

# What is Anorexia?

In Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, we suffer from addiction to sex, love, relationship, fantasy, romance, and codependency. However, there is still another addiction some of us suffer from: anorexia. As an eating disorder, anorexia is defined as the compulsive avoidance of food. In the area of sex and love, anorexia has a similar definition: Anorexia is the compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving social, sexual, or emotional nourishment.

As anorectics or as people with anorectic tendencies, we may have a wide range of feelings and responses. Some of us feel overwhelmed in social settings. Others of us get high by socializing with a great many people in order to keep ourselves from intimacy with any one person. Some of us feel incapacitated by shyness in relationships with others. Others of us are in relationship but are passionate only in one area of it; for instance, we may be emotionally invested in the relationship but remain sexually or socially unavailable.

## Common Symptoms of Social/Sexual Anorexia

1. Do you go for long periods without being involved in a sexual or romantic relationship?
2. Do you go without social activities for extended periods of time?
3. Although in a relationship, have you found that, for a long while, you have not experienced: romance? sexuality? intimacy? friendship?
4. Are you alone more than you want, but feel unable to change that?
5. At work do you have trouble developing relationships, talk only when absolutely necessary, or hide out in the work?
6. Do you avoid relationships with a certain gender?
7. Do you stay aloof when in groups?
8. Are you afraid of being noticed?
9. Does being in the presence of others exhaust you, even if you like them?
10. Do you habitually panic or push people away when they start getting too close?

*Excerpted from the pamphlet "Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional" © 2004.*