

Relationship Rehab Show

Episode 36: Why Does Codependency Ruin Relationships?

First of all, these are some things that codependency is not:

1. Codependency is not appropriate Caretaking. When someone legitimately needs physical or mental care that they cannot provide for themselves, it is compassionate to do whatever you can to take care of them.
2. Codependency is not Interdependence. We all depend on others in order for our life-needs to be met, such as farmers, grocers, providers of goods and services.
3. Codependency is not Selectivity. Selectivity is when you each do what you're good at in order to make the whole run smoothly. He may do the laundry. You may help with homework. At work someone is the boss in charge of vision. Others are the worker bees that produce the product.

A great definition of Codependency is “An Imbalance of Responsibility.” This creates an imbalance in the relationship that results in one person taking advantage of the other leading to resentment and a loss of appropriate growth.

The classic example is a partner buying booze for the alcoholic partner. Maybe we would all spot that irony very quickly. But codependency can be much more subtle...and just as devastating.

Has your child ever “forgotten” their homework or sports uniform and you go to great trouble to get it to them in time for the class or practice? Rather than letting them learn an important life lesson about responsibility?

Has your partner asked you to lie for them so they can go golfing on a “sick” day from work?

Have you ever said “Yes” to an invitation to an event you really didn’t want to attend? Then felt resentful because you wished you were somewhere else?

Has your child been asked a question that she is old enough and capable of answering for herself, but you jump in and answer it for her?

Has your friend guilted you into a weekend trip that you really didn’t want to take? Or guilted you for not giving enough support for his or her plans? Or laid a guilt trip on you because she worries about you?

Is resentment a common condition for you? Then you are probably assuming responsibilities that do not rightfully belong to you.

These are not your responsibility:

1. The consequences of another person’s choices,
2. The feelings or worries of another person,
3. Making another person happy at your own expense.

There can be rare occasions when you sacrifice in order to meet another’s need...for instance attending the funeral of a friend’s partner in order to give her emotional support. Or, the first time the homework or uniform is forgotten you fetch it for your child with the clear understanding that in the future, this is their responsibility.

Codependency breeds unhealthy dependence for one person and chronic resentment for the other person, killing any hope of having a healthy, responsible relationship.

Many examples were shared in this week’s Episode. You have my love and support as you untangle the knots of codependency in your relationships!

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