



Healing Co-Dependency Worksheet

What is co-dependence? The notion of co-dependence came out of addictions research, specifically personality and behaviour trends in adult children of alcoholics. The concept has been applied more widely over the last few decades, and there is help available for those who find themselves in a co-dependent relationship.

Definitions

Co-dependence describes someone who has excessive emotional reliance on another, and that other person needs a lot of support. Someone who is co-dependent derives their value and self-worth by supporting others, to their own detriment. They engage in imbalanced relationships, where they enable the other person's addictions, under-achievement, immaturity, poor mental health, or irresponsibility. People who are co-dependent generally suppress their own feelings and needs, have a high level of self-sacrifice, focus on the other rather than the self, and have a strong need to fix or control the other.

Co-dependence occurs when we are always there for others, but don't consider our own needs, as we are over-identifying with the Helper/Hero/Rescuer role. In co-dependence, we can also feel like a victim, and it seems like nothing will change unless the other person changes. We intertwine our life with theirs and forget we have choices and can set boundaries.

According to Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA), people who are co-dependent exhibit the following patterns:

- Denial patterns
- Low self-esteem patterns
- Compliance patterns
- Control patterns
- Avoidance patterns

Watch this video to learn more about co-dependence:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r9VexoTZnrw>

Write down your notes and thoughts as you watch this video.

Personal Thoughts and Reflections on Video:

How does a person become co-dependent?

Attachment is the key unmet need in co-dependence.
Watch this video to understand what attachment is,
and what happens when our attachment needs are not met:

<https://youtu.be/FGnf4c7cxq4>

There are three typical childhood scenarios that can lead
to a person becoming co-dependent as an adult:

1. Damaging parental relationships (either a parent is addicted or they have a lack of emotional maturity and so is focused on their own needs)
2. Growing up with someone who is chronically ill
3. Coming from an abusive family



Brainstorm the behaviours a child would have to engage in in order to get their attachment needs met in each of these family scenarios. How might their coping mechanisms translate into adulthood?

(Record your ideas below.)

	A child would cope by:	As an adult this person would:
Parent who is addicted or self-absorbed		
Family member has a chronic illness		
On-going abuse in the family home		



How to heal co-dependency?

- The first step in healing co-dependency in adulthood is admitting you are indeed in a co-dependent relationship.
- You become willing to move away from the imbalanced relationships and be willing to see other people as capable and responsible for their own lives.
- You remember to remind yourself that your needs are just as important and valid as the other person's.
- You learn to set boundaries and begin to ask for what you need.
- You begin to get to know yourself, and be develop a kinder, more compassionate inner voice.

If you see yourself in the traits and qualities discussed, perhaps you are in a co-dependent relationship. If you can relate, take a few minutes to engage in the journaling prompts below.

Who am I enabling?

If I let go and let them live their own life, it is possible that:

Negative Possibilities	Positive Possibilities



Notes and Personal Reflections: