So how do you know if you have developed an unhealthy attachment to another person? By examining the Obsessive Love Wheel (OLW), which is designed to illustrate an overall process called Obsessive Relational Progression (ORP) [the specific attachment style of people Who Confuse Love with Obsession] it may be possible to recognize if you have a problem. There are four phases of ORP and each one carries unique behaviors. As demonstrated through the wheel, once an unhealthy attachment to another starts, the person who Confuses Love with Obsession begins to lose emotional control.

It is called a "wheel" because it is always turning, round and round as the relationship continues. Sometimes the wheel turns quickly, other times slowly, but it is always turning and always painful. While examining the wheel, look for any patterns of behavior in your relationship(s) and ask yourself: "Do either I or the person I am involved with behave this way?"

### PHASE ONE THE ATTRACTION PHASE:

The initial phase of ORP is characterized by an instantaneous and overwhelming attraction to another person. It is at this point the relationally dependent person becomes "hooked" on a romantic interest, usually resulting from the slightest bit of attention from the person they are attracted to. Phase One ORP behaviors can include:

- An instant attraction to romantic interest, usually occurring within the first few minutes of meeting.
- An immediate urge to rush into a relationship regardless of compatibility.
- Becoming "hooked on the look" of another, focusing on the person's physical characteristics while ignoring personality differences.
- Unrealistic fantasies about a relationship with a love interest, assigning "magical" qualities to an object of affection.
- The beginnings of obsessive, controlling behaviors begin to manifest.

### PHASE TWO THE ANXIOUS PHASE:

This phase in considered a relational turning point, which usually occurs after a commitment has been made between both parties. Sometimes however, the relationally dependent person will enter into this phase without the presence of a commitment. This happens when the afflicted person creates the illusion of intimacy, regardless of the other person's true feelings. The second phase of ORP behaviors can include:

- Unfounded thoughts of infidelity on the part of a partner and demanding accountability for normal daily activities.
- An overwhelming fear of abandonment, including baseless thoughts of a partner walking out on the relationship in favor of another person.
- The need to constantly be in contact with a love interest via phone, email or in person.
- Strong feelings of mistrust begin to emerge, causing depression, resentment and relational tension.
- The continuation and escalation of obsessive, controlling behaviors.

### PHASE THREE THE OBSESSIVE PHASE:

This particular phase represents the rapid escalation of this unhealthy attachment style. It is at this point that obsessive, controlling behaviors reach critical mass, ultimately overwhelming the RD person's life. It is also at this point that the person being controlled begins to pull back and ultimately, sever the relationship. In short, Phase Three is characterized by a total loss of control on the part of the RD person, resulting from extreme anxiety. Usually, the following characteristics are apparent during the third phase of ORP:

- The onset of "tunnel vision," meaning that the relationally dependent person cannot stop thinking about a love interest and required his or her constant attention.
- Neurotic, compulsive behaviors, including rapid telephone calls to love interest's place of residence or workplace.
- Unfounded accusations of "cheating" due to extreme anxiety.
- "Drive-bys" around a love interest's home or place of employment, with the goal of assuring that the person is at where "he or she is supposed to be."
- Physical or electronic monitoring activities, following a love interest's whereabouts throughout the course of a day to discover daily activities.
- Extreme control tactics, including questioning a love interest's commitment to the relationship (guilt trips) with the goal of manipulating a love interest into providing more attention.

### PHASE FOUR DESTRUCTIVE PHASE:

This is the final phase of Obsessive Relational Progression. It represents the destruction of the relationship, due to phase three behaviors, which have caused a love interest to understandably flee. For a variety of reasons, this is considered the most dangerous of the four phases, because the RD person suddenly plummets into a deep depression due to the collapse of the relationship. Here are some of the more common behaviors that are exhibited during phase four of ORP:

- Overwhelming feelings of depression (feeling "empty" inside).
- A sudden loss of self-esteem, due to the collapse of the relationship.
- Extreme feelings of self-blame and at times, self-hatred.
• Anger, rage and a desire to seek revenge against a love interest for breaking off the relationship.

• Denial that the relationship has ended and attempting to "win a loved one back" by making promises to "change".

• The use of drugs, alcohol, food or sex to "medicate" the emotional pain.

**SUMMARY**

If your behaviors mirrored the various phases of the Obsessive Love Wheel, then it may be time to learn more. Obsessive Relational Progression is a problem that does not get better on its own and does not get better over time. Sadly for many people, the only way they can get off their frenzied wheel is by jumping onto a new one.