

Faith Based Recovery

Codependency Recovery

The Problem/ Definition

“Codependence” means literally to share an addictive dependence. As an alcoholic is addicted to alcohol, so a codependent is addicted to the alcoholic.

“All addictions are rooted in codependence and codependence is a symptom of abandonment. We are codependent because we have lost ourselves... Co-dependents try to make themselves indispensable by taking care of others. They are willing to do whatever it takes to be loved or worthwhile. Co-dependents often choose professions of caretaking and financial achievement, throwing themselves into their work to the point of workaholicism and burnout. Codependence is core addiction. It is a diseased form of life. Once a person believes that his [or her] identity lies outside of himself in a substance, activity or another person, he has found a new god, sold his soul and become a slave.” (Bradshaw on the Family, p. 172)

In its broadest sense, codependency can be defined as an addiction to people, behaviors, or things. Codependency is the fallacy of trying to control interior feelings by controlling people, things, and events on the outside. To the codependent, control or lack of it, is central to every aspect of life. The codependent may be addicted to another person. In this interpersonal codependency, the codependent has become so elaborately enmeshed in the other person that the sense of self – personal identity, is severely restricted or “crowded out” by that other person’s identity and problems. Additionally, codependents can be like vacuum cleaners gone wild, drawing to themselves not just another person, but also chemicals (alcohol or drugs, primarily) or things – money, food, sex, and/or work. They struggle relentlessly to fill the great emotional vacuum within themselves.

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10 Traits of Codependency

1. The codependent is driven by one or more compulsions
2. The codependent is bound and often tormented by the way things were in the dysfunctional family of origin.
3. The codependent's self-esteem (and, frequently, maturity) is very low.
4. A codependent is certain his or her happiness hinges on others
5. Conversely, a codependent feels inordinately responsible for others.
6. The codependent's relationship with a spouse or a significant other person is marred by a damaging, unstable lack of balance between dependence and independence.
7. The codependent is a master of denial and repression.
8. The codependent worries about things he or she cannot change and may well try to change them.
9. The codependent's life is punctuated by extremes.
10. A codependent is constantly looking for the something that is missing or lacking in life.

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Top Enabling Patterns of Codependency

Enabling is defined as reacting to a person in such a way to shield him or her from experiencing the full impact of the harmful consequences of behavior. Enabling behavior differs from helping in that it permits or allows the person to be irresponsible. It includes:

- Protection from the natural consequences of behavior
- Keeping secrets about behavior from others in order to keep peace
- Making excuses for the behavior (school, friends, legal authorities, work, and family members).
- Bailing out of trouble (Debts, tickets, paying lawyers, providing jobs).
- Blaming others for the chemically dependent person's behavior (friends, teachers, employers, family, self)
- Seeing the problem as a result of something else. (Shyness, childhood, adolescence, loneliness, broken home).
- Avoiding the chemically dependent person in order to keep peace. (Out of sight, out of mind).
- Giving money etc. that is undeserved / unearned.
- Attempting to control (planning activities, choosing friends, getting jobs).
- Making threats that have no follow through or consistency
- Taking care of the chemically dependent person (Doing what he/she should be doing for themselves).

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Top Compliance *Patterns of Codependency*

- I assume responsibility for others' feelings and behaviors
- I feel guilty about feelings and behaviors
- I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling
- I have difficulty expressing feelings
- I am afraid of my anger, yet sometimes I erupt in rage
- I worry how others may respond to my feelings, opinions, and behavior
- I have difficulty making decisions
- I am afraid of being hurt and/or rejected by others
- I minimize, alter or deny how I truly feel
- I am very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the same
- I am afraid to express differing opinions or feelings
- I value others opinions and feelings more than my own
- I put other people's needs and desires before mine
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition and praise or gifts
- I judge everything I say, think or do harshly, as never "good enough"
- I am a perfectionist
- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long
- I do not ask others to meet my needs or desires
- I do not perceive myself as lovable and worthwhile
- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others' anger

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Codependency The Solution/Results

Jesus taught the value of the individual. He said we are to love others equal to ourselves, not more than.

By coming together with others with Jesus as our higher power, and by working the 12 Steps and Eight Recovery Principles of Celebrate Recovery, we begin to experience a love of self which forms the basis for truly loving others.

We find:

- Our motives begin to change
- We develop a healthy sense of self worth
- We act vs. react
- We develop healthy boundaries
- We begin living balanced lives and take care of ourselves
- We learn Christian service which brings us joy
- We become God directed and free from compulsiveness, knowing that God brings the ultimate results

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The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through

- We are going to know a new happiness and a new freedom
- We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it
- We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace
- No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others
- That feeling of uselessness and self pity will disappear
- We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows
- Self-seeking will slip away
- Our whole attitude and outlook of life will change
- Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us
- We will intuitively know how to handle situations that use to baffle us
- We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

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Codependency Recovery Recommended Reading List

The Life Recovery Bible *(The New Living Translation version with devotionals, recovery commentary notes, etc.)*

Tyndale Publishing

When People Are Big and God Is Small *(Overcoming Peer Pressure, Codependency, and the Fear of Man)* –John & Pat M's top recommendation

Edward T. Welch

Boundaries *(When to say Yes, when to say no; to take control of your life).*

Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

Safe People *(How to find relationships that are good for you and avoid those that are not)*

Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

Love is a Choice *(Recovery for codependent relationships)*

Minirth – Meier Series

The Healing Journey *(Learn new ways of thinking, feeling, and acting to replace destructive patterns learned in childhood from alcoholic parents).*

Daryl E. Quick

Changes that Heal *(How to understand your past and ensure a healthier future)*

Dr. Henry Cloud

Don't Let Jerks Get the Best of You *(Advice for dealing with difficult people)*

Paul Meier

12 "Christian Beliefs" that Can Drive You Crazy *(Reveals false assumptions that many people develop from misreading the Bible and listening to someone teach who misinterprets God's truth).*

Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

12-Steps of Celebrate Recovery

Step Guides 1- 4

John Baker