

COMMENTARIES ON THE CHARACTERISTICS MOST OF US SEEM TO HAVE IN COMMON

Characteristic 6:

"We tried to bring intensity and excitement into our lives through sex, but felt ourselves growing steadily emptier."

The pursuit of excitement pushed us into violating lines we thought we would never cross, fantasies and activities that violated our values, morals, and integrity. Dangerous or forbidden activities activated our adrenaline. We often pursued sex without thought for our personal safety. Some of our behaviors revolved around having unsafe sex. Some of us told ourselves that using protection was inconvenient, or that it ruined the experience. What counted was the "hit." In some cases, other factors came into play that caused us not to concern ourselves with how our behavior might affect a partner. As we ventured further and further into extremes, residues of shame made us feel unworthy, and alienated us from other people. With each new degradation, we lost another piece of our souls. If we were having sex outside a committed relationship, we felt ever more isolated from our partners, and ever more distant from true intimacy based on honesty. If we were single, we might have rationalized that we were merely "sowing our wild oats," but our actions left us hollow and unprepared for building a relationship with anyone. We were locked into a relentless loop of exhilaration followed by feelings of fear, remorse, dread, and self-loathing. Our inability to break this cycle resulted in abject despair and whittled away at our spiritual self. The insistent need to remedy this "hole in the soul" we could not properly identify compelled us to try to use sex and excitement to assuage what was, in fact, a spiritual emptiness.

In recovery, through the grace of our Higher Power, we no longer need to seek intensity and excitement to escape pain — our spirituality fills us. As we heal, we develop a fulfilling relationship with ourselves, our Higher Power, and outwards to others. We come to value and respect ourselves and others, and change our behaviors to reflect that. We find contentment in previously unappealing activities. We find intensity through sheer joy, which can take many forms, such as getting in touch with nature, participating in service to others, and creating or appreciating art. By living a full and balanced life, we become satisfied.

(Extract from "The Characteristics Most of Us Seem to Have in Common" © SCA-ISO)