

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

### Characteristic 11:

**“We feared relationships, but continually searched for them. In a relationship, we feared abandonment and rejection, but out of one, we felt empty and incomplete.”**

Relationships, even friendships, triggered the fear of enmeshment or the fear of abandonment in many of us. Relationships of all sorts were anxiety-provoking. This included work relationships and family relationships, as well as romantic relationships. We may have experienced abandonment within the confines of family relationships. Fear of abandonment did not mean that we did not want to be in a relationship. We searched for all kinds of relationships, but lacked the confidence to take a first step, make introductions, or in some way signal our availability. We saw others in relationships and wanted what others had. Yet our intimacy issues and low self-esteem interfered. We built a defensive wall against anyone we thought was coming on too strong. Conversely, our sense of alienation and need for validation led us easily to allow unsuitable, insincere and even abusive intimate partners into our lives. Despite our fear of commitment, our aching loneliness led us into new entanglements. We felt that a relationship would somehow fix us, and compensate for our isolation and sense of unease with the world, and we pursued our self-prescribed cure-all relentlessly.

Within our relationships, we felt entitled to everything we wanted sexually, and when we did not get it, we sometimes felt justified in taking it, or exerting pressure. Our relationships, we felt, could not be complete without the right kind and quantity of sex. Fearing that our partners felt the same way and that we would never measure up, or that our relationships depended on sex, our anxiety persisted in all its flavors, such as insecurity, jealousy, stalking, and walking on eggshells. Our feelings of being “less than” made it hard not to feel overwhelmed. In a relationship, we were constantly on guard, fearing that our partner would suddenly end the relationship. Out of a relationship, our inadequacies, real or imagined, took on a life of their own. We were looking for emotional and spiritual wholeness from another human being, rather than working on our spiritual condition and finding healing ourselves.

In recovery, our relationship with our Higher Power is our foundation. We learn to look on our Higher Power as our divine matchmaker. We no longer fear rejection. There may be times when we feel that we do not want to be in a relationship. Recovery allows us to accept that reality. We feel okay about ourselves, whether we are in a relationship or not. We work on ourselves, and our lives. We find that the more we grow, heal and become whole, the more fulfilling our life is, and the better our spiritual condition, then the better our relationships with others will be.

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