

Warning Signs of a Codependent Relationship

Codependent relationships are not healthy and do not allow partners room to be themselves,

(their true/best selves) to grow, and to be autonomous. These unhealthy relationships involve one or both partners relying heavily on the other and the relationship for their sense of self, feelings of worthiness, and overall emotional well-being. *They also exclude others and become insensitive to others and the bigger picture around them, creating their own separate world even unknowingly. Not bringing out the best in each other as their relationship is (even unconsciously) selfish in nature about what they are getting/needing/wanting or not wanting to happen.*

Make notes on the lines available with what God is saying to you about you!

1. People Pleasing

It's normal to want people to like you and we all want our loved ones to be happy, but there's a difference between these normal tendencies and having to please people all the time. People pleasers often feel like they have no choice but to keep other people happy. They don't like to say no, even when pleasing others substantially interferes with their own wants and needs.

2. Lack of Boundaries

People in both roles in a codependent relationship tend to have problems recognizing, respecting, and reinforcing boundaries. Having boundaries simply means you respect the other person's right to his or her own feelings and autonomy. It also means recognizing that you aren't responsible for the other person's happiness. People in codependent relationships tend to have a problem where one person doesn't recognize boundaries and the other person doesn't insist on boundaries. Thus, one person is controlling and manipulative, and the other person is compliant and fails to assert his or her own will. Working on setting and maintaining boundaries is one of the most important skills families have to learn in family therapy.

3. Poor Self-Esteem

Typically, neither person in a codependent relationship has very good self-esteem. One person needs the approval of the other or at least needs to be of service to the other to have a sense of purpose. The other person has low self-esteem due to having to depend

on someone else to meet material needs and needing validation from that person. The dependent person is often controlling out of a basic sense of insecurity that the other person might leave.

4. Poor Communication

A codependent mindset makes it hard to communicate effectively. The caregiver is often unaware of her own wants and needs, and when she is aware of them, she may be reluctant to express them. She may feel like caring for the other person is the most important thing, or she may fear upsetting the other person by asserting herself. The dependent person may be in the habit of communicating dishonestly, more interested in maintaining control than in actually communicating. Communication is another crucial skill to learn in family therapy. Both people have to learn to communicate honestly and effectively.

5. Lack of Self-Image

The caregiver may have low self-esteem, or she may not have much of a self-image at all. Often, the caregiver defines herself mainly in relation to the other person and may have no idea who she is without having that role to play. This is why the caregiver is also dependent, even though she is the one taking care of practical matters and could probably get along just fine without the other person.

6. Dependency

Of course, dependency plays a major role in codependency. Each person needs the other for something. One person needs her material needs to be met because addiction or other issues have impeded her autonomy. The other person needs validation and a

sense of purpose from taking care of someone. In a way, it's a tradeoff, but it also limits both people involved.

7. Relationship Stress

As you might expect, any of these factors can put a lot of stress on a relationship. When you can't communicate or respect boundaries, you're bound to have problems. The caretaker often feels a lot of stress about doing everything right, while the dependent person often feels insecure about being abandoned by the caretaker. Both are afraid to be alone, but neither is particularly happy. There may not be many fights since one partner is typically committed to keeping the other happy, but both are likely to feel stressed, nonetheless.

*God wants us **interdependent** on our family in Christ as a whole not just one or two people, in a family there is an inclusive giving and receiving in a large group, everyone sensitive to the needs of all the others around them not just one or two!*

Spend time in honest, open communication with the Lord...What is He saying to you?