

Connection and Disconnection

Female Friendship

Understanding the nature of connection and disconnection is helpful for cultivating healthy relationships. As a sex and love addict, your relational energy has been twisted to meet the needs of your addiction. Fill the void. Stop the loneliness. Feel desirable. Get a hit. You are familiar, perhaps comfortable, with the pain of disconnection.

As a result, knowing the difference between an addictive relationship and a healthy relationship is tricky. Dr. Judith Jordan and Cate Dooley illustrate the attributes of connection and disconnection in a chart that is helpful for making this distinction (RTH, 47).

It's important to keep in mind that even good relationships have periods of disconnection. In a healthy relationship, both individuals have a mutual desire to repair the damage of disconnection and establish a re-connection. Healing a disconnection takes significant emotional energy. If only one person is doing the work, eventually, the chronic imbalance will take a toll, and disconnection becomes the relational norm. Most people either leave or act out at this point.

Signs of Connection

Zest, increased energy (early addiction mimics connection. You have more energy, you feel powerful)

Increased self awareness and sensitivity to others Clarity and ability to act (decision making feels easy/less burdensome and fearful)

Desire for more connection (isolating/hiding parts of yourself becomes less necessary)

Signs of Disconnection

Decreased energy and vitality

Confusion (which is often generated by shame/decisions are difficult)

Withdrawal from human connection (and hobbies/self care)

Turning toward addiction (relief from pain of disconnection)