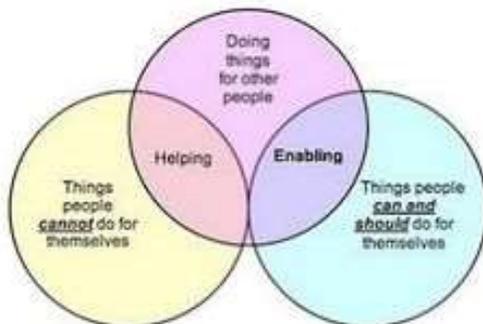
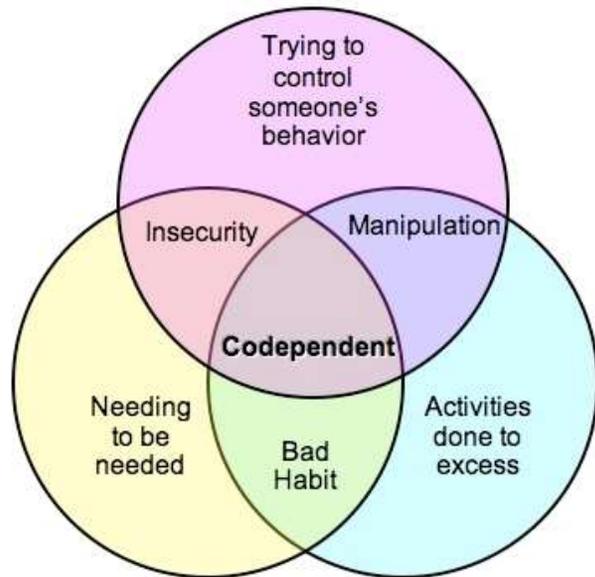


RELAPSE PREVENTION: CO-DEPENDENT NO MORE

Life With God In Recovery

RELAPSE PREVENTION: CO-DEPENDENT NO MORE



The Lord will guide you continually, giving you water when you are dry and restoring your strength. You will be like a well-watered garden, like an ever-flowing spring. (Isaiah 58:11 NLT)

Co-dependency is a relationship addiction which touches many lives. People who are co-dependent often form relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive and/or abusive. The co-dependent person bases their identity and personal value on who they perceive themselves to be in a harmful relationship. They interact with the other person in ways that are detrimental to their own well-being.

Characteristics of co-dependency include:

- An exaggerated sense of responsibility for the actions of others
- A tendency to confuse love and pity, with the tendency to “love” people they can pity and rescue
- A tendency to do more than their share, all of the time
- A tendency to become hurt when people don’t recognize their efforts
- An extreme need for approval and recognition
- A sense of guilt when asserting themselves
- A compelling need to control others
- Lack of trust in self and/or others
- Fear of being abandoned or alone
- Difficulty identifying feelings
- Rigidity/difficulty adjusting to change
- Problems with intimacy and/or lacking boundaries
- Chronic anger
- Lying/dishonesty
- Poor communications
- Difficulty making decisions¹

We are living co-dependently when we are looking to another to affirm and maintain our value. The person we are looking to has limited ability to understand us, or to provide for our needs. When another is co-dependently looking to us, we also face these limitations. That’s why we do such a poor job when we try to rescue or prop up another person. God wants each of us to come to that place where we first identify with Him and acknowledge who we are in Christ. Contentment in life does not come from trying to control another

so they will meet our needs or, by trying to please someone so they will like us and meet our need to feel secure.

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago. (Ephesians 2:10 NLT)

Fullness of life and real freedom from co-dependency can only be found when we are first rooted in a relationship with our Heavenly Father. We need to acknowledge that God made us in His own image and we have great value in His sight. When we base our worth and identity around this truth, rather than on the opinions of others, we will begin to experience peace, freedom and security. What does God say about who we are and why He actually created us?

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (Ephesians 1:4-5 NLT)

From God's perspective, these things are true about me:

1. I am a loved person. I do not have to earn love. Jesus loves and values me. God says: ***I have loved you, my people, with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself.*** (Jeremiah 31:3 NLT)
2. I am a chosen person. I have nothing to prove or accomplish in order to be chosen, wanted and accepted. God has already chosen me. ***Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? No one—for God himself has given us right standing with himself.*** (Romans 8:3 NLT)
3. I am a forgiven person. There is no sin too evil for God to forgive. The blood of Jesus cleanses all sin. ***God the Father knew you and chose you long ago, and his Spirit has made you holy. As a result, you have obeyed him and have been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.*** (1 Peter 1:2 NLT)
4. I am a person of love and power and wisdom. God lives in me and blesses me with new life. God gives me power to make wise choices. ***For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*** (2 Timothy 1:7 NLT)
5. Although I am a limited human being, I belong to the God who has limitless power and unconditionally loves me and those I love. ***By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love.*** (Psalm 33:6-7;18 NIV)

God is committed to walking with us while we learn how to live well in relationship with Him and with others. Life will become satisfying as we learn to relax in the acceptance of God's unfailing love for us. When our self-worth is not based on our success or failure, we will move away from a lifestyle of co-dependency. ***Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you. I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.*** (Isaiah 41:10 NLT)

We need to abandon the impossible expectations we put on others. Another person cannot love us enough or touch us deeply enough to satisfy the longing in our hearts. Only God can truly satisfy those longings. As far as it depends on us, we need to understand that we have only limited responsibility for another's happiness. We have our own desires and dreams and we need to let others have theirs. We make our own mistakes and others will make theirs. We need to forgive ourselves and others and determine to learn from the mistakes we have made. God is active in our lives and, as we seek Him, He will teach us His ways. We will build healthy relationships with others when we pursue God first.

¹<http://mentalhealthamerica.net/co-dependency>

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What aspects of co-dependency do I battle with?
2. Why is building a healthy relationship with God more important than holding on to a co-dependent relationship with another person? Why do we so easily choose the wrong way in this situation?
3. In what ways do we sometimes behave in a co-dependent way with God?
4. How does knowing and affirming God's view of me help me avoid co-dependent behaviour?
5. What have I learned that challenges me in my relationships?

Heavenly Father, Thank You for caring for me and for those I am in relationship with. I ask You to show me the way to live in a healthy relationship. I acknowledge that I need to begin with my relationship with You. Help me to believe and put into action what You say in Your Word. Forgive me for the times I have chosen to be co-dependent with another. Help me to love You with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. Help me to love and care for others with the same love and care You have shown me. Teach me Your ways that I may live according to Your truth. I am forever grateful to be loved and accepted by You. AMEN