

The Mirror of Lost Love, Addiction and Compulsion

This mirror has a little bit of a different quality as it requires more introspection. Lost or forgotten love is that part of yourself that you least remember. It's the part of you that you hold most dear but unconsciously or consciously forget about or give away. For example, a man who is on his way to achieving status and earning money may have forgotten his love for his family, friends, hobbies, and for himself. His compulsion is to earn money and unconsciously sacrifices what he loves.

Through the course of our lives we will often adopt patterns of behavior that become so important to us that we will rearrange the rest of our lives to accommodate this pattern or behavior. Leading us to lose, step by step, little by little, that which we hold most dear.

These patterns unfold gradually over time. We can recognize the pattern at any time and heal rather than taking it to the extreme. We can heal at any time, even in the extreme. There is no "it's too late" scenario.

The most commonly acknowledged addictions like substance abuse, alcoholism, addictions to gambling, shopping or spending money, and sex are easy to identify. There are more subtle addictions that can be harmful to you emotionally and mentally, stealing your time and attention from your own self care and the love and care of others. These addictions are often an escape from the reality of everyday life.

The exercise that follows will take you through a process to help reveal any compulsive or addictive behavior. Do not engage in self judgment or blame yourself for this discovery. Accepting that this is all happening for a reason and forgiving yourself is a major part of healing and in moving forward.

Exercise

Self reflection is a valuable tool for personal growth. If we are not evaluating ourselves from time to time, we can get 'stuck in a rut' repeating the same mistakes and behaviors, wondering why things are the way they are and never change.

This exercise will involve a great deal of honest self reflection. Journaling is a valuable tool for revealing truth, promoting awareness, and facilitating change. Thoughts and revelations may come to you in the course of your day. Write it all down. This is for your self reflection.

Be open and honest with yourself. Take your time and reflect. Write down all of your thoughts and feelings so you can come back later and review. Forgo passing judgment of yourself or your behaviors. This exercise is about healing not self recrimination.

Journal Prompts

Take a moment to reflect on your behavior. Think of things that you feel compelled to do or do so frequently they interfere with daily life and/or affect your wellbeing physically, emotionally, and spiritually. These patterns of behaviors become so important that we will rearrange our lives to accommodate them.

Make a note of the behaviors

- What is the behavior?
- How do you feel when you do it?
- How do you feel when you are not doing it?

When and with whom did the behavior take place?

- Note the time and day
- Is anyone else involved? Who and what are they doing?

Consider the reason behind the behavior

- What are you are seeking ie: fulfillment, change, recognition, escape... etc
- What void does it fill or purpose does it serve?

How has this behavior affected your life?

How does it affect the lives of others?

What have you given up or lost in pursuit of this addiction or compulsion?

Has this behavior had an adverse effect on you, your family, your friends, or your job?

What can you do to change this behavior?

Sometimes, to change a behavior, we may need to change the environment. Removing the temptation so to speak. Or you might ask someone else to help hold you accountable and check in with you to see how it's going. Sometimes it's replacing the unwanted behavior with a new behavior.

Make a note of your WHY and HOW below. This is important because it will motivate you toward change.

Why do you want to change this behavior? When you answer this question, take a moment to ask another why about that first why. Dig deeper into your why.

Note our how.

What are you moving toward? (this is often associated with your why)

What steps will you take? (breaking it down into steps can make it easier)

Then model your why and how into a positive affirmation. Write this on a piece of paper and post it in the area where the behavior most often occurs. Use words that convey present tense. Like "I am, I do, I have, I will, I give, " etc.

Give yourself a pat on the back or a gold star each time you notice yourself falling back into old behavior patterns and you stop yourself. Keeping a log can be helpful here.

In 30 days, come back and take a look at how much has changed in your life and in the lives of those who were affected by that past behavior. Write your insights and thoughts below.