

LOW SELF WORTH

& codependency

- Often come from troubled, repressed, or dysfunctional families
- Deny our families were troubled, repressed, or dysfunctional
- Blame ourselves for everything
- Pick on ourselves for everything, including the way we think, feel, look, act, and behave
- Get angry, defensive, self-righteous, and indignant when others blame and criticize us—something we regularly do to ourselves
- Reject compliments or praise
- Get depressed from a lack of compliments and praise
- Feel different from the rest of the world
- Think we're not quite good enough
- Feel guilty about spending money on ourselves or doing unnecessary or fun things
- Fear rejection
- Take things personally
- Have been victims of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, neglect, abandonment, or alcoholism
- Feel like victims
- Tell ourselves we can't do anything right
- Fear making mistakes
- Wonder why we have a tough time making decisions
- Expect perfection from ourselves and others
- Wonder why we can't get anything done to our satisfaction
- Have a lot of "shoulds"
- Feel a lot of guilt
- Feel ashamed of who we are
- Think our lives aren't worth living
- Try to help other people live their lives instead
- Get artificial feelings of self-worth from helping others
- Overly identify with the failures and problems of the people we love
- Wish good things would happen to us
- Believe good things will never happen to us
- Believe we don't deserve good things and happiness
- Wish other people would like and love us
- Believe other people couldn't possibly like and love us
- Try to prove we're good enough for other people
- Settle for being needed

DENIAL & codependency

- Ignore problems or pretend they aren't happening
- Pretend circumstances aren't as bad as they are
- Tell ourselves things will be better tomorrow
- Stay busy so we don't have to think about things
- Get confused
- Get depressed
- Get sick go to doctors and get tranquilizers
- Become workaholics
- Spend money compulsively
- Overeat
- Pretend those things aren't happening either
- Watch problems get worse
- Believe lies
- Lie to ourselves
- Wonder why we feel like we're going crazy

WEAK BOUNDARIES & codependency

- Say we won't tolerate certain behaviors from other people
- Gradually increase our tolerance until we can tolerate and do things we said we never would
- Let others hurt us keep letting people hurt us
- Wonder why we hurt so badly
- Complain, blame, and try to control while we continue to stand there hurting
- Finally get angry become totally intolerant

POOR COMMUNICATION

& codependency

- Blame
- Threaten
- Coerce
- Beg
- Bribe
- Advise
- Don't say what we mean
- Don't mean what we say
- Don't know what we mean
- Don't take ourselves seriously
- Think other people don't take us seriously
- Take ourselves too seriously
- Ask for what we want and need indirectly—by sighing, for example
- Find it difficult to get to the point
- Aren't sure what the point is
- Gauge our words carefully to achieve a desired effect
- Try to say what we think will please people
- Try to say what we think will provoke people
- Try to say what we hope will make people do what we want them to do
- Eliminate the word no from our vocabulary
- Talk too much talk about other people
- Avoid talking about ourselves, our problems, feelings, and thoughts
- Say everything is our fault
- Say nothing is our fault
- Believe our opinions don't matter
- Wait to express our opinions until we know other people's opinions
- Lie to protect and cover for people we love
- Lie to protect ourselves
- Have a difficult time asserting our rights
- Have a difficult time expressing our emotions honestly, openly, and appropriately
- Think most of what we have to say is unimportant
- Begin to talk in cynical, self-degrading, or hostile ways
- Apologize for bothering people

The preceding checklist are just four of the ways that co-dependency can affect your life, but they are not all-inclusive.

Like all people, codependents do, feel, and think many things. There is not a certain number of traits that guarantees whether a person is or isn't codependent. Each of us is different; each of us has our own way of doing things.

What's most important is that we first identify behaviours or areas that cause us problems and then decide what we want to do.

WAYS TO IMPROVE

codependency

- **Self-awareness:** Recognize and acknowledge the codependent patterns in your relationships. Understanding your own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors is the first step towards change.
- **Establish boundaries:** Develop clear boundaries between yourself and others. Set limits on the amount of time, energy, and resources you dedicate to others, and communicate these boundaries openly and assertively.
- **Cultivate self-esteem:** Work on building your self-esteem and sense of self-worth. Engage in activities that make you feel good about yourself and focus on your personal strengths and achievements.
- **Develop self-reliance:** Focus on becoming more independent by making decisions for yourself, taking responsibility for your actions, and learning to solve problems on your own.
- **Practice self-care:** Prioritize your physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Develop a self-care routine that includes exercise, proper nutrition, sufficient sleep, and time for relaxation and hobbies.