



exercising, enjoying music, and other healthy activities you enjoy.

- ✓ **Be kind** - Apply the “golden rule” to yourself. Treat yourself as you would like others to treat you. Be kind to yourself and offer forgiveness when needed.
- ✓ **Communicate** - Relational closeness doesn't magically happen. Open dialogue and communication is needed to foster intimacy in relationships.
- ✓ **Choose hope** - Let go of living in fear of losing the relationship, and instead focus on expressing your core values, and exercising hope in tomorrow.

KEEP IN MIND

If you or your loved one is struggling with codependency, be courageous and seek help. A licensed counselor or therapist can help you explore where this behavior originated and how you might go about adopting healthier ways of relating. Together, you can establish a plan to change your life's direction and move from a codependent relationship to a mutually satisfying one.

What steps will you take today to discover a healthier, more enjoyable and mutually rewarding relationship?

Codependence

Are you in a close relationship THAT FEELS EXHAUSTING as if another's success or recovery depends on you?

Imagine how much more enjoyable the relationship might be if you could let go of feeling responsible for the other person's behavior and choices.

When a person is codependent they are unable to define and meet their own needs in a relationship. This individual "loses" their sense of self because they are completely absorbed in the needs of the other person, who often is struggling with addiction or illness. This intense focus on the other person can jeopardize one's health, safety and success in life.

HOW DO PEOPLE BECOME CODEPENDENT?

No one is born codependent; rather, the behavior is often learned by observing other family members and modeling their codependent behavior.

People who have addiction (drugs, alcohol, food, gambling, etc.) in their family history are more likely to become codependent. Additionally, when physical, sexual or emotional abuse has occurred the risk of emotional dependence escalates.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CODEPENDENT PEOPLE

Codependent people struggle to define who they are and what their purpose is in life. They see their place in this world solely through the lens of their codependent relationship.

There are many emotional characteristics of codependent people. A person may not exhibit all these traits, but there will be some signs of imbalance such as:

- Low self-esteem and comparisons with others
- Overblown sense of responsibility for others
- Hurt feelings when actions aren't recognized
- Fears of abandonment or losing the person in the relationship
- Unable to set and maintain boundaries
- Emotional outbursts to stressful events
- Difficulty expressing their own goals or values

ACTION STEPS

The following helpful tips can help you or someone you know step away from codependent tendencies:

- ✓ **Set boundaries** - Embrace your own needs and emotions. Saying "no" to a loved one doesn't mean you don't care for them, and it's healthy to set these boundaries.
- ✓ **Stop "fixing"** - Learn how to show love and support for your loved one by being intentional about not trying to "fix" their lives.
- ✓ **Explore** - Discover what your core beliefs and values are, and how you might best express them. Make sure you haven't just adopted the values and beliefs of another.
- ✓ **Relax** - Take some time for you. Relieve stress, tension and anxiety by relaxing,