

## WHAT'S CODEPENDENCY, AND WHO'S GOT IT?

### ZAINAB'S STORY

I sat in kitchen, drinking coffee, and thinking about my unfinished housework. The list is endless, yet couldn't get started. Doing it seemed impossible. Just like my life, I thought. Fatigue, a familiar feeling, overtook me. Once a luxury, naps had



become a necessity. Sleeping was all about I could do. I use to have excess of energy. Now, it was even an effort to comb or apply makeup daily. When I lie on bed and fell a deep sleep, after waking up my first feeling was pain. That was also not new, I did not know

which hurts me the most: the raw ache that my marriage is over, the love is gone, the drinking and the disappointments; the bitter rage I felt toward my husband the man who had caused it all. I asked many questions to me like why did he have to drink? Why I loved him? And so on. I never intended to marry an alcoholic. My father had been one. Frank's problem with drinking had become apparent on our honeymoon when he left hotel suite late one afternoon and didn't return until 6:30 the next morning. Looking back the signs were clear. What a fool I had been? "Oh,

no. he's not an alcoholic. Not him. "I had defended, time and again. I had believed his lies as well as mine. I left him before and all I did was feel depressed, think about him, and worrying about money. Damn me.

I look at the clock it was quarter to three. The kids would be home soon from school and the he would be too, expecting supper but nothing was done as it was his fault, I thought. *His fault!*

Suddenly, I shifted emotional gears, and a chain of negative thinking aroused like maybe he had taken another woman to lunch or having an affair, maybe he had left early to drink.

The phone rang, interrupting my anxiety. It was my neighbor, a friend. We talked and I told her about my day.

"I am going to counseling tomorrow," she said. "Want to come along?"

I had heard about Counseling. it was a group for people married to drunks. "I'll see," I lied. "I've got a lot of work to do," I explained, not lying. Outrage poured through me, Of course I didn't want to go to Counseling. I felt furious at the suggestion that I do more and continue giving to this bottomless pit of unmet needs we called a marriage. I was sick of shouldering the burden and feeling responsible for the success or failure of the

relationship. It's his problem. Let him deal with it, leave me out of this. Make him better, and I will feel better.

After I hung up the phone, I Dragged myself in to the kitchen to fix supper, thinking I am not the one who needs help, I thought. I haven't drunk, used drugs, lost job, and lied to and deceived those I loved. No, I decided, I'm not irresponsible one. To the contrary, I've been responsible for everything and everyone. I don't need more guilt. Tomorrow, I'd get up and get busy. Things will get better tomorrow.



When the kids came home, I found myself hollering at them. That didn't surprise me or them. My husband was a nice guy, I was the bitch. Anger was always beneath the surface. For so long, I had tolerated. I was always on defensive, and felt I was somehow, fighting for my life. Later I learned I was.

By the time my husband came home, I had put disinterested effort into preparing supper. We ate, barely talking

“I had a good day,” Frank said.

“That's nice,” I said back.

“How was your day?” he asked.

How in the hell do you think it was? I railed silently. After all you have done to me. I flashed him daggers, forced a smile, and said, “My day was okay. Thanks for asking.” Frank looked away. He heard what I wasn’t saying. We used to thrive on arguments, but we grew sick of them. So we did it silently.

The children interrupted our hostile silence. Our son said he wanted to go to playground several blocks away. I said no, I didn’t want him to go without his father or me. I yelled he wasn’t going, and that was that. He yelled please, I have to go. As usual I backed down. Okay, go but be careful, I warned. I felt like I had lost. No one ever listen to me. I didn’t take me seriously.

After supper, I washed dishes while my husband watched television. As usual, I work, and you play. I worry and you relaxed I care and you don’t. I told him to rake the yard but he



refused while saying I will do it later as it was really the man job, but later never came. I couldn’t wait; I was embarrassed by the yard. When I said I was used to doing everything and I would do that too. He said okay. Our

sexual life was damaged as sleeping with my husband had become as strained as our waking moments. Either way, sex was psychologically and emotionally unsatisfying. Long ago I

had shut off my sexual desires. I had shut off my need to give and receive love.

I had expected so much of this marriage. I had many dreams for us, but none of them had come true, everything in this marriage had become a trap. And I couldn't find the way out. Maybe, I kept telling myself, it will get better, after all the problems are his fault. He's an alcoholic. When he will get better our marriage will get better too.

He attended the alcoholics anonymous for six months. He was getting better but I wasn't. I was beginning to wonder. What happened to our love? What had happened to me?

One month later, I began to suspect what I would soon learn was the truth. By then, the only thing that had changed was I felt worse. I had no purpose, except to care for other people, and I wasn't doing a good job of that. I was stuck in the past and terrified of the future. Something dreadful, something that I couldn't explain, had happened to me. I ruined my life. Somehow, I had been affected by his drinking, and the ways I had been affected had become my problems. It no longer mattered whose fault it was

I had lost control.

## **OTHER STORIES**

Amjad was a chemical dependency counselor and a recovering alcoholic with several years of sobriety when he found himself having troubles.

Amjad was also an adult child of an alcoholic; his father and three brothers were alcoholics. An intelligent, sensitive man who enjoyed his work, Amjad's problem was his leisure time. He spent most of it worrying about---- obsessed with----other people and their problems. Sometimes he tried to untangle messes alcoholics created; other times he felt angry with the alcoholics for creating the messes he felt obligated to clean up; sometimes he felt upset because people, not necessarily alcoholics, behaved in particular ways. He ranted, felt guilty, sorry and used by people. Rarely, however, did he feel close to them. Rarely did he have fun.

For many years, Amjad believed his duty was to worry about people and get involved in their problems. He called his behavior kindness, concern, love and sometimes, righteous indignation. Now, after getting help for his problem, he calls it codependency. Sometimes, codependent behavior becomes inextricably entangled with being a good wife, mother, husband, brother or

daughter. Now in her forties, Rubina is an attractive woman---- when she takes care of herself. Most of the time, however, she's busy taking care of her five children and her husband, who is a recovering alcoholic. She devoted her life to making them happy, but she didn't succeed. Usually, she feels angry and unappreciated for her efforts, and her family feels angry at her. She spends too much of the family's budget on toys and clothing for the children---- whatever they want. Most of the time, they don't even say, "Thank you." Rubina resents her constant giving to people in her life. She resents how her family and their needs control her life. She chose nursing as her profession, and she often resents that.

"But I feel guilty when I don't do what's asked of me. I feel guilty when I don't live up to my standards for a wife and mother. I feel guilty when I don't live up to others people's standards for me. I just plain feel guilty," she said. "In fact," she added, "I schedule my day, my priorities, according to guilt."

Does endlessly taking care of other people, resenting it, and expecting nothing in return mean Rubina is a good wife and mother? Or could it mean Rubina is codependent?

Co dependency is complex. Some people have extremely painful and debilitating experience with codependency. Others don't and may be only mildly affected.

## CODEPENDENCY

*Relationships are like a dance, with visible energy  
racing back and forth between the partners.  
Some relationships are the slow, dark dance of  
death.*



The obvious definition would be: being a partner in dependency. This *definition* is close to the truth but still unclear. It brings no specific image to mind.

### WHAT'S CODEPENDENCY?

In an article from the book *Co-Dependency, An Emerging Issue*, Robert Subby codependency is: “An emotional, psychological,



and behavioral condition that develops as a result of an individual's prolonged exposure to, and practice of, a set of oppressive rules---rules which prevent

the open expression of feeling as well as the direct discussion of personal and interpersonal problems.”

Earnie Larsen, defines codependency as; “those self-defeating, learned behaviors or character defects that result in a diminished capacity to initiate or to participate in loving relationship.”



Some therapists have proclaimed: “codependency is anything and everyone is codependent.” So, who’s got who inside story? A brief history of codependency will help answer this question.

## **A BRIEF HISTORY**

The word codependency appeared on the treatment scene in the late seventies in Minnesota treatment center. Originally the word Codependent was used to describe the person or persons whose lives were affected as a result of their being involved with someone who was chemically dependent. The codependent spouse or child or lover of someone who was chemically dependent was seen as having developed a pattern of coping with life that was seen having developed a pattern of coping with life that was not healthy, as a reaction to someone else’s drug or alcohol abuse.

It was a new name for an old game. Professionals had long suspected something peculiar happened to the people who were closely involved with chemically dependent people. Codependents certainly felt the effects of codependency long before the word was coined.

In 1940’s, after the birth of Alcoholics Anonymous, a group of people---primarily wives of alcoholics formed self help, support groups to deal with the ways their spouses’ alcoholism affected them. They wanted a program so they went for counseling.

## *Codependent No More*

The basic thought then, and in 1979 when the word codependency emerged, was codependent (co-alcoholics or para-alcoholics) *were people whose lives had become unmanageable as a result of living in a committed relationship with an alcoholic.*

However, the definition for codependency has expanded since then. Professionals began to better understand the effect of the chemically dependent person on the family, and the effect of the family on the chemically dependent person. As professionals began to understand codependency better, more groups of people appeared to have it.

When a codependent discontinued his or her relationship with a troubled person, the codependent frequently sought another troubled person, the codependent behaviors with that new person. The behaviors, or coping mechanisms, seemed to prevail throughout the codependent's life---if that person didn't change these behaviors.

*A codependent person is one who has let another person's behavior affected him or her, and who is obsessed with controlling that person's behavior.*

## **CODEPENDENT CHARACTERISTICS**

Many professionals say the first step towards change is awareness. The second step is acceptance. With that in mind, let's examine the characteristics of codependency.

### **CARETAKING**

1. Think and feel responsible for other people's feelings, thoughts, actions, choices, wants, need, well being, lack of well being, and ultimate destiny.
2. Feel anxiety, pity and guilt *when* other people have a problem
3. Feel compelled, almost forced, to help that person solve the problem such as unwanted advice, giving a rapid dire series of suggestions or fixing feelings.

### **LOW SELF WORTH**

1. Reject compliments or praise
2. Feel different from the rest of the world
3. Think they are not quite good enough.
4. Take things personally.
5. Think their lives are not worth living.



### **REPRESSION**

1. Push their thoughts and feelings out of their awareness because of fear and guilt.
2. Become afraid to let themselves be who they are.
3. Appear rigid and controlled.

### **OBSESSION**

1. Feel terribly anxious about problems and people.
2. Worry about the silliest things.
3. Lose sleep over problems or other people's behavior
4. Focus all their energy on other people and problems.

### **CONTROLLING**

1. Think they know best how things should turn out and how people should behave.
2. Try to control events and people through threats, advice giving, manipulation, or domination.

### **DENIAL**

1. Ignore problems or pretend they are not happening.
2. Pretend circumstances are not as bad as they are.
3. Tell themselves things will be better tomorrow.
4. Stay busy so they don't have to think about things.

### **DEPENDENCY**

1. don't feel happy, content, or peaceful with themselves.

2. Look for happiness outside themselves.
3. feel terribly threatened by the loss of anything or person they think provides happiness.
4. Don't love themselves.
5. Lose interest in their own lives when they love.
6. Tolerate abuse to keep people loving them.



### **POOR COMMUNICATION**

1. Don't say what they mean.
2. Don't mean what they say.
3. Gauge their words carefully to achieve a desired effect.
4. Try to say what they think will please people.

### **WEAK BOUNDARIES**

1. Let others hurt them
2. Keep letting people hurt them.



### **LACK OF TRUST**

1. Don't trust themselves.
2. Don't trust their feelings.
3. Don't trust their decisions.
4. Lose faith and trust in God.

### **ANGER**

1. Feel very scared, hurt and angry.



2. Are afraid of their own anger.
3. Are frightened of other peoples anger
4. Think people will go away if anger enters the picture.
5. Are afraid to make other people feel angry.
6. Repress their angry feelings.
7. Cry a lot, get depressed, overeat, get sick, do mean and nasty things.

### **PROGRESSIVE CHARACTERISTICS**

There are some progressive characteristics of codependents like in the later stages of codependency; codependents may

1. Feel lethargic, depressed, suicidal, hopeless, and violent.
2. Experience a complete loss of daily routine and structure.
3. Abuse or neglect their children and other responsibilities.
4. Experience an eating disorder.
5. Become addicted to alcohol or other drugs.

### **SEX PROBLEMS**

1. Are caretakers in the bedroom?
2. Have sex when they don't want to.
3. Don't talk about it.
4. Consider or have an extramarital affair.
5. Make up reasons to abstain.
6. Lose interest in sex.
7. Reduce sex to a technical act.



## **DETACHMENT**

Most codependents are attached to the people and problems in their environment. By “attachment,” I don’t mean normal feelings of liking people, being concerned about problems, or feeling connected to the world. Attachment is becoming overly-involved, sometimes hopelessly entangled.



Attachment can take several forms:

- We may become excessively worried about a problem or person.
- Our emotional energy is directed at the object of our obsession.
- We may become reactionaries, instead of acting authentically of our own violation.
- We may become emotionally dependent on the people around us.
- We may become caretakers (rescuers, enablers) to the people around us (firmly attaching ourselves to their need for us).

Whenever we become attached in these ways to someone or something, we become detached from ourselves. We lose touch

with ourselves. We forfeit our power and ability to think, feel, act and take care of ourselves. We lose control.

In other words over involvement of any sort can keep us in a state of chaos; it can keep the people around us in a state of chaos. If we are focusing all our energies on people and problems, we have little left for the business of living our own lives and there is just so much worry and responsibility in the air. It is in fact a wasted energy which we focus on other people.

We cannot begin to work on ourselves until we have detached from the object of our obsession. Detachment is not a cold hostile withdrawal. Detachment is based on the premises that each person is responsible for himself, that we can't solve problems that aren't ours to solve, and that worrying doesn't help. We adopt a policy of keeping our hands off others people's responsibilities and tend to our own instead.

Detachment involves "present moment living". We allow life to happen instead of forcing and trying to control it. Detaching means we learn to love, care be involved without going crazy. Sometimes detachment even motivates and frees people around us to begin to solve their problems. Detachment is both an act and an art. It is a healthy way of life I believe it is also a gift and it will be given to those who seek it.



For the practical implication of detachment Counseling suggests a three-part formula called HOW. In HOW Formula:

H: stands for honesty

O: stands for openness

W: stands for willingness to try

**Honesty;** means there is only a need of being honest with oneself and accepting the fact that we being human beings have some limitations. We can't be perfect in solving other people's problems. So there is no need to be crazy and spoiling one's own life at the expense of others.

**Openness;** means we should always welcome other people's thoughts and opinions and be open to express our own true feelings and thought about them. Instead of being scared to the fact that if we shall express our true feelings; we shall lose our object of obsession or the person we love.

**Willingness to try;** is the ability to accept ones strengths and weakness and strive for finding ones individual potential rather than finding happiness and magic in others.

HOW formula suggests that with a little humility, surrender and effort on our part we can strive for detachment.

## **DON'T BE BLOWN ABOUT BY EVERY WIND**

Most codependents are reactionaries. They react with anger, guilt, shame, self-hate, worry, hurt, controlling gestures, caretaking act, desperation, and fury. They react with fear and anxiety. It is normal to react and respond to our environment. Reaction is part of life. It's part of interaction. It's part of being alive and human. But we allow ourselves to get so upset, and so distracted. Little things, big things, anything, have the power to throw us off the track. And the way we react is frequently not in our best interest.



Codependents basically have a self destructive reactionary pattern. Like they think that if someone does something, so we must do something back. If someone says something, so we must say something back. Someone feel a certain way, so we must feel a certain way.

*They Simply Jump Into The First Feeling That Comes Their Way  
And Then Wallow In It.*

Some suggestions follow to help you detach from people and your destructive reactions to them.

- 1. Learn to recognize when you are reacting;** usually when you start to feel anxious, afraid, indignant, out raged, rejected, sorry for yourself, ashamed, worried, or confused, something in your environment has snagged you.
- 2. Make yourself comfortable;** when you recognize that you are in the midst of a chaotic reaction, do whatever you need to do to help yourself relax. Take a few deep breaths. Go for a walk. Clean the kitchen. Go for shower. Go to a friend's house.
- 3. Examine what happened;** if the problem is serious, or is seriously upsetting you, you may want to discuss it with a friend to help clear your thoughts and emotions. Troubles and feeling go wild when we try to keep them caged inside. Talk about your feelings. Take responsibility for them. Deal with it. Then tell yourself the truth about what happened.
- 4. Find out what your need to take care of yourself;** make your decisions based on reality, and make them from a peaceful state. Do you need to have a heart-to – heart talk with someone? Do you need to make some other decision to take care of yourself? When you make your decision keep in mind what your responsibilities are.

## **SET YOURSELF FREE**

People say codependents are controllers they are the people who consistently, and with a great deal of effort and energy, try to force things to happen.

- They do so in the name of love
- They do it so as they say “we are only trying to help”
- They do it because they think they know best how things should go and how people should behave.



Controlling is an illusion. It doesn't work. We cannot control alcoholism. We cannot control any one's compulsive behaviors like overeating, smoking or any of their behavior. We cannot control anyone's emotions, minds or choices; we cannot control the outcome of events. We cannot control life. Some of us can barely control ourselves.

People ultimately do what they want to do. They feel how they want to feel (or how they are feeling); they think what they want to think; they do the things they believe they need to do; and they will change only when they are ready to change.

## *Codependent No More*

We cannot change people. Any attempt to control them is just an illusion. People will either resist our efforts or redouble their efforts to prove we can't control them. They may temporarily adapt to our demands, but the moment we turn our backs they will return to their natural state.



Furthermore, people will punish us for making them do something they don't want to do, or be something they don't want to be. No amount of control will effect a permanent or desirable change in another person. We just need to understand that

*The Only Person You Can Ever Change Is Yourself. The Only Person Your Business To Control Is Yourself.*

When you have done all that you can do, it is time to detach. Deal with your feelings. Gain control of yourself and your responsibilities. Free others to be who they are. In so doing, you will set yourself free.

## **REMOVE THE VICTOM**

The underlying theme of this rule is that there is no need of pursuing unnecessary acts of rescuing and care taking because through such acts one becomes vulnerable to be the victim of troubled person's aggression or misuse.



Codependents are caretakers \_\_rescuers. They rescue, then they persecute, then they end up victimized. For codependents “your wish is my command” and “your problem is my problem” is the theme of life. They are the caretakers.

### **WHAT IS A RESCUE?**

Rescuing and caretaking mean almost what they sound like. We rescue people from their responsibilities. We take care of people's responsibilities from them. Later we get mad at them for what we've done. Then we feel used and sorry for ourselves. That is the pattern, the triangle.

Rescuing and caretaking are synonymous. Their definitions are closely connected to enabling. *Enabling* is a therapeutic jargon



that means a destructive form of helping. Any acts that help an

alcoholic continue drinking, prevent the alcoholic from suffering consequences ,or in any way make it easier for an alcoholic to continue drinking are considered enabling behaviors.

As counselor Scott Egleston says, we rescue anytime we take responsibility for another human being –for that person’s thoughts, feelings, decisions, behaviors, well being, problems, or destiny.

The following acts constitute a rescuing or caretaking move:

- Doing something for someone although that person is capable of and should be doing it for him or herself.
- Meeting people’s needs without being asked and before we’ve agreed to do so. Doing more than a fair share of work after our help is requested.
- Consistently giving more than we receive in a particular situation.
- Speaking for another person
- Suffering people’s problems for them.

Caretaking breeds anger. Caretakers become angry parents, angry friends, and angry lovers. Giving to and doing things for and with people are essential parts of healthy living and healthy relationships. But learning when not to give, when not to give in, and when not to do things for and with people are also essential parts of healthy living and healthy relationships.

Care taking is an act and an attitude .but when it becomes a role an approach to our entire lives and to all the people around us we become codependents. There is a thin line between beneficial care giving and destructive giving and in order to be relieved, we need to learn to make that distinction. Hence one ought to be a caregiver not a care taker



We can learn to recognize a rescue. Refuse to rescue. Refuse to let people rescue us. Take responsibility for ourselves, and let others do the same. Whether we change our attitudes, our circumstances, our behaviors, or our minds, the kindest thing we can do is remove the victims ourselves.



## UNDEPENDENCE

A married woman had assumed all the responsibilities for raising her two children, and did all the household chores. “I want to separate from my husband,” she sobbed. “I can’t stand him or his abuse any longer. But tell me; please tell me,” She asked, “Do you think I can take care of myself?”



The words vary, but the thought is the same. “I’m not happy living with this person, but I don’t think I can live without him (or her). I cannot, for some reason, find it within myself to face the aloneness that every human being must face or continue to run from: that of being ultimately and solely responsible for taking care of myself. Whether codependence appears fragile and helpless, or sturdy and powerful, most of us are frightened, needy, vulnerable children who are aching and desperate to be loved and cared for.

This child in us believes we are unlovable and will never find the comfort we are seeking. Sometimes this vulnerable child becomes too desperate. People have abandoned us, emotionally and physically. People have rejected us. People have abused us, let us down. People have never been there for us; they have not

seen, heard, or responded to our needs. We may come to believe that people will never be there for us. For many of us, even God seems to have gone away.

We have been there for so many people. Most of us desperately want someone to finally be there for us.

We need someone, anyone, to rescue us from the stark loneliness, alienation, and pain. We want some of the good stuff, and the good stuff is not in us. Pain is in us. We feel so helpless and uncertain.



Others look so powerful and assured. We conclude the magic must be in them.

So we become dependent on them. We can become dependent on lovers, spouses, friends, parents, or our children. We become dependent on their approval. We become dependent on their presence. We become dependent on their need for us. We become dependent on their love, even though we believe we will never receive their love; we believe we are unlovable and nobody has ever loved us in a way that met our needs.

Needing people so much, yet believing we are unlovable and people will never be there for us, can become a deeply ingrained belief. Sometimes, we think people are not there for us when

they really are. Our need may block our vision, preventing us from seeing the love that is there for us.

Many of us expect and need other people so much that we settle for too little. We may become dependent on troubled people, alcoholics and other people with

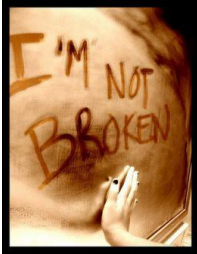


problems. Sometimes, we need people so badly we settle for nearly anyone. We may even convince ourselves that we can't live without someone and will wither and die if that person is not in our lives. If that person is alcoholic or deeply troubled, we may tolerate abuse and insanity to keep him or her in our lives, to protect our source of emotional security.

People who feel trapped look for escapes. Codependents who feel stuck in a relationship may begin planning an escape. Sometimes our escape route is a positive, healthy one; we begin taking steps to become independent, financially and emotionally. "Undependence" is a term Penelope Russian off uses in her book to describe that desirable balance wherein we acknowledge and meet our healthy, natural needs for people and love, yet we don't become overly or harmfully dependent on them.

We may go back to school, get a job, or set other goals that will bring freedom. And we usually begin setting those goals when we are sick enough of being trapped. Some codependents,

however, plan destructive escapes. We may try to escape our prison by using alcohol or drugs. We may become workaholics. We may seek escape by becoming emotionally dependent on another person who is like the person we were attempting to escape, another alcoholic, for example.



Ultimately, too much dependency on a person can kill love. Many of us learned these things because when we were children, someone very important to us was unable to give us the love, approval, and emotional security we needed.

So we go about our lives the best way we could, still looking vaguely or desperately for something we never got. Some of us are still beating our heads against the cement trying to get this love from people who, like mother or father, are unable to give what we need. The cycle repeats itself until it is interrupted and stopped. It's called unfinished business.

Some women were taught to be dependent. They learned to center their lives on other people and to be taken care of. Even since the women's liberation movement, many women, deep inside, fear being alone. Many people, not just women, fear being alone and taking care of them. It is part of being human.



Some of us may have entered an adult relationship with our emotional security intact, only to discover we were in a relationship with an alcoholic. Nothing will destroy emotional security more quickly than loving someone who is alcoholic or has any other compulsive disorder. Their diseases demand us to center our lives on them. Confusion, chaos, and despair reign. Even the healthiest of us may begin to doubt ourselves after living with an alcoholic. Needs go unmet. Love disappears. Alcoholism creates victims of us – drinkers and nondrinkers alike – and we doubt our ability to take care of ourselves.

Here are some ideas that may help:

1. Finish up business from our childhoods, as best as we can. Grieve. Get some perspective. Figure out how events from our childhoods are affecting what we're doing now.
2. Nurture and cherish that frightened, vulnerable, needy child inside us. The child may never completely disappear, no matter how self-sufficient we become. Stress may cause the child to cry out. Unprovoked, the child may come out and demand attention when we least expect it.
3. Stop looking for happiness in other people. Our source of happiness and well-being is not inside others; it's inside us. Learn to center ourselves in ourselves.
4. We can learn to depend on ourselves. Maybe other people haven't been there for us, but we can start being there for us.

5. We can depend on God, too. He's there and he cares. Our spiritual beliefs can provide us with a strong sense of emotional security.
6. Strive for Undependence. Begin examining the ways we are dependent, emotionally and financially, on the people around us.

Start taking care of ourselves whether we are in relationship that we intend to continue, or whether we are in relationship we are trying to get out of. We can feel our feelings, talk about our fears, accept ourselves and our present conditions, and then get started on the journey toward Undependence. We can do it. When don't have to feel strong all the time to be undependent and taking care of ourselves. We can and probably will have feelings of fear, weakness and the even hopelessness. That is normal and even healthy. Real power comes from feeling our feelings, not from ignoring them. Real strength comes, not from pretending to be strong all the time, but from acknowledging our weaknesses and vulnerabilities when we feel this way.



Many of us have dark nights. Many of us have uncertainty, loneliness, and the pang of needs and wants that beg to be met and yet go seemingly unnoticed. Sometimes the way is foggy and slippery, and we have no hope. All we can feel is fear. All we can see in the dark. I was driving one night in weather like this. I

don't like driving, and I particularly don't like driving in bad weather. I was stiff and frightened at the wheel. I could barely see; the headlights were only illuminating a few feet of the road. I was almost blind. I started to panic. Anything could happen! Then a calming thought entered my mind. The path was only lit for only few feet, but each time I progressed those few feet, a new section was lit. It didn't matter that I couldn't see far ahead. If I relaxed, I could see as far as I needed for the moment. The situation was not ideal, but I could get through it if I stay calm and worked with what was available. You can get through dark situations, too. You can take care of yourself and trust yourself. Trust God. Go as far as you can see, and by the time you get there, you'll be able to see farther. It's called One Day at a time.

## CHARACTERISTICS

<b>LOVE( OPEN SYSTEM)</b>	<b>ADDICTION(CLOSEDSYSTEM)</b>
Room to grow, expand, desire for other to grow	Dependent, based on security and comfort, use intensity of need and infatuation as proof of love (may really be fear, insecurity, and loneliness).
Separate interests, other friends, maintain other meaningful relationships.	Total involvement, limited social life, neglect old friends, interests.
Encouragement of each other`s expanding; secure in own worth.	Preoccupation with other`s behavior; dependent on other`s approval for own identity and self-worth
Trust; openness	Jealousy, possessiveness, fears
Mutual integrity preserved.	One partner`s needs suspended
Willingness to risk	Search for perfect invulnerability
Room for exploration of feelings in and of relationship.	Reassurance through repeated, ritualized activity.
Ability to enjoy being alone	Intolerance



## **LIVE YOUR OWN LIFE**

The surest way to make ourselves crazy is to get involved in other people`s business and quickest way to become sane and happy is to attend to our own affairs. Living our lives may not be exciting prospect to some of us either. Maybe we`re been so wrapped up in other people that we`ve forgotten how to live and enjoy our lives.



We may be in so much emotional distress we think we have no life; all we are, is our pain. That`s not true. We are more than our problems. We will be more than our problems. Just because life has been painful so far doesn`t mean it has to keep hurting. Life has doesn`t has to hurt so much, and it won`t – if we begin to change. It may not be all roses from here on out, but it doesn`t have to be all thorns either. We need to and can develop our own lives.

Some codependents think a life with no future, no purpose, no great shakes, and no great breaks isn`t worth living. That`s not true, either. I believe God has exciting, interesting things in store for each of us. I believe there is an enjoyable, worthwhile purpose–besides taking care of people and being an appendage to someone – for each of us. I believe we tape into this attitude by

taking care of ourselves. We began to cooperate. We open ourselves up to the goodness and richness available in us.

Throughout this book I have used the phrase taking care of ourselves. I have heard that phrase used and abused. I have heard people use it to control, impose upon, or force their wills on people. (I dropped in, uninvited, with my five kids and cat. We are going to spend the week. I'm just taking care of myself!) I have heard the phrase used manipulatively to justify persecuting and punishing people, instead of dealing appropriately with angry feelings. (I'm going to holler and scream at you all day because you didn't do what I wanted you to do. Don't get mad at me though. I'm just taking care of myself.) I have heard people use these words to avoid responsibility. (I know my son is up in his bedroom shooting heroin, but that's his problem. I'm not going to the store and charge Rs500, and I'm not going to worry about how I'll pay that either. I'm just taking care of myself.)

Self-care is an attitude toward ourselves and our lives that says. I



am responsible for myself. I am responsible for living or not living my life. I am responsible for tending to my spiritual, emotional, physical, and financial well-being.

I am responsible for identifying and meeting my needs. I am responsible for solving my problems or learning to live with those I cannot solve. I am responsible for my choices. I am

responsible for what I give and receive. I am also responsible for setting and achieving my goals. I am responsible for how much I enjoy life, for how much pleasure I find in daily activities. I am responsible for whom I love and how I choose to express this love. I am responsible for what I do to others and for what I allow others to do me. I am responsible for my wants and desires. All of me, every aspect of my being, is important. I count for something. I matter. My feelings can be trusted. My thinking is appropriate. I value my wants and needs. I do not deserve and will not tolerate abuse or constant mistreatment. I have rights, and it is my responsibility to assert these rights. The decision I make and the way I conduct myself will reflect my high self-esteem. My decision will take into account my responsibilities to myself.

This may be a shock to us and our family system at first. Most codependents don't ask for what we need. Many codependents don't know or haven't given much thought to what we want and need. Many of us have falsely believed our needs aren't important and we shouldn't mention them. Some of us even began to believe our needs are bad or wrong, so we've learned to repress them and push them out of our awareness. We haven't learned to identify what we need, or listen to what we need because it didn't matter anyway-our needs weren't going to get met. Some of us haven't learned how to get our needs met appropriately.

Then we need to listen to ourselves and to our higher power. Respect what we hear. This insane business of punishing ourselves for what we think, feel, and want-this nonsense of not listening to who we are and what ourselves are struggling to tell us-must stop. How do you think God work with us? No wonder we think God has abandoned us; we've abandoned ourselves. We can be gentle with ourselves and accept ourselves. We're not only or merely human, we were created and intended to be human. And we can be compassionate with ourselves. Then perhaps, we may develop true compassion for others. Listen to what our precious self is telling us about what we need.



Sometimes giving ourselves what we need means giving ourselves something fun: a treat, a new hairdo, a new dress, a new pair of shoes, a new toy, an evening at the theater, or a trip to the Murree. Sometimes, giving ourselves what we need is work. We need to eliminate or develop a certain characteristic; we need to work on a relationship; or we need to tend to our responsibilities to ourselves. Giving ourselves what we need does not only mean giving presents to ourselves; it means doing what's necessary to live responsibility-not an excessively responsible or an irresponsible existence. Besides giving ourselves what we need, we begin to ask people for what we

need and want from them because this is a part of taking care of ourselves and being a responsible human being.

Giving ourselves what we need means we become our personal counselor, confidante, spiritual advisor, partner, best friend, and caretaker in this exciting, new venture we have undertaken – living our own lives. We base all our decision on reality, and we make them in our best interests. We take into account our responsibilities to others people, because that is what responsible people do. But we also know we count. We try to eliminate “should” from our decision and learn to trust ourselves. If we listen to ourselves and our higher power, we will not be misled. Giving ourselves what we need



and learning to live self-directed lives requires faith. We need enough faith to get on with our lives, and we need to do at least a little something each day to begin moving forward.

We forgive ourselves when we make mistakes and we congratulate ourselves when we do well. We also get comfortable doing some things poorly and some things with mediocrity, for that is part of life too. We learn to laugh at ourselves and our humanity, but we don't laugh when we need to cry. We take ourselves seriously but not too seriously.

## *Codependent No More*



I am learning to identify how to take care of myself. I know many people who have either learned or learning to do this too. I believe all codependents can. Training for healing codependency is

available at Nishan Foundation, Pakistan where counselors and psychologists are striving to serve humanity and helping them to learn codependent-free life.

## **HAVE A LOVE AFFAIR WITH YOURSELF**

“Love thy neighbor as thyself”. Problem with many codependents is we do just that. What’s worse, many of us wouldn’t dream of loving or treating other people the way we treat ourselves. We wouldn’t dare, and others probably wouldn’t let us. Most codependents suffer from that vague but penetrating affliction, low self-worth. We don’t feel good about ourselves, we don’t like ourselves, and we wouldn’t consider loving ourselves. For some of us, low self-worth is an understatement. We don’t merely dislike ourselves, we hate ourselves.



We don’t like the way we look. We can’t stand our bodies. We think we’re stupid, incompetent, untalented, and, in many cases, think our feelings are wrong and inappropriate. We believe we’re not important, and even if our feelings aren’t wrong, we think they don’t matter. We are convinced our needs aren’t important. And we shame someone else’s desires or plans. We think we’re inferior to and different than the rest of the world-not unique, but oddly and inappropriately different.

*Love Yourself,*  
*Believe in Yourself...*  
*Find the Spirit Within*  
*And Your Dreams*  
*Will Come True!*

We have never come to grips with ourselves, and we look at

ourselves not through rose-colored glasses but through a dirty, brownish-gray film.

We may have learned to disguise our true feelings about



ourselves by dressing right, fixing our rights, living in the right home, and working at the right job. We may boast of our

accomplishments, but underneath the trappings lies a dungeon where we secretly and incessantly punish and torture ourselves. At times, we may punish ourselves openly before the whole world, by saying demeaning things about ourselves. Sometimes, we even invite others to help us hate ourselves, such as when we allow certain people or religious customs to help us feel guilty, or when we allow people to hurt us. But our worst beatings go on privately, inside our minds.

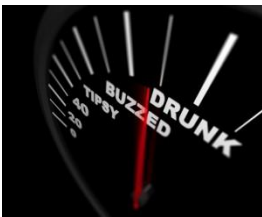
Some of us believe we have made such bad mistakes that we can't reasonably expect forgiveness. Some of us believe our lives are a mistake. Many of us believe everything we've done is a mistake. A few of us believe we can't do anything right, but at the same time, we demand perfection of ourselves. We put ourselves in impossible situations, and then wonder why we can't get out.





Then we finish the job by sharing ourselves. We don't like what we do, and we don't like who we are. Fundamentally, we are not good enough. For some reason, God created in us a person totally inappropriate for life.

We don't like ourselves, and we're not going to let ourselves get any of the good stuff because we believe we don't deserve it. As codependents, we tend to enter into totally antagonistic relationships in our families, possibly with the help of an alcoholic parent. Some of us reinforced our self-disdain by leaving an alcoholic parent and marrying an alcoholic. We may have entered into adult relationships with fragile self-worth, and then discovered our remaining self-esteem disintegrated. A few of us may have had our self-worth completely intact until we met him or her or until that problem came along; we suddenly or gradually found ourselves hating ourselves. Alcoholism and



other compulsive disorders destroy self-worth in alcoholics and codependents. Some of us may not even be aware of our low self-esteem and self-hatred because we have been comparing

ourselves to the alcoholics and other crazy people in our lives; by comparison, we come out on top. Low self-worth can sneak up on us any time we let it. In all our codependency, with all our controlling, rescuing, and assorted character defects, we are okay. We are exactly as we are meant to be. I've talked a lot

## *Codependent No More*

about problems, issues, and things to change-these are goals, things we will do to enhance our lives. Who we are right now is okay. In fact, codependents are some of the most loving, generous, good-hearted, and concerned people I know.

We can cherish ourselves and our lives. We can nurture ourselves and love ourselves. We can accept our wonderful selves, with all our faults, strong points, weak points, feelings, thoughts, and everything else. It's the best thing we've got going for us.

We aren't second-class citizen. We don't deserve to lead second-hand lives. And we don't deserve second-best relationships! We are lovable, and we are worth getting to know. People who love and like us aren't stupid or inferior for doing that. We have a right to be happy. We deserve good things.



The people who look the most beautiful are the same as us. The only difference is they're telling themselves they look good, and they're letting themselves shine through. The people who say the most profound, intelligent or witty things are the same as us.

We are good. We are good enough. We are appropriate to life. Much of our anxiety and fearfulness stems, I believe, from constantly telling ourselves that we're just not up to facing the

world and all its situations. Relax. Wherever we need to go and whatever we need to do, we are appropriate for that situation. We will do fine. Relax. It's okay to be who we are. Who or what else can we be? Just do our best at whatever we are called upon to do. What more can we do? We need to be good to ourselves. We need to be compassionate and kind to ourselves. How can we expect to take care of ourselves appropriately if we hate or dislike ourselves?

Shame and guilt serve no long-term purpose. They are only useful to momentarily indicate when we may have violated our own moral codes. Guilt and shame are not useful as a way of life. Stop the "shoulds". Become aware of when we're punishing and torturing ourselves and make a concerted effort to tell ourselves positive messages. If we should be doing something, do it. If we're torturing ourselves, stop it. It gets easier. We can laugh at ourselves, tell ourselves we won't be tricked, give ourselves a



hug, then go about the business of living as we choose. We need to stop shaming ourselves. Shame, like guilt, serves absolutely no extended purpose. If people tell us, directly or indirectly, that we ought to be ashamed, we don't have to believe it. Hating or shaming ourselves doesn't help except for a moment.

## *Codependent No More*

We can be gentle, loving, listening, attentive and kind to ourselves, our feelings, thoughts, needs, wants, desires and everything we're made of. We need to love ourselves and make a commitment to ourselves. We need to give ourselves some of the boundless loyalty that so many codependents are willing to give others. Out of high self-esteem will come true acts of kindness and charity, not selfishness? The love we give and receive will be enhanced by the love we give ourselves.

### **ACTIVITY**

How do you feel about yourself? Write about it. Include the things you like or don't like about yourself. Reread what you have written.

## **LEARN THE ART OF ACCEPTANCE**

Accepting reality is touted and encouraged by most sane people.



It is the goal of many therapist, as well it should be. Facing and coming to terms with what is a beneficial act. Acceptance brings peace. It is frequently the turning point for change. It is also much easier said than done.

People, not just codependents, are faced daily with the prospect of either accepting or rejecting the reality of that particular day and present circumstances. We have many things to accept in the course of normal living from the moment we open our eyes in the morning until we close them at night. Our present circumstances include whom we are, where we live, who we live with or without, where we work, our method of transportation, how much money we have, what our responsibilities are, what we shall do for fun, and any problems that arise. Some days, accepting these circumstances is a breeze. It comes naturally. Our hair behaves, our kid behave, the boss is reasonable, the money`s right, the house is clean, the car works, and we like our spouse or lover. We know what to expect, and what we expect is acceptable. It`s okay. Other days might not go so well. The brakes go out on the car, the roof leaks, the kids sass, we break our arm, we lose our job, or our spouse or lover says he or she

doesn't love us anymore. Something has happened. We have a problem. Things are different. Things are changing. We're losing something. Our present circumstances are no longer as comfortable as they were. Circumstances have been altered, and we have new situation to accept. We may initially respond by denying or resisting the change, problem, or loss. We want things to be the way they were. We want the problem to be quickly solved. We want to be comfortable again. We want to know what we expect. We are peaceful with reality. It feels awkward. We have temporarily lost our balance.

Codependents never know what to expect, particularly if we are in close relationship with an alcoholic, a drug addict, a criminal, a gambler, or any other person with serious problem or compulsive disorder. We are bombarded by problems, losses, and change. We endure shattered windows, missed appointments, broken promises, and outright lies. We lose financial security, emotional security, faith in people we love, faith in God, and faith in ourselves. We may lose our physical well-being, our material goods, and our ability to enjoy sex, our reputation, our social life, our career, our self-control, our self-esteem, and ourselves.



## *Codependent No More*

Perhaps the most painful loss many codependents face is the loss of our dreams, the hopeful and sometimes idealistic expectations for the future that most people have. This loss can be the most difficult to accept. As we looked at our child in the hospital nursery, we had certain hopes for him or her. Those hopes didn't include our child having a problem with alcohol or drugs. Our dream didn't include this. On our wedding day, we had dreams. The future with our beloved was full of wonder and promise. This was the start of something great, something loving, and something we had long hoped for. The dreams and promises may have been spoken or unspoken but for most of us, they were there.

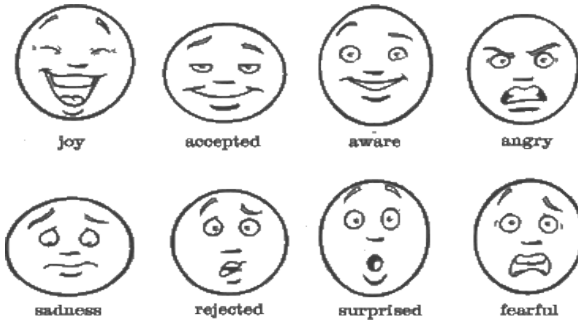
May that's where all the trouble began. Did you mean what you said when you said it? If you knew at that time that you are going to have not the better but the worse, not the health but sickness, not richer but the poorer, would the love that you felt have made it worth it? You may say yes, but I wonder. If you were more realistic than romantic you may have interpreted the vows to mean – through the bad as well as the good, assuming that the bad times would be transitory and the good ones permanent. The contract is entered into good faith. There is no benefit of hindsight.”



The dreams were there. Many of us held for so long, clutching those dreams through one loss and disappointment after another. We flew in the face of reality, shaking these dreams at the truth, refusing to believe or accept anything less. But one day the truth caught up to us and refused to be put off any longer. This wasn't what we wanted, planned on, and it would never breathe again. Some of us may have had our dreams and hopes crushed. Some of us may be facing the failure of something extremely important such marriage or another important relationship. I know there's a lot of pain at the prospect of losing love or losing the dreams we had. There nothing we can say to make that less painful or to lessen our grief. It hurts deeply to have our dreams destroyed by alcoholism or any other problem. The disease is deadly.



## **FEEL YOUR OWN FEELINGS**



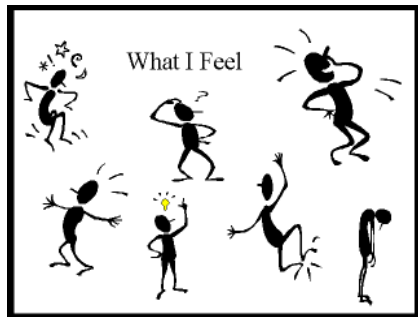
Codependents frequently lose touch with the emotional part of themselves. Sometimes they withdraw emotionally to avoid become piled upon hurt, and no one seems to care. It becomes safer to go away. They become overloaded with pain so they short circuit to protect themselves. Codependence may withdraw emotionally from certain people-people they think may hurt them. They don't trust them, so they hide the emotional part. Their feelings may provoke unpleasant reactions in others, such as anger. Expressing their feelings may even be dangerous to their physical well being because they rock the family boat.

Even the families that have no history of addiction may reject feelings. Like "Don't feel that way" or "This feeling is inappropriate". Hence people quickly learn the lie that our feelings don't come, that feelings are somehow wrong. It appears easy not to feel. Codependents have so much responsibility because they have taken so much responsibility for the people

around them. Sometimes they try to make their feelings disappear because they're afraid of them. The catch is to acknowledge how we really feel and that demands a decision-action or change-on our part.

Codependents are oppressed, depressed and repressed. Many of them can quickly tell what someone else is feeling. Many of them have abandoned or never taken responsibility for their emotional selves.

Codependence get deeper in to the water with codependency when they think themselves too sophisticated to deal with the feelings. Feelings are

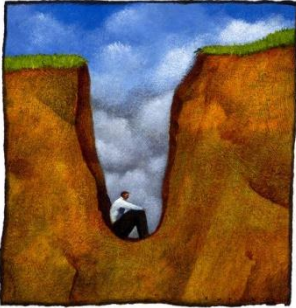


not the end all and be all to living. Feelings must not dictate or control behaviors, but they can't ignore their feelings either. Feelings are the source of joy as well as sadness, fear and anger. The emotional part is the part that laughs as well as cries. The emotional is the center of the giving and receiving the mom glow of love.

Feelings are also indicators. When we feel happy, comfortable, warm, and content, we usually know well in our world, for the present moment. When we feel uncomfortable with anger,

sadness or fear, our feelings are telling us there is a problem. The problem here might be internal or external.

Feelings can be positive motivators. Anger can motivate us to solve a bothersome problem. Fear encourages us to run from



danger. Repeated hurt and emotional pain tells us to stay away. Our feelings can also provide us with clues to ourselves: our desires, warns and ambitions. Our emotions tap into that deep part of ours that seeks and knows

truth and desires self-preservations, self-enhancement, safety and goodness. Our emotions are connected to our conscious, cognitive thought process and to that mysterious gift called instinct or intuition.

Sometimes we can get stuck in emotions, trapped in a well of certain dark feelings and think will never get out. Some of us live with fear for long periods of time. Anger turns into resentments and sadness into depression. Our feelings can trick us too. Our emotions can lead us into situations where our heads tell us not to go. Sometimes feelings are like cotton candy; they appear to be more than they actually are. Not feeling our feelings, withdrawing emotionally and pushing that part of us can be unpleasant, unhealthy and self destructive. Repressing or denying feelings can result in physical ailments. Feelings are energy.

Repressed feelings block our energy. We don't do our best when we're blocked. We have to stay one step ahead of the feelings, we have to do *something*. We don't dare get quiet and peaceful because we might feel these emotions.

A big reason for not repressing feelings is that emotional withdrawal causes us to lose positive feelings. We lose the ability to feel. Sometimes this may become relief and if the pain becomes too great or too constant, but this is not a good plan for living. We may shut down our deep needs, our need to love and be loved when we shut our emotions. We lose the ability to enjoy the pleasant things in life.

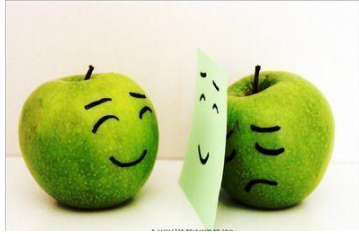


Feelings are not supposed to be suppressed or else they might bring misery. Solution is that it's ok to feel our feelings. Feelings are never wrong. They're not inappropriate. We don't need to feel guilty about feelings. Feelings aren't acts; feeling homicidal rage is entirely different than committing homicide. Feelings are personality trades.

There are four popular feelings Mad, Sad, Glad, Scared. These are the four primary feelings groups and all the rest are shades

and variations. If one is feeling anxious, nervous, he is touching different spectrums of scared feeling and so on.

Dealing with our feeling means we can move out of the muck. It means if a feeling-emotional energy comes our way, we got to feel it. We take a few



moments; acknowledge the sensation and move on to the next step. We don't censor. We don't block. We just allow the energy to pass through our bodies.

The next step is the judging. This is where our moral code comes into play. We still don't judge ourselves from having the feelings. We evaluate the situation first then choose a behavior in the line with our moral code and our new ideal of self-care. Is there a problem we need to solve? We may need to correct certain disaster-oriented thought patterns such as, "I feel horribly afraid and sad because the car broke down, and it's the end of the word "Should be replaced by "I feel sad that the car is broken".

Perhaps it is sufficient to feel nearly feel the emotion and acknowledge the thought. If you're in doubt about what action to take just wait for the right moment until you're peaceful and your mind is consistent. In other words, Detach. Our feelings don't need to control us. If we don't feel with our feelings and deal with them responsibly, they will control us. We need to submit

them to our intellect, our reason and our moral and behavioral code of ethics. Responding each person's feelings are his or her own. Nobody makes anyone feel; no one is ultimately responsible for our feelings except us, no matter how much we insist they're. People might help us feel but they don't make us feel. Moreover, people can't change the way we feel and neither is anyone are we responsible for anyone else's feelings. Our feelings are reactions to life's circumstances. Thus, adequate require that when you discuss a feeling with someone you say "I feel such and such when you do such and such because... (Assertiveness formula)".



We must watch out for the patterns of our feelings. They tell a great deal about us and our relationships. There is a connection between what we think and what we feel. The way we think influences how we feel. It's very important that after we feel our emotions we should examine our thinking.

Caution: Intense happy feelings can be as destructive and scary as intense sad feelings, especially to codependence that are not used to happy feelings. Many codependence believe happy feelings must all be followed by sad feelings, because that is the

way it has usually happened in past. Let the emotional energy pass through, and strive for peace and balance.

In order to get rid of such thought patterns we need to exercise some precautions like

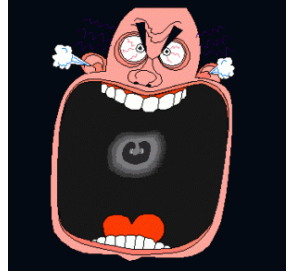
- Make awareness of ourselves a habit
- Paying attention to our level of comfortableness
- Listening to what we're thinking and saying
- Spending quiet time in meditation
- Keeping an eye on what we're exactly doing



Eventually we will find our way to and through our emotions, a way that works for us. Trust your feelings and trust yourself. You're wiser than you think

## ANGER

Angry feelings are part of almost everyone's life. Sometimes anger play's small part in our lives and presents no problem while at other times it blows off steam. In codependence anger covers alarge part of their life. In fact it becomes their life. Like when addict is mad, codependent is mad.



Usually hostility lurks just below the surface, waiting for a chance to come out in the open. The anger sometimes explodes like a bomb but nobody ever gets done with it. Consider the following dialog

*Alcoholic:* How dare you become angry with me? I'm the king. I'll get angry with you but not the other way around.

*Codependent:* After all what I've done for you, I'll get angry anytime I please.

Silently codependent wonders maybe the alcoholic is right. There must be something wrong with me. Codependence deal another blow to their self worth with a little guilt tagged on. Plus, the anger is always there. The problem never gets resolved. The anger festers and boils up. It is usual when the problem gets worse. The codependent may learn for the first time that it is not



the codependent's fault. They start feeling safer to express healthy anger. Things may finally have calmed down enough for the codependent to realize how angry he or she was and is. This can cause more complex the alcoholics may expect and want to start fresh. Consider like

*Alcoholic:* How dare you get angry now? You're starting over.

*Codependent:* That's what you think I'm just getting started.

Then the codependent may act to his or her low self worth and guilt another silent-torturing thought: The alcoholic is right, I should be ecstatic. I should be grateful; there is something wrong with me. Then everyone feels guilty because everyone feels angry and everyone feels angrier because they feel guilty. They feel cheated and mad because sobriety doesn't bring the joy it had promised. This is how it continues. The old anger burns away, new anger fuels the fire. Codependence places this condition that if an alcoholic quits drinking the problem will be solved. But what's wrong with them. Why can't they forgive and forget?



Anger may be a common place emotion, but it is tough to deal with. Most of us haven't been thought how to deal with anger, because people show us how they deal with anger; they don't

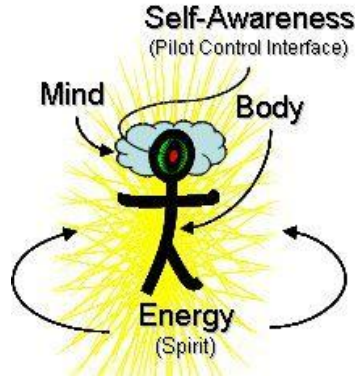
teach us and most people show us inappropriate ways to deal with anger because they're not sure either. People advise like "Be angry, but don't sin; don't let the sun go down your anger". We can't adhere to these mandates. Some of us think they mean don't be angry whereas anger is a normal human emotion. Some common false beliefs about anger are:

- It's not ok to feel angry
- Anger is a waste of time and energy
- People will go away, we get angry at them
- We shouldn't feel angry when we do
- We'll lose control and go crazy if we get angry
- If others are angry at us, we made them feel that way and we're responsible for fixing their feelings
- If we feel angry at someone the relationship is over and that person has to go away
- If we feel angry we have to hit someone or break something
- If someone feels angry at us, it means that person doesn't love us anymore
- Anger is a sinful emotion
- It's ok to feel angry when we're can justify our feelings



## *Codependent No More*

As codependence, we may be frightened of our anger and other people's anger. Maybe we believe one or more of the myths. We react to anger both ours and other people. It's a provocation emotion and it can be contagious too. Codependence has the anger that comes from the persecution stage of rescuing or care taking. They're stuck on the corner of the triangle of rescue-pursue and victimization. They suffer from justified anger—all the mad feelings are those which are result of someone else. Anger covers up sad, hurt, feared and scared feelings. It comes from guilt and makes the codependent take the course of guilt trip.



People usually suffer from reactive anger and they prefer to stay in that mode. Sadly, many of us have had no place to go with that anger. We swallow it, bite our tongues, stiffen our shoulders, push it into our stomachs, run from it, and medicate it. Hence, blame ourselves and everyone around. This anger turns in to depression, puts ourselves to bed, hope to die, and get sick because of it. Finally, ask God to forgive us for being such horrible people.

So what to do with all this build-up steam. The common answer is to repress it and feel guilty about it. Repressed anger like other repressed emotions cause problems. When anger leaks out we scream at someone we aren't intended to. We wrinkle our faces, curl our lips and we break anything of material value because we've already lost so much. Anger may also show its face in different manners like not enjoying food, recreation or any pleasurable activity. Then we add more self hatred to our already heaping pile by one drink what is wrong with us and going on our hostile way.

Anger and unpleasant feelings are weeds. They don't go away when we ignore them; they grow wild and take over. We may lose control and unleash ourselves in a fighting, spitting, screeching, hair pulling, dish breaking rage. And our anger may further harden into bitterness, hatred, contempt, revulsion or resentment.

Even if we're living with the serious problem or seriously ill person it is ok to feel anger when it occurs. Anger is one of the many profound effects life has on us. It's one of our emotions. We have every right to feel anger and we're going to feel it when it comes our way. So do other people. But we also have a responsibility primarily to ourselves to deal with our anger appropriately.

We're back to our original advice: Deal with our feelings. Here few queries generate like how to quit feeling that anger, how does it go away. After the entire person we're mad at is an addicted person. Is it really alright to be this mad at a sick person?

Yes we have the right. We didn't ask for the problem. Although the ideal feeling is compassion, we probably won't feel this until we deal with our anger. Dealing with the repressed emotions will never happen overnight. It takes time and effort and it takes a lot of practice.

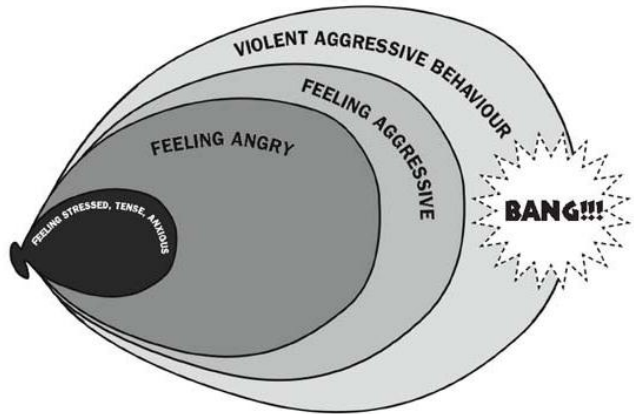
Here are some suggestions to deal with anger:

- Address any myths subscribed about anger and give oneself and others the permission to feel angry when need
- Feel the emotion even though its anger, its only emotional energy, it has to be vented in the right manner
- Acknowledge the thoughts that accompany the feelings. Preferably, say these those allowed
- Examine the thinking that goes with the feeling
- Watch out for the flaws and repetitive situations
- Make a responsible decision about what, if any, action we need to take
- Figure out what our anger is telling us

**Be Strong.**



- Don't let anger control us. If we find ourselves controlled by our angry feelings we can stop ourselves
- Don't misinterpret and get peaceful by figuring out what we need to do



- Openly and honestly discuss our anger, when its appropriate. But don't talk to a drunk when he is drunk
- Take responsibility of our anger. Be yourself and understand that you're responsible for your angry feelings-even if they're appropriate reaction to someone else's inappropriate behavior
- Talk to people you trust. Talking about anger and being listened to an accepted really help clear the air
- Burn off the anger energy. Play exercise, dance etc. Anger is extremely stressful, and it helps to physically discharge that energy

- Don't beat ourselves or others to feel angry. Don't let other people hit us or abuse us in a way when they feel angry
- Write letters when we don't intend to send
- Deal with the guilt. Get rid of unearned guilt

Dealing is an ongoing process. Be patient. No one does it perfectly. We'll make mistakes, but we'll also learn from them. We need to be gentle with ourselves if we've repressing loads of angry feelings. But it's ok to feel anger unless that anger turns out to be healthy instead of toxic anger.

## **YES, YOU CAN THINK**



Codependence don't trust their minds, they truly understand the horror of indecision. The smallest choice is, such as, what to order at restaurant, what to cook for evening, paralyze them. The larger significant decisions they face such as how to solve problems, what to do with their lives and who to live with can over whelm them. Many of them simply give up and refuse to think about these things. They allow other people or circumstances to make choices for them.

Encourage yourself to think about things. Figure things out. Decide what you need. Decide what you want, and decide how to solve your problems. We wonder if that's really possible. For a variety of reasons we may have lost faith in our ability to think and reasons things. We have believed the lies overtime. Denying to ourselves, chaos, stress, low self esteem and stomach full of repressed emotions may cloud our ability to think. Decisiveness is hindered by worrying about what other people think. Telling ourselves we have to be perfect. We falsely belief we can't make the "wrong choice". We'll never have another chance and the whole world waits and rises on this particular decision.



Hating ourselves, not listening to our needs and wants might cheat us out of the information we need to make good choices.

Maybe we've been using our minds inappropriately, to worry an



obsessed and our minds are tired, abused and filled with anxious thoughts.

Causing us to lose faith in our ability to think because people have told us we can't think and make good decisions.

Our parents may have directly or indirectly done this in our childhood.

We've been criticized on our choices having difficulties with subjects at school so to solve problems at work and household chore. We gave up and told ourselves we couldn't think and figure things out.

Remember, decisions don't have to be made perfectly. We don't have to be perfect; we can make mistakes in our choices. We're not so fragile that we can't handle making a mistake. It's not a big deal! It's part of living. We can learn from our mistakes or we can simply make another decision.

Changing our mind would be helpful. Change is constant. The paradigm shift here is that we can be flexible in our thoughts. Codependences are in the midst of upsetting situations. They go back n forth a lot. They throw alcoholic out, then take him back in. Or they leave and then come back, then leave again. For a codependent, it's terrible to think because they've attended their

**God** grant me the

*Codependent No More*

**Serenity** to

accept the things **I** cannot  
change...

spouse's funeral hundred times in  
their mind and as thoughts are  
key to the feelings, they feel

**Courage** to

change the  
things **I** can

And **Wisdom** to know  
the difference...

aloof and are unable to make  
proper decisions. All they need to do is  
let the thoughts and feelings  
pass through, then figure out that  
they need to take care of themselves along with others.

Following our few suggestions that may help us gain confidence in our mental abilities:

- Treat our minds to some peace. Detach. Sooth your nerves and make your thoughts more consistent
- Ask God to help us think (Serenity prayer)
- Quit abusing our minds. Worrying and obsession constitute mental abuse
- Feed our minds, give our minds information and reasonable amount of data and let it sort through the complications and come up with good results
- Find our minds healthy thoughts. Indulge in activities that uplift our thoughts and give us a positive charge
- Stretch our minds. Many of us become so concerned about our problems and that of others that we start loosing interest in daily activities
- Quit saying bad things about our minds

## *Codependent No More*

- Stop telling ourselves things like I'm stupid, I can't make good decisions. Because the way you speak to yourself, your body will react accordingly. Either negative or positive
- Use our minds. Make decisions. Formulate opinions. Express them. Create!

We don't have to let anyone make a decision for us, unless we're wards of the state. And even if we're, we can still make some of our choices. Letting people make decision for us means that we're been rescued, which means we're dealing with victims. But we aren't the victims. Furthermore, it's not our business to make decisions for others. We can take possession of our power to think. We will gain more confidence in ourselves, as we start feeling better and begin to make decisions. People around us will grow, as they're allowed to make choices and mistakes.



We can become comfortable with our minds. Become acquainted with them. They're part of us and they work. Trust them and our ability to think.

## SET YOUR OWN GOALS

There is a magic in setting goals. Things actually happen. Things change. People should be ecstatic about goal settings. Their problems would get solved and dreams would come true. There is nothing in the world like going where we want to go, getting what we want, solving a problem, or doing something we always wanted to do.

Goals



Many codependents know this joy. They get bothered even they think about what they need. Life has to be endured. Codependents are too busy in reacting, rather than acting. People can't control all the evens in their lives. They don't have final say on much of anything; God does. But we have the ability to plan, make requests and start a process in motion. It is said that failure has to be followed by desire, to do what you want to do most, paves the way to mediocrity. Success requires heart and soul efforts and you can really put your heart and soul into something you really desire.

Goals also give us direction and purpose. Sometimes people don't end up where they want to go. So as a result when people change their mind or the problems beyond their control interfere,

they find themselves doing something other than what they plan to do. So timings and exact circumstances may vary. So that's ok. They might end up some place better or worse than before. That is where acceptance, trust, faith and letting go comes in. All you have to do is aim properly.

You will stop worrying about your problems when you turn your problems in to goals. Goals are fun. They generate interest and enthusiasm in life. They make life interesting and sometimes



exciting. Goals cure boredom. They may even cure chronic ailments.

When you surrender yourself to desires you may let yourself become obsessed with the goals. You receive the physical power, energy and enthusiasm needed to accomplish your goal. But you receive something else. Something equally valuable. That's called "Automatic Instrumentation", needed to keep you going straight to your objective.

When you deeply entrench your goals it keeps you on course to reach your target. When you surrender to your goal, the goal works itself into your subconscious mind. Your subconscious mind is always in balance. Your conscious mind is not, unless it is in tuned with what your subconscious mind is thinking.

Without full cooperation between the both minds a person is hesitant, confused and indecisive. Now as your goal has been absorbed in your subconscious mind you automatically react in the right way. And the conscious mind is free for clear and straight thinking.

What are our goals? What do we actually want in life? What problems do we want to be solved and what do we want to accomplish? Have we ever pondered over it? Following are some ideas to find a way to realize what your goals are and a way to reach them:

- Turn everything into goal. Looking for solution and making a decision can be your life-long goal. Successfully turn every aspect of your life into goal.
- Omit the shoulds. Make it a goal to get rid of 75% of the shoulds
- Don't limit ourselves. Go for all of it: everything we want and need, even some of our whims
- Write our goals on paper. There is extra ordinary power in jotting down goals rather than storing them loosely in minds
- Commit a written goal to God. Tell God these are the things we're interested in, ask for His help, surrender humbly



- Let go. Keep our goals closed, where we can look at them as we need to but don't worry and obsess about how, when, if and what if
- Do what we can, one day at a time. Within the framework of each day do what seems fitting and appropriate. Do it in peace and faith and do what we're inspired to do
- Set goals regularly and as needed. Like setting goals in the beginning of each year indicates that we're interested in living my life in that particular year. Hence believe in your goals
- Check off the goals we reach. We will achieve certain things that are important to us. When this happens, cross off that goal, congratulate our self and thank God. We'll gain confidence in ourselves in setting future goals
- Be patient. Trust in God's timing. Don't take an item off the list if it's still important to us, just because we didn't achieve or receive something.



I've started to realize that waiting is an art, that waiting achieves things. Waiting can be very, very powerful. Time is a valuable thing. If you can wait two years, you can sometimes achieve something that you could not achieve today, however hard you

worked, however much money you threw up in the air, however many times you banged your head against the wall...

Things happen when the time is right-when we're ready, when God is ready, when the world is ready. Give up. Let go but keep it on our list. Kick start yourself today by scheduling your goals. You probably won't start living happily ever after, but you may start living happily.



## COMMUNICATION

Communication is not mystical. The words we speak reflect who we are: what we think, judge, feel, value, honor, love, hate, fear or hope for, believe in, and commit to. If we think we're inappropriate to life our communication will reflect this: we will judge others as having all answers. Read through the following conversation which explains the codependents' intentions and thought pattern.



*Counselor:* Salman and Ridah, I'm glad you're both here tonight. How are you doing?

*Salman:* We're doing great. Aren't we Ridah?

*Ridah:* (smile). Yes. Everything's fine. (Nervous laugh)

*Counselor:* Ridah, you're laughing, but I sense something is wrong. It's okay to talk in here. Its okay to talk about your feelings and it's okay to talk about your problems. This is what this group is for.

*Ridah:* (Her smile crumbles, and she begins crying). I'm so sick of this. I'm sick of him hitting me. I'm sick of the lies. And I'm sick of being slapped around.

Many of codependents have poor communication skills. We carefully chose our words to manipulate people please, control,

cover up, and alleviate guilt. Codependents are indirect. We don't mean what we say.

The reason for such poor communication is that codependents don't trust themselves. They don't trust their thoughts. They don't trust their feelings. They think they don't have the right to say NO. They may feel ashamed for having their problems. Many of them don't trust their ability to accurately identify the problem, and we're more than willing to back down if somebody else insists the problem isn't there.

Such communication problems can be solved by doing little effort on our part.

1. Talking clearly and openly is not difficult. Start knowing that who you are is okay. Your feelings and thoughts are okay. It's okay to say NO.
2. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. If you don't know what you mean, be quiet and think about it.
3. Talk about your problems. Share secrets with trusted friends who won't use these against you or help you feel ashamed.
4. Express your feelings.
5. You can say what you think. Learn to say, "This is what I think."
6. You can say what you expect, without demanding that other people change to suite your needs.

7. You can learn to ignore nonsense. Learn to say, “I don’t want to discuss this.”
8. You can be assertive and stand up for yourself without being abrasive or aggressive. Learn to say, “This is as far as I think.”
9. You can show compassion and concern without rescuing. Learn to say, “I am sorry you’re having that problem.”
10. You can express your wants and needs. Learn the words: “This is what I need from you.”

You need to take responsibility for communication. Let your words reflect high self-esteem and esteem for others. Be honest, be open and be direct. Above all else, be who you are and say what you need to say. In love and dignity, speak the truth----as you think, feel and know it--- and it shall set you free.



## **WORK A TWELVE STEP PROGRAM**

It is a spiritual self-care based therapy consisting on twelve steps. This program teaches people how to live peacefully, happily, successfully. It brings peace. It promotes healing .It gives life to their members- frequently a richer, healthier life than those people knew before they developed whatever problem they developed. This Twelve steps program is called Counseling, and it is designed for people affected by someone else are drinking.



### **THE TWELVE STEPS**

These steps are basically a way of life and the heart of this program

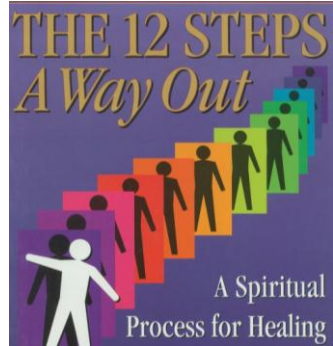
1. *We admit we were powerless over addiction that over lives had becomes unmanageable.* This is an important step and must be taken first. This step sounds like giving up, as we surrender to the truth that we are powerless over the disease of alcoholism or other addictions. It brings acceptance and peace that we can't change things we can't control, and trying to do that will make us crazy. When we quit trying to do the impossible, we are allowed to do the possible.

2. *Come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity if we have gone crazy due to this problem.* If the first step left us despairing, this step will bring hope. I did not doubt for a minute that I was crazy .the way I had been living my life was insane to control the things which were uncontrollable. It is the step where we have to accept the ultimate power or God, Who is above all and can solve all problems.
3. *Make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.* I had turned my will and my life over to the care of other human beings(usually addicts or alcoholics) I had spent many years trying to impose my own plan onto the scheme of things. It is now time to remove myself from anyone or any things control and place myself in the hands of an extraordinarily loving God.
4. *Make a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.* We take our eyes off the other person and look at ourselves. Here we need to look for our moral problems may be we find here that self hate or not loving ourselves enough has been a real moral problem. We even have to look at our good moral qualities.

**4<sup>th</sup> STEP**  
**A SEARCHING  
FEARLESS  
MORAL  
INVENTORY**

5. *Admit to God, ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

Confession is good for the soul. There is nothing like it. We don't have to hide any longer. We tell our worst, most shameful secrets to a trusted person skilled in listening to the fifth step.



6. *We are entirely ready to have God remove all defects of our character.* We decide we are ready to take a risk, and let go of these outdated behaviors and attitudes. We become willing to be changed and to cooperate in the process of change. For example I consider my low self worth a defect, and I use this step on it too.
7. *Humbly ask God to remove our shortcomings.* Humbly seems to be the key here.
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.* Don't forget to put ourselves on the list. Make a list of all persons we had harmed and become willing to feel guilty about it. This is our chance to take care of our earned guilt.
9. *Make direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.* This step will give us immense internal happiness and satisfaction.

10. *Continue to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admit it.* We keep our eyes on ourselves. We continually and regularly evaluate our behavior. We figure out what we like about ourselves, what we have done right and good. Then we wither congratulate ourselves, feel good about it, thank God, or do all three. We figure out what we don't like that we have been doing, and then we figure out how to accept and take care of that without hating ourselves for it.
11. *Sort through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.* This step, used daily and as needed, will successfully take us through our entire lives. Here we need to understand that God's will is an appropriate, common-sense approach to life. learn to trust his Higher Power to whom we have given the guardian ship or our lives
12. *Have a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, and try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.* Here in this step we will awaken spiritually. We will learn to spiritually take care of ourselves-not religiously, although that certainly is part of life. This program will enable us to love ourselves and other people, instead or rescuing and being

rescued. Carrying the message does not mean we become evangelists.

## **WORKING THE PROGRAM**

All over the world “anonymous” people meet at a variety of locations –churches, homes, and barber shops. They might meet once a day, twice a week, or seven nights a week.

They don’t preregister or register. They simply find out where a particular group meets that focuses on the problem these



people are having troubles with. At the meeting, they don’t have to identify themselves. They don’t have to say anything if they don’t want to.

They don’t have to pay money, although they can make a donation of any amount to help pay for coffee and meeting room rent expenses-if they want to. One nice thing about meetings is that people can be who they are. They don’t have to pretend they don’t have a particular problem, because everybody there has the same problem.

Meeting formats vary with each particular group. Some groups sit around a table and the people who want to talk, discuss



feelings or problems. Some meetings are speaker meetings, where one person gets up in front of everyone and talks about a step or an experience .at some groups, the steps are the theme and the people just put their chairs in a circle and each person gets a chance to say something about whatever step is the theme that day.

During their daily routines, the people who go to these meetings think about the steps and slogans. They try to figure out how the steps and slogans apply to them ,what they are feeling ,what they are doing and what is going on I their live at that particular time .they do this regular and when a problem arises. Sometimes they call someone they met at the meeting and discuss a problem with that person.

When these people thing about and work these steps enough, eventually the Twelve Steps may become habits-habitual ways of thinking, behaving and handling situations –much the same as codependent characteristics become habits. When they become habits, the program becomes a way of life. This is called work the steps and working the program.

## PIECES AND BITS

Few miscellaneous tidbits about codependency and self-care that are needed to be considered are mentioned as under.

### FEAR OF INTIMACY

Most people want and need love. Most people want and need to be close to people but fear is an equally strong force, and it competes with our need for love. More specifically, this force is fear of intimacy.



For many of us, it feels safer to be alone or in relationships where we are “unemotionally involved” than it does to be emotionally vulnerable, close, and loving. I understand that. In spite of the range of needs and wants that go unmet when we don’t love, it may feel safer to not love. We don’t risk the uncertainty and vulnerability of closeness. We don’t risk the pain of loving and for many of us love has caused a great deal of pain.

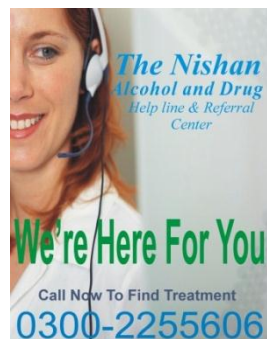


We don’t risk being trapped by ourselves in relationships that don’t work. We don’t risk having to be who we are, which includes being emotionally honest and the possible rejections of that. We don’t risk people abandoning us; we don’t risk. And we don’t have to go through

## *Codependent No More*

the awkwardness of initiating relationships. When we don't get close to people, at least we know what to expect: nothing. Denial of love feelings protects us from the anxiety caused by loving. Love and closeness often bring a sense of loss of control. Love and closeness challenge our deepest fears about which we are and whether it is okay to be ourselves, and about whom others are and whether that is okay. Love and closeness-involvement with people-are the greatest risks a man or woman can take. They require honesty, spontaneity, vulnerability, trust, responsibility, self-acceptance, and acceptance of others. Love brings joy and warmth, but it also requires us to be willing to occasionally feel hurt and rejection.

Many of us have learned to run from closeness, rather than take the risks involved. We run from love or prevent closeness in many ways. We push people away or do hurtful things to them so they won't want to be close to us. We do ridiculous things in our minds to talk ourselves out of want to be close. We find fault with everyone we meet; we reject people before they have a chance to reject us. We wear masks and pretend to be something other than who we are. We scatter our energies and emotions among so many relationships that we don't get too close or vulnerable to anyone-a technique called "watering down the milk" by one person. We settle for



artificial relationships, where we will not be expected nor asked to be close. We play roles instead of being a real person. We withdraw emotionally in our existing relationships. Sometimes, we prevent closeness by simply refusing to be honest and open. Some of us sit, paralyzed by fear, unable to initiate relationships or enjoy closeness in existing relationships. Some of us run; we physically remove ourselves from any situation where love, emotional vulnerability, and risk are or might be present. As a friend says, “We all have a pair of track shoes in our closet.”

We run from intimacy for many reasons. Some of us, particularly those of us who grew up in alcoholic family situations, may never have learned how to initiate relationships and how to be close once a relationship begins. Closeness was not safe, taught, or allowed in our families. For many people, caretaking and chemical use became substitutes for intimacy.

Some of us allowed ourselves to get close once or twice, and then got hurt. We may have decided (on some level) that it was better and safer not to get close, not to risk being hurt again. Some of us learned to run from relationships that aren't good for us. But for some of us, running from or avoiding closeness and intimacy may have become a habit, a destructive habit that prevents us from getting the love and closeness we really want and need. Some of us may be tricking ourselves, so we're not

even aware we're running or what we're running from. We may be running when it isn't necessary.

It's okay to feel afraid of closeness and love, but it's also okay to allow ourselves to love and feel close to people. It's okay to give and receive love. We can make good decisions about who to love and when to do that. It's okay for us to be who we are around people. Take the risk of doing that. We can trust ourselves. We can go through the awkwardness and friction of initiating relationships. We can find people who are safe to trust. We can open up, become honest, and be who we are. We can even handle feeling hurt or rejected from time to time. We can love without losing ourselves or giving up our boundaries. We can love and think at the same time. We can take off our track shoes.

We can ask ourselves, are we preventing closeness in our existing relationship? How are we doing that? Is it necessary? Why? Do we know someone we want to be close to—someone who would be safe to be close to? Why don't we take steps to get close to that person?



Would we like to initiate some new relationships? How could we do that? Are we needing and wanting more intimacy in our relationships but settling for less? Why?

## **FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Some codependents become financially dependent on other people. Sometimes this is by agreement; for example, a wife stays home and raises the children while the husband works and provides the money. Sometimes this is not by agreement. Some codependents become so victimized that we believe we cannot take care of ourselves financially. Many codependents were, at one time, financially responsible, but as alcoholism or another problem progressed in a loved one we simply became too upset to work. Some of us just gave up: “If you don’t care about the money, then neither do I.”

Sometimes, codependents become financially responsible for other adults. I have frequently seen a codependent wife work two or even three jobs, while her husband brings home not one penny-yet he continues to eat, watch television, and live rent free. Neither way is preferable.

Being financially dependent on a person can trigger emotional dependency. Emotional dependency on a person can trigger financial dependency. Becoming financially responsible for ourselves-however we accomplish that-can help trigger Undependence.

## **FORGIVENESS**

Compulsive disorders such as alcoholism twist and distort many good things, including the great principle of forgiveness. We repeatedly forgive the same people. We hear promises, we believe lies, and we try to forgive some more. Some of us may have reached a point where we cannot forgive. Some of us may not want to, because



to forgive would leave us vulnerable to further hurt and we believe we cannot endure more pain. Forgiveness turns on us and becomes a painful experience.

Some of us may be truly trying to forgive; some of us may think we have forgiven, but the hurt and anger just won't disappear. Some of us can't keep up with the things we need to forgive; the problems are happening so fast we barely know what's going on. Before we can register the hurt and say, "I forgive; another nasty thing has been dumped on us.

Then we feel guilty because someone asks, "Why can't you just forgive and forget?" people uninformed about the disease of alcoholism and other compulsive disorders frequently ask that. For many of us, the problem is not forgetting. Forgiving and forgetting feed our denial system. We need to think about, remember, understand, and make good decisions about what we are forgiving, what can be forgotten, and what is still a problem.

And forgiving someone does not mean we have to let that person keep hurting us. An alcoholic doesn't need forgiveness; he or she needs treatment. We don't need to forgive the alcoholic, at least not initially. We need to step back so he or she can't keep stomping on our toes.

I am not suggesting we adopt an unforgiving attitude. We all need forgiveness. Grudges and anger hurt us; they don't help the other person much either. Forgiveness is wonderful. It wipes the slate clean. It clears up guilt. It brings peace and harmony. It

acknowledges and accepts the humanness we all share, and it says, "That's okay. I love you anyway." But I



believe we codependents need to be gentle, loving, and forgiving with ourselves before we can expect to forgive others. But I believe codependents need to think about how, why, and when we dole out forgiveness.



## **LEARNING TO LIVE & LOVE AGAIN**

The problem codependence encounter usually is learning to live again and learning to love again simultaneously. The two deepest desire people have are: To love and to be loved, and to believe that they're worthwhile and know someone else believes that also. This desire aren't specifically needs or wants, they're simply important. Most of us have been trying to achieve these honor level of consciousness and some of us have blocked or shut off these needs. But they're still there whether we acknowledge them or repress them.



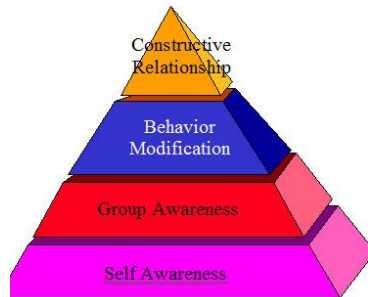
Codependence needs to learn to do his fulfill these desires, needs and wants and ways that don't hurt themselves or other people. Many of the people they've learned to do things differently because the way they've gone about to meet their needs haven't worked. Detachment, are non-rescuing approach to people, not controlling object of our attention, directness and paying attention to ourselves. As codependence get healthier, love gets better and better than before. Love doesn't have to hurt as much as it did in the past. It's not God's will that they stay in misery and stay in the miserable relationships. That's something that they have been doing something for themselves. We don't have

to stay in relationships that cause us pain and misery. We're free to take care of ourselves.

God allows certain people to come in our lives. It is also the result of the choices we've made. We need to learn to recognize the difference between relationships that do work and that don't work. We can learn to leave destructive relationships and enjoy the good ones. So everyone wants and need love but we don't need a destructive love.

Everyone is free to set their own goals and reach their dreams. They need to capture a vision for their own lives. That's exciting

because good things can, do and will happen to us if we allow those things to happen and if we're open to and believe we deserve those things. Things may not come easily or naturally, we may struggle and kick and want



to hide our heads in the sand along the way. That's ok. That's how growth feels. If it feels too comfortable, too natural or too easy, we're not growing or we're not doing anything different. Loving and living simultaneously without getting emotionally entangled with the object of our affection makes life more easy to handle. A balance has to be made between giving and receiving, besides this, we also need to find the dividing line

between letting go and doing our part. Much of our anguish comes from having to live with grief of unsolved problems, and having things not go the way we hoped and expected.

## GETTING STARTED



Getting started is more difficult and fun. Start with a simple 3 part formula for doing this it's called "HOW": Honesty, Openness and Willingness. The initial step towards getting started also involves changing codependence behavior towards assertiveness. It means to do things differently, being honest, keep an open mind and willing to try to do thing differently.

People might feel hopeless, trapped and think as if gloom has surrounded them. This results in hitting the peak of despondency and anxiety towards themselves. But the only way out is to get started. We need to reconstruct what has been lost, make effective choices. The busier you'll get, the better you'll feel. You'll start trusting your decisions. The important concept here is getting started. Light off fire under yourselves.



## **GROWING FORWARD**

Once we've gotten started, moving forward will become a natural process. Sometimes we will take few steps back. But that's ok. Sometimes it's necessary. It's always a part of going forward, unless you consider it to be. If a relationship is dead, bury it. Take your time, work on yourself. You'll be able to make the right decision in the process while moving ahead.



Some of us may repair the damaged, but still alive, relationships. Be patient. Love and trust our fragile. Love and trust don't automatically appear for codependence if the other person gets sober or solves whatever problem he/she had. Love and trust must be allowed to heal in their own times. To consider the fact that at times it heals and at times it doesn't.

It's ok to be in a relationship but it's also ok not to be in a relationship. Find friends to love. Be loved by and who think we're worthwhile. Moving out of codependency tells us to love ourselves and know what we're worthwhile. Grow, develop. Work on yourself so when the love comes alone, it enhances a full and interesting life. Love shouldn't be the concern of our whole life or an escape from unpleasant life.

Strive towards goals. Have fun. Trust God and His Timings. He cares and knows about all our needs and wants. Whatever our situation, we can grow out of it gradually. At times our heart may lead us where our head say we shouldn't go while sometimes our heads may insist we go where our hearts don't want to follow. But slow down and take the time to do it in a way that doesn't hurt anyone. Pay attention to what's happening. Love from our strengths, not from our weaknesses, and ask others to do the same by setting an example. Make good decisions each day about what we need to do to take care of ourselves.

Codependent characteristics, ways of thinking and feeling become habits. Those habitual feelings and thoughts may surface on occasion. An alcoholic insanity and stress may provoke codependency. See through it and go beyond it. Don't be ashamed and don't hide. Codependence can pick them again. They just need to do the things they keep on doing. They shouldn't stop taking care of themselves no matter what happens. For codependence, getting the balance and keeping it consistent once they have it is what recovery is all about. They can learn to live again; they can learn to love again. They can even learn to have their merriment. The life eventually turns out to be full of zest and worth living.