

Celebrate Recovery Codependency Problem/Solution

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The Problem

We are codependent because we allow the behavior of another person to effect our behavior so that we become consumed with that person and their problems. This obsession with the issues and problems of others becomes debilitating to us as we exhaust inordinate and inappropriate amounts of mental and emotional energy over them, leaving little, if any, energy for ourselves.

Often our childhood was so chaotic and our environments were so out of control, we learned ways to escape to try to find serenity. As we grew into adulthood, we worked hard at trying to control our external environment, believing it was the key to our happiness and inner peace. Our family of origin was frequently dysfunctional. Sometimes we even blamed ourselves for our parent's problems. If we were terrorized by a volatile alcoholic parent, anger became an unacceptable and unwelcomed guest in our lives. Anger was to be avoided at all costs. As a result, we learned to appease; we learned to rescue. We learned to be aware of others' feelings in order to protect ourselves and began to lose touch with our own feelings. We made ourselves responsible for the happiness of others, and when they weren't happy, neither were we

We are extremely loyal but also extremely insecure. Self-doubt is our constant companion, and often self-hatred. Being unacceptable to ourselves, we hide our true selves, convinced that if anyone truly knew us, they would abandon us. This fear of abandonment often fuels our codependent behavior as we seek to do everything in our power to become so valuable that others would not want to leave us. By choice, our lives are not our own and our emotions are the property of whatever crisis the person(s) closest to us is having. a need to be needed (which means he actually uses the other person to meet his own needs; the "helpee" becomes an object to help the helper achieve his own goals).

The Solution

We don't have to live this way! We do have a choice. We can live free of these obligatory compulsions. Through God's help we can learn to take responsibility for our own lives and allow others to take responsibility for theirs.

With Jesus Christ as our Higher Power we learn how to apply the 8 Recovery Principles and 12 Steps, designed to guide us through the journey we call "Recovery." If we are diligent to provide willingness, integrity, consistency and rigorous honesty, God will supply us with courage, strength and the ability to take the necessary steps to gain freedom from our compulsive behaviors.

In the context of caring and loving relationships, we learn to recognize our dependence upon God. We are then able to take a penetrating look at ourselves, and inventory both our own and other's contributions to our lives which have brought us to where we are today. As our defects of character are unearthed, we

are able to come clean to ourselves, to God and to safe people. When our secrets cease our freedom will increase. God provides us with tools and a will to do what we once thought impossible. We begin to see relationships restored, old animosities put to rest and lives pieced back together. We learn to take daily inventory that we might continue to walk in truth, light and freedom. Most importantly, we can draw closer to God than ever before. We are being used by Him to share our lives and God's miracles with others that they might experience the hope and healing that we have experienced.

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 the lack of it is central to every aspect of life.

A Definition of Codependent Sobriety

Codependent sobriety is somewhat different in nature in that we do not have a substance from which to abstain. Our addiction is more relational in nature. The key is learning how to have healthy relationships and how to establish and enforce appropriate boundaries that we may accurately establish where we end and another person begins.

Therefore, we define codependent sobriety as a faithful commitment to consistently work the program; which includes working or having worked through the CR Step Study Group; steady attendance at the Friday night meetings; and responsibility to a Sponsor and Accountability Partners. We advocate journaling, daily inventory, transparency and rigorous honesty.

Compliance Patterns

As a codependent, you:

- Assume responsibility for others' feelings and behaviors.
- Feel guilty about others' feelings and behaviors.
- Have difficulty identifying what you are feeling.
- Have difficulty expressing feelings.
- Are afraid of your own anger, yet sometimes erupt in rage.
- Worry about how others may respond to your feelings, opinions, and behavior.
- Have difficulty making decisions.
- Are afraid of being hurt and/or rejected by others.
- Minimize, alter or deny how you truly feel.
- Are very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the same.
- Are afraid to express differing opinions or feeling.
- Value others opinions and feelings more than your own.
- Put other people's needs and desires before your own.

- Embarrassed to receive recognition and praise, or gifts.
- Judge everything you think, say, or do harshly, as never “good enough.”
- Are a perfectionist.
- Are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- Do not ask others to meet your needs or desires.
- Do not perceive yourself as lovable and worthwhile.
- Compromise your own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others’ anger.