

Can You Be Addicted to a Person?

Sometimes, being **too** into someone can be unhealthy

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They are your whole world. You can't get enough of them, and you want to be with them **all** of the time. It might feel like love, but could it actually be an addiction? While it might sound far-fetched, it really *can* happen! Like other types of addiction, being addicted to a person can be unhealthy or even dangerous. While it's most common with significant others, it can happen with anyone in your life.

At a Glance

Yes, you really can be addicted to a person, or at least to the rush of neurochemicals you get whenever you are around them. But it's important to distinguish between real love and addiction. Love is marked by healthy boundaries, mutual respect, and support, while addiction leads to problems like obsessive thinking, jealousy, and the loss of other relationships. This isn't just unhealthy; it can be dangerous if the situation becomes abusive or unstable. If you think that you might be addicted to a person, it's important to seek help from a professional who can help you manage your behaviors and emotions.

Is It Really Possible to be Addicted to Another Person?

In short, yes. It's completely possible to be addicted to another human.

Addiction is a compulsion to do something that makes you feel a certain way—usually, something that floods your brain with happy chemicals, such as dopamine or oxytocin. By triggering the brain's reward systems, being around that person generates feelings of euphoria and excitement—an experience your brain then urges you to keep seeking out.

Addiction specialists believe that addiction can occur with anything and that a person can subsequently suffer from an unhealthy addiction to anything or anyone. While we tend to think of addiction purely in terms of substances, it is also possible to get addicted to certain behaviors or experiences. Behavioral addictions compel people to keep engaging in actions, even when doing so leads to negative consequences.

The Differences Between Love and Addiction

Addiction to a person may feel like love to you, but it manifests in unhealthy ways. Let's look at the differences between a loving relationship and an addictive one.

Characteristics of a Loving Relationship

- Healthy boundaries are easy to keep
- You feel free to talk about your feelings with them
- You both take alone time and encourage one another's solo outings and activities
- You respect their privacy
- Your self-esteem does not depend on your partner's thoughts of you
- No one in your life is concerned about your level of involvement with them

Characteristics of an Addictive Relationship

- You feel uncomfortable or like you can't handle life when they aren't there
- You think they are the only person you will ever love
- They are expected to fulfill all of your needs
- You feel jealous or upset if they do anything outside of the relationship
- Friends and loved ones from your life before this person are worried about you; you may be in less frequent contact with them, as well

Why You Might Become Addicted to a Person

Now that you understand how to differentiate between love and addiction, you're probably wondering why addiction to another person might occur. Here are some of the top reasons.

You're Seeking A High

New people can be very exciting, and interaction with someone can flood our brains with feel-good chemicals. If you meet someone and they make you feel like a better version of yourself, it can become addictive to want more of that feeling.

Being admired by another person can be a high, just like a substance would give you. You may simply be looking for something that makes you feel good and keeps you feeling good.

You're Prone to Addiction

A person with an addictive personality is one who has challenges with moderation, which isn't necessarily only in relation to drugs and alcohol. People prone to addiction may be more likely to exhibit mood swings, impulsivity, thrill-seeking behaviors, and low self-esteem.

Because members of the mental health field have criticized the idea that some people have addictive personalities, it's important to break down the individual factors that may lead to addictive behavior so that we aren't lumping all people into one category.

For instance, a genetic background of family members who suffer from addiction may increase your risk of addiction. Additionally, environmental factors such as poverty play a contributing role. And lastly, mental health conditions can increase addiction risks.

You Never Saw What a Healthy Relationship Looked Like

The relationships we see and experience as children have a powerful effect on how we engage in adult relationships. If you've never seen an example of a healthy relationship in your life, it can impact how you navigate relationships in adulthood.

If one of your parents was neglectful, if they were in unhealthy relationships, or if their focal point in life was their relationship, you may not have received a healthy relationship blueprint.

Why Addiction to a Person Can Be Harmful

Pop songs might make it sound fun, but addiction to another person can be dangerous. These are the reasons why:

- You may stay with someone even if they become abusive
- The rest of your life, such as your work or school, may suffer because you give less time and energy to it
- People in healthy relationships may no longer want to be around you

- You may use substances to cope with troubles in the relationship
- If the relationship ends, you may feel unable to cope with life

If you or a loved one are a victim of domestic violence, contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at **1-800-799-7233** for confidential assistance from trained advocates.

For more mental health resources, see our National Helpline Database.

What to Do If You Think You're Addicted to A Person

Being addicted to someone is mentally unhealthy, but it doesn't have to be permanent. You can take steps to turn your relationship and your life around for the better.

It's possible to educate yourself, and to get help, so that you can change. It may take some time, but as you start to recognize these patterns, you can make progress toward establishing healthier, more fulfilling connections.

Learn About Addiction

Addiction can be lifelong, so if you're experiencing it as a life issue, it's very important that you work to understand what it is and your own personal risk factors.

Risk factors that may cause you to be more prone to addiction include:

- Close genetic relatives who have experienced addiction
- A family history of addiction
- Childhood abuse, mistreatment, or neglect
- Experiencing poverty, discrimination, or violence

Addiction recovery programs offer substantial literature, usually in the blog sections of their websites, about addiction-related issues. Educating yourself about what addiction is and how it has been at play in your life can be a key step to your recovery.

Learn About Codependence

Addiction and codependence may be intertwined. Codependence defines a relationship dynamic where people rely on one another to an unhealthy extent. This

may be particularly apt if you are in a relationship where each of you feels addicted to the other.

There are many steps you can take to stop being codependent, as it is fully possible to recover from it. Taking care of your needs, establishing healthier boundaries, and communicating with others who experience codependency can all play a part in helping you change your patterns.

Seek Professional Help

Educating yourself can potentially be enough to help you shift away from addictive behavior, but this is often not the case.

It's very normal to need professional help. Many types might be right for you, from a relationship therapist to an addiction program.

Takeaways

Addiction to a person may feel fun and exciting. Still, it's worth remembering that there will always be fun and exciting interactions with others in your life and that you can experience joy and delight without it being all-consuming or interfering with your daily tasks.

6 Sources

Verywell Mind uses only high-quality sources, including peer-reviewed studies, to support the facts within our articles. Read our editorial process to learn more about how we fact-check and keep our content accurate, reliable, and trustworthy.

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