

Typical Characteristics of Co-Dependence

Taken from the CODA Newcomers Handbook
Copyright ((1) 1994 go-Dependents Anonymous, Incorporated and its licensors – All Rights Reserved

The following list is collected from individual experiences. It is offered as a way of identification. These are behaviour patterns which individuals claim as their codependant traits. Few of us have all these traits but most of us identify with some of them.

Codependents typically:

- Are not aware of how they feel
- Have difficulty identifying their feelings.
- Have difficulty in expressing their feelings.
- Tend to minimise, alter or even deny the truth about how they feel.
- Give power over their own feelings to others.
- Do not know that it is okay to talk about problems outside the family.
- Do not know or believe that it is good to share feelings, rather than to deny, minimise or try to justify them.

Also co-dependents generally:

- Are not aware of what they want.
- Have difficulty in asking for what they want.
- Are more concerned with what others want.
- Find it easier to ask what others want.
- Tend to put other people's wants and needs before their own.
- Look to other peoples wants or desires in determining what to do or say.

As such co-dependents tend to:

- Focus their attention on pleasing the other person.
- Focus their attention on protecting the other person.
- Focus their attention on solving the other person's problems.
- Focus their attention on relieving the other person's pain.
- Focus their attention on manipulating the other person (to do things their way).

Also, in general, co-dependents

- Have difficulty acknowledging good things about themselves.
- Are perfectionists, and tend to place too many expectations on themselves and others.
- Tend to judge everything they say or do, harshly, by someone else's standards.
- Tend to feel that nothing they think, say or do is "good enough"

In relationships. Co-dependents typically:

- Have difficulty forming and/or maintaining close relations with others.
- Have to feel "needed" in order to have a relationship with another.
- Do not know or believe that being vulnerable is a means to greater intimacy.
- Do not know or believe that asking for help is both okay and normal.

Often Codependents

- Are more aware of what others feel.
- Assume responsibility for other people's feelings.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by outside influences.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by the other person's struggles.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by how others feel.
- Allow their serenity to be affected by how others behave.
- Condition feeling good about themselves on being liked by others.
- Condition feeling good about themselves on receiving approval from others.
- Bolster their self-esteem by trying to solve other people's problems.
- Bolster their self-esteem by trying to relieve other people's pain.
- Look to other people's feelings in determining what to do or say.

Accordingly, in relationships, co-dependents may tend to:

- Value the other person's ideas and ways of doing things more
- Diminish their social circle as they become involved with
- Try to control the other person's, dress and behaviour feeling that these things are a reflection on them.
- Feel overly responsible for the other person's behaviour.
- Fear the other person's anger', fear being hurt and/or rejected by the other person.
- Let these fears dictate what they should say or how they should behave.
- Use giving as a way of feeling safe in a relationship.
- Put aside their own hobbies and interests and spend time sharing the interests and hobbies of the other.
- Question or ignore their own values in order to connect with the other person.
- Let the other person's actions and attitudes determine how they should respond or react.
- Remain steadfastly loyal, even when such loyalty is unjustified and personally harmful.
- Controlling others by not listening to them or by discounting their opinions and 'values