
Sober Tools - Exploding the Fantasy

Exploding the Fantasy can be a very difficult tool to use without help when attempting to interrupt certain addictive impulses such as love and sex addiction but you should not let the challenge discourage you. When used properly, its use can produce results when many other strategies have failed.

When an addict is fantasizing about what a “drug of choice” is going to do for rather than to him or her, the expected results have no negative consequences. The addicts who are able to think rationally might be able to stop the euphoric recall simply by using the Thinking the Drink Through Profile. For many addicts the process of imagining the trouble that he or she is going to get into if abstinence is surrendered is not going to be sufficient. Addicts whose thinking has become very toxic will find the seduction associated with the fantasy to be too strong.

When you find that you are not able to scare yourself out of the fantasy, do not give up. You will need to shift your focus onto intervening on the fantasy itself by exploding it. It is an especially valuable tool for love and sex addicts to learn how to use before he or she finds that they need to.

You will explode the fantasy by challenging the delusion. Be prepared for a fight because self-delusion is not going to give up easily.

To illustrate we will explode the fantasy of a love and sex addict in the short vignette:

Shawn's Wild Ride

Shawn is riding along the highway following a 12 Step meeting that he attended. During the meeting he had a difficult time with romantic and sexual thoughts that began to invade his serenity when he spotted an **available** attractive woman enter the room and take a seat across the table from him next to the **female “old timers”** in the group and they **exchanged warm welcomes**. He did well to keep his eyes off the object of his attraction and managed to get through the incident without a problem. He left the meeting without the usual socializing he was accustomed to because he knew that he was fragile. While he was trying hypnotize himself with the Serenity Prayer to get safely home from the meeting he catches the image of a **beautiful blond** as she races past him in the passing lane **luring him into the chase**. Sure that she had **glanced his way** as she passed, he decided to speed up to play a little “cat and mouse” with her to **confirm that she was interested in him**. The **romantic** game of hopscotch went back and forth with her pulling ahead and **waiting for him to catch up with her**. When he was convinced that this was a **golden opportunity** he pulled up ahead one last time to give her a long turn signal invitation to take the next exit for a rendezvous at the truck stop. He was thrilled at this **fortunate chance meeting** with the **gal he had been looking for a long time**. She was **someone who understood the thrill of the chase**. **She was a little dangerous** and **he liked that**. **She would also be fun-loving**, he was sure of it. He thought to himself: **“This could be Mrs. Right!”** She surprised him by speeding up again and passing him just as he switched on his turn signal. **He guessed she was not ready to stop playing**. He sped up to get along side of her and to his shock the beautiful and bold blond had an Adam's apple.

As you can see, this three to five minute game of chase was all in Shawn's mind but it was a powerful rush. To explode the fantasy he would need to be able to challenge any one of a number of distorted perceptions of reality that were fueling his fantasy.

Sober Tools - Exploding the Fantasy (Continued)

This exercise has three features named Explosion #1, #2, and #3. Below the descriptions of the Explosions are the Task descriptions.

Explosion #1:

The first time you complete this assignment you are asked to complete Tasks 1 - 4 as if you were a member of Shawn's support group trying to help him out of the spiral by exploding the fantasy he is having.

Explosion #2:

If you were able to complete it without assistance, you are encouraged to complete Tasks 1 - 4 to explode a challenging fantasy of your own either from the past or present.

Explosion #3:

If you find yourself engaged in a fantasy at any point in the future, complete Tasks 1 - 4.

If you are becoming emotionally disturbed at any time during your task work, stop what you are doing and get the help of a trusted support group member or therapist.

Task 1: Write out in narrative form a detailed description of the fantasy similar to the way that Shawn's Wild Ride was completed. Be sure to describe in detail what the object of your fantasy is going to do for you and do not concern yourself with what it might do to you.

Task 2: Then highlight each one of the elements of the fantasy that might not be exactly true or that some member of your support group might be concerned about.

Task 3: Separate the page into two columns. On the left hand side under the heading of Fantasy "Fact" write each one of the elements and why you (or in the case of Explosion #1 - Why Shawn) would think it was a fact. In the second column marked "Possible Reality" write out a logical or alternative explanation for the Fantasy "Fact".

Task 4: Review your work with a trusted member of your support group or therapist and get a second opinion about which explanation seems like Fantasy and which seems like Reality.

Sober Tools - Exploding the Fantasy (Continued)

~ Tasks 2 & 3~

Separate the page into two columns. On the left hand side under the heading of "Fantasy Fact" write each one of the elements and why you (or in the case of Explosion #1 - Why Shawn) would think it was a fact. In the second column marked "Possible Reality" write out a logical or alternative explanation for the Fantasy "Fact":

Fantasy Fact

Possible Reality

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

~ Task 4~

Review your work with a trusted member of your support group or therapist and get a second opinion about which explanation seems like Fantasy and which seems like Reality:
