

Codependency involves a habitual system of thinking, feeling, and behaving toward ourselves and others that can cause pain. Codependent behaviors or habits are self-destructive.

We frequently react to people who are destroying themselves; we react by learning to destroy ourselves. These habits can lead us into, or keep us in, destructive relationships that don't work.

These behaviors can sabotage relationships that may otherwise have worked. These behaviors can prevent us from finding peace and happiness with the most important person in our lives....

ourselves. These behaviors belong to the only person we can change.. ourselves. These are our problems. The following are characteristics of codependent persons: (We started to do these things out of necessity to protect ourselves and meet our needs.)

Care Taking

Codependents may,

1. Think and feel responsible for other people---for other people's feelings, thoughts, actions, choices, wants, needs, 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 offering unwanted advice, giving a rapid-fire series of suggestions, or fixing feelings.
4. Feel angry when their help isn't effective.
5. Anticipate other people's needs
6. Wonder why others don't do the same for them.
7. Don't really want to be doing, doing more than their fair share of the work, and doing things other people are capable of doing for themselves.
8. Not knowing what they want and need, or if they do, tell themselves what they want and need is not important.
9. Try to please others instead of themselves.
10. Find it easier to feel and express anger about injustices done to others rather than injustices done to themselves.
11. Feel safest when giving.
12. Feel insecure and guilty when somebody gives to them.
13. Feel sad because they spend their whole lives giving to other people and nobody gives to them.
14. Find themselves attracted to needy people.
15. Find needy people attracted to them.
16. Feel bored, empty, and worthless if they don't have a crisis in their lives, a problem to solve, or someone to help.
17. Abandon their routine to respond to or do something for somebody else.
18. Over commit themselves.
19. Feel harried and pressured.
20. Believe deep inside other people are somehow responsible for them.
21. Blame others for the spot the codependents are in.
22. Say other people make the codependents feel the way they do.
23. Believe other people are making them crazy.
24. Feel angry, victimized, unappreciated, and used.
25. Find other people become impatient or angry with them for all of the preceding characteristics.

Low Self Worth

Codependents tend to:

1. Come from troubled, repressed, or dysfunctional families.
2. Deny their family was troubled, repressed or dysfunctional.
3. Blame themselves for everything.
4. Pick on themselves for everything, including the way they think, feel, look, act, and behave.
5. Get angry, defensive, self-righteous, and indigent when others blame and criticize the codependents -- something codependents regularly do to themselves.
6. Reject compliments or praise
7. Get depressed from a lack of compliments and praise (stroke deprivation)
8. Feel different from the rest of the world.
9. Think they're not quite good enough.
10. Feel guilty about spending money on themselves or doing unnecessary or fun things for themselves.
11. Fear rejection.
12. Take things personally.
13. Have been victims of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, or alcoholism.
14. Feel like victims.
15. Tell themselves they can't do anything right.
16. Be afraid of making mistakes.
17. Wonder why they have a tough time making decisions.
18. Have a lot of "shoulds".
19. Feel a lot of guilt.
20. Feel ashamed of who they are.
21. Think their lives are not worth living.
22. Try to help other people live their lives instead.
23. Get artificial feelings of self-worth from helping others.
24. Get strong feelings of low self-worth ---embarrassment, failure, etc...from other people's failures and problems.
25. Wish good things would happen to them.
26. Believe good things never will happen.
27. Believe they don't deserve good things and happiness.
28. Wish others would like and love them.
29. Believe other people couldn't possibly like and love them.
30. Try to prove they're good enough for other people.
31. Settle for being needed.

Repression

Many Codependents:

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

Codependents tend to:

1. Feel terribly anxious about problems and people.
2. Worry about the silliest things.
3. Think and talk a lot about other people.
4. Lose sleep over problems or other people's behavior.
5. Worry
6. Never Find answers.
7. Check on people.
8. Try to catch people in acts of misbehavior.
9. Feel unable to quit talking, thinking, and worrying about other people or problems.
10. Abandon their routine because they are so upset about somebody or something.
11. Focus all their energy on other people and problems.
12. Wonder why they never have any energy.
13. Wonder why they can't get things done.

Controlling

Many codependents:

1. Have lived through events and with people that were out of control, causing the codependents sorrow and disappointment.
2. Become afraid to let other people be who they are and allow events to happen naturally.
3. Don't see or deal with their fear of loss of control.
4. Think they know best how things should turn out and how people should behave.
5. Try to control events and people through helplessness, guilt, coercion, threats, advice-giving, manipulation, or domination.
6. Eventually fail in their efforts or provoke people's anger.
7. Get frustrated and angry.
8. Feel controlled by events and people.

Denial

Codependents tend to:

1. Ignore problems or pretend they aren't happening.
2. Pretend circumstances aren't 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.

5. Get confused.
6. Get depressed or sick.
7. Go to doctors and get tranquilizers.
8. Become workaholics.
9. Spend money compulsively.
10. Overeat.
11. Pretend those things aren't happening either.
12. Watch problems get worse.
13. Believe lies.
14. Lie to themselves.
15. Wonder why they feel like they're going crazy.

Dependency

Many codependents:

1. Don't feel happy, content, or peaceful with themselves.
2. Look for happiness outside themselves.
3. Latch onto whoever or whatever they think can provide happiness.
4. Feel terribly threatened by the loss of any thing or person they think proves their happiness.
5. Didn't feel love and approval from their parents.
6. Don't love themselves.
7. Believe other people can't or don't love them.
8. Desperately seek love and approval.
9. Often seek love from people incapable of loving.
10. Believe other people are never there for them.
11. Equate love with pain.
12. Feel they need people more than they want them.
13. Try to prove they're good enough to be loved.
14. Don't take time to see if other people are good for them.
15. Worry whether other people love or like them.
16. Don't take time to figure out if they love or like other people.
17. Center their lives around other people.
18. Look for relationships to provide all their good feelings.
19. Lost interest in their own lives when they love.
20. Worry other people will leave them.
21. Don't believe they can take care of themselves.
22. Stay in relationships that don't work.
23. Tolerate abuse to keep people loving them.
24. Feel trapped in relationships.
25. Leave bad relationships and form new ones that don't work either.
26. Wonder if they will ever find love.

Poor Communication

Codependents frequently:

1. Blame
2. Threaten
3. Coerce
4. Beg
5. Bribe
6. Advise
7. Don't say what they mean.
8. Don't mean what they say.
9. Don't know what they mean.
10. Don't take themselves seriously.
11. Think other people don't take the codependents seriously.
12. Take themselves too seriously.
13. Ask for what they want and need indirectly --- sighing, for example.
14. Find it difficult to get to the point.
15. Aren't sure what the point is.
16. Gauge their words carefully to achieve a desired effect.
17. Try to say what they think will please people.
18. Try to say what they think will provoke people.
19. Try to say what they hope will make people do what they want them to do.
20. Eliminate the word NO from their vocabulary.
21. Talk too much.
22. Talk about other people.
23. Avoid talking about themselves, their problems, feelings, and thoughts.
24. Say everything is their fault.
25. Say nothing is their fault.
26. Believe their opinions don't matter.
27. Want to express their opinions until they know other people's opinions.
28. Lie to protect and cover up for people they love.
29. Have a difficult time asserting their rights.
30. Have a difficult time expressing their emotions honestly, openly, and appropriately.
31. Think most of what they have to say is unimportant.
32. Begin to talk in Cynical, self-degrading, or hostile ways.
33. Apologize for bothering people.

Weak Boundaries

Codependents frequently:

1. Say they won't tolerate certain behaviors from other people.
2. Gradually increase their tolerance until they can tolerate and do things they said they would never do.
3. Let others hurt them.
4. Keep letting others hurt them.
5. Wonder why they hurt so badly.

6. Complain, blame, and try to control while they continue to stand there.
7. Finally get angry.
8. Become totally intolerant.

Lack of Trust

Codependents

1. Don't trust themselves.
2. Don't trust their feelings.
3. Don't trust their decisions.
4. Don't trust other people.
5. Try to trust untrustworthy people.
6. Think God has abandoned them.
7. Lose faith and trust in God.

Anger

Many Codependents:

1. Feel very scared, hurt, and angry
2. Live with people who are very scared, hurt, and angry.
3. Are afraid of their own anger.
4. Are frightened of other people's anger.
5. Think people will go away if anger enters the picture.
6. Feel controlled by other people's anger.
7. Repress their angry feelings.
8. Think other people make them feel angry.
9. Are afraid to make other people feel anger.
10. Cry a lot, get depressed, overact, get sick, do mean and nasty things to get even, act hostile, or have violent temper outbursts.
11. Punish other people for making the codependents angry.
12. Have been shamed for feeling angry.
13. Place guilt and shame on themselves for feeling angry.
14. Feel increasing amounts of anger, resentment, and bitterness.
15. Feel safer with their anger than hurt feelings.
16. Wonder if they'll ever not be angry.

Sex Problems.

Some codependents:

1. Are caretakers in the bedroom.
2. Have sex when they don't want to.
3. Have sex when they'd rather be held, nurtured, and loved.
4. Try to have sex when they're angry or hurt.
5. Refuse to enjoy sex because they're so angry at their partner
6. Are afraid of losing control.
7. Have a difficult time asking for what they need in bed.

8. Withdraw emotionally from their partner.
9. Feel sexual revulsion toward their partner.
10. Don't talk about it.
11. Force themselves to have sex, anyway.
12. Reduce sex to a technical act.
13. Wonder why they don't enjoy sex.
14. Lose interest in sex.
15. Make up reasons to abstain.
16. Wish their sex partner would die, go away, or sense the codependent's feelings.
17. Have strong sexual fantasies about other people.
18. Consider or have an extramarital affair.

Miscellaneous

Codependents tend to:

1. Be extremely responsible.
2. Be extremely irresponsible.
3. Become martyrs, sacrificing their happiness and that of others for causes that don't require sacrifice.
4. Find it difficult to feel close to people.
5. Find it difficult to have fun and be spontaneous.
6. Have an overall passive response to codependency -- crying, hurt, helplessness.
7. Have an overall aggressive response to codependency -- violence, anger, dominance.
8. Combine passive and aggressive responses.
9. Vacillate in decisions and emotions.
10. Laugh when they feel like crying.
11. Stay loyal to their compulsions and people even when it hurts.
12. Be ashamed about family, personal, or relationship problems.
13. Be confused about the nature of the problem.
14. Cover up, lie, and protect the problem.
15. Not seek help because they tell themselves the problem isn't bad enough, or they aren't important enough.
16. Wonder why the problem doesn't go away.

Progressive

In the later stages of codependency, codependents may:

1. Feel lethargic.
2. Feel depressed.
3. Become withdrawn and isolated.
4. Experience a complete loss of daily routine and structure.
5. Abuse or neglect their children and other responsibilities.
6. Feel hopeless.
7. Begin to plan their escape from a relationship they feel trapped in.
8. Think about suicide.
9. Become violent.

10. Become seriously emotionally, mentally, or physically ill.
11. Experience an eating disorder (over- or under eating)
12. Become addicted to alcohol or other drugs.