

CODEPENDENCY

1. What is codependency?
 - How the word originated.
 - Support groups for spouses of drug and alcohol dependent persons. They all had similar characteristics.
 - “Someone related to a person with a chemical dependency who developed into a pattern of coping with life that was not healthy as a reaction to someone else’s drug or alcohol abuse (co-alcoholic, non-alcoholic, para-alcoholic).” P.29 Melodie Beattie *Codependent No More*.
 - Alanon, support group to deal with ways the spouse’s alcoholism affected them.
 - How it is used today.
 - While the original usage still applies, it’s more broad application to apply to people who adapt to other’s low levels of attitude and behavior. Chem / alcohol + emotional instability + rage & hostility, obsessive-compulsive disorder.
 - The Controllers of this world find people who will not resist them, who do not stand up to them, rather whose lives are defined by compensating for others.
 - My life defined by other’s attitudes and behaviors. I adapt to their low and unhealthy level. I LIVE REACTIVELY, trying to control the situation.
 - Dr. “J” in L.B. Rescued son repeatedly, buy a new car for him every time he would crash it. Give him money and bail him out of jail. She had friends amongst the judiciary and he would always get off easy.
2. How would you characterize a co-dependent?
 - If I unhealthfully adapt to another’s unhealthiness and allows it to flourish because I adopt a mode of non-resistance or mild resistance. Instead of setting boundaries, which expose and help to extinguish it, I tolerate, allow and enable the toxic behavior.
 - A person who through non resistance or minimal resistance, avoids anger, gets approval, a smile or kind word (living on scraps) or simply some peace and quiet.

- Anger is underdeveloped
 - Enable, rescue, pleaser, caretaker. It is my role! This is my life. This is my destiny.
 - Result: Eclipsed by the other person, under developed sense of self, What do you want? I don't know. No "purpose driven life here."
 - Tired, angry, despondent, depressed, anxious, cynical, hopeless, helpless...waiting for the other person to change.
 - Fear, shame and guilt hold us into this trap.
3. How do we get that way?
- F.O.O: "The Foo factor":
 - Insecurity driven
 - No voice & No feelings... "How, what do you feel?"
 - Little assertiveness & push back skills
 - Low self esteem
 - Easily intimidated: Fearful of the person and or the outcome of opposing them (the unknown).
 - Adult children of alcoholics or parents with emotional unhealthiness, grow up compensating. Caring for the weak, parentified child. A mind set, a lifestyle. A caretaker role which is known and comfortable to me. I need to be needed. "I'm dependent upon your needing me to be there and help or counterbalance you."
 - I'm always there for you, always dependable, I view self as needed and I live for the purpose of mirroring you in a negative way and as a result, I loose or never develop a sense of self.
 - Christian thought that fosters codependency.
 - Kindness
 - Grace
 - Loving
 - Submission
 - Peace and Unity
 - Turn the other cheek (non resistance)
 - Selflessness
 - All of which can yield a non-confrontational approach to life.
 - It is "good" taken to an extreme.

4. Illustrations & case studies.
 - Co-dependent leader: Overcoming the Dark Side of Leadership by Gary McIntosh, “ME”
 - Spouse of an alcoholic
 - Husband of a rageful wife

5. What does God want from us?
 - Realize our personhood, individual giftedness, destiny, and accountability to the Lord. Jesus from age 12 began to become his own individual and to be different from his family.
 - To Grow up (Ephesians 4):
 - To not be conformed (bend to the shape of something else) unto this world (Romans 12:1-2). To have a life that is not defined by another who is weaker, but by God’s definition.
 - Talents and character will be questioned one day.
 - To learn real love (Agape)
 - To not intercept the consequences of others (reap sow). To rescue from hardship is not let the person fall, which teaches lessons.
 - Reciprocity causes respect and causes others to step up to change.

6. What are the steps to freedom? How do we get out?
 - Inner truth and admission (Psalm 51:6)
 - Learn to feel your own negative feelings.
 - You must choose to change rather than waiting for the other person to change.
 - Speak the Truth (be direct) (Adult voice.)
 - Ask God for the help to tolerate the rejection , disapproval, tension, having someone upset with you, unhappy pout & sulk (people will walk away from you, John 6)
 - Boundaries (Gospel)
 - Make your own decisions, think for yourself, become aware of and express your own feelings.
 - Self-care: Balance like Jesus (always someone in need yet he pulled away to re-center himself with the Father.
 - Learn to ask for help and get support
 - Assertiveness/ push back:
 - Severe: 911, press charges, restraining order, court ordered anger management, assertiveness training.
 - Mild: Boundaries, Say “No!” Allow consequences, tolerate discomfort.
 - Never do this alone: Community