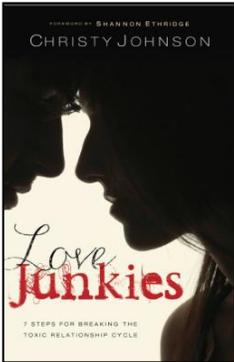


LOVE JUNKIES

7 Steps for Breaking the Toxic Relationship Cycle



Edmond, OK – A love junkie is a woman who is addicted to unhealthy relationships and continues to make the same painful relationship mistakes, even though they can have a traumatic impact on her emotionally, and sometimes physically.

Christy Johnson, author of *Love Junkies, 7 Steps for Breaking the Toxic Relationship Cycle* (Authentic Publishers), believes that because our culture is saturated with hyper-sexuality and instant relationships, many women do not understand how destructive it is to compromise themselves emotionally and physically to so many men that they do not really know. As a result they develop unhealthy and toxic habits with the opposite sex.

Johnson reveals how personal struggle as a love junkie ended in horrific loss. Johnson's first marriage of ten years crumbled as a result of her husband's abuse and drug addiction, and her marital infidelity. In 1998, Christy's ex-husband, who was under the influence of narcotics, was involved in a head on collision that killed their three-year old son and left their other son hospitalized. Her husband spent time in a psychiatric ward, and received a deferred sentence for involuntary manslaughter.

Through the adversity she suffered in her marriage, Johnson identified her destructive behavioral and relational patterns. With the help of counseling and her faith in God, she was able to have a healthy second marriage. She now shares her story in hopes of helping other women eliminate toxic behaviors that jeopardize their soul-health.

Johnson believes that breaking the toxic love cycle relies on a woman's choice to transform her thinking, and a transformation process begins with replacing false beliefs with encouraging truths, many which are found in the Word of God.

In *Love Junkies*, Johnson shares personal failures and victories, encouragement for soul-care, and insight on behaviors that threaten your relationship happiness, including:

- **Defining a Relationship Addict:** In search of affirmation or affection from men, a relationship addict will substitute the use of romantic relationships for counterfeit comfort, attention, or spiritual intimacy.
- **Emotions Out, Logic In:** Although chemistry often fades, a relationship founded on friendship and trust can grow stronger in time. If we base our relationship on the euphoric feeling we experience early on in a relationship, we will be sorely disappointed.
- **Mind Affairs:** Creating fantasies can be dangerous. The more we want, the more our resolve diminishes. An act of physical adultery always begins in the mind. When thoughts are not healthy or honor God, you must replace them.
- **The Difference between Charm and Charisma:** Though they look the same on the surface, time will expose their differences. Charm is superficial, deceptive, and gets you the initial hook-up. Charisma is backed up with character, integrity, and ensures long-term relational success.

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Even Christian women can be susceptible to low self-esteem, and emotional and physical love affairs outside their marriage. But understanding that a woman's true identity and personal value first comes from her Creator, a woman can stand firm on the truth of who she is.

"Before you release your heart to love, you need to make sure the object of your affection is worthy of trust. If you give away your love too freely, it is difficult to walk away even when you know you should," says Johnson. "With determination and perseverance, you can repair the damage done and change your patterns that gravitate toward unhealthy relationships."

Johnson also offers guidance to people of faith and the Church to consider before they shun or reject a woman involved in adultery. "Remember she may not understand how to break her pattern in an unhealthy relationship. The rejection from those who claim to love her, or care about her emotional and spiritual well-being, will intensify her shame and push her further into despair, and farther from God and her faith," says Johnson.

To help other women break the addictive cycle of toxic relationships, Johnson created the acronym "If-I-Pray" as the foundation for healing.

- **I** = Identity (seeking your worth through the reflection of Christ, not the opinions of others)
- **F** = Forgiveness (cleansing your soul by choosing to walk in forgiveness)
- **I** = Imagination (maintaining a healthy thought life)
- **P** = Prayer (the practice of conversing with God)
- **R** = Resolve (the practice of adding divine revelation to your human strength)
- **A** = Accountability (protecting your will by surrendering to wise counsel)
- **Y** = Yes (allowing God to lead and guide your life)

Johnson reminds that maintaining soul-health takes work and women may be tempted to return to their old habits, but if they apply the seven steps to breaking the toxic love cycle, they will avoid compromise, and envision their circumstances through God's perspective. Readers can evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in their relationship patterns through Johnson's "Soul Assessment Profile" she created at www.christyjohnson.org.

Product Details: Trade paper, 256 pages **Language:** English **Publisher:** Authentic Publishers/April 1, 2014 **ISBN:** 9781780782287 \$14.99

About the Author

Christy Johnson knows the pain and chaos that accompanies toxic relationships. After a disastrous first marriage filled with addiction and adultery and the tragic death of her youngest son, Christy has found the beauty on the other side of brokenness.

As a soul-health advocate, Christy's mission is to help women identify roots of bitterness, maintain joy in the midst of adversity and develop drama-free habits that help to improve their relationships.

Today, as a certified life coach, inspirational speaker, and soul-health advocate, Christy shares her story and encourages others with the hope and power of God. Christy, and her husband John live in Edmond, Oklahoma.

Her message of hope inspires women, that whether they are in or out of a relationship, they can live confident content lives. Her official web site is www.ChristyJohnson.org.

Suggested Interview Questions for Christy Johnson, author, *Love Junkies*

1. What is a “love junkie”? How does one become a love junkie?
2. How does our culture encourage the behaviors of relationship addicts or love junkies? Why are women so susceptible to these toxic behaviors?
3. You experienced a tragic loss after your ten-year marriage ended. Can you share with us what happened? What did you learn through that tragedy about yourself and your ex-husband?
4. When did you realize you were a love junkie? How did these patterns manifest in your marriage?
5. What started you on the path to identifying and changing your toxic behaviors? What is needed to break the toxic love cycle?
6. At its core, you share that women are deeply searching for affection and affirmation that too often leads to the arms of an earthly man, not a heavenly Father. How does your book help women identify the way to find that affirmation in Christ?
7. Explain the acronym “IF-I-PRAY” that you offer to help women break the toxic love cycles in their lives?
8. What are ways a woman can become “soul-healthy”?
9. What is your message to women who feel trapped in a toxic love cycle? Is this something they will always struggle with? If so, how do they prevent a repeat occurrence later on in life?
10. How can a woman tell if her identity is compromised? What is the first step in the process of healing?
11. What role does forgiveness and forgetting have in the process? Why is forgiveness a difficult step in the process of healing?
12. Why role do emotions and thoughts play in mind affairs and eventually extra-marital affairs?
13. What are some Scriptures you recommend for guarding our hearts and minds from temptation? Why is it crucial for love junkies to commit these to memory?
14. What role should prayer play not just in the life of a love junkie, but in the lives of all of us?
15. On the road to recovery from relationship addiction, you encourage accountability in the lives of women. What is the benefit of accountability for women? How can a woman find someone to share accountability? What should women know before finding an accountability partner?

“*Love Junkies* is like getting an emotional makeover . . . it will help women destroy false beliefs about relationships and find personal restoration.” – Georgia Schaffer, Life Coach and Author of *Avoiding the 12 Relationship Mistakes Women Make*

“Raw, honest, and life-changing! If you are addicted to love – be it real or fantasy – Christy offers you hope and healing . . .” – Victorya Michaels Rogers, Love Coach and author of *Finding a Man Worth Keeping*

“Will restore your heart and soul, drawing you closer to the joy and fulfillment Christ alone offers.” – Cheri Fuller, Speaker and Author of *The One Year Praying the Promises of God* and *A Busy Woman’s Guide to Prayer*

“Christy shares transparently about her former addiction to using men for approval and affirmation, and provides seven healing steps to break free.” – Julie Gorman, Speaker and Author of *What I Wish My Mother Had Told Me about Men*

Notable Quotes from *Love Junkies*:

Broken people attract broken people, and broken people hurt each other. Until the brokenness is fixed, an invisible vacuum sucks us into a merry-go-round of chaos sprinkled with just enough temporary peace that momentarily deceives us into thinking that everything is going to work out after all. (pg. 13)

Everything I learned about romance I learned from *The Love Boat*. By the time I figured out that real devotion comes from a friendship, not a cruise ship, it was too late – I was already hooked. I got old too soon and smart too late. (pg. 13)

I'm a happily married woman today, but I wasn't always so lucky in love. Like the woman at the well encountered by Jesus, I was a big-time loser when it came to relationships. I was a love junkie and men were my drug of choice. (pg. 14)

Until we allow God full occupancy, we are naturally drawn to fill our own soul. We'll inhale approval wherever we can find it. When we fill the place meant for His devotion with human intimacy, however, we settle for a counterfeit oneness that prevents our true contentment and joy. (pg. 29)

The best way to improve the health of our relationships is to improve our own soul health. As long as our contentment is tied to someone else's behavior, we hand the reins to our happiness to someone else. (p. 32)

Unfortunately, with the way movies, television shows, and other media have influenced our culture with hyper-sexuality and instant relationships, many women may not understand how destructive it is to go out with so many men. (p. 34)

The epidemic of relationship addiction in our culture is obvious. Cultural influences that put emphasis on sex and romance have eroded the moral fabric of our society. (p. 42)

The strong impulse to move rapidly into a relationship should be a Christian's first clue – a waving red flag – to be extremely cautious. God never rushes us. Satan is the one who wants us to make snap decisions before we have a chance to reconsider. (pg. 48)

Identity is the practice of seeking your worth through the reflection of Christ rather than the opinions of others. (pg. 82)

Often our crisis is a dramatic emotional and circumstantial upheaval; but through our crisis, God wants to birth something. When we get to the end of our rope, we need to let go of the rope and grab onto hope. (pg. 96)

God wants us to imagine truths that produce victory for our situations. We need to see the victory in our spirit before it manifests. When we mentally imagine and envision our future, we have a champion mentality. (pg. 128)

Hope is the fruit that is produced *after* our character and endurance is developed. Hope is the prize we receive when we suffer and prevail. Today, because of the adversity in my life, and because I

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surrendered to the work of God and allowed him to develop my perseverance and character, I have tremendous hope. (pg. 147)

“If – I – Pray” Action Points for Soul Health

Identity Action Points

- Speak the Word
- Declare Positive Affirmations
- Exercise Your Faith
- Evaluate Your Thoughts
- Give Yourself a Break
- Evaluate Friends and Places
- Avoid Negative People or Environments

Forgiveness Action Points

- Manage Your Expectations
- Guard Your Heart
- Get Your Mind Off the Offense
- Pray for God to Bless
- Pick an Attribute You Admire
- Make a Gratitude List
- Overlook an Offense
- Change Your Meditations
- Pray for Revelation
- Seek Advice

Imagination Action Points

- Pray for God’s Vision
- Judge the Fruit of Your Thoughts
- Pinpoint False Beliefs
- Write Replacement Thoughts
- Declare the Truth to Yourself
- Live in the Moment
- Give Discouragement a Time Limit
- Practice Breath Prayers
- Memorize Scripture

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Prayer Action Points

- Listen Intentionally
- Watch Something Inspiring
- Read Your Bible
- Find a Prayer Partner
- Attend Church Regularly
- Listen to Praise Music
- Establish a Regular Devotional Time
- Memorize Scripture
- Keep a Prayer Journal

Resolve Action Points

- Pray for Revelation
- Create a Plan
- Find a Focal Point
- Establish Boundaries
- Fill Your Schedule
- Halt
- Go on a Fast
- Confess Your Sins
- Write Down Your Goals

Accountability Action Points

- Pray for a Mentor
- Establish Godly Friendships
- Nurture Established Relationships
- Give Others Permission to Put You on the Spot
- Have a Forewarn System
- Take Inventory
- Pinpoint False Beliefs
- Set Goals for Your Future

Yes Action Points

- Create an Atmosphere
- Make a Gratitude List
- Practice Surrender
- Do a Trial Run
- Find Encouragement
- Pay Attention to Perceived Direction
- Talk It Over
- Pray for Vision

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