

# Change

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## Introduction

*“When we satisfy unmet needs or repair childhood conflicts, we may find that who or what attracted us may no longer turn us on in the way it once had” - Stanley Siegel, ‘Your Brain on Sex’ (2011)*

By now, you’ve hopefully understood the many things that can lead to your cuckold fetish. The self-analysis will lead to a reduction in the majority of those desires, for now. As Robert Stoller noted, ‘The analytic process dissolved the fantasy by softening the demands that underlay it’.<sup>1</sup> By examining your arousal and understanding it, you loosen its grip over you. It no longer creates nasty feelings and demands that you indulge in it to escape. Instead, it starts to make sense, and stops functioning in the same damaging way as before.

This is enough in the short term, but it won’t be *permanent* without fully removing the subconscious inadequacy, which takes practical action repeated regularly over a long period of time. Changing your subconscious inadequacy is hard, and it takes a lot of time - perhaps even years of doing things differently before it becomes a normal part of you.

It’s also not a binary option of changed or unchanged; it’s a scale, where the aim is to get closer to the place you want to be,

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<sup>1</sup> Stoller, R. J. (1979) *Sexual Excitement: Dynamics of erotic life*. Pantheon, New York

permanently. Furthermore, when porn involves nudity and sex, it will always have arousing elements, regardless of the fetish involved. Change means removing the desire to engage in this fetish; *reducing* your arousal from this fetish to the level of other people, or to a level which removes your preference for this fetish. This is simple in the short term, but the long term involves removing subconscious inadequacy.

Essentially, the process of changing your fetish means removing feelings of inadequacy. Firstly, this involves coming to a conscious realization that you are not inadequate. This can be done immediately and perhaps you've had that realization already, in one of the previous books.

Secondly, it means removing anything that makes you continuously feel conscious inadequacy, such as control/escape/release behaviors, disconnection, expectations, culture, relationships, etc. This can be done in a few weeks or months by implementing small changes in your life and removing negative influences while developing positive ones. It also means changing thought patterns like internalization, owning your needs, treating yourself kindly, and much of the content in this upcoming chapter.

Separately to this process, it also means changing your behavioral patterns - your habits of porn and dealing with unmet needs, your

social patterns and fulfilment, and conditioning in associating cuckolding with pleasure.

Thirdly, it means removing the deep-rooted subconscious feelings of inadequacy formed in childhood or those which are deeply internalized. This can take years; it means changing who you are as a person.

It takes a long time to change your life. All of these conscious feelings take time to sink in and become permanent, but also the change is so extreme and profound that it can't happen quickly. For some people, it involves changing everything about themselves, because they founded their entire life on a sense of inadequacy; their friends, their careers, their relationships, their hobbies, their habits, their personality, and more. It takes a long time to change these things! Others haven't let their lives be dictated by that feeling, so don't have as much to change.

This book focuses on changing your behavior to remove things that create feelings of inadequacy, introducing things that boost your self-worth, and changing the conditioning which creates an association between cuckolding and pleasure. There are also exercises you can do, new positive habits to form, boundaries to set and attitudes to take on, which can remove feelings of inadequacy.

In this book I will present a number of short-term and long-term practical steps to make this conscious realization become

subconscious reality. It would be very nice to be able to create a concise, simple process for change, but a complex multifaceted issue such as this has many different possible solutions. Again, it's individual. Some things will be more relevant to you than others, and other things will be more relevant to other people than you.

# Chapter 1: Porn

## **Porn Can Change Your Sexual Desires**

Repeated porn use over time can lead to progressively more hardcore content. When we first discover porn, we can get easily aroused by nudity alone. Then, after having seen a lot of nudity, we start to get desensitized to it, and need more hardcore content to reach orgasm. Perhaps this starts off as wanting to see female masturbation, then progressing to lesbians, to blowjobs, to sex, to dominant/submissive sex, to sex involving some element of fetishes, to sex exclusively revolving around fetishes, to extreme fetishes that hardly even feature sex at all, until it escalates to porn which is so distorted and warped that it is unrecognizable to the real world.

Eventually, after many years, softcore content is hardly even enough to cause arousal. With the influence of subconscious inadequacy, our tastes move towards this fetish. It starts out tame and can progress further into more humiliating scenes, as the repeated porn use starts to make you need more and more. Porn can cause the escalation of sexual tastes away from simple nudity towards hardcore cuckolding.

There is a neurological reason for this. Watching porn releases dopamine - that's the feel-good hormone that we associate with pleasure. Porn floods our brains with dopamine, and after months or



years of doing this, we become ‘desensitized’; we get so used to elevated dopamine levels that those high levels become normal, and then we need *even more* dopamine to feel the same amount of pleasure. How do we get more of a kick? We watch more hardcore things.

Some types of porn can cause you to experience shock, surprise, and anxiety. This causes the release of ‘stress’ hormones which amplify the effects of dopamine. That means that more shocking, forbidden, or taboo genres boost dopamine levels, which makes it feel more pleasurable.<sup>2</sup>

That’s how porn can change your sexual desires. Desensitization to dopamine (from watching a lot of porn) can lead to a need for more shocking content. It leads you to seek out hardcore stuff, and your subconscious emotions determine the nature of that stuff. This leads to what I call a ‘porn-induced cuckold fetish’. The core of this fetish is still subconscious inadequacy, but porn and dopamine desensitization can act as the trigger that makes you go down this path.

### **Porn’s Influence On World View**

The objectification of women that can come with porn use can eventually make you focus too much on your standing compared to

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<sup>2</sup>[www.oceanrecoverycentre.com/guides/the-ultimate-guide-to-overcoming-internet-porn-addiction/](http://www.oceanrecoverycentre.com/guides/the-ultimate-guide-to-overcoming-internet-porn-addiction/)

other men, especially in bed. When you watch a lot of porn, it affects your perception of women, sex, and life.

In one study, researchers found that people who regularly watched a lot of porn were inaccurate at judging the prevalence of ‘extreme’ sexual behaviors in real life.<sup>3</sup> They thought that sexual acts like sadomasochism or group sex were much more common than they really are. This is the effect of porn - it makes you think that the things in porn are normal, and everyone else is doing those things.

This might make you feel left out, excluded, and not good enough. If you start thinking that your partner is more promiscuous, drawn towards infidelity, or secretly aching for group sex and kinky activities (but not involving you in that), it hurts - and that’s the pain which cuckolding eroticizes.

An evaluation of the effects of porn found that: “Dispositional changes include diminished trust in intimate partners, the abandonment of hopes for sexual exclusivity with partners, [and] evaluation of promiscuity as the natural state... Cynical attitudes about love emerge.”<sup>4</sup>

Do you have cynical attitudes about love and sex? Anyone finding ‘diminished trust in intimate partners’ or the ‘abandonment of hopes

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<sup>3</sup> Zillmann, D. (2000). Influence Of Unrestrained Access To Erotica On Adolescents’ And Young Adults’ Dispositions Toward Sexuality. *Journal Of Adolescent Health*, 27, 2: 41–44.

<sup>4</sup> Zillmann, D. (2000). Influence Of Unrestrained Access To Erotica On Adolescents’ And Young Adults’ Dispositions Toward Sexuality. *Journal Of Adolescent Health*, 27, 2: 41–44

for sexual exclusivity' or the 'evaluation of promiscuity as the natural state' are experiencing the same fears and emotional pain that cuckolding eroticizes. By watching a lot of porn, it seems like you may be able to develop hurtful beliefs about sex, women, and society - which can be sexualized through cuckold porn.

Porn can create the sense that women are sex-crazed beings who yearn for a big penis on a muscular stud to use their bodies for pleasure. We see them screaming in pleasure, faint from ecstasy, and do anything they're told no matter how extreme. By comparison, if that's the standard by which you think sex should be, 'normal' sex would make you feel like you're not good enough.

Especially, seeing women submit to men at an extent which is frankly ridiculous can make you feel like you're inadequate if in real life your wife/girlfriend doesn't want to do the same to you. To be bombarded by images of spontaneous blowjobs and loud, crazy sex can make you feel left out when that doesn't happen to you. Cuckold porn takes this concept and amplifies it much more than regular porn, because we see women submitting to other men, reinforcing these damaging feelings.

Sometimes you start asking questions of yourself. Am I not good enough? Do I not fulfil her sexually? Would she let some other guy do that stuff to her? Is it because I'm not dominant enough? Is it because I don't excite her? Did her ex-boyfriends get to do it?

Often, the answer is that your perceptions of reality have been warped by porn. Our brains may interpret it as a personal rejection, when this is not true.

It is a common idea among people with a cuckold fetish that their girlfriend or wife would be happy to carry out the cuckold fantasy. They think it is a matter of permission, and as soon as they give permission for them to have sex with anyone they want, they will love to do so. This is so wrong! Wives and girlfriends are usually incredibly reluctant to do such things, and have no sexual desire to do so. Yet, porn can make us think they are aching for a bigger, better man to use their body for pleasure.

### **Humiliation Humiliates You**

Watching porn where penis size takes a central role will make you focus on the size of your own penis, even if you have nothing to worry about. Cuckold porn may frequently involve an element of humiliation over penis size, in fact 'small penis humiliation' porn now exists as a separate category of porn. Every time you see or hear this, it only makes you feel more concerned about how you measure up - regardless of the size of your penis. It directs your attention towards your penis size, and your mind becomes concerned, whereas without porn you may never have focused on the size or even on your penis at all. This is how porn can change you and your perspective of reality. Then, of course, this concern over penis size

can be eroticized through small penis humiliation porn, which reinforces the focus and concern on penis size, which can be eroticized, which reinforces the concern, and so on.

There exists some types of porn involving humiliation around being a 'loser' or 'pathetic' or a 'beta male'. Of course, this is arousing to people who have a deep-rooted fear of these things and a worry that it may be true. It eroticizes these hurtful feelings. When they watch this porn, it amplifies their worries; it makes them even more worried that they're not good enough. Again, this is how porn can affect you.

Amateur porn is especially bad for this. With professionally-produced porn, we know for sure that it is at least staged and purely fantasy. With amateur porn, it makes it seem so much more real.

On a similar note, feelings and fears of sexual inadequacy - particularly 'performance anxiety' - are the psychological core of erectile dysfunction and premature ejaculation;<sup>5</sup> our fears prevent us from having sex, because self-consciousness and anxiety are essentially the opposite of being validated.<sup>6</sup> When we experience these problems, we feel even more sexually inadequate, and become

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<sup>5</sup> Shamloul, R. and Ghanem, H., (2013) Erectile dysfunction. *The Lancet*, 381(9861), pp.153-165.

<sup>6</sup> Many other causes such as age or hormones are also possible, particularly for ED.

more anxious, which reinforces the psychological cause and makes it even more likely to happen again!

Porn can do the same thing. When you engage in behaviors that are caused by a feeling, which create consequences that reinforce that feeling, it becomes a fierce downward spiral which can eventually lead you to a terrible emotional and psychological state.

In these ways, by affecting your perceptions of relationships and sex, as well as by releasing pleasurable hormones from hardcore or shocking content, repeated porn usage may lead to or strengthen a cuckold fetish when feelings of inadequacy are already present.

Reality must be hard for plumbers, pizza deliverers, masseurs, and step-moms. No-one wants to have sex with them nearly as much in real life!

Clive found that he had preconceived ideas about what women wanted. He realized that he unconsciously thought that all women want to be dominated in bed. This is obviously a damaging feeling to have. He also thought that all women want a particular type of man - one who's overly-confident, socially loud, inconsiderate and arrogant. He felt inadequate because he wasn't that type of person - he was quiet, thoughtful, and restrained, and by judging himself by other standards he was not good enough. He didn't think that a woman could really be attracted to someone like him, without secretly wishing for someone arrogant to roughly dominate them.

Upon questioning these assumptions, he slowly started to realize that they were inaccurate, and they faded away. Try to identify any of your thoughts, feelings, and assumptions about women and sex. It's hard to do, because they appear to be 'the truth' in our brains until we question them. By what standards do you measure yourself?

### **Porn Can Lock You In**

Furthermore, every time you find pleasure in this fetish, you reinforce it. This is conditioning. Every time you watch cuckold porn while masturbating, you strengthen its association with pleasure. Even if this subconscious inadequacy changes, your conditioning can be so strong that the fetish doesn't change. Once your brain 'expects' to get aroused by a certain thing, it will. And if you've become used to watching cuckold porn, you can be naturally drawn back to it as a result of conditioning. Porn causes this.

An example of this is going straight to cuckold porn as soon as you're aroused. After some time of having this fetish, you may no longer watch any other type of porn, and this is a mistake. Your brain automatically jumps to whatever it's associated with arousal in the past. Then, you watch it, and strengthen the conditioning.

You may also have stopped questioning whether it really arouses you, even at times when it doesn't. Researchers found that people are more drawn towards fetishes after experiencing social rejection and

isolation.<sup>7</sup> A group of men were split into two and asked to choose 1 of 6 women that they'd most like to date; half were told that their choice rejected them, and the other half were told that the women they chose reciprocally chose them as the men they would most like to date. Then they did the same thing again, so these men either experienced 2 successive rejections or 2 successive acceptances. They found that those who experienced the rejections were more likely to be drawn towards fetishistic activities afterwards.

Of course, if fetishes are a method of validation, this makes perfect sense. The people who were rejected essentially took a hit to their ego. They felt like they weren't good enough. They craved validation. People who spend time alone, isolated, or without proper social fulfilment need to find another way to get validation - and that is often fetishes.

This means that if you have a fulfilling day where you experience social inclusion and friendship, you might be naturally less aroused by cuckolding. However, because of porn's effect on the brain, if you get horny that evening, you might jump straight to cuckold porn; that's what your brain has learned can fulfil the need for sexual release. Even though it doesn't arouse you as much at that moment, you don't even ask the question of 'What porn should I watch?' or 'Am I enjoying this as much?'. You become conditioned into acting in

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<sup>7</sup> LaTorre, R. A. (1980). Devaluation of the human love object: Heterosexual rejection as a possible antecedent to fetishism. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 89(2), 295-298.



a certain way - seeking out cuckold porn and masturbating to it as a reaction to your sex drive, even if it's not perfectly arousing on that particular day.

Lastly, you may masturbate to deal with other issues (such as rejection, loneliness, or shame) instead of burning arousal. You learn that cuckold porn can make you feel better during these times.

If this occurs frequently, your real sex drive is never given enough chance to build back up from the last time you masturbated, and so you feel less aroused by other porn or other fantasies, despite this not being a real reflection of your sexual tastes. Then, you assume it is a reflection of your sexual tastes, that you're only aroused by cuckolding, and that 'normal' porn doesn't arouse you enough, so you strengthen the conditioning even further. Going enough time without masturbating will allow you to experience real arousal at softcore fantasies, although it won't remove hardcore ones.

## **Changing**

Every time you masturbate *without* needing this fetish, you recondition your brain into *not needing it* to be aroused. You can change the associations that are partially responsible for arousal, and bit by bit, you can slowly recondition yourself. It may take time, but every day is a chance to move in the right direction. Every time you masturbate or have sex, you will either strengthen the conditioning, or break it and recondition your brain. Also, you have

the chance to form new associations with other more positive sources of arousal.

Similarly, your world view can be changed by consuming less porn, and you can re-sensitize your brain to dopamine by quitting porn too. All of the effects of porn on your brain can be healed by stopping watching porn.

Some people might find better success in strictly watching more softcore porn (but that's hard to stick to when you're aroused, and still has aforementioned negative effects). Some have better success with quitting porn altogether. Or, perhaps you're not as affected by porn. Truthfully, it's possible to manage the downsides, and some people find that easier. Find out what works best for you. In my opinion, the less porn the better, but perhaps I'm biased. I've heard first-hand the damaging effects of porn on people's world view, self-perception, and brain, and it makes me sad. It's probably a very individual thing though, and you should find what's best for you.

# Chapter 2: The Self

“The self-image is changed, for better or worse, not by intellect alone, not by intellectual knowledge alone, but by ‘experiencing.’ Wittingly or unwittingly you developed your self-image by your creative experiencing in the past. You can change it by the same method.” - Dr Maxwell Maltz, *Psycho-cybernetics* (1960)

One of the annoying things about having a subconscious sense of inadequacy is that, when it comes to healing, you can't *think* your way out of it. If you wrote a big list of everything you were good at, everything you excelled at, and every reason why you are not inadequate, that would do nothing to heal.

That's addressing the problem by a logical method, when the subconscious sense of inadequacy often goes directly against logic. You can logically know that you are good enough but that won't change the subconscious. You can't think your way out of it. You have to *act and feel* your way out of it.

The first step is to stop it from continually getting worse by stopping the repeated internalization of shame, which we've already covered. The most basic step in this is stopping and reversing the disconnection which occurs as a result of internalization.

## Self-Connection

It's common to have a self-image which is inaccurate. You may think of yourself in a way which is different to your real life.

The most basic self-connection is with our needs, which was discussed earlier in Book 2: Subconscious Inadequacy. If you struggle with this, a good way to become better at listening to yourself is to meditate; specifically mindfulness meditation. It makes you more mindful of your thoughts, more aware of yourself, and aware of your needs.

Another important method of self-connection is through your feelings. Disconnection from your feelings is a way to cope with toxic shame. Some people have repressed all their emotions to such an extent that they feel nothing. They become hyper-rational robots as a way to cope. Unfortunately, this leads to bad consequences, particularly a lack of empathy for others which leads to poor social skills and a lack of meaningful friendships. This is a guaranteed way to make subconscious inadequacy far worse! The disconnection from their own emotions is a source of many psychological problems.

Other people make claims like 'I don't get angry' or 'I don't get sad' and some people are always angry or always sad.

Emotional repression is extremely common in men, and I hear from many men who believe they're borderline autistic because of their

emotional ineptitude. They feel like sociopaths at times, (or ‘antisocial personality disorder’, as it’s technically called - and this has been found to correlate with fetishes<sup>8</sup>). Cutting off emotions is another side-effect of toxic shame; not just through social conditioning, but through the brain’s way of dealing with childhood pain.

One way of conceptualizing how this works is by thinking of the brain in two separate parts: a rational thinking brain (the neocortex), and an emotional brain (the amygdala and limbic system). The neocortex is responsible for thinking, analyzing, reasoning, and processing, and the limbic system is responsible for emotions, senses, memories, and motivation.

A process known as ‘neuronal gating’ acts as an adaptive biological response for inhibiting pain.<sup>9</sup> The interconnecting fibers between the two separate brain systems can either facilitate or inhibit communication. Inhibiting the communication - neuronal gating - is essentially shutting a gate between the two brains, so the information doesn’t pass. The signals from the limbic system containing the information of emotional life are blocked from entering the neocortex and being consciously recognized.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Thibaut, F., et al (2010). The World Federation of Societies of Biological Psychiatry (WFSBP) guidelines for the biological treatment of paraphilias. *The World Journal of Biological Psychiatry*, 11(4), pp.604-655.

<sup>9</sup> Bradshaw, J., (1988) *Healing The Shame That Binds You*. Deerfield Beach FL: Health Communications Inc.

<sup>10</sup> Many liberties were taken with this conceptualization, as Bradshaw (1988) did.

When the emotional pain in the limbic system is overwhelming, an automatic mechanism closes the gate so that it can't get to the neocortex. The neocortex takes over, and our life becomes dominated by rationalizing, thinking, analyzing, explaining, dissecting, learning, but never feeling.

Once this gate is closed, we block out our emotional past so that the neocortex can function unhindered. However, these emotional imprints don't go away. They stay there as unresolved emotional energy, subtly affecting your life for years to come.

Ego defenses act to keep the gate from opening; they stop us from feeling any pain and to retrospectively justify our actions to ourselves. This may take the form of disconnection from ourselves, or something else like intellectualization which makes healing incredible hard.

How do we open the gate? We do this by letting go of ego defenses - anything that prevents us from feeling - and actively trying to feel. Opening the neuronal gate means allowing yourself to feel the pain of your past trauma. You do this by consciously letting yourself feel. Instead of thinking and rationalizing, you empty your mind, and let the emotions flow through. Grieving is healing, and the way to get rid of these unconscious emotions is to let them out. Not doing so in a rational, analytical way, but rather by opening the gate and letting them flood through.

One of the most successful treatments for phobias is ‘exposure therapy’. In this treatment, the patient is exposed to their phobia in very small steps, starting out by simply imagining their phobia (spiders, for example) until they can do so comfortably, then getting a little closer to their phobia but only if they can do so without fear (like knowing there’s a spider in the next room), then taking another step closer (being in the same room as the spider, but far away), then closer (unless they feel fear, where they should take a step back to where they were comfortable and build back up), then closer, until eventually they are directly confronting their phobia in a situation where they are calm and collected. By doing so, they remove their mental association between the phobia and feeling scared, and essentially remove their phobia.

A similar concept is used for toxic shame<sup>11</sup> and fetishes<sup>12</sup>. The best way out is through; to confront those painful concepts until they no longer cause pain. In the 12-step program - one of the leading treatments for addictions which also serves to heal toxic shame and fetishes<sup>13 14</sup> - the participant is first humbled by admitting they are addicted and powerless. This is popularized by the customs of

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<sup>11</sup> Bradshaw, J., (1988) *Healing The Shame That Binds You*. Deerfield Beach FL: Health Communications Inc. p125

<sup>12</sup> Langevin, R., (2013) *Sexual strands: Understanding and treating sexual anomalies in men*. Routledge. pp31-34

<sup>13</sup> Lennon B. (1994) An integrated treatment program for paraphiliacs, including a 12-step approach. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*; 1:227–41.

<sup>14</sup> Salmon RE. (1995) Therapist’s guide to 12-step meetings for sexual dependencies. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*; 2: 193–213.

alcoholics anonymous, who open their meetings by stating 'My name is x, and I am an alcoholic'. This serves to break down the ego defenses and confront their deepest fears.

By admitting powerlessness, they have nothing left to fear. They are no longer trying to uphold false standards or maintain a false image. They are no longer trying to control and be perfect. They have stopped trying to justify their actions and create excuses. They embrace healthy, human shame, and admit that they are imperfect. They are humbled to the core, and this means they have nothing left to lose, and thus nothing left to fear. By feeling the pain they're trying to avoid, they free themselves from the menacing grasp of all actions they do to deal with the pain. They embrace it, and by doing so, they find freedom from it.

For toxic shame, this means admitting you're imperfect and never will be perfect. It means admitting you're flawed, like every other human.

By living their lives in that humbled state, they learn that actually, there's nothing painful about it. Their fears about not being good enough and being imperfect are completely irrational. They start to break down their associations between imperfection/inadequacy and pain. After spending some time like this, they no longer feel that fear. They no longer feel the paralyzing doubts of inadequacy.



If you can do this too, you will also no longer feel the emotional pain and fears of inadequacy. Admitting imperfections and human limits is confronting the problem and learning that nothing changes. This is particularly important in the social realm; become comfortable showing your flaws to others in a normal, healthy way.

Confronting the painful feelings and fears head-on is how to remove your arousal to this fetish. Once you've investigated your life analytically, all that's left is to let these feelings out, *emotionally*. Allowing yourself to grieve those emotions makes you feel the full force of them.

This does two things: first, it heals them by letting them go. Finally, the unresolved emotional energy can be let out, and resolved. Second, by opening yourself to these emotions, you open yourself to them *in porn*. Next time you view cuckold porn, you'll feel the painful aspects over the arousing ones, and be repulsed instead of turned on. When you open the neuronal gate to your emotions, you're more sensitive to the pain contained within this fetish, and understand why most people find it repulsive. Every time you view cuckold porn from then on, it seems horrible, abusive, and cruel – and you feel that.

You can only get here by allowing yourself to grieve your past experiences and pent-up pain. You do this by sitting down without distractions, and consciously allowing yourself to feel those emotions

without your thinking brain getting in the way with rational excuses and obstacles. Let go of any thoughts, and allow yourself to feel.

Using your insights from the previous books as a guide, explore your past experiences on an emotional level. Let those emotions out.

This is the short-term solution. The long-term solution is about *staying* emotionally open.

### **Periodic Reminders**

Work on paying more conscious attention to your feelings throughout the day. It's a good idea to take a moment every now and then to feel inside yourself, not in your brain but in your body, to just say 'I feel anxious' or 'I feel aggravated' or 'I feel stressed'.

This is not easily felt in your brain, instead, it can be easy to feel it in your body. If you have sadness, you will feel in your body a lot slower, a lot less energy, your eyes will turn more downwards, and your posture will slump. If you feel anger you will feel in your body more restlessness, maybe higher blood pressure or your heart rate will increase, more tension all over.

This is another way to connect with your feelings; you listen to your body. If you just listen to your brain, you'll only connect with how you *think* you feel, or what you *think* you should feel, or maybe how your false self influences your perception of feelings.

Others will suffer with too much of one particular emotion. When we feel inadequate, we often feel threatened, scared, or wronged as a result of our faulty interpretation of the world around us. This leads to anger issues in a lot of cases. It's common to see wild emotional outbursts and a short temper. Anger is an emotion that can control your life, and it can certainly stop subconscious inadequacy from improving. A good solution (again) is mindfulness meditation.

Self-Connection is the first step towards healing the disconnection that is a result of internalization. We should connect with our feelings as well as our needs.

### **Self-Love**

Self-love does not mean recognizing all the great things you've done in life and loving yourself for what you've achieved. That's actually a conditional form of love. It means that I am good enough *if* I do this, which is another way of saying you're not good enough just as you are.

Being good enough just as you are means you don't have to do anything to be good enough. It is unconditional.

Instead you need to try to love yourself regardless of what you've done, even the bad things. You need to love yourself unconditionally, for everything that you are, imperfections and all. And you need to accept that it's ok to be imperfect.

Self-love is not about deluding yourself into thinking you're perfect. It's about seeing your whole self, faults and all, and reacting kindly to that.

Love is a process. It's something that takes effort. The work of love involves giving yourself time just to be - not with the pressure to do more or achieve more, and also not with comforting escapism. Allow yourself to be a 'human being', not a 'human doing' whose self-worth depends on doing things, achieving more, working harder. Allow yourself to be just as you are, right now.

Self-love means you will do the following:

- Take care of yourself - proper hygiene, grooming, taking care of your skin, hair, face etc.
- Take holidays and time off
- Allow yourself pleasure and enjoyment
- Work at your sex life
- Work at your social life
- Work at fulfilling all your other needs
- Take time for things that are important: Exercise, eating properly, cleaning your surroundings

This is not mindless indulgence; it's taking care of yourself by being attuned to what you need. You must be willing to delay gratification so that something else more conducive to your growth might take place. Sometimes, that means resting, other times it means spending time on taking care of yourself. Self-love is fundamentally about giving yourself the permission to meet your needs.

### **Sexual Fulfilment**

Taking out your main source of sexual fulfilment leaves a giant hole and an unmet need. Do not ignore your sexual desires, and do not neglect the fulfilment of this need.

Further to the self-love principle, masturbation is an important part of self-love. A lot of people with undesirable fetishes try to fix it with abstaining from masturbation for as long as possible. It's very counterintuitive - sexual desire is a normal part of being human and a basic human need. Denying yourself sexual pleasure is almost being ashamed of your natural human desires - which is the essence of toxic shame. Remember, we feel shame around our needs, and that includes sex. You need to make sure that you are sexually fulfilled, and that you take time out to attend to your needs.

Otherwise, you will end up craving the fulfilment of this fetish.

Masturbation is very healthy, however, compulsive masturbation, compulsive porn usage, or repeatedly watching porn that doesn't make you happy and leaves you feeling empty, ashamed, unfulfilled,

and low in self-esteem is not healthy. So, I encourage you to take some time to masturbate, without porn. Take the time off to relax and enjoy yourself. Focus on giving yourself pleasure. It's ok to fantasize, but avoid anything that makes you feel shame.

At first you might find it harder to ejaculate, or even sustain an erection. That's ok, don't worry about that. Just focus on giving yourself pleasure and enjoying it in the moment. Some men experience a reduction in their sex drive when they stop watching porn, and some experience an increase. Everyone is unique.

Perhaps no aspect of human activity has been as dysfunctionally shamed as much as our sexuality. You need to train your brain to accept normal sexual arousal. You need to know that it's ok to be aroused. You need to have a healthy relationship with your own sexuality.

Masturbation isn't always healthy, and some people masturbate too much or use it to deal with other issues. If you find you are masturbating when you're not even sexually aroused, maybe you should learn to be more in touch with your needs.

### **Misinterpreting Healthy Fantasies**

Jenson, a single 35-year-old, felt upset and ashamed about imagining his ex-girlfriend every time he masturbated. He felt like he was hopelessly lusting after her, while she had probably moved on. It made him feel bad about himself, like he was sitting at home

fantasizing about her while she was out having sex with new people. This was incredibly upsetting to him. He also felt like a pervert, because he frequently imagined his female friends while masturbating, which made him feel like a 'pathetic loser' as he once put it. This is silly.

It's very normal to imagine ex-girlfriends while masturbating. It's also normal to imagine female friends. We get turned on by anything that gives us validation. Sometimes, the people who can provide us with the most validation are those who knew us the most; our ex-girlfriends have the capacity to give us an all-encompassing type of validation because they knew us the most deeply. Often, we can also gain validation from people who we perceive to be above us in social ranking - being worthy of sex from those friends would affirm ourselves as better than we thought. It's completely normal and healthy to have these sexual attractions.

Ex-girlfriends occupy a special place in our lives, because they got to know us in more intimate detail than anyone else. We will obviously crave their validation and find immense pleasure in imagining their sexual validation. It doesn't mean you're still in love with them, it doesn't mean you're hopelessly lusting after them, and it's very normal.

Rest assured, it's not a one-sided scenario either. As much as our fetish would make us imagine ex-girlfriends having multiple new

lovers and completely forgetting about us, that's not true. Validation goes two ways. Female friends have their own fantasies too, and it's wrong to assume you'd be left out from all of them. You're not a pervert, you're a normal man with a healthy sexuality; own it.



# Chapter 3: Friends

The last stage of healing the subconscious is bringing all this self-acceptance, self-compassion, and self-love to the social domain. Friends are essential for feeling like you're good enough. They give you third-party affirmation of your self-worth, they provide a sense of love, belonging, and security (the fundamental needs), and more. If you don't have a group of friends that you regularly see, then you need to get one. You don't necessarily need many, and you don't need to go 'out' and be extraverted if that isn't you, but you need regular social contact.

Since subconscious inadequacy is initially formed by personal relationships, we need personal relationships to heal it too. Identity is a social phenomenon; we can only see ourselves through the eyes of others. To form a more accurate self-image we need to reach out to non-shaming people.

Some people say to me: "I don't want regular social contact" or "I don't like socializing". This is one of the ways that some people deal with a subconscious sense of inadequacy - by cutting themselves off from their social life. The sense of inadequacy creates an expectancy of rejection, and thus a dislike of social situations or the urge to avoid them altogether. When we don't feel good enough, we often interpret

social situations within that context, seeing everything through a pessimistic lens.

Due to this social pessimism, many people become shy, or very introverted, or socially anxious, or they simply dislike social situations so much that they avoid them. It is no surprise that social anxiety/phobia has been shown to correlate with fetishes.<sup>15</sup>

This is a self-reinforcing phenomenon.<sup>16</sup> Without social connection, we interpret social situations negatively, and end up isolating ourselves. The part of your brain that recognizes faces gets out of sync, and is more likely to recognize neutral faces as hostile.<sup>17</sup> Social isolation makes you assume the worst about others' intentions. We become more self-centered, and appear more cold, unfriendly, and socially awkward than we really are, which isolates us even more. Even if a socially isolated person tried to be social, they would get in their own way and end up alone. After a long period of lacking social contact, your brain effectively prevents you from re-integrating mostly because it creates *negative assumptions*. So, if you find this happening, make sure not to follow those assumptions.

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<sup>15</sup> Hoyer, J., Kunst, H. and Schmidt, A., (2001). Social phobia as a comorbid condition in sex offenders with paraphilia or impulse control disorder. *The Journal of nervous and mental disease*, 189(7), pp.463-470.

<sup>16</sup> Cacioppo, J.T., Chen, H.Y. and Cacioppo, S., (2017) Reciprocal influences between loneliness and self-centeredness: A cross-lagged panel analysis in a population-based sample of African American, Hispanic, and Caucasian adults. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 43(8), pp.1125-1135.

<sup>17</sup> Yoon, K.L. and Zinbarg, R.E., (2008). Interpreting neutral faces as threatening is a default mode for socially anxious individuals. *Journal of abnormal psychology*, 117(3), p.680.

Furthermore, when you've recently watched a few hours of cuckold porn and have been thoroughly degraded and humiliated, you feel dirty, tainted, secretive, as if you need to conceal your true nature and not let anyone come close. You feel like you're different, bad, flawed, weird, or have something to hide. This only makes you more prone to avoiding social situations, or acting awkwardly in them.

We all need social validation. Actually, subconscious inadequacy makes us need it slightly more. This can make us even more fearful of things going wrong, or even more avoidant. This is related to attachment style: avoidant people avoid social relationships, anxious people fear them. The best way to overcome this is to form secure relationships.

The neediness for social validation becomes apparent through other ways. To fit in and be liked, many people try very hard to be something they're not. Others go the opposite way, embracing rejection and solitude on purpose as a defense mechanism, and becoming too nonchalant and seemingly uninterested, so much so that it leads to isolation.

A healthy social life with genuine friendships is essential. However, the most important thing is not the friendship, but how you act. No matter how many friends you have, you'll still feel inadequate if you're not being honest and authentic. If you're putting on a front, or

subtly lying, or simply not letting people get close to you, you will not receive the validation and fulfilment of your needs.

Sometimes, we're not even sure ourselves if we're fully authentic. That's ok, I don't think anyone is ever 100% themselves. The important part is when we know for sure that we're not authentic - when we leave the interaction thinking 'why did I say that?' or 'why did I lie?'. That's the area we need to improve on.

## Friends and Insecurities

Social contact is the number one way to heal whatever insecurity you may have. The more time you spend around people, the more you'll know that everyone has flaws, and the more you'll be able to see yours in a wider context where they don't matter as much. Open, honest social contact destroys insecurities like nothing else.

Having many other people in your life stops you from focusing on yourself. Shame and inadequacy are self-centered feelings. Thinking about ourselves usually means thinking *negatively* about ourselves. If we're left alone to think about past social interactions, we will undoubtedly over-analyze. Small moments of awkwardness or imperfection become giant flaws when we have the time and solitude to think about them and dwell on them. Our self-critical mind looks only for bad things, and ignores the good things, so we develop an inaccurate self-image. Keeping busy with daily social

interactions is a valid solution. Draw attention away from yourself with friends, and you can stop being self-centered.

When these friendships are honest, open, and secure, you stop worrying about being left out, excluded, and not good enough. Importantly, having an overabundance of friends - more than you want - makes you not care if you aren't good enough for one of them. It makes you better at handling the burden of being good enough. It creates a secure feeling inside yourself, free from fearing inadequacy, because rejection from one friend is a good thing when you have too many.

Particularly, you gain a real sense of what it means to be human. You see other people accurately, flaws and all, and become more comfortable with being imperfect, and being yourself.

Openness and honesty does not mean being without privacy. Privacy too is a human need. It also doesn't mean being ignorant of social norms.

For example, being open about certain things can be socially weird at times, and that's when privacy is necessary. Some secrets are only secret because it would be a social faux pas to talk about them. If your friends are talking about their weird things, then you shouldn't hide yours. It may not feel great if it involves admitting you're imperfect, but stop trying to be great and start trying to be real. It is the denial of your reality which causes problems, either from

attempting to be superior or feeling so uselessly inferior, it is the inability to be authentically you which stops you from healing inadequacy.

The feeling of needing to keep it secret is exactly what gives it power over you. When it's a secret, it's toxic shame. It's evidence that you are fundamentally flawed and no-one will ever love you. It's proof that you are simply inadequate. When it's out in the open, it's healthy shame. It's a bad thing that you hate about yourself, but it's not yourself that you hate. It's a way in which you're less than perfect - in a world where everyone is less than perfect.

Most people assume that they will be outcast from society for talking about these things. They are unable to accept it as a small imperfection, and instead see it as an all-encompassing confirmation of total inadequacy.

In reality, you will most likely gain respect from your devotion to overcoming it. If you make it clear that you don't value these things, no-one will think you do! Perhaps, it will inspire the person you're talking with to share something similar about them.

The reasoning behind keeping secrets is: 'If I hide this thing from everyone, I can still be loved, accepted, and no-one will have to know I'm imperfect. I can go on appearing to be without major flaws'. Hiding imperfections and flaws, and trying to appear perfect is the result of toxic shame. Healthy shame means being as flawed and

imperfect as everyone else. Being unable to accept imperfections and flaws is the hallmark of toxic shame. Therefore, keeping it secret is what gives it power over you. Some secrets carry life-destroying power; particularly addictions like alcoholism and porn addiction. While it is secret, it is a big source of toxic shame, and that toxic shame will never be released if you don't allow yourself to experience healthy shame and acknowledge imperfections.

Having a dirty little secret leads to lying, closing yourself off, unable to be truly yourself or to let people in, and social isolation - leading to more toxic shame. Most importantly, it means you can never heal the toxic shame. Usually, the bigger the secret, the more you need to tell someone. Humble yourself; that is the cure.

If this sounds like a step too far for you, it probably is at this point in time. It takes a lot of social contact to become comfortable enough, and know that people won't judge, mock, or shame you nearly as much as you think. The overarching principle is what's important: imperfections don't make you worthless.

Write your story, your feelings, your shameful secrets, your insecurities, your confessions, and get it out into the world. If nothing else, the process will remove the power that these insecurities have over you. And, in future, when you've overcome this fetish, you should be able to freely recount the past and tell your journey of having this fetish. If you can't even visualize this, you will

never truly find self-acceptance, and will never stop feeling inadequate. As counterintuitive as all of this seems, it is at least the truth.

Getting more friends is a sure-fire way to get a more accurate self-image, and remove insecurities. Honesty is the key ingredient.

## Friends and The Brain

Subconscious inadequacy is sometimes accompanied by a subtle, low-grade depression. The worst thing is, if you've never experienced anything different, you're not aware of it, and cannot be aware of it, because you've never felt differently! Depression is also something that makes recovery hard, because it prevents you from being able to take action.

Depression is characterized by low serotonin levels. Serotonin is a chemical in our brain that regulates mood. Friendship boosts serotonin.<sup>18</sup>

If you're not getting social contact while being open and honest, you're not getting as much serotonin, and that's bad. Similarly, social situations which involve defeat, such as rejection and exclusion or insecure relationships, are just as bad.

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<sup>18</sup> Kiser, D., SteemerS, B., Branchi, I., & Homberg, J. R. (2012). The reciprocal interaction between serotonin and social behavior. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 36(2), 786–798.



Serotonin is linked to your place in social hierarchies, and moving up the hierarchy produces serotonin. The social hierarchy is a mental construct which everyone perceives differently, and it's actually your perception that matters. You can improve your perception just by having normal, secure friendships and fitting in.

A type of drug called SSRI (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor) works to increase the amount of serotonin in the brain, particularly to treat deficiencies. It's the standard treatment for depression and anxiety, but more interestingly it's been used to successfully treat fetishes too; it appears to selectively decrease fetishistic arousal without decreasing sex drive.<sup>19</sup>

If sexual behavior comes from validation, and serotonin reflects your perceived place on the social hierarchy (and therefore your need for validation - people high on the hierarchy don't need validation as much), then low serotonin theoretically causes an increased need for validation, which is something that contributes to fetishes. High serotonin causes a decreased need for validation - and therefore decreased arousal from fetishes. This is a theoretical explanation why SSRIs work in treating fetishes.

It's not really testable or provable, so we'll never be certain, but it doesn't quite matter the theory as to *why* - what's important is that

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<sup>19</sup> Greenberg, D. M., & Bradford, J. M. W. (1997). Treatment of the Paraphilic Disorders: A Review of the Role of the Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 9(4), 349–360.

SSRIs appear to selectively reduce arousal to fetishes, without necessarily decreasing sex drive.

### **How To Raise Serotonin Levels**

You can naturally increase your serotonin levels by doing a number of things.

Firstly, increasing the effort you make socially. By climbing the social ladder, you'll increase the amount of serotonin in your brain. If you're someone who tends to isolate themselves, or not spend much effort on this aspect of life, it may be beneficial to reconsider that.

Secondly, exercise increases serotonin, particularly aerobic exercise like running. It also appears bright light (being outside), and a healthy diet can also increase serotonin. Furthermore, self-induced changes in mood can have a biological effect. Researchers found that people who were made to feel happy showed an increase in serotonin, and people who were made to feel sad showed a decrease in serotonin. So, changing your mood (literally 'thinking positive') seems to feed back into your serotonin system, which in turn will positively affect your mood, which positively affects serotonin, which positively affects mood, which positively affects serotonin, and you'll enter an upwards spiral.<sup>20</sup> Just by acting like someone high on the social hierarchy, your serotonin system will follow. Standing up straight with your shoulders back, smiling, laughing, and cultivating

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<sup>20</sup> Young, S.N., (2007). How to increase serotonin in the human brain without drugs. *Journal of psychiatry & neuroscience: JPN*, 32(6), p.394.

these effects before they naturally happen ('fake it until you make it') seems like it may increase serotonin.

One of the weirder ways people have tried to do this is through 'laughter therapy' or 'laughter yoga'. This is where a group of people gather to laugh, without anything funny to laugh about - they just make the sounds and actions of laughter on purpose. These groups meet up, sometimes in a public place, to stand there, laughing for 20-30 minutes or until they get tired. Surprisingly, this has been shown to have positive effects.<sup>21</sup> The brain seems like it can't tell the difference between what's fake and what's real in our actions, so smiling, laughing, positive thinking, and 'keeping your chin up' may actually have some scientific validity in the treatment of low serotonin levels, and starting an upwards spiral.

## Friends and Addiction

Addiction can be caused by toxic shame, and has understandably been shown to correlate with fetishes<sup>22 23</sup> - they can share the same cause. In many ways, this fetish is an addiction - if you continue to engage in it, despite not wanting to, and trying hard to stay away (with no success), then it shares many similarities with addictions.

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<sup>21</sup> Shahidi, M; (2010) "Laughter yoga versus group exercise program in elderly depressed women: a randomized controlled trial". *Int J Geriatr Psychiatry*. 26: 322-7.

<sup>22</sup> Allnutt, S.H., Bradford, J.M., Greenberg, D.M. and Curry, S., (1996) 'Co-morbidity of alcoholism and the paraphilias.' *Journal of Forensic Science*, 41(2), pp.234-239.

<sup>23</sup> Kafka, M.P. and Hennen, J., (2002) A DSM-IV Axis I comorbidity study of males (n= 120) with paraphilias and paraphilia-related disorders. *Sexual Abuse: A Journal of Research and Treatment*, 14(4), pp.349-366.

One of the most interesting studies on addiction came from an experiment in the 1980s, where scientists split rats into two groups and put them in different settings. The first group was put in small individual cages, in complete isolation with one another, where they couldn't communicate. The other group were put in 'rat park' - an enclosure with platforms for climbing, tin cans for hiding in, wood chips for strewing around, and running wheels for exercise, as well as many other rats of the opposite sex, all free to interact with each other.

Each group were given two bottles to drink from - one with water, and one with a mix of water and addictive drugs. Researchers found that the rats in solitary confinement chose to consume far more drugs than the rats from rat park - up to 19 times more. The rats in rat park resisted the drugs, and although they tried it occasionally, they showed a significant preference for the plain water.<sup>24 25</sup>

In another experiment, the researchers put all the rats into cages, and got them 'hooked' on the drugs over two months without any choice of what to drink. Then, they moved those rats into rat park, and gave them the choice between plain water or drugged water. They chose plain water.

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<sup>24</sup> Alexander, B.K. et al. (1981) 'Effect of early and later colony housing on oral ingestion of morphine in rats' *Pharmacology Biochemistry and Behavior*, 15(4), pp.571-576

<sup>25</sup> Chauvet, C., et al. (2009) 'Environmental Enrichment Reduces Cocaine Seeking and Reinstatement Induced by Cues and Stress but Not by Cocaine.' *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 34(13), pp.2767-2778.

This study suggested that addiction has a huge social element, and a lack of social fulfilment can be a significant cause of addiction. The rats in rat park had everything they needed, and the rats in isolation took drugs to *cope* with their situation.

The rats' addictive behavior was a faulty attempt to make up for their unfulfilled social needs. As the author wrote, 'Addiction isn't you - it's the cage you live in'.<sup>26</sup>

This is why friends are so important for anyone with addictive tendencies. By forming new, healthy relationships, we not only meet our needs, but also heal the damage caused by the initial faulty parent/child relationship. By seeing ourselves mirrored in the eyes of others, we develop a healthy and more accurate self-image. This is one step to cure addictions.

### **Friends And The Opposite**

The conclusion of this section is that fulfilling friendships lead to a more accurate self-image, less feelings of insecurity and inadequacy, more social validation, and the fulfilment of social needs.

However, at times, it can feel like the complete opposite is true; that social situations lead to increased stress, increased pressure to be good enough, and increased feelings of insecurity. Entering the social world can certainly seem to create more problems than it solves,

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<sup>26</sup> Addiction is a complex issue with many other potential causes aside from this, such as chemical dependence and genetic predisposition. Environment is one factor.

because it means seeing yourself compared to others, introducing a greater burden to be good enough, and taking on more responsibility. Avoidance seems easier, more comforting, and likely to lead to happiness. And it does, in the short term, because we don't have to risk anything. In the long term, however, it doesn't lead to happiness.

It can seem like it creates more problems, but actually it simply brings existing problems to light. It is the tool that makes you confront yourself, instead of avoiding and ignoring. This can be a difficult process, and a painful one for some people, but it's worth it.

The aim is not to climb to the top of the social circle, it is to settle with a group of non-shaming, accepting, secure people in an open, honest, and fun relationship. Forming secure, authentic friendships with men and women, where principles of self-compassion, self-love, and self-acceptance can be brought into the social domain is the ultimate goal.

The aim is also not to be extroverted, loud, socially authoritative, or something you're not, but to overcome the defense mechanisms of social avoidance that prevent you from feeling good enough.

# Chapter 4: Integrating The Shadow

‘One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The later procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular.’ - Carl Jung

The psychologist Carl Jung suggested that all of us have a ‘shadow’ - a dark side of us, filled with repressed aspects of ourselves that we deny or hide. Everything that we don’t like about ourselves gets pushed away and rejected, but never actually leaves us. Instead, they gather to form the ‘shadow’.

‘Having been banished from consciousness, shadow impulses tend to fester, assuming exaggerated and distorted proportions - which is why the shadow so often breaks into consciousness in the form of bizarre or “perverted” sexual fantasies that flagrantly disregard both cultural norms and personal values...’ Jack Morin, *The Erotic Mind* (1995)

Everything that you deny and reject about yourself does not go away, it lingers outside of your awareness where it can grow and thrive

without you knowing about it. For us, this is everything to do with inadequacy. We tend to deny things about ourselves which we really don't like - but that doesn't help. Denial makes everything worse. You cannot feel good enough as you are if you deny who you are. Before you try to feel good about it, you need to accept it!

Developing an accurate self-image does not mean to be without flaws. Instead, we must confront our flaws, and integrate them into our lives.

'Most people don't really want to act out their darker fantasies, especially in ways that are clearly damaging... Problems most commonly erupt in those who keep the shadow locked away in its unconscious dungeon, thus eliminating any chance for them to reintegrate their rejected aspects into an expanded self-awareness.' Jack Morin, *The Erotic Mind* (1995)

It is frequently *denial* which causes the escalation of sexual problems. Denial leads to being *out of control* of these impulses. That's not good.

Carl Jung repeatedly emphasized this in his work, teaching the importance of 'integrating the shadow' - learning to accept and acknowledge the things you're not proud of. In other words, it's about feeling healthy, conscious shame about things you dislike about yourself, instead of repressing it into the subconscious and feeling toxic shame.



‘The shadow, including its erotic manifestations, holds the key to the whole self, as opposed to the limited self to which most of us have become accustomed. When shadow material is denied an outlet, pressure builds for it to push beyond the safe boundaries of the imagination and become destructive. **The shadow is darkest when we refuse to look at it.**’ - Jack Morin, *The Erotic Mind* (1995). Emphasis mine.

Specifically, this means everything you’re ashamed of. You must integrate these things into your identity. Write them down, accept them, remember them, and stop trying to hide, repress, or deny them. It won’t make you feel good, it’s not pleasurable, and it doesn’t provide any gratification - but it’s much healthier than thinking you’re someone that you aren’t. An accurate self-image is much healthier than a flawless self-image.

Superiority is a different manifestation of inferiority, and they both come from toxic shame. Remember, it’s ok to be imperfect, in fact that’s the very foundation of healthy shame. Intentionally try to feel healthy shame; integrate and accept the parts of yourself that you repress, and try to make this as accurate, reasonable, and rational as possible.

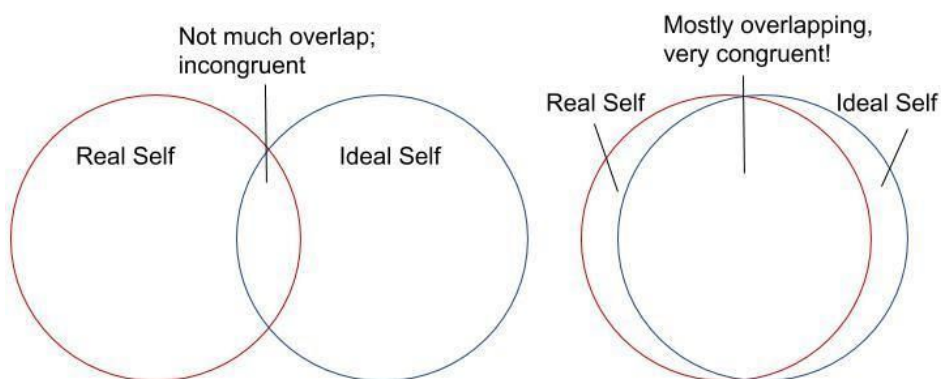
This does not mean dwelling on bad things and feeling inadequate. It means feeling healthy shame, feeling human, and moving on.

### **Ideal Self vs Real Self**

Furthermore, everyone has a concept of their 'ideal self' - the imagined image of ourselves that we want to be. When this is significantly different from our 'real selves' - the people we are right now and the actions we do regularly - it causes psychological mayhem.

When the 'real self' and the 'ideal self' don't have much in common, we have a psychological incongruence and develop many coping mechanisms to deal with that.

On the other hand, if there's a lot more overlap between the 'real self' and the 'ideal self', where they're almost the same, we're able to have much more control over our lives. We're much healthier and happier, and have fewer problems as a result.



If our perception of our real self is warped, like when we have a sense of inadequacy, we're unable to integrate the real self with the ideal self, and develop multiple defense mechanisms and problems which prevent us from making positive changes in our lives.

Furthermore, if our perception of our ideal self is warped, like when it is an unreachable fantasy or anything more than we're able to do right now, we will never be able to develop the healthy congruence we need. The real self will always be playing catch-up and never be healthily integrated, and that's another way in which we can live with a divide between the real self and the ideal self.

We will probably never be able to have an identical real self and ideal self, but we can get close, and doing so is crucial for psychological serenity.

When your thoughts are at war with your emotions and deeper motivations, it's inner turmoil. Accept your feelings and needs without fighting them. Don't try to out-think them or intellectually refine them. Remove the incongruence between your feelings, needs, and thoughts, and then finally start to act out this inner truth so there's no incongruence between your inner self and your *actions*. This means acting honestly.

# Chapter 5: Drawing The Right Line

In every person, there is a line between fantasy and reality, and between thoughts and actions. When this line becomes blurred, vague, or wrongly placed, the effects of your fantasies can have a menacing grip on your self-esteem, as if you're worthless.

The cuckold fetish can make some men feel like they're flawed, defective, fundamentally broken, and will never fit in. This is toxic shame, and it's the very same toxic shame that causes the fetish in the first place. The toxic shame causes the fetish and the fetish causes toxic shame. This is a self-reinforcing spiral.

Therefore, to break out of this spiral it is essential to draw a clear line between toxic and healthy shame, and between fantasy and reality. It is healthy to feel shame about indulging a fetish which contradicts your values. It is not healthy to direct that shame towards yourself and conclude that you are worthless. It is healthy to have fantasies, but unhealthy for those fantasies to affect your self-esteem.

The difference between toxic shame and healthy shame comes partly from your interpretations, and partly from your actions. Usually,

denying this fetish and trying to hide it from yourself leads to a lingering feeling of toxic shame. Denial and self-restriction are unhealthy. However, it's also unhealthy to engage in something which contradicts your personal values - which can very easily lead to toxic shame. Therefore, it is important to act in a way which is without denial, but also with strong boundaries. It is important to draw the line in the right place.

Many children are raised in an environment where all sexual thoughts are forbidden, and sex is a naughty, disgraceful act. This attitude of creating a 'taboo' only serves to eroticize the experience further, and these children frequently grow up to engage in even more debauched sexual acts, fueled by the taboo. (It would not be surprising if the adults that created that sex-shaming environment held a few dirty secrets of their own!)

Some people rebel against these sex-shaming principles, and go in the complete opposite end of the spectrum, engaging in any sexual behavior whatsoever, without any regard to boundaries, ethical consequences, or personal values. Some even start to think that sex and morality are separate, and the bedroom is a unique dimension where experiences are not real.

At first this feeling can be liberating, as a rebellion against the aforementioned restrictive morality. However, before long it becomes as empty and conceited as the principles they're rebelling

against. Sexual behavior must be directed by the same thing that guides all other behavior - your personal values. If not, sexual liberation ultimately becomes an empty goal, and sexual restriction becomes a meaningless contradiction. Both seek to form an identity around sex - either of total tolerance or total restriction - in order to deal with discomfort about themselves, and instead find comfort in thinking that their attitude is 'right'.

All too often, I hear of men trying to deny themselves masturbation, punishing themselves for 'impure' thoughts, or otherwise attempting to destroy all remnants of their sexuality. Conversely, on the other end of the spectrum, many people will humiliate themselves to such a great extent that it violates their personal boundaries, or disrespects their morals.

It is imperative for your sexual health that you understand your personal values, morals, and boundaries, and use them to draw a clear line between right and wrong. The process of healing subconscious inadequacy can take a very long time, and during this process, there are bound to be remnants of your fantasies which crop up. It is important to know where you stand, so you can act in an appropriate, healthy way when this happens, and know the difference between right and wrong, fantasy and reality, and between thoughts and actions.

Otherwise, when a thought pops in your head with only vaguely submissive undertones, you'll feel like you're a total failure and utterly worthless - toxic shame.

Or, on the other hand, you'll violate your boundaries and do things that actually upset you, and make you feel like you're a total failure and utterly worthless - toxic shame.

Without a clear line and pre-defined principles, you will unintentionally create more toxic shame, either through unreasonable restriction, or the disregard of boundaries.

### **Restriction**

David, a 30-year-old accountant, was unable to draw this line in the right place. Whenever David masturbated, he needed to watch cuckold porn. David was distraught. He absolutely hated himself after every time this happened. Cuckolding was something that he detested, and he was upset to be getting pleasure from it. He tried to restrict himself - firstly by denying himself from watching cuckold porn because it made him feel bad, which is fair enough. Then, however, he started to escalate his self-restriction to an unreasonable extent. He started punishing all fetishistic *thoughts*, then denying himself masturbation, then denying himself *sexual* thoughts, and eventually becoming upset at getting an erection upon seeing a hot woman in a tv show.

David drew the line too close to restriction, in fact, he didn't have a 'line' at all. Of course, he took it to a ridiculous extent, but even in the beginning, he punished himself for his thoughts, even though thoughts are meaningless. David treated fantasy and reality as if they were the same, and by doing so he enhanced the very thing he was trying to fight. His denial caused toxic shame, which created deeper urges for cuckolding.

David's solution was to let himself feel healthy shame, not toxic shame. By recognizing that his fantasies were contradicting his values, but understanding that fantasizing this doesn't mean much about him, he could divert his shame away from himself and understand that he wasn't fundamentally flawed, and most importantly take pride in his line between fantasy and reality. He had an opportunity for self-affirmation; to become proud of his values and happy with himself for his decisions. David became proud to keep his fantasies confined to his mind, and this alleviated much of his toxic shame. By alleviating the toxic shame, David saw a huge reduction in the amount that cuckolding turned him on, and was able to enjoy himself without it.

Arnold, a 19-year-old student, was ashamed of masturbation. He felt like masturbation meant he was a failure, and that he was weak. He once declared to himself 'I will never masturbate again', only to break that promise 4 days later. Arnold had toxic shame around his



sexuality and found it hard to accept that sexual expression is an unavoidable human need.

He hated himself simply for having a penis and a sex drive. Then, when his sexual needs became too large to resist, he would release it all in one huge extended masturbation session lasting for many hours - and then feel such toxic shame around that. He would think of himself as a failure.

Arnold also drew the line too close to restriction. He restricted all sexual behavior. His toxic shame made him hate his sexual needs. Then, meeting those needs made him feel toxic shame, and the cycle continued, endlessly creating toxic shame. Arnold needed to recognize that it's ok to masturbate.

I imagine that, like most of the men I've worked with, most people reading this book will struggle with over-restriction. It seems so hard to have a line - any line - between fantasy and reality, when cuckolding contradicts your values so much. It is almost enraging for some readers to even consider this! This is because it makes them feel like a failure, weak, submissive, dishonorable, or many other negative things.

The solution to this is not restriction. Restriction causes toxic shame and makes everything worse. Restriction only intensifies the problem. Restriction is probably what got them here in the first place. The solution is to investigate these feelings, and question them,

because they're often completely irrational and just plain wrong. Then, it is to draw a strong line in the right place.

Most often, a common thought about this fetish is feeling as if it's your place in life - that finding pleasure in submission, humiliation, and being excluded, means you are naturally destined to take a lower, more submissive position in life, destined to be humiliated and excluded *in real life*, and are never going to reach the success and happiness you desire.

This is stupid. There is no way that your fetish can impact your real life; only if you let it. Your sexual tastes do not determine or affect your success in life. Having a fetish doesn't make you any less worthy of love and happiness, and doesn't affect the person you are outside the bedroom - unless you fail to draw a line between sex and reality.

Some people equate their sexual tastes to their aspirations, as if their sexual fantasies should be conducive to personal growth, and intertwined with fantasies of their ideal life. This is clearly in need of a strong line! Believing that you need continuity between your sexual fantasies and your personal aspirations is wrong. You can have sexual fantasies about being a homeless criminal (for example), and still live a life of wealth, integrity, and achievement - if you draw a strong line between the two. You can fantasize about being tied up and powerless and still live a life involving powerful positions and

responsibility. You can fantasize about hurting others without being a bad person. You can fantasize about being a slave to women without acting any differently in real life. There should be no link between your sexual fantasies and 'your place in life'. Your fetish does not define you, unless you let it. Your bedroom activities should not escape your bedroom. Don't let them affect anything outside of the bedroom. Draw a strong line. The moment your fetish starts to change the way you act in real life, stop. Do not let it control you. Draw a line.

As well as feeling shame around masturbation, Arnold had this same problem too. He was a workaholic who had high hopes for his life, but felt like his sexual fantasies destroyed his probability of success. He felt as if he could not be a happy, successful, confident man while simultaneously having sexual fantasies of almost the opposite; being humiliated, submissive, and inferior. He felt as if his sexual fantasies would stop him from achieving what he wanted. This is wrong. If any fetish escapes your bedroom against your will, it's a *huge* problem. Draw the line there. Arnold again needed to draw a strong line between sex and real life.

### **Boundaries**

Arnold also had a different problem: aside from not allowing himself to masturbate, he disliked the amount of *time* he was spending masturbating. After a period of restricting himself, he would

frequently 'relapse' and spend hours and hours letting out his pent-up sexual energy. He would then be upset that he hadn't spent that time more productively. As a busy student, Arnold had many things that he wanted to do, and his masturbatory issues got in the way of that. He was not a hedonist, and didn't value physical pleasure very highly, instead valuing achievement.

This was a totally valid objection, where his sex life was contradicting his values and having real-life consequences. As well as allowing himself masturbation, Arnold also needed to set a boundary around how much time he was spending masturbating. Allowing himself endless hours of mindless masturbation is not a good solution for improving his life. Rather, Arnold needed to draw a clear line between the masturbation that he needed and the over-indulgence that he didn't. He needed to draw a clear line, and set a healthy boundary.

Arnold also had a habit of watching porn when he was bored. His brain was strongly conditioned to seek out cuckold porn, even when he wasn't aroused. Obviously, it can be highly distressing to watch that without being turned on. Without arousal, the negative emotions of the fetish are seen for what they are, instead of being sexualized, and it can become more heart-breaking than sexual. Especially, when Arnold jumped straight to cuckold porn at the first sign of arousal without any preparation, he would feel these negative emotions and feel upset and ashamed. Without being aroused first,

he would empathize with the situation and feel much worse than he would when he was extremely turned on first.

Here, again, Arnold's problem was the lack of healthy boundaries. Arnold could remove the majority of his suffering by committing to not watch porn out of boredom and to not jump straight into the deep end. Just by implementing these changes, he would feel about 75% better - and more importantly, he'd feel 75% less toxic shame.

Jim, a 22-year-old student, was a little more open-minded. He had asked his long-term girlfriend to role play this fantasy in bed. Over the years, the role play started to feel more and more real, and although it was a turn-on in the bedroom, it was upsetting when Jim thought about it later. Jim suspected that what his girlfriend was saying during their dirty talking was true, and the feeling of inadequacy that this created is upsetting when it isn't being sexualized. He felt like he really wasn't enough for her. He felt like she didn't want him. He felt awful, and retreated further into his fantasies to deal with that, which only made it worse.

Jim let his sexual fantasies interfere with his real life and destroy his self-esteem, along with his relationship. Jim should have drawn the line much earlier. He liked the sexual role play, but should have stepped in when it started to escape the bedroom. That was where his values and feelings started to be affected. At the point where Jim realized he was upset, he needed to talk to his girlfriend and get

reassurance that this was only sexual role-play, and nothing else. He needed reassurance that he was a big strong man that was perfectly capable of pleasing her.

Jim was comfortable mocking that idea during sexual role play, but he wasn't comfortable with that in life. That was where Jim needed to draw his line. Unfortunately, this humiliation made Jim feel toxic shame, and the toxic shame made him feel like he wasn't good enough to ask for boundaries.

It was hard for Jim to speak up and draw his line, but eventually, he did it. He asked his girlfriend to reassure him that it's only role play, and for her to say this every time after they did it. This was a solution that worked perfectly for him.

This is only Jim's situation and this line will be unique to him. Peter, a 23-year-old waiter, was a little more conservative than Jim. Peter had also asked his girlfriend to try some role play, but this alone made him very uncomfortable. Unlike Jim, Peter's discomfort came simply from bringing his fantasy into his real sex life - and he didn't even enjoy it. He found that he much preferred normal, loving sex, and didn't actually experience as much arousal from role-playing his fantasies. This was confusing to him. Peter was under the impression that fantasies should become reality and that those fantasies would still be pleasurable in real life - which are both incorrect assumptions.

Few people would want to make the full extent of cuckolding a reality, and nearly everyone would find it to be far less pleasurable in reality! Peter felt so much discomfort from this that it really wasn't worth it for him. Furthermore, Peter found that it was putting a strain on his relationship - his girlfriend felt uncomfortable too. Peter needed to accept that it's ok to keep fantasies separate from real life. It's ok to not act out your fantasies, and to not involve your partner. He needed to draw his line between his personal fantasies and his relationships. His lack of a healthy boundary was damaging to him. Peter decided he'd be much happier and more sexually fulfilled if he only had normal sex, without involving his fetish. It surprised him that it was ok to draw this line - he thought he somehow *had* to mix fantasy with reality. This is not true!

Paul, a 34-year-old cleaner, came to me after bringing his fantasies to real life, with unintended consequences. He had let his girlfriend sleep with someone else, thinking it would be nothing but sexy fun. Unfortunately, Paul felt like he'd been punched in the gut - he felt jealousy, insecurity, inadequacy, and everything you'd feel from being cheated on. This is common. Real life and sex are not separate.

It's a common assumption that liking a certain type of porn means you'd also like it if it happened in real life. This is wrong! Sometimes - particularly with emotional fetishes - it's only arousing when it's *not real*. If it happens in real life, it's as heartbreaking and horrible as you'd expect. In fantasy, we know that it isn't real, and *that's why it's*

*arousing*; we're able to overcome those horrible emotions. In real life, when it's not consensual and not happening for your pleasure, the emotions are real, and we don't overcome them, we just experience them like normal, and thus don't find pleasure from them. Paul didn't realise this; he thought that being aroused by something in porn meant that he wanted it to happen in real life. It doesn't mean that! There's a big difference between fantasy and reality, and with fetishes that's also the difference between pleasure and genuine pain! Draw your line!

Paul was then faced with a giant web of problems - being upset, but not able to tell his girlfriend, because he made her do it, and she did it to make him happy, but he didn't know if he could continue the relationship because he felt so bad, and he couldn't look at her in the same way again, but it's his fault, so he couldn't end the relationship because she was only trying to make him happy and it was his mistake, etc. I've read many similar stories, and can conclude that navigating scenarios like this are complex and very difficult.

Paul also needed to realize that he didn't *have to* bring his fantasies to reality, and that when he did, he didn't have to go the whole way and do something that would negatively affect his relationship outside of the bedroom. It's important to know your boundaries, and Paul unfortunately discovered this a little too late.



Paul also suffered from a lack of sexual functioning - he couldn't even get an erection without involving his fetish. Whereas most people can choose whether to involve their fantasies or not, Paul had no choice - he had zero normal sexual functioning. He wasn't able to have sex or masturbate without thinking of his fetish. This is a problem!

Paul found the solution was to reset his brain by abstaining from porn and masturbation until he found he was turned on by the simple pleasures of nudity alone. He did restrict himself, but he did so in order to *encourage* his normal sexuality, not deny it.

Carlos liked to cross-dress and found sexual thrill in being emasculated. Nothing was more arousing to him than being forcefully feminized, and humiliated as a result. Although Carlos kept this activity to himself, and had no desire to make it real, he still felt real-world effects of this.

He was scared to bring anyone over to his house - in case they rummaged around in his bedroom and found his crossdressing clothes - and was particularly unwilling to bring female guests back to his room. He lived in fear of someone finding his female underwear, and judging him based on that. In the back of his mind, when interacting with people, he would have nervous feelings and fearful thoughts such as 'What if they found out?', 'Can they tell by looking at me?', 'What if I didn't clean off the makeup properly?',

‘What if they want to see my room?’, ‘What if I left the clothes out on display?’. He was unable to be comfortable and feel secure in himself. This damaged his social life.

He was a normal guy but felt like he had a huge secret that he needed to protect at all costs. His dating life was non-existent as a result, and his friendships were severely lacking in openness and honesty because of this. Carlos always felt like he had something to hide - even far away from home, the feeling stuck with him - and felt unable to let anyone get close to him because of a fear of them finding his secret.

Carlos either needed to throw his crossdressing clothes away and rely on imagination, or he needed to get a locked box for his crossdressing clothes. And then he needed to hide that locked box inside a larger locked box.

It is unacceptable for sexual fetishes to affect your real life! The moment this started to happen, Carlos should have drawn his line. He needed to set a healthy boundary between his fetish and real life - declaring that it should have no unwanted side-effects on his friendships or relationships - and then look for a solution.

However, when toxic shame takes over, it makes you feel like there are no solutions - that this is just *you*, and you’re destined to have no relationships, and no real friendships, because you have a fetish which makes you broken, defective, and worthless.

This is toxic!

Carlos could have lived a happy, fulfilling life, *with* his fetish, if he just spent 5 minutes identifying the exact problem and looking for solutions. Toxic shame makes you think there are no solutions. *There are always solutions*. Carlos didn't feel like he was worthy of drawing a line. He felt like it was just *him*. Again, this is toxic shame. Just by drawing his line in the right place, Carlos could feel much better, and immediately remove much of his toxic shame.

Ron, a 54-year-old farmer, had spent most of his life in polygamous relationships and his current marriage was no exception. He and his wife were swingers, and had always had an open marriage. For the most part, it worked well for both of them, and they navigated most aspects of their open relationship well. In fact, it had brought a spark back to their marriage, and introduced a sexual energy that had been gone for too long. Over the years, Ron's sexual tastes started to lean more heavily towards cuckolding than anything else.

Ron's problems came when his wife started staying over away from home, multiple nights in a row, with the same man. Ron was fine with her having multiple sexual partners, but the idea of romantic *intimacy* bothered him. He was upset that his wife wanted to spend *time* with someone else, not sex. When he thought about his wife cuddling her boyfriend, cooking for him, and caring for him, he felt abandoned, discarded, useless, worthless, and inadequate.

Ron didn't set *any* boundaries, and that was a mistake. This made him feel inadequate, which not only affected his fantasies but also made him feel like he didn't have the right to set boundaries; that he wasn't good enough to deserve that. Ron felt like he wasn't worthy of asking his wife for anything. (It turned out that his wife had problems too; Ron's cuckold fantasies made his wife feel like he didn't care about her. She reasoned that if her husband didn't care about her staying with other men, he must not really love her. Staying with other men was therefore just an attempt to meet her unfulfilled need to feel loved.) Ron needed to draw his line and set his boundaries. He eventually communicated his feelings and his wife agreed.<sup>27</sup>

As you can see, poor sexual functioning is often the result of having no healthy line between right and wrong, real and fake, and fantasy and reality. Those with no line see everything as wrong, or everything as right. This often leads to more toxic shame.

Your line is totally individual and it depends on your values; the only rule is that there must be space for both what you consider to be right and what you consider to be wrong. It must not be totally restrictive nor totally boundless, rather a healthy medium between the both. Total restriction is driven by toxic shame, and a lack of

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<sup>27</sup> For more on navigating the interpersonal conflicts that can arise in these situations, I again recommend reading *Nonviolent Communication* (1999) by Marshall Rosenberg. If all Ron said was 'I want you to stop sleeping elsewhere', his wife would still feel unloved and not be *able* to comply! NVC is a great guide for creating harmony in relationships.

boundaries is also caused by toxic shame. Both of these cause even more toxic shame by making you feel bad about yourself. To stop this, it's important to draw the right line in the right place.

# Chapter 6: Summary

Hopefully, these 4 books have shown you that your fetish can tell you a lot about who you are. It contains the key to the deepest parts of your psychology, and the reason for many aspects of your life. Also, I hope that this book has informed you of ways to take back control; mindsets to adopt, behavior to change, and actions to take. In doing so, you'll improve the subconscious inadequacy, change your fetish, and change your *life*.

## **Summary**

Sexual behavior is pleasurable because it protects us from hurtful feelings, allows us to escape from them, or provides us with validation, and fetishes provide us with heightened validation by overcoming our fears and negative subconscious feelings, or somehow otherwise affirming our self-worth and affirming that we're good enough to get our needs met.

The need for extra validation can be created through unmet needs (particularly in childhood, but also in the present day), including unmet social needs, or other negative perceptions of self-worth.

The fears and negative feelings can also be created by many factors in childhood, development, and the present.

Our associations shape our fantasies by changing the way we see certain things, associating particular things with pleasure, pain, love, taboo, or anything else.

The cuckold fetish forms as a way to turn deep-rooted feelings of inadequacy into sexual pleasure. Conditioning can also play a role, particularly in strengthening and reinforcing this fetish once it's formed.

Those emotions are internalized in childhood, and throughout life from then onwards. It's strengthened throughout development, with culture, expectations, and relationships all playing a part.

Coping mechanisms such as disconnection from ourselves and control/release behavior are ways to try to avoid the pain of inadequacy. Porn can also be the 'trigger' that causes inadequacy to be eroticized.

To heal this, connect with yourself - your feelings, needs, and wants. Then bring that out into the real world.

At the same time, externalize - communicate your toxic shame. Get all those trapped emotions out through honesty and openness.

Replace them with positive emotions that accurately represent you.

There's a huge social element to inadequacy, so work on your social life. Fix whatever things are preventing your from doing that.

Integrate your shadow, and form a self-image which is accurate.

Draw the right line in the meantime, because this is a lot to take on!

Change means doing things differently. You won't get different results if you keep engaging in the same process. Often this means doing things you're not used to, or would never have done before.

Sometimes the thing you most need to do is the thing that you least want to. This makes change very difficult.

For some people, change is unconsciously incredibly scary, and the comfortable safety of sameness will keep them stuck in the same patterns. If changing yourself means finally needing to fulfil what you've waited so long for, there's too much pressure. As Walters (1997) writes:

“Fear, however, may provide the greatest support for maintenance of a sexual lifestyle. The individual fears change because change requires giving up the attachments, certainty, and identity that have served to comfort the individual”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Walters, G. D. (1997). The paraphilias: A dialectically informed review of etiology, development, and process. *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity*, 4(3), 221–243.



Some people just aren't ready. It's not natural, and you have to fight yourself to take control. It takes a long time to change, and a lot of effort. The changes in this book are very deep, so take your time, and don't be ashamed for not changing quick enough.

In the meantime, you may find it best to focus more on developing positive sexual interests; to channel your eroticism into different pleasures while the old ones take time to fade away. Remember that conditioning still makes you aroused by cuckolding - this will take time to change. Your brain will still be drawn towards cuckolding - even though it might not be as arousing.

When Arnold was struggling with his porn addiction, he found that he would 'naturally' jump to cuckold porn without even looking at anything else. The porn sites he went on were filled with this in particular, and it was hard to avoid. Arnold found that sometimes, it really wasn't arousing. He occasionally tried to masturbate without even getting an erection first. This is the role of conditioning. He was so used to watching cuckold porn that it was his automatic go-to source of pleasure, even when his fantasies changed, he was still conditioned into thinking about it. Many men find their fantasies changing and yet they still seek out the same porn or imagine the same fantasies. The patterns that we're used to can stay with us for a long time! Become aware of this and make sure not to reinforce those patterns.

While conditioning fades away, make sure to find new, healthy areas to channel your sexual energy into. Start to find other things which are very arousing to you, that you'd prefer to find arousing. Start to question exactly how arousing cuckolding is compared to those things. View the cuckold fetish with the pain of infidelity and inadequacy at the forefront of your mind. Start to find validation from other sexual sources.

“Our desires slowly unfold over the course of our lifetimes. New desires or preferences will surface when we no longer require the old ones.” - Stanley Siegel, ‘Your Brain On Sex’ (2011)

Take time with this process of overcoming subconscious inadequacy, otherwise you'll feel inadequate for not being able to do it fast enough! This is just the beginning. There's only so much that can happen from reading these ebooks - your life can't magically transform overnight. However, it can start to change in the direction you want it to go. It's an individual process that's different for everyone. Everyone has unique emotions, experiences, and interpretations, and therefore a unique path from here on. I hope this serves as a useful compilation of information for your next steps.

## Infinite Shameful Flaws

In these books I've listed a ton of behaviors that are driven by a sense of inadequacy: escapism, compulsive self-improvement, overly niceness, and of course this fetish. These books have unintentionally shamed all of these behaviors and have shamed having a cuckold fetish too, and unfortunately that's hard to avoid while explaining these things.

Introspection and self-reflection are often critical and creates negative feelings - even when it's focused on developing positive feelings. The process of analyzing yourself is focused on everything wrong with you, and not everything right. These books will quite possibly make you feel bad about yourself instead of the opposite. Now that you know the cause, you might feel shame for all of the behaviors mentioned in these books, but you really shouldn't. Of course, when that gets internalized it's just going to make everything worse.

Extend some self-compassion to yourself. The purpose of these books was to let you know that you can get better, not to make you feel more toxic shame about more areas of your life! Change takes time. Self-compassion is key in the meantime. Balance any negative feelings with an equal positive counterpart, to avoid forming an

inaccurate or biased opinion of yourself. It would be good to spend time thinking about what you're good at, and what's right about you.

I want to reiterate a point I made earlier. I got an email from someone asking the following:

'Is it ok to masturbate to slutty behavior? Not cuckold stuff, just thinking about girls being wild. I'm really turned on by the thought of girls having uninhibited sex, particularly with strangers, but I think that's probably because of my associations or maybe subconscious inadequacy, I don't know. Is it ok to be aroused by that or not? If not, what should I do?'

This summarizes a lot of people's attitudes towards sex. Here's the bottom line: something is only wrong if it makes you upset, or causes *bad things* to happen. If you're happy with a particular fantasy, and it doesn't reinforce any bad feelings or cause you to be ashamed/upset/impaired etc., then why would it not be ok?

It doesn't matter if it comes from subconscious inadequacy or anything else - *all that matters is how it affects you*. People ask me all the time if their fantasies are ok. The answer is almost always yes.

Everyone has their own feelings, fears, unmet needs, and associations - and always will do. Everyone therefore has their own fantasies, kinks, and fetishes. Beyond the more extreme and obvious fetishes, everyone has thousands of unique erotic patterns - little things that turn us on more than others. Maybe it's a part of a

woman's body, a certain look in her eyes or facial expression, a type of lingerie, or something else. We have thousands of associations, and thousands of memories, fears, and emotions to eroticize. It's completely normal to be turned on by something unique, and it's normal to have painful emotions, fears, and associations too. It hardly ever needs any attention - only if it harms you or others, makes you sad, impairs your relationships or any part of your life, or causes some sort of *bad things*. The cuckold fetish often does cause *bad things*, but other fetishes don't necessarily, even if they share a similar cause.

It's totally ok to like ANYTHING, as long as it makes you happy. Sure, it can be caused by some deeper phenomenon - *but there's no need to change that part of yourself* if you're happy. The deeper phenomenon, too, is only a problem itself if it causes bad things! This book is about solving a problem of unhappiness by finding the root cause and changing it - not trying to find 'abnormalities' or 'imperfections' and 'fix' them. Remember, fears/emotions/associations are fine and normal, as long as you're happy. It's all too easy to think of them as flaws, but they're not, they're normal.

In many ways, flaws are subjective. Who decides what a flaw is? Is it a flaw to be questioning what flaws are instead of living life, for example? Is that intellectualization - a side-effect of toxic shame? Am I only questioning it to overcome the unjust treatments in my

childhood by attempting to analyze my way out of unresolved pain? Is this an attempt at compulsive self-improvement formed by subconscious inadequacy? Is this whole rhetorical paragraph a self-centered narcissistic gratification of my need to seem intelligent and analytical?

Anything can be a flaw if you make it a flaw. You can characterize any behavior as flawed from some perspective, if you think about it hard enough. Criticism is potentially infinite; self-criticism even more so. Really, the only problems are ones which cause *bad things* to happen: they make your life worse in some way.

In these books I've described different behaviors which *are only bad things for some people*, when they make their lives worse.

Intellectualization, for example, can prevent us from living the life we want, cause disconnection from others and the resulting distress from that - in other words, it can cause *bad things*. It can reinforce subconscious inadequacy too (which can also cause bad things itself).

However, it can also *not* cause bad things. It can be a fully integrated aspect of a healthily functioning person. It can be a desired behavior, leading to great analysis and useful cognition. Or, it can just be fun and satisfying. It's not a flaw, unless it causes bad things.

I'm a very good guitarist, having played guitar for most of my life now, and in overcoming my subconscious inadequacy I decided to turn my attention to understanding what made me so obsessed with

playing guitar. Why was I able to practice for so long, and other people not? Why did I play for many years, when most people give up? What drove that behavior and my attitude?

Playing guitar was the thing my parents praised me for the most, and the way I got attention as a young boy in an otherwise neglectful environment. Furthermore, it made me feel pretty good about myself; I could fantasize about people praising me for my guitar skills and admiring me. I could rest in the comfort of knowing that I was good at something, and feel like I may be good enough. In short, my drive to practice guitar was likely caused by a sense of not being good enough and an attempt to avoid that.

Does that mean I should stop playing guitar? Of course not! It's a wonderful thing and a very good quality about me! It would be absolutely ridiculous to stop!

Everything about us is driven by *something*. That's ok. Unless it causes *bad things*, it doesn't need attention. The internal inadequacy did cause other bad things, so it needed attention - but the guitar playing didn't.

Anything can be seen as a flaw, but the only real problems are ones which have bad consequences. You shouldn't stress out about the deep-rooted associations, fears, and emotions inside of you unless they're causing bad things. Everyone has thousands of them and there's no way to change all of them before you die. That would be a

pointless waste of time anyway. Nor should you stress about behavior which has no negative consequences; even if it's caused by unresolved emotional energy from childhood, your deeper emotions and fears, or your personal associations. Just because something has a cause, it doesn't mean it's wrong to do it.

Everything has a cause; every aspect of yourself and your behavior has some sort of cause or explanation. There's no reason to try to overcome those causes - they don't need changing unless they cause bad things. We're all driven by the things that drive us, and that's ok.

So, when someone says 'is it ok to be aroused by \_\_\_\_?' the real question is: 'does your arousal cause *bad things*'?

All the behaviors in these books are only problems if they cause *bad things*. That's my main issue with writing something like this - it appears to pathologize nearly every behavior. From being nice to playing video games, it makes it seem like there's something wrong with everything you do. And it has to be this way, in order to present an individual process to many people at once with no knowledge of who they are! Reading a book like this could definitely *increase* the sense that you're fundamentally flawed in some way, if you don't make this distinction - and that defeats the whole point!

Subconscious inadequacy, too, is not necessarily a bad thing by itself, and it doesn't need to be changed in most people. I want to be as



clear as possible here - it's only wrong if it causes *bad things*. It's ok to be human.

It's a fine line, but I hope I can help you tread on the right side of it.

### **Don't Obsess**

Some people get very obsessed with overcoming toxic shame. They have this idea that by overcoming toxic shame, they can finally be good enough. No no NO! That goes against everything we've learned! When it becomes an *obsession* it's just a way to feel like you'll be good enough *one day*. One day never comes. The only day you ever have is today. This is about feeling good enough right now, just as you are.

Don't get obsessed. When you think that you have to follow everything in this book 'in order to finally be good enough', you're using that as a way to control the subconscious inadequacy. The solution is to let go. Whilst still bearing all of this in mind, let go. Get out of your head. Live your life. Spend time with friends, spend time having fun, spend time pursuing your interests and let go of the obsession to be good enough.

Fighting urges only makes them worse. This applies to changing your fetish. The more self-hate and toxic shame you feel about having this fetish, the worse it gets (because, of course, it's based on toxic shame

itself!). Fighting, denying and restricting yourself does nothing to help. Unfortunately, due to the nature of this fetish, that is precisely many people's natural instinct, and so hard to overrule. So, they inevitably get obsessed with doing everything they can to change. This makes everything worse.

The more toxic shame you feel, the worse it gets, because the fetish is based on toxic shame. The more you battle yourself and try to restrict, deny, or even punish yourself, the more intense and unrelenting it gets.

Let go.

Get out of your head and come back to reality. Give yourself unconditional self-love and self-compassion. Introspection is automatically self-critical, so get out of your head, and you'll start to feel much better. Stop caring as much, stop self-analyzing when there's nothing left to analyze, stop being in your head and focusing on yourself. Introspection leaves negative feelings in its trail. Don't obsess.

Once you've analyzed your life, stop. Don't continue to analyze every little behavior you do, otherwise you'll be self-conscious for the rest of your life, and self-critical over everything you do.

Get a life. Sometimes, people fall into damaging patterns because they don't have a purpose. They spend their days watching porn and

obsessing over damaging fantasies as a way to escape. If that sounds like you, get busy with the things you love.

Don't stop doing the actions in this book, and it's no reason to ignore them. But when it becomes an obsession, it becomes unhealthy.

## **Thank you.**

I wrote this to help solve a common problem, which I went through myself. I had this fetish many years ago, and felt extremely upset about it - I hated myself. Even worse, I didn't know there was anything that could be done about it. I thought it was just a part of me that I had to live with. Luckily, I discovered that was wrong.

My purpose in life is to help other people to deal with the problems that I successfully overcame. I've done that to about a thousand people so far with my personal coaching, my online course, and my website, but now I hope to make that 100,000.

I can't do that without your help. So please, if this helped you, you can spread the word and help others too. Perhaps not in person, because that's weird and embarrassing, but we're all strangers on the internet and there are so many people out there in need of help - I just need to reach them. Word-of-mouth is more powerful than anything I can do. The amount of people who have a ton of issues - and end up in this fetish - is overwhelming. I really want to make the world a better place but I can't do that without your help. So please, spread the word wherever you can. If I can just keep this business up and running, I can help people for years to come, all across the world, in a variety of different methods and mediums.

My biggest obstacle is that this is such a niche and I don't know where to find people who need this! You can do this anonymously and without risking unnecessary shame. So if you know of any forums or chat rooms or even individual people - or anything of the sort - please spread the word. Perhaps that was how you found me in the first place! If you come across anyone who has this fetish and wants to change, I'd appreciate it, and I'm sure they'd have **you** to thank too. We're all in this together.

Send them to [HowToStopBeingACuckold.com](http://HowToStopBeingACuckold.com) and I'll take it from there.

Thanks for reading this, I wish you the best in your life.

- Connor.

## Afterword

Fetishes are incredibly common, and so are ones which are seemingly shameful or destructive. Cuckolding can fit in to this category, along with many others. About 20% of men are aroused by masochism.<sup>29</sup> Judging by the most popular porn categories, even incest is now popular; ‘step mom’ is the 2nd most popular search term among males on the leading porn site pornhub.com. Among the combination of males and females, ‘hentai’ (sexual Japanese cartoons) is the 2nd most popular search term on Pornhub, and equally searched for by both genders.<sup>30</sup>

This shows that porn is straying further and further from reality, and now many people’s pornographic preferences have absolutely no relation to their real-life tastes, and in some cases not even the *possibility* of being able to bring their kinks into real life. In fact, a lot of these things would be downright hurtful in real life, and certainly damaging to their relationships, whether it be with their step-mom or their wife, so many people now live with a divide between their fantasies and reality. That’s fine (and healthy!).

Cuckolding is no exception. Although there are some that choose to role-play, most people have a clear divide between fantasy and reality. In fact, it often bears no resemblance to reality - a person can

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<sup>29</sup> Joyal, C. C., & Carpentier, J. (2016). The Prevalence of Paraphilic Interests and Behaviors in the General Population: A Provincial Survey. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 54(2), 161–171.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2017-year-in-review>

have a cuckold fetish without ever imagining their partner or themselves in that situation; simply the *concept* is arousing. The same goes with incest fetishes - rarely are they turned on by the thought of real-life incest, and even if they were, they know that porn shouldn't influence their actions, and they wouldn't want it to. This is ok, and a good fit for most people. Sexual fantasies are distinct from sexual desires; we don't always fantasize about things we want in real life.<sup>31</sup>

Still, it can be upsetting to have this divide, as many people treat it more like an unmentionable secret than a fantasy. Fantasies such as cuckolding can be very hurtful to have, as they violate common values such as monogamy, and ideas of what people want from life. Incest, too, could be a hurtful fetish to have, as it also violates common values of decency and *not having sex with your family*.

Really, all fetishes are potentially painful in some way - they prey on our hurtful subconscious emotions and our deepest fears. The submissive/masochistic category of fetishes involves being in the exact situation we fear or loathe the most, so is obviously uncomfortable to deal with. Each fetish is in many ways the opposite of what we really want, and that often makes us upset to be turned on by them.

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<sup>31</sup>Joyal, C. C., Cossette, A., & Lapierre, V. (2015). What exactly is an unusual sexual fantasy? *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 12, 328–340.

Not only are many people living with an easily explainable hurt, but the psychological core is causing trouble in their lives too. Addictions ruin lives, as do uncontrolled emotions and disconnection from ourselves. Subconscious inadequacy is like a low-grade depression, and not a nice thing to live with. Having lived with subconscious inadequacy myself, I know how much it can impact someone's life. When I overcame it, I knew it was my mission in life to help others do the same.

On the internet particularly, a few people have come under the impression that fetishes are somehow a fixed, untreatable quality. I'm not sure how this started; perhaps it evolved out of a reaction to the historical kink-shaming and sexuality-shaming of the past - because on the other extreme, some people think fetishes are a mental illness or a symptom of immorality. The 19th and 20th century was rife with oppression and suppression of sexuality, and as a response to that the more informed and progressive people sought to normalize it. We grew to know that sex is normal, and individual differences in preferred sexual behavior are normal too. 'Normal', however, does not mean without explanation, or without a cause.

It's hard to even categorize what counts as a fetish and what doesn't. Generally, a fetish can be described as an abnormal or weird sexual attraction, but who says what's normal? Societal values dictate our perception of normal, and some things which were previously



thought to be 'perversions' are now accepted as completely fine (such as homosexuality and anal sex). Who's to say something like BDSM won't be seen as 'normal', 50 years from now?

Society's standards are what determine what's a 'fetish' and what's not, and therefore fetishes aren't a separate psychological phenomenon, they're determined by society. There's really no such thing as a fetish, in terms of the brain - our genitals are just not constrained by society's standards.

However, that doesn't mean there's no such thing as a problematic sexual attraction. A problem is something that is unwelcome or harmful. If people with fetishes are happy, and it doesn't harm anyone ('consenting adults'), it is by definition not a problem. That doesn't mean it is without a cause, and it doesn't mean that fetishes can never be a problem.

For individuals, anything can be a problem, if it causes bad things. Fetishes have potential to cause harm to others, impair relationships, impair normal sexual function, cause social impairment, affect self-esteem, involve non-consent or minors, and more. The majority probably don't, so aren't a problem- in fact these things only apply to a tiny minority - but for the individuals who are affected, it's a problem.

Despite the good intentions of people who want to see less shame around sexual behavior, it's important to recognize that there are a

myriad of potential bad things that can come from our sexual desires, and we should make an effort to heal them.

I have an emotional connection to this issue, having seen the great many problems that fetishes - and the belief that they're hopeless - have the capability of causing. There are so many things we can do about these things, but only if we talk about it openly without shame. The treatments for changing sexual desires have shown great success in nearly every study in existence, and although they're often flawed in some way - too small, short follow-up, lacking control groups (usually for ethical reasons) or in some way incomplete - there are a vast range of different options that have shown promising success, from drugs to therapy and to self-help books like this.

I hope that this has made a small step in the right direction of informing people about causes, effects, and solutions, and helping you to have a healthier relationship with your sexuality.

Not only that, but I hope that this has helped you to feel in control and less powerless to your sexual desires. I hope that this has helped you understand your sexuality, and how to channel it into healthier areas, and do the same to your life too. In doing so, you can vastly improve your wellbeing. Then, you'll become a better person; more positive, less constrained by your psychology, and able to impact the world and the people around you in a truly positive way.

## Further reading

### **How To Win Friends And Influence People - Dale Carnegie (1936)**

Social situations are hard when you feel inadequate. Socializing is a big solution to many problems. If you lack social skills, then this book is a classic in the basics of social dynamics. The title implies manipulation or coercion, but it's really about developing natural empathy and understanding. If your social life has always been a weak point of yours, then this is a good starting point.

### **The Power Of Habit - Charles Duhigg (2012)**

### **The Willpower Instinct - Kelly McGonigal (2011)**

These two books are a practical guide if you're struggling to get your life together from addictions, overeating, or underachieving, and you need to break free from destructive influences. You'll need to understand willpower and habits. Any other book on habits or willpower is probably as useful.

### **Healing The Shame That Binds You - John Bradshaw (1988)**

If you're particularly interested in toxic shame, its roots and its causes and its solutions, then this is the book for you. Most of these

books are inspired by the works of John Bradshaw, particularly the sections on shame, internalization, control/release/escape, disconnection, needs, childhood, familial enmeshment, self-compassion, self-love, friends, integrating the shadow, and more. It has a religious undertone which I think is a little biased towards the authors opinions, and the tone is not widely appealing, but the content is all there, if a little airy and less concrete. Another book of his - Homecoming - is similar.

### **No More Mr Nice Guy - Dr Robert Glover (2003)**

Are you a Nice Guy? I'll admit, I was put off by the title - I believe niceness is a wonderful thing to practice, and niceness gets you very far in life - but not if you sacrifice yourself and forgo your own needs, and that's what this is about. You end up being more bitter, coercive, and manipulative all while thinking you're nice - and it's actually not nice for those around you! This book is about the 'Nice Guy syndrome', which is just another way that toxic shame manifests itself. It's another book about overcoming toxic shame, aimed particularly at those who are more passive than they'd like to be and struggle to stand up for themselves, and end up being needy or covert and not very nice at all, despite their intentions. No More Mr Nice Guy talks a lot about needs, family, childhood, development,

and disconnection, focusing on assertiveness, honesty, and owning your needs as the primary solution.

**Your Brain On Sex: How Smarter Sex Can Change Your Life - Stanley Siegel (2011)**

If you're interested in learning more about sex, fetishes/kinks, and how they're caused, or if you're interested in discovering how to choose a partner that you're sexually compatible with and understand the sexual desires of others, this book is good for that. It's heavily biased towards acceptance as opposed to change, and is better for those looking to integrate their fetish with their relationship, but if you're not looking for that you can ignore those bits.

**The Erotic Mind: Unlocking the Inner Sources of Passion and Fulfilment - Jack Morin (1995)**

For another book about fetishes/kinks, as well as dealing with troublesome turn-ons, read this book by Jack Morin.

**Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life - Marshall Rosenberg (1999)**

To get your needs met, as well as learning how to communicate effectively without conflict, and solve people's problems before they become worse (or before they become angry and upset), as well as learning how to make people genuinely happy, and most importantly make yourself happy - read this book.

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