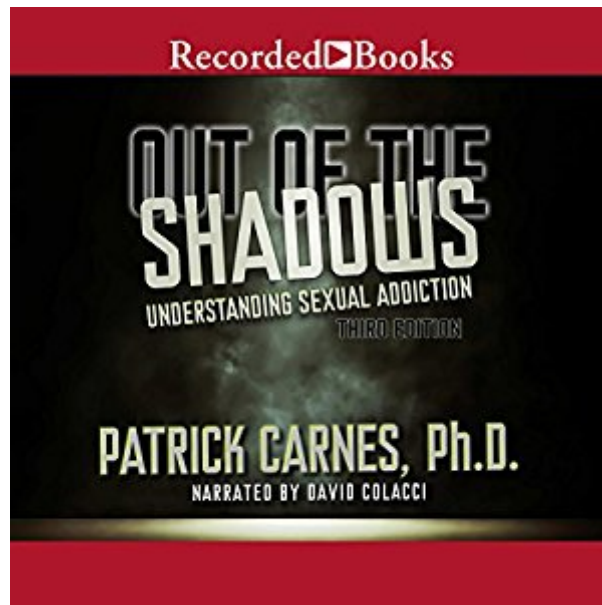


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# Out Of The Shadows: Understanding Sexual Addiction



## Synopsis

Sex is at the core of our identities. And when it becomes a compulsion, it can unravel our lives. *Out of the Shadows* is the premier work on this disorder, written by a pioneer in its treatment. Revised and updated to include the latest research - and to address the exploding phenomenon of cybersex addiction - this third edition identifies the danger signs, explains the dynamics, and describes the consequences of sexual addiction and dependency. With practical wisdom and spiritual clarity, it points the way out of the shadows of sexual compulsion and back into the light and fullness of life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"*Out of the Shadows*" by Patrick Carnes is one of the best books on sexual addiction. Carnes says sexaholism transcend personality, gender, and socio-economic status. He defines sexual addiction as having a pathological relationship with sex and using it as a mood-altering drug. His descriptions of the symptoms, the three levels of addictions, and the progression through the four-part cycle of preoccupation, ritualization, compulsive sexual behavior and despair are excellent. Carnes also deals with the sex addicts underlying dynamics such as a faulty self-image, and believing that sex is their most important need. Carnes describes how some addicts appear grandiose and full of exaggerated self-importance to create a front of "normalcy," and hide their addiction and poor self-esteem. He says the addict's family and friends often become angry and frustrated with the addict's "egocentricity" and insensitivity to others. Since guilt and remorse cannot be expressed the addict may become progressively more isolated and unreachable as they close off their vulnerability. Carnes states that since the addict feels unloved and unlovable they have little

confidence in the love of others and become calculating, manipulative and ruthless. They are purposely unclear about their intentions in relationship and are seductive in their behavior. Addicts also have a high need to control all situations in an effort to guarantee their sexual supply and ensure all possible sexual opportunities. To get help Carnes recommends SA's 12 Step Program. He says the Program helps the addict to, "separate themselves as individuals from their addiction which, as a powerful illness, is destroying their lives. By admitting the addictions power, hope emerges from connecting with others and Higher Power.

This is a good book for anyone who wants to understand the basic emotional and psychosexual dynamics of sexual addiction but the problem I did have with it was that it was written to understand the male addict. Although the dynamics from the human level are essentially the same there are some differences. After a really harrowing relationship with a woman addict whose secretiveness and intense denial/shame of the problem translated to my being left in the dark as to it's nature I scoured the web for any information I could find. I was really confused how this woman's behavior really depressed her to the point of endless bouts of crying and yet it continued with more calculating deceit, mind games, rampant flirting with colleagues and promiscuity. Everyone involved becomes a powerless spectator in the painful ongoings. This was the most painful experience that I have gone through to date and it has really made me wary of my perception of how sex is used to sell just about everything in the US. Pity. For guys who have been likewise involved understanding the "logic" ( if it can be called that) of the female sex/romance addict is better outlined in a book by Charlotte Davis Kasl called: "Women, Sex and Addiction - a search for love and power" a highly qualified therapist in the field. I was amazed at how every page seemed to be a prediction ( in hindsight ) of my ex's irrational and destructive behavior, motives, feelings etc., such that many of the statements made by sexually addicted women she interviewed for the book were made by my ex g.friend, verbatim.

Patrick Carnes is a recognized authority on sexual addiction and has a very clear, direct and writing style. He has a deep understanding of his topic and he conveys it in easy to understand language without any judgmental overtones. This specific book is intended primarily for people who are addicts or suspect they have some problems in this area. As such, it contains a lot of case histories, first person quotes and a simple approach that describes the basics underlying sex addiction. The role of shame and guilt in the addictive cycle as experienced by the person caught in the cycle sexual addiction is covered in-depth. In addition, the role of sexual addiction as a maladaptive survival

strategy in response to core wounds is developed at length. In my opinion, this is an excellent resource for people in recovery. However, one of his other books **CONTRARY TO LOVE** seems to be more useful for helping professionals. While this book lacks some of the detailed accounts of **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** it goes into much greater detail on the systems dynamics i.e. role of family, culture, etc. It is more comprehensive, but a more difficult and less personal treatment of Carnes' ideas. However, this book will also be useful to people who are further along in recovery. Patrick Carnes has written many excellent books in this area. However, Charlotte Kasl is also an author who I feel compliments Patrick Carnes' approach. The book **WOMEN, SEX and ADDICTION** is particularly good and even if you are not a woman, you will find it a useful resource for understanding sexual addiction and co-dependence in general. Patrick Carnes is a fan of Twelve Step Programs and he argues convincingly for this approach in combination with therapy.

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