



## **Out of the Shadows**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Patrick Carnes is a speaker and author who has become an expert in the field of sexual addiction and codependency. "Out of the Shadows", his first book, clearly describes the way that lives, and families are hurt when intimacy is replaced with compulsive behaviors.

Dr. Carnes defines addiction and uses case studies to allow the reader further insight into how addiction begins and progresses in people's lives. His Addictive Cycle chart shows several significant stages that contribute to and reinforce the addiction: These include one's belief system, impaired thinking, unmanageability, preoccupation, ritualization, sexual compulsivity and despair that all add to the problems that the individual initially faced.

Personal pain and a lack of intimacy can be difficult. Often, trauma from childhood can fuel a person's desire to find an escape. Sex is at the core of our identities but if it is used as a replacement for healthy relationships, the consequences can be devastating.

Dr. Carnes argues that there are different levels of addiction. He also describes how cybersex has become a significant issue for some because of the availability and secrecy that it provides.

But the sexual addict is not the only one who suffers. Family members can be involved in co-addiction and often, in their attempts to fix things or hide them, become enablers.

Dr. Carnes is not only a pioneer but also a researcher who has invested years of his life into developing effective ways of communicating about and treating those who are affected by sexual addiction. Besides narrative, he uses charts, checklists and provides resources to facilitate understanding.

The good news is that there is effective treatment available. Dr. Carnes clearly shows how twelve-step programming can help the addict to step out of the shadows and learn to live a life that is healthy and full.

"Out of the Shadows" was originally published in 1983 and has been revised twice since then. The information and research are therefore current.

A Resource Guide contains a Recommended Reading List as well as contact information for various organizations that help sex addicts.

This book is suitable for therapists, addicts, codependents and people who just want to learn more about the topic. It is written in an easy-to-understand style.

I like the fact that "Out of the Shadows" not only describes the danger signs, dynamics and consequences of sexual addiction but also offers solutions and hope for those who want to make positive changes.