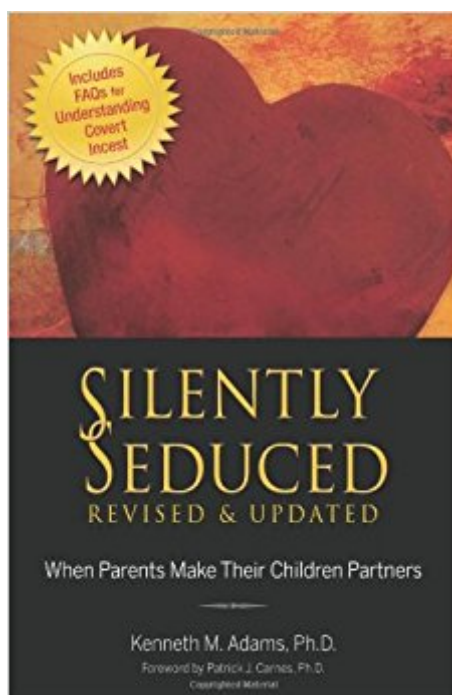


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Silently Seduced: When Parents Make Their Children Partners



Synopsis

In this revised and updated 20th anniversary edition of his groundbreaking book, Dr. Kenneth Adams, a leading expert on covert incest, sex addiction, and childhood trauma, offers tools for identifying and healing from covert incestuous relationships that affect adult relationships and lives. He explains how 'feeling close' with a parent is not always the source of comfort the phrase suggests, especially when that child is cheated out of a childhood by being a parent's surrogate partner. Dr. Adams includes a new Q&A section that directly addresses issues including: "How can this be incestuous when there is no physical sexual contact?" "Why is sexual addiction so common with covert incest survivors?" "Why is it so hard for covert incest survivors to commit to romantic relationships?" "If my partner is a covert incest survivor, how can I help?" "Can I pass covert incest on to my children? Through new findings and expanded discussions on 'engulfment,' 'excessive guilt,' 'loyalty,' and 'narcissism,' and others, *Silently Seduced* offers a framework to understand covert incest and its effect on sexuality, intimacy, and relationships to facilitate the process of recovery.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[View larger](#) Essential reading for victims of parental sexual abuse Covert incestuous attention occurs when a child becomes the object of a parent's affection, love, passion, and preoccupation. The parent, motivated by the loneliness and emptiness created by a chronically troubled marriage or relationship, makes the child a surrogate partner. The boundary between caring and incestuous love is crossed when the child exists to meet the needs of the parent rather

than the child. In *Silently Seduced*, Dr. Adams shares the experiences of victims of covert parental sexual abuse and the impact of growing up in a dysfunctional home supercharged with sexualized emotions.

Kenneth M. Adams, Ph.D., is a licensed psychologist and the clinical director of Kenneth M. Adams and Associates in suburban Detroit, Michigan. In addition to maintaining an active clinical practice, Dr. Adams is a national lecturer, workshop leader, and consultant in the areas of childhood abuse, dysfunctional family systems, and sex addiction. He is a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist (CSAT), a CSAT supervisor, and a CSAT training facilitator as well as an Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) practitioner. A member of the American Psychological Association, Michigan Psychological Association, Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health (SASH), and International Institute for Trauma and Addiction Professionals (IITAP), Dr. Adams is also an advisory board member to SASH and IITAP, and an editorial board member of *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*. Dr. Adams, along with coauthor Dan Robinson, received the 2001 Reader's Choice Award for "Shame Reduction, Affect Regulation and Sexual Boundary Development: Essential Building Blocks in Sex Addiction Treatment," the article voted by subscribers of *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention* as the Article of the Year. He also received the 2011 Carnes Award for outstanding work and research in the field of sex addiction. In 2010, Dr. Adams was part of a focus group set up to advise the Office of the Director of National Intelligence on developing criteria for security clearances for federal employees. He specifically advised on matters related to sex addiction and personality disorders. Dr. Adams is the coeditor, with Dr. Patrick Carnes, of *Clinical Management of Sex Addiction* and the author of *When He's Married to Mom*. He does regular speaking engagements and media appearances, including national and local television and radio. For more information, visit www.drkenadams.com. Patrick J. Carnes, Ph.D., is a nationally known speaker on addiction and recovery issues. He is the author of *Out of the Shadows*, *Contrary to Love*, *A Gentle Path Through the 12 Steps*, and *Don't Call It Love*. He is the clinical director for sexual disorder services at The Meadows in Wickenburg, Arizona. Dr. Carnes is the editor-in-chief of *Sexual Addiction and Compulsivity: The Journal of Treatment and Prevention*, the official journal of the National Council of Sexual Addiction/Compulsivity, an organization of which he is a board member. He also serves on the national advisory board of the American Academy of Health Care Providers in the Addictive Disorders.

Introduction When I began writing *Silently Seduced* twenty years ago, I could not have imagined its longevity and impact. Since then, hundreds of covert incest survivors have discussed the book with me in therapy sessions and have mentioned it in lectures. They most frequently report two main reactions to the book: one, that it clarifies a troublesome parent-child relationship history that was perplexing and previously beyond the reader's understanding; and two, that the succinct and clear manner in which it is written allows readers to be undistracted by repetition or material that is spurious to the topic. As such, *Silently Seduced* has not only been informative to its readers, but transformative as well. For many, it opened an emotional, experiential moment that ignited the search for more clarity and healing. Over the years, I have received many important and thoughtful questions that the original text did not adequately answer. For example, some readers are still seeking clarity on why I consider it incestuous when a parent turns a child into a surrogate husband or wife but does not touch them sexually. Others have sought more information on how best to manage their adult relationship with their parent. They want to neither continue with the same level of inappropriate closeness nor completely 'divorce' their parent. Other questions have been about how to deal with siblings, how to date, and how to handle the tension between the intrusive parent and the romantic partner. Readers have wanted more perspective on emotional issues, such as how to break free from the suffocating guilt or fear of engulfment that seems to plague covert incest survivors so often. A desire for a healthy relationship and a way to finally feel contented in love is the source of many questions. Wanting to understand why their sexuality seems so burdened, even though there was no sexual touch, creates a frequent source of confusion for survivors. I've also been asked about certain populations or special circumstances. For example, are there different issues for a gay man who is involved as a surrogate husband to his mother than for a straight man? What about when a daughter plays the role of a surrogate partner to her mother as opposed to her father? Are there implications for single-parent households or for adults who choose to have and raise a child as a single parent? What are the specific problems and concerns for the partners or spouses of covert incest survivors? How should they best respond to the difficulties in their relationships caused by the covert incest of their partners? Although many survivors of covert incest are able to relate to the stories of overt incest survivors, most struggle to feel validated because they have not been physically violated. Covert incest survivors are still suffering in silence. In fact, most are not aware that their relationships with their parents were incestuous. I've written this book to give such survivors a framework to understand what happened to them, how their lives continue to be affected, and how to begin the process of recovery. What follows in this new edition is an update to the original text and a new chapter that addresses the questions that have emerged over

the last twenty years. The new chapter, Frequently Asked Questions, is a dialogue between you, the reader, and me, as if we were sitting down in a therapy session or I was responding during a lecture. In addition, new material has emerged in the field over the years that supports my observations. The bibliography has been updated to reflect those sources. In the first part of the book, I use the word 'victim' to describe the person still experiencing the effects of covert incest. These early chapters describe the victimization process and its consequences. In the last chapters, I discuss change and recovery. I use the word 'survivor' instead of 'victim' at that point to help underscore the important transformation from being a victim to reclaiming life. Also, to help the stories flow without the encumbering use of he/she or him/her, I use personal pronouns interchangeably. The stories presented in the book are composites designed to illustrate the traits of covert incest survivors. Your actual experience may vary. No one story represents any one person's particular life. To protect their right to privacy, I have purposely avoided using the stories of my clients. However, their sharing certainly has influenced my thinking. To that extent, there may be some overlap between what I have heard in my practice and what I have included in these pages. I am grateful to my clients for the sharing of their lives and the trust they have given me in the process. I respect their courage. As I did in the original book, I strive to be clear and to the point, with as little psychological jargon as possible, in hopes that the new edition becomes another transformative step in your journey from pain and struggle to healing and freedom.

This book helped me to understand --why certain family members were unable as adults to separate from their parents, why they erected such high "walls" against others / had few friends, why they never dated, why they never married. An outstanding book.

This book has been pivotal in the healing of my inner child. I can see all the symptoms with both my parents making me their partner. I have been listening to both of them talk about personal problems since I was a teen. There is a way out, there are steps to follow that can assist in the recovery process.

Excellent, excellent book. I've read many books on dysfunctional families, but Kenneth Adams is apparently one of those therapists who is really GOOD because his insight into this stuff comes through really strongly. He doesn't waste words like so many writers do and I felt like the wall of misunderstanding in my life started falling down. Highly recommend

This book is... difficult to read but very necessary. I was recommended this by my therapist, and needed to understand the background behind such toxic enmeshment between my husband and his mother. I will tell you this... it made things make more sense. It helped me understand a lot. It will aid me in not replicating things like that to my own child(ren). It's just heartbreaking to know that this kind of stuff is REAL and actually does take place. I recommend anyone hurting from being a victim of covert incest OR the spouse of someone who is (even if that person is unaware, which most are!) as it will help clear the lines and put things in a more easily understood explanation. But... you might not enjoy the fact that this covert incest is very hard to break and the victims sometimes do not even know they're a victim, or they may defend their parent.

Most of us think we had happy childhoods and everything that was happening around us is usual and normal. This book is highly recommended for people to recognize dysfunction in their families and how that shows up in adult lives.

I came across to this book when reading another book by Neil Strauss (The Truth) where this book as referenced as a source of good knowledge on enmeshment. I downloaded on my kindle and read it in quite a short time. It is quite resourceful, and easily readable. I like that the author has provided the core essence of a really complex topic in a really concise manner.

I bought this when the love of my life's daughter, a self described Daddy's Girl, sabotaged our relationship. This book described the situation exactly and offered a wealth of information and insight. Clear. Readable. Highly recommended.

Great read, highly recommend if you or somebody you know has dealt with a narcissistic parent.

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