

# Codependency and Addiction Examined

By Jim Rachels



The Oxford dictionary defines codependency as:

*“Excessive emotional or psychological reliance on a partner, typically one who requires support on account of an illness or addiction.”*

A lot of times codependency happens as a response to the feeling that they are not safe and as a result of ongoing trauma in their life due to the addition problems of a friend or loved one. Many times this will stunt a child's growth and development in different areas of their life. Many will have trouble with communication issues.

Many times someone the situation might be that someone's loved one is currently stuck in active addiction and is addicted to and relies on their drug of choice. Then someone in the family comes to solely depend on the person that is stuck in addiction. Which in turn then makes both people dependent on the substance of choice for the addict. Everything is dictated by it. It can sometimes almost seem as if that person is addicted to the person with the addiction issues.

So what are the signs of codependency?

There are actually many signs that point to someone having codependency issues. Self-worth is a big one. Many suffer from extreme feelings of guilt and shame. Many are also very hard on themselves and blame themselves for many things that they didn't even have control of.

Another sign is not knowing who you are without using outside opinions. You base your entire self-worth on the opinions of others. There are also things like feeling the need to have to obsessively take care of the person you are trying to control and manipulate. Many will try to make themselves indispensable to the person and try to make it seem like that person can't live without them. They want to be that person's safety net. Once again this is all in an attempt to manipulate that person into doing what that person wants them to do. The codependent thinks that if they are able to accomplish their goal that the person will never leave them and they can be in control of all situations that happen between them.

Many people come to live in fear. They are in fear of not being in control. Fear of something happening to the person you love and losing them. Fear is one of the main things that fuel codependency. Many times one person in the relationship will base their self-worth on what the other person thinks. Some people even get to the point where they are going through withdrawals both physically and mentally when they are away from the person they are codependent on. This can come in the form of anxiety and depression. There are many different ways the withdrawal will exhibit itself.

There are different areas of our life that cause problems such as physical, cognitive and relationship problems. Physical problems can be things like stress and anxiety. This then in turn leads to problems with sleeping and things like problems with eating. There are a lot of other negative physical effects from going through stress constantly without any breaks.

Many people will also be looking for validation from others and come to care more about what other people think of them than they think of themselves. Another thing that affects many people with codependency issues is an extreme fear of abandonment. This is something that many times adds a lot of problems to an already strained relationship.

Some will also constantly be offering unsolicited advice about things going on in people's lives. Acting like they have a sense of a responsibility for someone else's actions. I personally believe that this is a way of inflating the ego of that person and making themselves feel more important than they really are. They also feel a need to have control over others and expect people to do what they say. These things can also lead to a sense of no trust in yourself as well as difficulty trusting others.

Some are also manipulative. They will do whatever it takes to get control of a situation and control over whatever person they are dealing with. I remember when I was in my last relationship I did whatever I could do in order to try to control the situation and my ex-girlfriend. Part of trying to control my ex-girlfriend had to do with my extreme fear of abandonment. I was terrified of losing her and being by myself. At the time I couldn't imagine a life without her and this led to my attempts at manipulating the situation. My whole self-worth was based on how she saw me and that led to my manipulating situations the best I could. Now I see that at that time I was looking to fill a void in myself.

Looking back now I see that my fear of losing her fueled all the things I did to try to control her and our relationship. I depended so much on this relationship for validation that I lost a sense of myself. I felt if I wasn't wanted all the time that I was worthless. I also tried to control the ones around me and everything going on in my life. I now see that I am not in control and this is something all of us need to accept.

I was so desperate to not be single that the second my ex-girlfriend and I were fighting and she would threaten to break up with me I would immediately go on dating apps trying to find someone else to be with. I was terrified of being alone.

I also had extreme trust issues. I didn't trust my ex-girlfriend when she said she wouldn't leave me. I never believed her and always thought she

might be lying. I also have trust issues with pretty much everyone in my life. I always feel as if they are lying to me when they show me support and love. This is something that really affects my life and mental health. It got to the point I didn't even trust myself.

So what are some of the things we can do to try to start recovering from our codependency issues? I think the first thing that should be done is if you have access consult a professional such as a therapist or psychologist. I would also recommend trying a support group like Codependents Anonymous. These things can be of immense benefit and really help to progress you along in your recovery from codependency.