

*codependency*



# What is Codependency?

**Codependency is when you rely too much on someone else, like a friend, family member, or partner, for your own happiness and well-being. Codependency does not just affect your relationship with another person, but it also has a significant impact on your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual health.**

**Codependence can occur in any kind of relationship including friendships, romantic relationships, or family relationships.**

**Codependency is getting lost in what others need from you and how it makes you feel; it is not just being helpful to others. It may seem like you are doing the right things by putting others first, but in reality, you are ignoring your own needs and losing sight of who you are and what you need as well.**

## What Does It Look Like to Be Codependent?

*"We rescue people from their responsibilities. We take care of people's responsibilities for 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."  
Melody Beattie*

In a codependent relationship, it might feel like you're walking on eggshells all the time, trying to avoid any conflict. You might find yourself saying you're sorry, even if it's not your fault. You'll drop everything to help another person, even if it's not good for you. When they have a problem, you're the first one to jump in and try to fix it, even if they're the ones causing the problem. You end up feeling sorry for them, even when they hurt you. Your whole life starts to revolve around them, and

you might even forget who you are outside of the relationship.

You might not even do things you used to love because you're too busy with them. The only time you feel good about yourself is when they're happy with you. And when it comes to your own feelings or problems, you keep them locked up tight.

Think about it in this way, in a healthy relationship, two people can rely on one another in an appropriate and loving way. However, in codependent relationships, one person may be relying on someone to give themselves value and worth. In a healthy relationship, they can support one another while also being two independent people. In a codependent relationship, they become lost in the other person and are unable to be their own person.

Did you know that being codependent can affect your physical health? When you spend all your time caring for other people, you may forget to take care of yourself.

Maybe you decide to postpone your doctor's visit because your boyfriend needs you to help him with something, even though you have been sick for weeks. You may be on the way to the gym to exercise, but instead you run errands for your loved one because you know that will help them feel happy.

When you are codependent, you may find you have no time to take care of yourself physically, because you are too busy being the caretaker for other people. If you find yourself consistently putting aside your physical needs and care, such as eating or going to the doctor when sick, then that is a red flag that you may be struggling with codependency in your relationship(s).



Physical



# Emotional

Have you ever had a friend who seemingly disappeared from your life when they started dating a new boyfriend or girlfriend? You went from spending quality time with your friend each week, to hardly ever talking to them, because they seemed to be consumed with their new relationship.

You watch your friend become anxious about the well-being of their partner, overwhelmed with the

thought that they are not okay unless their partner is okay, and then your friend fearing losing them. They may become so obsessed with making their partner happy that they forget what makes them happy. You may even see them doing things they wouldn't typically do like making poor decisions, ignoring their friends, only caring about their partners' interests, etc.

At first, it may seem like they are simply in love with another, but over time you see your friend losing who they are because they have become too emotionally dependent on another person.

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Spiritual codependency can show up when you start sacrificing your own well-being, like your health or your school grades, just to do things you think will help you earn God's love, even though we do not have to earn His love. It might also mean changing your beliefs to match someone else's, just to get their approval.

If you're spending all your time at church or volunteering, even when you really need to study or take care of yourself, that's a sign you may be too dependent on other people's opinions. Even though it might seem like you're doing the right thing, you're not treating yourself well.

If you used to have strong beliefs in God and went to church every Sunday before you started dating someone, but then you completely forgot about that routine and replaced God with your new partner, then that could be a big sign that your spiritual health is being affected by the codependency.

# Spiritual



*“Detaching does not mean we don’t care. It means we learn to love, care, and be involved without going crazy.”*  
**Melody Beattie**



# How Do You Heal From Codependency?

## Professional Guidance

There are many reasons as to why someone finds themselves struggling with codependency. Often when people grow up in a dysfunctional family environment or have roots in trauma, they struggle with codependent thinking and behaviors. Understandably so, people can have a difficult time navigating how to unlearn those patterns. The good news is that there is professional help. Seeking the guidance from a licensed therapist can be highly beneficial for you to develop an understanding of unhealthy patterns and how to find healing. Codependency is often related to relationship or love addiction, so you can check out our [love addiction resources](#) here too!

## Caring for Yourself

Codependency and boundaries go hand in hand. Setting and maintaining healthy boundaries is crucial in breaking free from codependent patterns. To begin setting boundaries for yourself, think about what is important to you, what your values are, and who you want to be. From there, begin to set small boundaries for yourself. If you have a hobby, set aside time to plan a date for yourself to pursue those hobbies. Maybe you struggle with needing to talk to your boyfriend about every decision you make. Instead of turning to him each time, ask at least one other friend for their input to broaden your support circle. Another boundary would be to express your feelings to your partner rather than shutting them down for fear of upsetting them.

*“The formula is simple: In any given situation, detach and ask, “What do I need to do to take care of myself?”*  
**Melody Beattie**

**Think about what is important to you, what your values are, and who you want to be.**

# Spiritual Practice

Codependency means that somewhere along the way, you lost sight of who you are, of what is important to you. While caring for others and trying to make them happy, you forgot about your own happiness. You forgot how to love yourself and how to receive genuine love. But here's the deal—you deserve love.

There are only a few sources of guaranteed love in life—not from family or a partner, but from yourself, and ultimately from Jesus. He sees your value, even when you can't. He loves you and you do not have to do anything to earn that love. He wants you to experience a life filled with love that doesn't depend on pleasing others or being useful to them. If you're curious about Jesus' love or want to talk about your codependent habits, reach out to one of our Hope Coaches today. They're here to help and listen—no judgment, just support.

*"No wonder we think God has abandoned us; we've abandoned ourselves."  
Melody Beattie*

*get  
prayer*

Send your prayer requests today!

**Real  
People  
Praying.**



# Next Steps

You deserve to be heard and understood. We help students and young adults in crisis by offering sound advice and a safe place to connect.

*explore*

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