maybe you deny your weaknesses. Maybe you deny your basic needs like sex. Maybe you deny your desire for friendships or intimacy.

In what way do you stop people from getting close to you?

What do you hide?

What image do you present to the world?

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## Self-Connection

Disconnection is an attempt to avoid pain. From a sense of inadequacy, we perceive that we are not good enough just as we are and that we need to change to be good enough. We perceive that we will be painfully rejected and outcast by being ourselves, so we hide it. It isn't painful to be inadequate; it is only painful if others see it and confirm it. So we hide it.

Exposure, therefore, is our greatest fear. Exposure of our true self means that our inadequacy will be revealed to others and we won't be liked or fit in. However, it's not just painful to be exposed to others; it's painful to be exposed to *ourselves*. To **realize** that we are inadequate is something that will hurt. We will go to great lengths to avoid this. We would rather live in denial than risk confirming our own inadequacy. So, we actually become disconnected from *ourselves*. Not just around other people, but alone too. Perhaps this is a little harder to understand, and certainly harder to relate to, but let's give it a shot.

How do you feel right now? Are you hungry? Thirsty? Are you tired or energized? Do you feel any stress/tension in your body? Or do you feel completely relaxed? Are you hot or cold? Are you happy or sad? Are you alert or unfocused? Take a moment to stop reading this paragraph and feel.

Now, you should be feeling a little more connected to yourself. I'd be surprised if you were aware of all of those feelings before being prompted. This is an easy example of disconnection from ourselves - we become completely unaware of what's really going on inside of us.

You can heal this disconnection fairly easily, by spending some time on self-connection. The above example was just a quick demonstration of feelings, both physical and emotional, but these feelings are not the essence of our self. To truly connect with ourselves, we have to connect with our needs. Our needs are the fundamental drive behind all human behavior. They are everything about us. They determine and are determined by who we are, what we do, what we want, and how we feel. Needs are our essence.

Self-connection, more than anything, means becoming attuned to your needs, and then giving yourself the time and attention to fulfil those needs. It means connecting with what you need, becoming consciously aware of it, acknowledging it, and then allowing yourself the time to get your needs met.

Maybe you need to relax. Maybe you need to have a nice bath, or a little nap. Maybe you need to play around. Or just listen to music. Or to have a good night's sleep.

Conversely, you may need the opposite. You may need to eat some vegetables, drink more water, do some exercise, and do some work

on your career. Take time to do the things that you need to do for yourself.

This is not mindless self-indulgence. Sometimes the things that you need aren't easy or fun to get. You must be willing to delay instant gratification in order to do what's best for you. Sometimes that means going to the gym, eating healthily, getting more sleep if you're neglecting sleep in favor of work or hobbies, or even getting less sleep if you're spending too much time in bed!

This is self-love. Self-love means giving yourself what you need; spending time and attention on yourself. It does not mean believing you're the most amazing person in the world, or that you let yourself eat chocolate 24/7 because you love yourself. If you truly love someone, you want what's best for them. Sometimes that means delaying instant gratification, sometimes it means taking time to relax. Self-love is about listening to yourself and fulfilling your needs. Become attuned to your needs, as this self-connection is the most basic step in overcoming the defense mechanisms that prevent us from healing toxic shame.

# Chapter 6: Needs

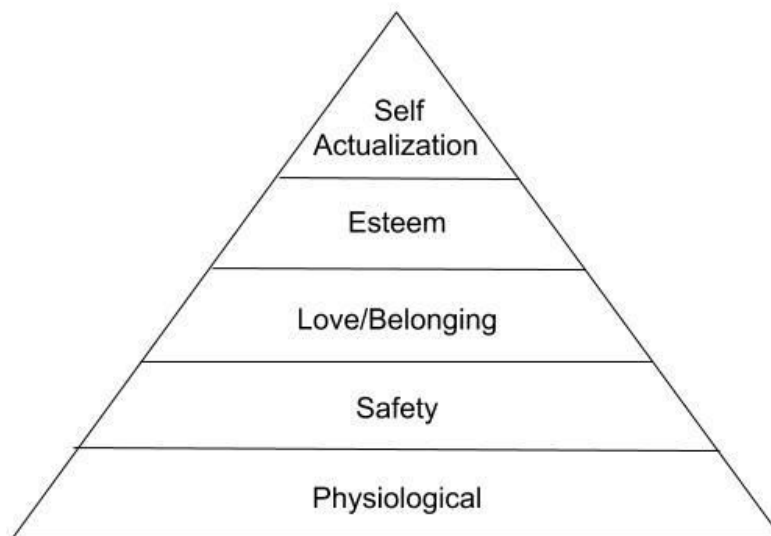
‘Problematic sexual patterns evolve to compensate for **unmet needs** or to soothe unhealed psychic wounds.’ - Jack Morin, ‘The Erotic Mind’ (1995) (emphasis mine)

We all have needs. As humans we need a variety of things. Obvious needs are food, water, shelter, warmth. Less-obvious needs are affection, respect, touch, and independence. These are universal human needs, and everyone needs them. There are hundreds more.

The great psychologist Carl Rogers stated that *every* human behavior is simply an attempt to meet our perceived needs. Everything we do is a way of trying to meet a need of some sort. This includes sexual behavior. Abraham Maslow said that we pursue our needs in a specific order: Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.

First, the most essential needs are physiological. These are the obvious things that we need to survive, like food, water, air, warmth etc. Once we’ve fulfilled these needs, we pursue safety and security next, then love and belonging, then esteem (respect, pride etc.), then self-actualization (fulfilling our purpose in the world). This is Maslow’s hierarchy of needs:





Everything you do will be an attempt to get these needs met, in that order (bottom to top). For example, why are you reading this book? What need is this fulfilling? Perhaps it could be love/belonging or esteem. You either think that by changing your cuckold fetish you'll be able to be loved for who you are, or you think you'll have greater esteem. Perhaps you think it's stopping you from being the best you can be, in which case it's meeting your need for self-actualization. Your need to understand this topic comes from a need for one of these things. Whatever it is, you're reading this book to fulfil your needs. *Everything* you do is an attempt to meet our perceived needs.

Crucially, it's our *perceived* needs that matter. Not our actual needs, but our perception of them.

If you have a subconscious sense of inadequacy, you're going to perceive your love/belonging and esteem needs to be greater. With a sense that you're not good enough, you're going to struggle to really

feel loved just as you are. It might be hard to feel like you belong. And it's certainly hard to feel esteem. So as a result, you are perpetually unfulfilled in those areas. You might need more love and will go to great lengths to be loved. You might need attention, and will seek it where possible. You need to be liked, and you might need it more than most people. You might need more validation. Alternatively, you might try to block this out and ignore it, and focus on self-actualization without the proper foundation, or as a covert way to feel loved and good enough.

Our behavior becomes a never-ending attempt to meet those needs. That's the psychological explanation for the control/release/escape mechanism and the disconnection; our behavior is an attempt to meet our needs, but we perceive our needs inaccurately because of our sense of inadequacy.

This sense of inadequacy leads to a damaged perception of your needs, which is the cause of every troublesome behavior in this book.

Even this fetish is an attempt to meet your needs. Aside from the obvious sexual needs, it meets your love/belonging and esteem needs by temporarily escaping from the sense of inadequacy. Either through a mechanism where the pain is turned into pleasure in order to protect us, or by escaping from the burden of self-awareness, or by obtaining gratification from the sense of being

unjustly treated. It temporarily removes the sense of inadequacy and therefore the greater needs that come with it.

Of course, this is only temporary. Once you've finished, it leads to even greater inadequacy. Just like the control/release/escape behaviors - these behaviors are unconscious attempts to meet our needs, and they're incredibly flawed; not only do they not work, but they can even make the subconscious inadequacy worse.

Connecting with your true needs is the first real way to heal this.

By owning your needs and admitting them, and then taking control and making sure that you fulfil them, you stop the faulty attempts to meet them (which only reinforce inadequacy) and can choose healthy behaviors instead.

**Own your needs. Take responsibility for meeting them.**

Trying to appear needless or wantless is a common side-effect of toxic shame. If you feel inadequate, you feel like you don't deserve to get your needs met, therefore it becomes very hard to receive and to have someone focus on you. This is most distressing when it comes to sex, and can cause frustration. It's common to focus so much on trying to make your partner happy and then have no ability to receive. Receiving often incites feelings of guilt, as if you don't deserve it.

I worked with one client who told me of how, whenever he was offered a drink at a friend's house, he would always decline, no matter how thirsty he was. He said he didn't want to trouble them, as if a glass of water is a challenging request! Actually, he just didn't feel like he was worthy of someone taking care of him.

Conversely, one way this is manifested is by caretaking for someone else, focusing on another person's problems, needs, or feelings, and going to great lengths to help them. It's usually done in order to feel valuable, or avoid your own problems and feelings, rather than simply being nice. Caretaking can be a way to try to feel loved, appreciated, and needed, which are obviously the greatest needs for people with subconscious inadequacy. It's a covert attempt to get your own needs met, without having the guilt of asking.

Unfortunately, it usually results in negative consequences, because it's very different from simply caring - which is just a nice thing to do, and expects nothing in return. It's actually secretly quite nasty - using someone else for your own needs - even though it seems nice on the surface. It's manipulative and exploitative, and unattractively needy deep down. People can sense this, and are usually repelled by this, leading to you being subtly rejected, wondering why people don't like you, and thus feeling more inadequate.

Seriously, own your needs. There's nothing wrong with having needs. There's nothing wrong with receiving and having someone

focus on you. There's nothing wrong with asking for what you want - in fact, everyone is better off if you do. Other people *want* to know your needs and want to be able to fulfil them, because it feels good! Giving feels good! Making your friend or partner happy is a good feeling. Caring for others is great, and other people want to care for you. Caretaking - using other people to covertly meet your own needs - is not good. Understand the difference and take responsibility for your needs. Learn to be more assertive.

During this process of owning our needs, there are a few pitfalls to watch out for. We still have to be considerate of others whilst being confident in ourselves. Be careful not to assert yourself without consideration. And in relationships, just because we have a need for sexual pleasure, it doesn't mean that your partner is responsible for fulfilling that need. It's very easy to become very assertive and confident with what we want and then make someone else do something they don't want to do. So, don't take it too far. It's ok to have needs, but remember that you don't depend on one specific person to fulfil those needs.

# Conversion Of Needs And Feelings Into Sexuality

Sometimes, we don't feel good. Orgasm always feels good. In times of mental pain, rejection, shame, or neglect, we can turn to masturbation to attempt to feel better. This is obviously ineffective and short-lived.

If in childhood you learn never to need anything emotionally from your parents, you'll be faced with a dilemma whenever you feel needy or insecure. If masturbating has been your most accessible source of good feeling, you may masturbate to restore good feelings about yourself at moments when your needs are quite unrelated to sexuality.

This is a process known as conversion - when needs for anything else are converted into the need for sexual pleasure. Insecurity, anxiety, or sadness can be registered as a need for sexual climax. We can continuously turn to porn to meet needs that porn cannot provide. It cannot provide intimacy, closeness, affection, or touch. Yet to our primitive brains, we associate those things with sex, and sense that porn can meet those needs, when in fact it can't.

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**ACTION: Feel Before You Feel**

If you struggle with watching cuckold porn when you really don't want to, take a moment to work out how you feel. Do you feel insecure? Do you feel rejected? Do you feel inadequate?

Not only that, but work out your needs. Is it really orgasm that you need? Or is it intimacy, affection, or love?

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### **What Needs?**

Here's a list of some universal needs:

- Acceptance
- Affection
- Appreciation
- Belonging
- Cooperation
- Communication
- Closeness
- Community
- Companionship
- Compassion
- Consideration
- Consistency
- Empathy
- Inclusion
- Independence

- Intimacy
- Love
- Mutuality
- Recognition
- Respect
- Self-respect
- Safety
- Security
- Sexual expression
- Stability
- Support
- To be known
- To be seen
- To be understood
- Touch
- Trust

All of us need the things on this list.

When I first saw this list, when I was still bound by toxic shame, I thought “I don’t need those! Waste of time! Those are for weak people! I’d rather spend my time productively!” That was my disconnection speaking and my attachment to achievement as my method of control. Deep down we all need these. Similarly, the ‘Nice Guy’ will think it’s selfish to spend your time on all these things. Someone who believes excessive masculinity is the ‘right’ way to act



will think it's 'weak' to need intimacy and closeness. Sometimes disconnection stops you from being able to meet your needs. We all need these things.

This is just a small list of hundreds of human needs. The reason why I've chosen these particular needs is because all of these depend on other people to fulfil them. They are interpersonal needs - we can't fulfil them by ourselves. This makes it particularly hard to fulfil them.

## Summary

Subconscious inadequacy causes a lot of troublesome things including the cuckold fetish, but also addictive behaviors (control & release) and disconnection from ourselves. It makes us try to be more than human (unlimited) or less than human (worthless), but we lack a healthy sense of humanity. We perceive our needs differently because of this.

One way to heal this is to own your needs and take responsibility for fulfilling them; by doing so, you stop feeling the urge to engage in any behavior which is a flawed attempt to meet those needs.

You'll also need to stop doing things that reinforce the feelings of inadequacy, whether that be control/escape/release behaviors (although not all of them reinforce feelings of inadequacy), or disconnection.