

### **Codependent Behavior Characteristics:**

This is a list of many patterns of codependent behavior, but it is not necessarily comprehensive. Also, not all codependents possess every one of them. Read through the list and determine if you have any of these behaviors.

Unless noted in the question, resist the temptation to identify other people's codependent behavior. If you find yourself doing this, bring yourself back to the question, "when have I displayed this behavior?" Remember, we often recognize behaviors we do not like in ourselves, by seeing it in other people first. "When you spot it, you got it!"

For much more detailed information about codependency, read Melodie Beatty's Codependent No More and Beyond Codependency: Hazeldon Publishing, July 1996. This list is an anecdotal compilation based on this book.

- I get feelings of self worth if I feel liked by others, so I spend a lot of time doing things I think will make me "liked."
- I am a "people pleaser." I give people what I think they want, and tell people what I think they want to hear. I often do this without knowing it at the time, and don't realize it until later, when I find myself uncomfortable or unsatisfied with the situation.
- I value other people's opinions more than my own.
- I usually put everyone else's needs above my own. I do not value my needs as much as I value others'.
- It feels selfish to put my own needs first.
- I have a hard time engaging in self-care behaviors; I tend to feel guilty if I do something for myself, or if someone else does something for me. I would rather focus my caring attentions on someone else.
- I usually deny, downplay, justify, or ignore my own feelings, and focus on others'.
- I eventually resent when others do not do for me, even though I have difficulty asking for what I want.
- I feel extremely uncomfortable about feeling vulnerable.
- I have a difficult time saying "no" or setting healthy boundaries with people.
- I feel most happy when I am giving in a relationship. I do not feel comfortable being on the receiving end.
- I feel very uncomfortable asking for help. I am much more comfortable being the one in the "helper" role.
- I avoid other people's anger at all costs.
- I avoid conflict whenever possible.
- I avoid most of my own feelings whenever possible by focusing on other people's.
- One or more of my parents or significant relatives was/is an alcoholic or an addict.

- I feel best about myself when I have helped solve other people's problems. It is very important for me to feel like I am nurturing someone.
- I feel most comfortable when I am in control of situations, people, and things. Some ways this may show up in my life: giving advice, telling others what to do, how to live, what to wear, what is wrong with their behavior, and/or how they can fix themselves or their problems.
- I spend a lot of time worrying or obsessing about how a situation is going to play out before it happens, in order to try and plan for every contingency. This becomes very tiring after a while.
- Often worrying gets in the way of my life, which causes me to have *at least one* of the following: sleep problems, lack of energy level, unhealthy eating habits, stress related anxiety.
- When I am in a significant relationship, I usually end up setting aside my own interests and allow my partner's interests to become mine. OR, my partner tends to do this.
- I choose relationships based on "need." I really like to be needed, and am attracted to needy people, or people whom I can help.
- I feel an emptiness, or loneliness when I am not in a romantic relationship. I tend to be a "serial monogamist," moving from one romantic relationship to another without much time in between.
- I have always believed that there is one special person out there who will fulfill every romantic, psychological and spiritual need of mine. I live my life in search of "*the one*."
- I love the feeling of being "in love," and after a relationship develops past this stage, I lose interest or experience a feeling of dissatisfaction.
- I allow my social circle to decrease or completely disappear when I become involved with a romantic partner. I do this because I experience that all of my needs are being met by my partner.
- I am afraid of being rejected, and avoid it at all costs. This often shows up as avoiding risk-taking, so as not to be hurt.
- I tend to emotionally withdraw when I feel rejected or feel afraid of the risk of rejection.
- I am uncomfortable when things are *calm*. I am often waiting for the "other shoe to fall," both fearing and/or expecting a crisis or drama in order to feel like things are somehow "normal" again.
- I am often like a chameleon, changing my values to match the values of the person I am with. My true values tend to get put aside so that I can feel a connection with a partner, or I may not even be aware of what my values are. OR, my partners tend to do this.
- I am like an emotion-sponge. I absorb whatever emotions are going on around me. This makes it hard for me to be around uncomfortable situations without me feeling like I "take on" the feelings of people around me.
- I am unable to self-regulate when there is chaos or confusion around me. I feel out of control.
- I am a perfectionist, and nothing is ever good enough for me, especially myself. OR, the partners I get involved with tend to be so.
- I feel responsible when other people are in pain or suffering. I feel like I have to DO something to force a solution or an outcome.