



Leading the Way to Wholeness

Note to the readers of the Mini E-book:

The author's passion to strengthen positive partnerships is reflected in her book, *Counseling the Codependent*, which was written for two purposes. First, to clarify the origins and definitions of the behavior referred to as "codependent". And secondly, to present accurate clinical content from a Biblical perspective in order to serve the many people of faith in helping professions who encounter the issues addressed in this book. The result has been a very practical and popular resource for personal and professional use by both secular and faith based readers. We hope you enjoy this excerpt of three chapters provided for you as an introductory gift.

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About the Author

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Dr. Jean LaCour has extensive experience in the addiction field. She co-founded NET Training Institute, Inc. which is an international training organization providing specialized coursework in counseling, addiction, prevention, recovery support services, and foundations in recovery coaching. Instruction is available through online multimedia training and web-based distance education materials for organizations or groups needing comprehensive, professional staff development. Affiliate programs are available through the NET Recovery Care Association. Since 1996, NET Institute, located in Orlando, Florida, USA, has trained thousand students worldwide who desire to strengthen families and communities and to serve the wounded, the addicted, the marginalized and the poor.

As an author, trainer, curriculum developer and international consultant, Dr. LaCour has extensive experience in establishing collaborative partnerships around the world. She has trained in over a dozen nations including Russia, Egypt, Pakistan, and India. She serves as Vice President of the International Substance Abuse and Addiction Coalition (ISAAC) based out of the UK which has over 2,000 members in 68 nations. Dr. LaCour took part in the United Nations' Non Governmental Organization/ NGO Drugs and Crime policy workgroup in Vienna, Austria in 2008. In 2009, she returns to Egypt as a UN consultant to train Christian and Muslim HIV/AIDS outreach workers from the Middle East region.

Dr. LaCour's passion is building bridges in order to raise the standard of care. For nearly two years she served as the statewide Faith Coordinator for the Florida Department of Children and Families which served over 12,000 Florida clients through the U.S Presidential initiative called "*Access to Recovery*" which connected the services of clinical treatment with a variety of "grassroots" recovery support organizations.

Beyond her professional accomplishments, Jean LaCour is best known for her enthusiasm and energy in communicating an uplifting message of hope in overcoming the challenges of life with grace and courage.

INTRODUCTION

Before the late 1980's, the term "codependency" was rarely heard outside the treatment field of chemical dependency and substance abuse. Since then, it has exploded into all areas of the counseling profession and is well established in the popular vernacular. Controversy exists over labeling certain "helping behaviors" as clinical or emotional illnesses, but individuals who recognize these patterns and use the tools for making healthier choices find tremendous relief and freedom.

Part I consists of seven chapters presenting codependency from a several points of view, including a Biblical perspective. Detailed behaviors and characteristics are included to aid in identification. Family of origin issues include:

- Codependency as a means for survival
- Codependency as a legacy of adult children of alcoholics
- Codependency as spiritual striving
- Codependency as obedience to a false image or system of rules

The relationship between codependency and alcoholism cannot be ignored. Background is given for the present day Twelve Step program of Alcoholics Anonymous and how it might be adapted in faith based settings. The section closes with three potent recovery strategies useful for individuals personally and for a range of counselors and coaches:

- Identifying unhealthy roles
- Identifying false belief systems
- Recovery stages

A discussion of "God's Healing Process" is offered as a useful model for understanding HOW to turn to God to receive His help. The role of forgiveness is discussed in detail.

Part II begins with a look at the psychodynamics of the development of a personality disorder. Codependent behavior is presented as paradoxical because it often mimics healthy behavior patterns. To be effective in breaking through barriers of denial, the counselor must be aware that most codependent clients perceive their own actions and intentions as "good".

Temperament Theory and Therapy are applicable in identifying, understanding, and counseling clients dealing with codependency. The Arno Profile System / APS (formerly called the Temperament Analysis Profile or TAP) is effective in determining the underlying temperament and gives valuable information for helping a person unlearn the self destructive behaviors associated with the personality disorder of codependency.

Temperament directly determines the direction and intensity of codependency and therefore the strategies most useful for breaking any self defeating bondage. Temperament is presented as the Biblical view of individual identity. Temperament is then differentiated from the doctrine of "Determinism," and further explained using the concept of the "Inner Man".

A brief overview of Temperament Therapy is given with clear definitions of the three areas within each temperament: *Inclusion*, *Control*, and *Affection*; and the two types of needs: *expressed* and *wanted*. The concept of "self care" is presented as an approach to recovery from codependency based on temperament needs.

Seven classic traits of codependency are identified and correlated with the strengths and weaknesses of each temperament type. Conclusions are offered for each temperament type to help the counselor identify and understand the issues affecting the codependent client. Individual temperament will dictate the emphasis of self care and recovery. Case studies will be included to provide examples of how temperament influences the psychodynamics of codependency.

CHAPTER III

FAMILY OF ORIGIN ISSUES

HEALTHY FAMILIES AND "LOVE TANKS"

It was pointed out in preceding chapters that much of what we called “codependent behavior” stems from our birth family or family of origin. Scripture indicates that God's pattern for families is good. It is the human unit designed for procreation, nurturing and developing of new human life. From families come tribes and peoples and nations.

The family is a system. It has components and principles that govern the system. The chief component is the marital partnership. If their relationship is healthy, the children have the opportunity to grow.

A healthy functional couple commit to each other through the power of will. They DECIDE and CHOOSE to stand by each other no matter what. A good relationship is based on unconditional love. It's not some maudlin feeling – it's a decision. The healthy marriage is based on the equality of two spiritual beings who connect at the level of their “being-ness”. Each is a whole person. Each grows because of the love for the other, which by definition promotes their spiritual growth.

Each is ultimately responsible for their own actions and happiness. Happiness and satisfaction come from inner resources and an individual's relationship with God. Happiness cannot come from external sources alone.

Mature, healthy relationships are by definition between equal, self-disciplined and self-responsible individuals. A good analogy of a healthy marriage is two people committed to playing the same song on their own instruments with their own unique skills, creating pleasing and ever-changing music.¹

Relationships based on incompleteness, neediness or complimenting and fixing one another's woundedness will NOT produce growth or good fruit, much less a harmonious, pleasing sound.

Healthy, mature people understand how to use the four basic techniques of easing the suffering of life's inevitable problems. Discipline is fueled by the commitment of love and is part of the commitment.

altogether. Or worse, if the parent is abusive as well as unavailable, the child is filled with fear, trauma and rejection.

But surely the nonalcoholic parent could make up for the lack of love in the child's life; right? No. This parent will spend all their energy trying to keep things a secret and keep life on track, and/or trying to help the alcoholic shape up. The non-drinking spouse is codependent and usually has to keep the family together, tend to the finances, and agonize over the family tragedy.

Depression, anger, and disappointment will consume the nonalcoholic parent's life. While this parent truly loves their own child, they have no more love available for the child on a consistent basis than the drinking parent has.

Thus the child of an alcoholic family grows up with an empty love tank. Often what little love the child had within itself is drained away and pulled out of the child by the needy parents who manipulate their children into providing for their own unmet emotional needs. The proper order of love flowing into children from stable parents is reversed and distorted. The child leaves the family of origin with an empty love tank and as a codependent adult.⁴

CODEPENDENCY AS SURVIVAL

One of the esteemed pioneers in the recovery movement is John Bradshaw, a former Catholic priest and alcoholic. He addresses family issues extensively.

Codependence is the most common family illness because it is what happens to anyone in any kind of a dysfunctional family. In every dysfunctional family, there is a primary stressor. This could be Dad's drinking or work addiction; Mom's hysterical control of everyone's feelings; Dad or Mom's physical or verbal violence; a family member's actual sickness or hypochondriasis; Dad or Mom's early death; the divorce; Dad or Mom's moral/religious righteousness; Dad or Mom's sexual abuse. Anyone, who becomes controlling in the family to the point of being experienced as a threat by the other members, initiates the dysfunction. This member becomes the primary stressor. Each member of the family adapts to this stress in an attempt to control it. Each becomes OUTERDIRECTED and lives adapting to the stressor....Each becomes codependent on the stressor.⁵

Humans have built in responses to danger. We also have remarkable survival skills. Any demand that is made on us that becomes a threat is adapted to in several ways. When threatened, the body prepares to fight or take flight. The heartbeat increases; the muscles tense; blood flow is altered as adrenaline pumps through us; we become hypervigilant, etc.

This state of readiness was intended by nature to be a survival state. But in dysfunctional families, this readiness state often becomes the "normal" state over time and leads to family members developing classic survival behaviors. These include denial, dissociation, repression, withdrawal (flight responses) or anger, identification with the persecutor and reactive and reenacting behavior (fight responses). These survival behaviors are among the characteristics listed in Chapter II.

It would seem reasonable that these behaviors would cease when a person moves out of the dysfunctional situation, but this is not the case. Even when Dad or Mom quits drinking or overworking or overeating or whatever, the IMPACT of the stress continues. It can be from mild (chronic fear) to severe (ongoing traumatic events).

According to Bradshaw, the adult child of a dysfunctional family learned to cope by developing certain patterns of survival behavior which were their actual responses to the violence. Some children will withdraw and hide while others will enter into confrontation or act out in other ways. These behaviors feel normal since they are how the person survived from an early age. While they were once protective and necessary, they become unhealthy and destructive in adult life.

But survival behaviors are hard to give up for they are what got a person through. They often sacrificed themselves to meet the emotional needs of broken and abusive parents. They learned to please and manipulate to avoid pain. They took on roles to play out the family melodrama. They took on parenting their own parents or siblings because there was no one else to do it. They grew up quickly with no time to be childlike. They had to keep up a false front of normalcy at school while the insanity and pain of their home life drained their youthful resources. They learned to shut down emotionally or to escape and self medicate their pain through substance abuse.

This understanding of survival behaviors which leave people powerless and spiritually bankrupt, has shaped Bradshaw's clinical definition. He writes, "Codependency is a set of survival behaviors which are unhealthy patterns of learned behavior. Codependence can be defined as a recognizable pattern of fixed personality traits, rooted in the internalized shame resulting from the abandonment that naturally happens to everyone in a dysfunctional family system."⁶

He goes on to say that it is always a symptom of abandonment, including neglect, abuse and enmeshment. Codependence is a loss of one's inner reality and an ADDICTION to outer reality.

CODEPENDENCY AS ACOA: ADULT CHILDREN OF ALCOHOLICS

"As paradoxical as it seems, MANY a child of an alcoholic becomes an alcoholic. And if they don't become an alcoholic, they marry an alcoholic or a person with some other compulsive addictive personality disorder." ⁷

"This paradoxical pattern of adults who grew up in alcoholic families has focused on the truth of "families as systems" more than any other single factor. Some 10 years ago (late 1970's) one adult child after another began to realize that there were commonalities in their lives that seemed to have less to do with them and more to do with their families of origin. "⁸

This group referred to as ACoAs or A.C.O.A.s became a movement, which is sweeping the country. It has been the work in the chemical dependency field and especially in the ACoA movement that has helped to explain the nature of compulsivity and how it is set up in the dysfunctional family systems. The fact that there are common characteristics of children who grew up in alcoholic families betrays an underlying structure of disorder.

The characteristics make it clear that the children are not just reacting to the drinking of the alcoholic. Rather they are reacting to relational issues, the anger, the control issues, and the emotional unavailability of the addict. The traits are actually a response to the trauma of the abandonment and ensuing shame that occurs in alcoholic families.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ACOAs: ⁹

- **Addictive, compulsive behavior or marry addicts**
- **Delusion and denial**
- **Unmercifully judgmental on self or others**
- **Lack of good boundaries**
- **Tolerate inappropriate behavior**
- **Constantly seek approval**
- **Have difficulty with intimate relationships**
- **Incur guilt whenever you stand up for yourself**
- **Lie when it would be just as easy to tell the truth**
- **Disabled will**
- **Reactors rather than actors**

- **E**xremely loyal to a fault
- **N**umbed out
- **O**ver-react to changes over which you have no control
- **F**eel different from other people
- **A**nxious – hypervigilant
- **L**ow self-worth and internalized shame
- **C**onfuse love and pity
- **O**verly serious
- **H**ave difficulty finishing project
- **O**verly dependent and terrified of abandonment
- **L**ive life as victims
- **I**ntimidated by anger and personal criticism
- **C**ontrol madness around you (and every other situation)
- **S**uper-responsible or super-irresponsible

(The first letter of each characteristic above spells the words: Adult Children of Alcoholics.)

The alcoholic family may be described as a compulsive family. "Everyone in the system is driven by the distress caused by not being able to get his needs met. Some compared living in an alcoholic family to living in a concentration camp. And like survivors of a concentration camp, ACoAs carry what has been compared to post-traumatic stress symptoms."¹⁰

Because of the chronic distress in an alcoholic family, every person in that family attempts to adapt to the chronic stress. No one gets their needs met. Everyone becomes codependent.

Abandonment is the major consequence of this chronic stress. Besides actual physical abandonment by the alcoholic, the neglect of the child's basic emotional needs is another form. With one parent chemically addicted, the other will be codependent on him. Both parents are needy and shame-based. This leads to each child turning inward to a FANTASY BOND of connection with their parents (delusion and denial and false roles) and ultimately to self-indulging habits and painkillers.

The third form of abandonment is abuse. Since alcohol lowers inhibitions and weakens the line between thoughts and expression, physical, sexual and emotional battering are commonplace in alcoholic families.

"Alcoholic families are severely enmeshed which is the fourth way that children are abandoned. As the alcoholic marriage becomes more and more entangled and entrapped, the children get caught up in the needs of both their parents, and the need of the family for wholeness and balance."¹¹ The children take on roles to keep the family system functioning. These roles will be discussed in Chapter VI.

John Bradshaw has done in-depth study into the nuances of adult children. His insight into the development of compulsivity is crucial.

What all this adds up to is that the children, who need their parents' time, attention and direction for at least 15 years, do not get it. They are abandoned. Abandonment sets up compulsivity. Since the children need their parents all the time, and since they do not get their needs met, they grow up with a cup that has a hole in it. They grow up to have adult bodies. They look like and talk like adults, but there is within them an insatiable little child who never got his or her needs met. This hole in the soul is the fuel that drives the compulsivity. The person looks for more and more love, attention, praise, booze, money, excitement, etc.¹²

And so it is the driven-ness, or compulsion, which becomes the hallmark of growing up in an alcoholic home. Since it is impossible to relive one's childhood again as a child, it must be dealt with in adulthood. The compulsions will not just go away with time; they must be acknowledged and dealt with.

Anyone with alcoholism in their family history, whether parents or grandparents, siblings, aunts or uncles, need to be alert and aware of the nature of the problems and tendencies mentioned in this chapter. Codependency is real. It is the name for this multigenerational legacy.

CODEPENDENCY AS SPIRITUAL STRIVING

What are the implications for those who have embraced their spirituality by accepting forgiveness for their sins through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? While millions of people can relate to the tragedies of troubled or dysfunctional families, there are still millions who came from "normal", productive homes who find themselves living codependent lives. How can emotional dysfunction come from supposedly "good homes?" This is particularly relevant for many Christians who have come to terms with the fact that they are living in misery and failure rather than freedom and joy.

Many feel depressed and trapped in lives with little hope. Though they take their faith seriously and try to obey Christ, they are not really alive. Christ's promises of life, joy, and peace often seem empty even though Christian speakers have exhorted them not to trust their feelings but to have faith in the facts. Supposedly knowing the facts of the faith will then dictate the appropriate feelings to follow. But many realize that their emotions are telling them that something is missing.

Usually they will not seek help until relationships begin to crumble or a family or financial crisis arises in which their survival skills cannot cope. Hopefully they will receive help from counselors knowledgeable about codependency. Many well-meaning pastors only know how to exhort them to "hang in there, pray more, stand on the Word, etc."

But these efforts alone, without looking at underlying problems and unresolved family of origin issues, will not bring healing. In fact, many codependents develop religious addictions, becoming obsessive and compulsive about religious behaviors, working themselves into a frenzy of good works, intense "ferve" prayer, etc., to cover up their intense anxiety and feelings of worthlessness. They never get closer to knowing the love of the Father or to experiencing the freedom in Christ.

In fact, it is possible to become addicted to the momentary relief experienced in praise and worship, or while unburdening and pouring out one's pain to others. If the codependent behaviors listed in Chapter II are ignored or denied, then an individual will remain cut off from themselves, others and God in spite of doing all the "right" proscribed Christian activities.

Codependent behavior reflects a deep-seated, private and often unconscious belief that the road to love, belonging, salvation, acceptance and success is dependent on our own ability to do what we THINK others want or expect us to do.

The practicing codependent has been taught that "doing for others" is a means to achieve these goals. Unfortunately, those we "do for" and those whom we are trying to please are often not as concerned about our welfare as they are about their own.

For the codependent who believes that "okay-ness" depends on their ability to meet the real or imagined needs of others, this approval-seeking or people-pleasing behavior becomes a mood-altering drug of choice.

Once addicted, the codependent becomes blind to the reality of his behavior and to the things that really count, like knowing the peace of God; having self-respect and self-worth; being led by the Holy Spirit; walking in the good works prepared for us beforehand; trusting in His provision; etc.

Operating under a sincere delusion that pleasing people will bring them what they want, codependents become willing participants in a losing game. Instead of success or joy, the codependent approval-seeker inevitably ends up angry, hurt, misunderstood, rejected, used, abused, and often feeling abandoned by God.

We are told to "love our neighbor as we love ourselves." The order is very important. Loving ourselves is God's idea and intention. Generally codependents are blind to themselves yet full of advice for others. They readily see what others need to do, or how others should walk with the Lord, but their own lives are a mess, and their own spiritual lives are sterile and dead or full of striving.

It's like going through a cafeteria line with everyone anxiously fixated on the next person's tray; will THEY make the right choices? Pulling in our focus to our own tray, we are often startled to find that we ourselves have made some very poor, unhealthy choices. We even discover that people close to us have dumped their garbage and emotional refuse on our trays. And we continue to CONSUME it all, denying the consequences of our own choices for partaking of "meals" which are destroying our own mental and physical health. And in our ignorance we insult God by calling this behavior Christian or spiritual.

Codependents misinterpret the scriptures about giving, turning the other cheek, being humble, loving, etc. through their own emotional distortions. They tend to emphasize performance and doing the work of the Kingdom. They confuse true serving with neurotic "de-selfing". But because the heart is sick, they experience no satisfaction, no power, and see very little fruit from their sacrifices and efforts.

It is through the grace of God that a sincere belief in the truth of the scriptures will oftentimes lead someone to counseling or into recovery when they realize how their own lives are far from the abundant life offered to us through Jesus Christ.

Many Christians hunger to come into the family of God. Little do they realize that the way in will take them back to the unresolved pain and unfinished business of their own family of origin. Our heavenly Father yearns to draw us to Himself and to heal us and to bestow upon us the full glory of our inheritance as His children. Chapter VI offers effective strategies so that we might indeed cease striving and know that He is God.

The next chapter will clarify and analyze the "rules" which become destructive influences in family systems.

NOTES

- 1 John Bradshaw, BRADSHAW ON: THE FAMILY (Deerfield Beach, 1988), p. 47.
- 2 Scott Peck, THE ROAD LESS TRAVELED (New York, 1980).
- 3 Robert Hemfelt, Frank Minirth, Paul Meier LOVE IS A CHOICE (Nashville, 1989), p. 34.
- 4 Ibid., p. 35.
- 5 Bradshaw, p. 164.
- 6 Ibid., p. 165.
- 7 Ibid., p. 88.
- 8 Ibid., p. 88.
- 9 Ibid., p. 89.
- 10 Ibid., p. 92.
- 11 Ibid., p. 93.
- 12 Ibid., p. 94.

CHAPTER IV

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY RULES

CODEPENDENCY AS OBEDIENCE

Many professionals are coming to understand that codependency can emerge from ANY family system where certain overt (spoken) and covert (unspoken) rules exist – rules that interfere with the normal process of emotional, psychological, behavioral and spiritual development; rules that close off and discourage healthy communication; rules that eventually destroy a person's ability to form a trusting relationship within themselves or between others or with God.

From this point of view codependency is a pattern of living, coping and problem-solving created and maintained by a set of dysfunctional rules within the family or social system. These rules interfere with healthy growth and make constructive change very difficult, if not impossible.¹

The real self is denied or repressed because of an erroneous assumption that love, acceptance, security, success, closeness, and salvation are all dependent upon one's ability to do the "right thing." What are the dynamics of these rules that lead to these erroneous assumptions? We will examine the NINE RULES and how they relate to codependency.

THE NINE RULES

RULE 1: IT'S NOT OKAY TO TALK ABOUT PROBLEMS.

Parents may say outright that what happens in our home is private so keep your mouth shut. But usually this rule is learned by experiencing tension in the air and no one talking about it. No one ever confronts the real cause like Dad's drinking, financial irresponsibility, or other outrageous behavior by a family member.

So the family members pretend the problem will go away while they relieve tension by fighting about small, unrelated issues, like household chores, which have nothing to do with the reality of the situation.

If addressing a family problem gets you yelled at or causes your mother to cry, talking is soon avoided. This fosters a feeling of impending doom, knots in the stomach, free floating anxiety, headaches and sleeplessness. People become emotionally numb and learn to deny problems exist.

Ultimately, this denial fosters a deep sense of personal shame. It also teaches people to avoid looking at problems which lead to more dysfunction. All people have problems which must be accepted and addressed in order to be solved. The healthy, normal family is not the family which is problem free for no such family exists; rather the healthy family is the one that faces their problems and challenges and seeks appropriate outside help.

Rule 2: IT'S NOT OKAY TO TALK ABOUT OR EXPRESS OUR FEELINGS OPENLY.

In America many men aspire to the strong, silent image. Women are given more latitude to express themselves but within certain limitations: anger or business assertiveness is considered unladylike. But in any family with unresolved chemical dependency or codependency issues, emotional blocking is a great problem. People learn to "stuff" how they feel. Feelings get buried and emotional lives become like a minefield that's fenced in with warning signs all around. Things can explode and surface when we least expect it. A child can spill his milk and his mother lashes out in condemning fury.

Statements like "Big boys don't cry," or "Keep that up and I'll really give you something to cry about," or "You don't REALLY hate your sister," or "OF COURSE, I love you. I pay the bills; don't I?" teach us to block our emotions further. Less subtle messages happen when a child seeks closeness and comfort from a parent and feels them tighten or tense up. Arm's length "closeness" is all that's available. Children learn to be remote and unexpressive as they are taught that their needs for nurturing are inappropriate.

Well-meaning Christians often tell others they ought to feel a certain way, like happy or peaceful, when the person is struggling with fear and loneliness and depression. When someone says they are afraid, our job is not to tell them fear is not from God. They KNOW THAT. They may not know that we accept them even when they are having less than victorious feelings.

Feelings are good indicators of what is going on inside us and if disparaged and rejected, it is possible to be out of touch with important signals and information we need to function. Feeling uneasy around someone may be a key for our safety. Feeling overly exhausted is a signal to withdraw or regroup and not make major decisions. Sensing someone's insincerity may be an accurate indicator for not becoming too involved with the wrong relationship.

It is typical to see people cheerily smiling while their eyes portray real sadness or anxiety. Churches are filled with the "smiling depressed" who know that they must appear happy and in control and encouraging even when they are filled with many other unacceptable emotions.

Many laugh when they need to cry, take on more responsibility when they need to rest, do "good works" when they need to be still. Their lack of trust in their own feelings makes them search for cues from others as to their next move.

Part of the legacy of growing up in a dysfunctional home is having our instincts and gut feelings sabotaged. A three-year-old child may sense that something is terribly wrong when her father passes out and falls to the ground and will probably react in deep concern. But when Mom says it's okay, Dad is just sleeping or "camping out", the child learns not to trust their own emotional instincts.

Bizarre behavior becomes "normal", and the child learns not to pay attention to their own emotions and need for reassurance. A child who is being abused learns to shut off their terror and to act like nothing is happening. To survive they freeze up and die emotionally.

Good mental health is our heritage in the Christian walk, but denying and stifling our feelings leads us to believe that it is better for us to deny what we feel rather than to risk letting someone else or God see who we really are inside.

This cutting off of our emotional selves becomes so complete that even we no longer know who we really are. Our heads tell us one thing, "I am a new creature in Christ", while our bodies are trying to tell us something else. We develop things like tension headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, rashes, sleep problems, etc. Spontaneity becomes impossible. Being aware of our emotions and feelings is a key to understanding our own belief systems and will be discussed in this context in Chapter VI.

RULE 3: DON'T ADDRESS ISSUES OR RELATIONSHIPS DIRECTLY.

Codependents learn to communicate indirectly, with one person acting as messenger between two others (triangulation). Parents should be able to talk directly to one another without having to draw the children or some other third party into the middle of their conflicts.

Children get burdened with the responsibility to "fix things up" between noncommunicating and sometimes hostile parents. Usually the child ends up receiving Dad's disappointment in him if he fails to get the point across to Mom; or if Mom reacts negatively, he winds up on the receiving end of all the anger and rejection she really wanted to direct toward Dad.

Children in reality have very little power over their parents but often get drawn in to lessen the tension and strife. They receive a legacy of guilt and failure leading to shame and a neurotic sense of over-responsibility to fix people and their problems. If divorce is chosen, children who have been go-betweens feel an unhealthy guilt for failing to negotiate effectively.

RULE 4: ALWAYS BE STRONG, ALWAYS BE GOOD, ALWAYS BE PERFECT.

Above all, this rule embodies unrealistic expectations. Success and achievement are important to most of us. We want things to go right. And most of us have a fairly good idea of how things should be done. Sometimes, though, we begin to believe that there is only one right way to do things. We may even begin to believe that even perfect is not good enough.

What happens in some families is that we create an ideal in our heads about what is good and right and best, but this ideal is so far removed from what is possible and realistic that we wind up punishing ourselves and others because our expectations are not met.

This rule ingrains in us a fear of failure which is most destructive. A most common symptom of this fear is perfectionism or an unwillingness to fail. This tendency suffocates joy and creativity. Because any failure is perceived as a threat to our self-esteem, we develop a propensity to focus our attention on the one area in which we failed rather than the areas we did well in. It is possible to be perfectionistic about anything – work, punctuality, housecleaning, our appearance, hobbies, skills, etc.

Perfectionists often appear to be highly motivated, but their motivations usually come from a desperate attempt to avoid the low self-esteem they experience when they fail. Having standards of excellence is commendable and leads to feelings of deep satisfaction and accomplishment. Someone who completes a well executed project glows with pleasure, but not the perfectionist who focuses on the flaws of their work and is drained from striving. Perfectionism is a destroyer of self-worth and satisfaction.²

In another context this rule keeps codependents endeavoring to do the right or expected thing in order to get the love they so desperately need. So the kind action may appear loving but it really comes from the belief that being loved and accepted by others depends on how much we can do for them. The good deeds become tradeoffs for acceptance.

We are not led by the Holy Ghost in doing love-motivated acts of kindness which truly touch the hearts of others. Also we miss the good works which were preordained for us to walk in as we spin off in our own exhausting cycle of good works and people-pleasing which have no life in them. These fleshly good works often leave us fatigued, disappointed, feeling unappreciated, and confused.

We have done what we thought the Bible teaches, but there is no life or joy in it. Unconsciously we have been giving to get, being good to be acceptable, being strong to please or prop up some other insecure person who has convinced us that our worth is linked to our making THEM feel secure. The latter is a totally impossible situation. Our good works have not come from

our inner resources of fellowshiping with the God who loves us and gives us value. We have no life to give away because we are externally directed, the locus of control is outside of us, that is, our sense of being in control, is external and focused outside of self.

We become obsessed with getting everything, everyone, every circumstance to line up with what makes us feel safe. Our sense of "okay-ness" comes from the outside, just the opposite of how the child of God is supposed to rest in the knowledge of God's love, provision, and protection.

RULE 5: DON'T BE SELFISH.

In a family system where this rule is rigidly applied to every situation, feelings of guilt and shame are certain to emerge. It is very hard for codependents to accept the idea that it is normal to think of our own needs first. Normally, there are times in life when it makes good sense to take care of ourselves first. When one has an alcoholic spouse, it can seem selfish to seek counseling; it can mean risking rejection and accusations of being self-centered.

Parents of young children can become overwhelmed from the demands of legitimate caregiving and need to take a break to refuel or get away alone with their spouse. Fulfilling this need by getting away from children for a while will improve the care the parent must give. But many parents may feel guilty or condemned for placing their needs above the children's. Children need parents who realize their marriage relationship is the key to well adjusted children.

If we believe our own needs are wrong, then we will never be able to ask directly for those needs to be met. Consequently, the codependent often tries to get personal needs met through manipulating or by taking care of others. Eventually this makes us overly dependent on others and our whole existence becomes wrapped up in caretaking.

Without somebody to take care of, we feel we have no purpose or worth. The more time we spend taking care of others, the less time we have to devote to own needs. We get lost in the shuffle, and in the end we do not even know that we have needs, or what they might be.

Ultimately, if those we are serving fail to recognize and appreciate our sacrifices on their behalf, we may start to feel resentful, abused and taken for granted. This in turn leaves us feeling even more guilty and ashamed for being angry. With no apparent way out of this vicious codependent cycle, we try even harder to make up for all our inappropriate anger and "selfishness" by doing more caretaking until the situation deteriorates completely.

Because we feel so wrong inside for putting ourselves first, we continue to set ourselves up to be used. In the end, we feel resentful, bitter and angry. And still our needs go unmet. Many do not

realize there are legitimate human needs and these needs vary depending on our age and development.

There are physical needs for safe shelter and clothing, proper diet, rest and exercise. Emotionally we need self-worth which comes from a sense of self-value and from a sense of competence and of belonging to a family and/or group. We must be in touch with our spirituality and not just our soulish psychology. We must have security and safety; a sense of order and predictability; outlets for productive work and creativity; we need to experience nature and behold beauty; we need respect from others; time alone, time with others; freedom to ask for help without being shamed, etc. God created us as multi-faceted beings.

Giving ourselves what we need is not difficult...we can learn how...In any situation, detach and ask, "What do I need to do to take care of myself?" Then we need to listen to ourselves and to our Higher Power and respect what we hear. This insane business of punishing ourselves for what we think, feel and want – this nonsense of not listening to who we are and what our selves are struggling to tell us – must stop. How do you think God works with us? ...no wonder we think God has abandoned us; we've abandoned ourselves. We can be gentle with ourselves and accept ourselves. We're not only or merely human, we were created and intended to be human. We can be compassionate with ourselves. Then, perhaps, we may develop true compassion for others. Listen to what our precious self is telling us about what we need... Besides giving ourselves what we need, we begin to ask people for what we need and want from them...because this is part of being a responsible human being.⁴

Learning to ask directly for what we need stops us from manipulating others and ripping them off to get our needs met. Example: When we need to take time off but won't until OTHERS INSIST so they can be spared our irritability and self-righteous martyr routine. Our need for rest must be met but our guilt wouldn't allow for it so we actually sin against others to get them to force us to meet our needs while we still keep our false belief in our own spirituality in tact.

Learning self-care and to meet our own needs helps us to forgive ourselves for mistakes and to enjoy our successes. We learn that few situations in life are ever improved by neglecting ourselves. Learning to trust God's grace is part of learning to take care of ourselves.

RULE 6: DO AS I SAY...NOT AS I DO.

This rule, more than any other, teaches us not to trust. If, as children, we are told by our parents to be honest, and then we see them being dishonest, we become confused and suspicious.

We stop trusting and begin to count only on ourselves. This is protection from the pain that results from our parents' inconsistency. We come to know that nothing is for sure.

"You kids better behave yourselves," parents shout, then act out their own childish behavior through fighting, yelling, acting out, door slamming, becoming inebriated.

Children will imitate their parents' self-discipline, restraint, dignity and capacity to order their own lives, or they will imitate the LACK of these traits.⁵

When our parents tell us lies and make promises they can't or won't keep, we begin to question our own worth. Children wonder, "Do they treat me that way because they don't love me?" If a child lacks trust in his parents' love, then it's not difficult to imagine how he might begin to feel insecure with himself and end up developing a real fear of abandonment in all his relationships.

This leads to the people-pleasing, manipulating, and caretaking behaviors already described. It leads to abandoning ourselves and becoming divided inside.

We feel compelled to deny who we really are to others. Being a PHONY means that we can never know for sure if those people close to us really care about us, or just care about the person we pretend to be. This in turn leads to a constant fear of being rejected or being found out for who we really are. Image management becomes primary.

The constant codependent effort to do "right" at the cost of not being true to ourselves simply perpetuates and deepens our sense of shame. Codependents know a lot about the truth as a result of trying so hard to avoid it, but we find no relief from the emotional fallout of our lie because we never share the truth which divides us from ourselves. In reality codependents are not true to themselves in spite of their words. Codependents do not do as they say.⁶

RULE 7: IT'S NOT OKAY TO PLAY.

The codependent adult child believes that the world is a very serious place. Life is seen as difficult and almost always painful. This rule lends itself well to the development of negative thinking and a view of ourselves as unlovable, boring, stupid, ugly and wrong. Because of this, the codependent is always working twice as hard as everyone else just to feel okay.

Having some project to work on or some crisis to deal with gives us a sense of purpose. In time, we become preoccupied with a host of more or less important issues – kids, job, in-laws, friends, health – and we get lost. Our preoccupations become a substitute for living. Our identity becomes what we do.

Play is a waste of time and also a threat to our identity. After all, "really serious people don't play." In time it becomes increasingly important to not be without something to do. Having fun is not productive; it's not okay.

Play is spontaneous; it can make us look foolish or childish. Children from troubled and dysfunctional families lose so much of their childhoods. They must grow up early to take care of themselves and even their own parents. Many never learned how to play and to enjoy life.

As adults it's very awkward to learn to play/enjoy life, to risk shaking off the premature and strained adulthood or negative role models forced upon us so early. Yet it is an important way to move toward good mental health and a real appreciation for the joys of life....smelling the roses along the way.

RULE 8: DON'T TALK ABOUT SEX.

Our social and cultural history has long minimized the importance of our sexuality and basic need to talk about it. We have many rules and prohibitions regarding sex, but by and large the overriding rule is "Don't talk about IT!"

The fact is that just eleven weeks into the process of gestation, we are identifiable as male or female. Even before birth, our sexuality starts to play a significant role in our lives. Despite the fact that there is no single issue that will affect us more over the course of our lifetime than our sexuality, there is no issue that will get less attention.⁷

For the codependent, the shame and anxiety associated with unresolved sexual issues is directly proportional to the length of time we have lived by the "don't talk" rules that surround us. And since this is the cultural norm, many people will be stifled in their search for a clear identity until certain issues are addressed.

The attitudes, behaviors and beliefs of our primary caregivers – moms, dads, aunts, uncles or grandparents – play a significant role in the way that we perceive ourselves and the world around. A clear and healthy understanding of sex and sexuality depends largely on our early experiences with these people.

Shame over our sexuality is largely due to our ignorance about it and misinterpretations of what the Bible teaches about "the marriage bed." Our ability to communicate with our spouses about our sexual needs and desires is severely restricted by the damage of the previously mentioned rules. Learning to love the man or woman whom God made us to be is a key part of recovery. The shame will remain with us until we break out of the silence that surrounds the sexual dimensions of our real God-given selves.

RULE 9: DON'T ROCK THE BOAT.

Every family is a system. Each person in the family has a special part, like actors in a play. The family rules help each person to know their part. Family rules make it easier for us to know what is right, wrong, or age appropriate. Stability, balance, and equilibrium are positive results of healthy family rules. Healthy families are able to flex and accommodate challenges and changes and still stay intact.

Dysfunctional families with unresolved chemical dependency, physical or sexual abuse, etc., also seek to maintain a type of balance, but an unhealthy one.

The flaw in the unhealthy system is there is no room for healthy change. For instance, Dad does not want to give up drinking. Nobody wants to confront him about his drinking because it might upset him, and besides, if Dad stopped drinking, then everyone would have to change, and change – even for the better – is frightening.

When one person in an unhealthy system gets help and moves into real recovery, it throws the whole system into crises. When the enabling codependent/caretaker decides to stop rescuing irresponsible family members, it is predictable that they will provoke crises and situations to draw the caretaker back in to meeting their needs and cleaning up their messes. Even though they may VERBALLY agree that they need to become more self-reliant, they know the right words to press the caregiver's guilt buttons; they are invested in keeping the family system intact.

Unconsciously other family members seek to sabotage that person's recovery in very insidious ways: from accusations, setups with chemical temptations, gossip, ostracizing, etc. A troubled family will destroy one member to keep its denial system from being penetrated by the truth.⁸

"Don't rock the boat" is the stern injunction, which locks each individual family member inside the other unhealthy rules. It suppresses change, hinders growth, and obstructs any hope of recovery.

NOTES

- 1 Robert Subby, *LOST IN THE SHUFFLE* (Deerfield Beach, 1987), p. 31.
- 2 Robert S. McGee, *SEARCH FOR SIGNIFICANCE* (Houston, 1990), p. 48.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 4 Melody Beattie, *CODEPENDENT NO MORE* (San Francisco, 1987), pp. 106-107.

- 5 Subby, p. 41.
- 6 Ibid., p. 42.
- 7 Ibid., p. 47.
- 8 See Beattie on Denial, p.122

Excerpts from

Counseling the Codependent

Part II

NOTE: We highly suggest that you take a personality inventory called the Arno Profile System (formerly known as the Temperament Analysis Profile/ TAP) which will provide the basis for a deeper understanding of individual recovery strategies.

It is best to fill out the Profile **BEFORE YOU READ ALL of Part II** which covers the topic of “Temperament” so that you will not be influenced by the information.

To find out more details email: healing@newhorizonscounseling.com

The Profile will be faxed or mailed to you. Take the following steps:

1. Complete the Profile according to instructions
2. Pay the processing fee of \$30.00 via Pay Pal at www.newhorizonscounseling.com
3. Fax Profile back to New Horizons and you will receive your personalized a 6-8 page Temperament Profile by return fax or mail.
4. OR you can contact New Horizons directly by phone or mail at:

**New Horizons Institute of Counseling
Attn: Dr. Pierre Samaan
4645 Clyde Morris Blvd., Suite 408
Port Orange, FL 32119-3004 USA**

**Voice +1-386-760-0445
Fax +1-386-767-4826**

You will receive your personal evaluation by return fax or mail.

CHAPTER XI

CODEPENDENCY

"THE TREE"

The life of a codependent person can be represented by a tree. This tree is beautiful. Its great branches stretch toward the sky, providing shade for anyone who would like to rest beneath it. The dense foliage is filled with sounds of birds, squirrels, woodpeckers, and a host of insects that make their home amidst the branches and in every available knothole. No one seems to notice that the soil in which the tree is planted has not been tilled or cultivated in ever so long. The roots are stunted, the soil is depleted. Very little nourishment can get through to replenish the life of the tree. The tree takes care of everyone, but no one takes care of the tree. It seems fine. The beauty, the busyness in the branches, and the coolness of the shade all draw attention away from the tree, which is slowly wasting away from within. The branches represent areas where you extend yourself into the lives of others. The trunk represents your personal life and inner life. The roots represent your past experiences, beliefs about yourself, and feelings buried in the soil of your past.... As your tree of life continues to grow, the telling moment comes when you must make a choice: Do you dislodge those who have nested there and prune the branches to sustain continued health of the tree? Pruning represents cutting back on the control and care of others enough to give you a chance to replenish your needs. If you are codependent, you forgo pruning for the sake of the nesters. There is no limit to what you are willing to give or endure for the sake of others. You do not sacrifice yourself out of love freely given. Your value, relationships, and security are based on being a nesting place for others. Your identity is the rescuer, savior, martyr, or one who holds things together for everyone else. Perhaps you don't believe the tree deserves a place in the world apart from its usefulness and appearance. Perhaps you fear that if you let go of controlling, manipulating, rescuing, and doing more than enough, the people you love would leave you.... The understanding of what compels you in these ways is probably hidden in the soil of your past, usually your early years of life. Something buried there holds the key.... ¹

The analogy of the tree provides another insight into the paradoxical nature of the codependent, someone who appears to be giving from their own inner strength and resources when, in fact, their behavior is a means to protect their own poor self-image, and to gain a sense of control and momentary security.

SEVEN TRAITS

In Chapter II an in-depth inventory of codependent characteristics was subdivided into fourteen categories. Those fourteen have been distilled below into seven distinct traits that were developed by Nancy Groom who has done foundational work on the topic. Her seven traits will appear beside the temperament strengths and weaknesses which they characterize. Each temperament type will magnify different codependent traits so that patterns of codependent emphasis can be surmised. A choleric and a supine will not act out in the same way even though they have both learned to act codependently. The focus of their recovery issues will also be different. The following presentation of the seven traits will answer the questions, "What does codependency look like? How does it feel? How does it sound?"² The descriptions are intended to help the counselor relate to the emotional pain and distortions which codependency produce.

1. SELF-FORFEITURE – (forfeit = to lose or lose the right to by some error or offense) --
RESIGNED TO HELPLESSNESS – I'm always reacting to other people and their situations; I feel controlled by their words, actions, or moods; I'm not really sure of who I am, or what I like or need or want; I can quickly guess what you want from me and how I should behave to get you to approve of me or to need me, but when I'm all alone and not reacting to other people, I don't really know who the real "me" is. I'm supposed to set boundaries for myself so I won't feel so used or overwhelmed by the demands of others, but I CAN'T say "NO" when someone needs me. I feel uneasy and unsure of myself and feel more comfortable when I'm "de-selfing" and meeting YOUR needs. I give and give, expecting nothing in return, yet I do resent it. Other people should do the same for me but they don't. I feel used and unhappy because of other people...This can appear to be the Christian virtue of self-sacrifice except that it is self-centered and doesn't bear good fruit in anyone's life.
2. SELF-CONTEMPT – (Low self-esteem) – RESIGNED TO WORTHLESSNESS – I really don't like myself very much. I always feel ashamed and unworthy and dumb. It's better when I can conform to what someone else wants me to be, then for awhile I can feel proud of who YOU think I am. I guess I'm sort of an "approval junkie". I worry a lot that you'll find out that I'm really a fake and that the real me is really not very good after all and then you'll reject me too. It's really scary to think that I might not be able to meet your expectations of me. I know I should take better care of my appearance and my weight, but I don't like to look at myself in the mirror and I feel so guilty if I take time out to exercise or just to relax. I feel so different from everyone else. No one understands me, but I guess I'm to blame though because I'm always messing up and letting people down. I do a lot of repenting, but it doesn't seem to help much. You know, I don't have a clue about the "joy" of my salvation or the abundant life. I guess it's meant for other people, not for me.

3. SELF-IMPORTANCE – (making self feel or appear more powerful than they really are in the face of a deep sense of powerlessness) – DESPERATE TO CONTROL.³ I'm skilled at making myself look good. Somehow if I do the right thing, and say the right thing in just the right way at the right time, everything will work out just the way I want. I can control any situation, manage any crises, and FIX anyone. I can rescue, cover up and deal with consequences and make things all right. My advice and knowledge is endless. You may think I domineering and controlling, but I am not. I can get people to do just what I want by giving helpful suggestions or by being sweet and congenial or even by acting helpless. You know, sometimes I feel really afraid that something awful is going to happen so I push myself harder. My job is to control my world since others can't be trusted to make the "right" decisions. I am good at caretaking and overseeing the actions of others so they won't make mistakes. I have a lot of insight into how others should live and it's my duty to step in so they avoid bad situations. Many of my friends and family members really depend on me. I guess it's obvious – I'm not the one with problems – THEY are. Besides, I'm a TRUE Christian. My good works prove it.
4. SELF-SUFFICIENCY – (refusal to be appropriately needy) – DESPERATE TO STAY SAFE. I can handle this situation quite well by myself, thank you. I won't tell you about my problems because you might think that my family or I are dysfunctional in some way, or not good Christians. I do not want to look bad, especially at church. You may think that I need counseling or a support group, but I can do this on my own. I don't need other people involved in my problems. Besides, things are getting better anyway and I don't need your opinions since you really don't understand how things are in my household, especially when there's a lot of pressure. Being loners is just the way we are. We like it that way. Some people think that I am a perfectionist but I'm not. You see, I can manage my world in such a way that no one can ever accuse me of anything. I am rarely wrong. I don't see why I should ever be obligated to anyone else. Why should I let myself depend on or need other people? Needing people is too risky; what if they get too close and see the real me? They'd probably let me down or reject me. No way! I do not ever plan to HAVE to have someone to love me or to have to ever apologize to someone else. I'm great at avoiding conflict. I know what's best and I have no blind spots. I work hard to control everything and I don't even like to imagine how awful it might be if things don't work out my way. You see, I should get ALL the credit when things go right. Even though I would not say this out loud, God will have to bless me because I am doing all the right things. I don't have to trust Him to intervene in situations that I can handle on my own.

5. SELF-DECEPTION – (failure or refusal to face what IS TRUE OR REAL in a situation or relationship) – COMMITTED TO DENIAL. Many codependents are well educated, so we are not stupid; we are BLIND! We don't have a clue to what's going on and our denial system is deeply ingrained. We believe lies and lie to ourselves. We get confused and trust untrustworthy people, again! We learned the unwritten rules very well – DON'T TRUST, DON'T TALK, DON'T FEEL, BE PERFECT – so we are shut up in our own distorted perceptions and learned behaviors.... Sometimes things are just so crazy and painful that I go NUMB and I don't feel anything at all. I've learned to "go away somewhere" in my head, but you'll think I'm really here smiling and conversing with you. Isn't everyone like this? I'm great at putting on whatever front is needed. I'm into image management for YOUR benefit. Everyone does it. I don't really ignore problems or pretend things aren't so bad, but when the pressure is on, I might have an extra drink or lots of cheesecake or charge too much on my credit cards or get super busy. You know how it is.

Denial stems from an internal preoccupation with avoiding pain. It is like a flashlight that works in reverse, casting shadows rather than light. It throws darkness over selected parts of the world to make them less noticeable, enabling us to hide embarrassing parts of our personality from our own vision, even though these parts may be obvious to everyone else... Denial prevents us from seeing things that make us too uncomfortable.⁴

6. ANGER – One of the two universal sins of mankind; grieves the Holy Spirit; causes many physical illnesses; leads to rebellion; root cause = selfishness (pride). Anger arises when our rights or space are violated. Many disguises of anger: Bitterness/wrath; rage/murder; malice/hatred/racism; clamor/seditions; envy/jealousy; resentment/attack; intolerance/gossip/slander; criticism/sarcasm; unforgiveness/vengeance.⁵ We often express anger instead of our fear, hurt, guilt, or unmet needs.

Anger can become a large part of our lives. It can BECOME our lives. The alcoholic is mad, we're mad, the kids are mad... Everyone is mad, all the time. Nobody ever seems to blow off enough steam. Even if we aren't shouting, even if we're trying to pretend we're not angry, we're mad. We give looks and make little gestures that give us away. Hostility lurks just below the surface, waiting for a chance to come out in the open...and explode like a bomb, but nobody ever gets done with it. The alcoholic (or whomever) says, "How dare you get angry at me!" The codependent says, "After all I've done for you, I'll get angry anytime I please!" But silently the codependent thinks, "How dare I get so angry with this person?" and then feels guilty for their anger. Now anger AND guilt deal another blow to our self-worth and the problem still doesn't get resolved. It festers.⁶

7. FEAR/OBSESSION – The other universal sin of mankind; first reaction of Adam and Eve to their disobedience to God; quenches the Holy Spirit; causes many physical illnesses; leads to idolatry (false comfort) and witchcraft (manipulation and control); root cause = selfishness (insecurity). Possible causes: Childhood experiences; traumatic experiences; negative thinking patterns; excessive anger produces fear of losing control; lack of faith; sinful behavior. Expressions of fear: anxiety/worry; doubts/inferiority, timidity/cowardice; indecision/suspicion; superstition/hesitancy; withdrawal/depression; loneliness/ haughtiness; social shyness/overaggression.⁷

Obsession is the result of fear. It is different from COMPULSION which is an irresistible impulse to act.⁸ Examples of COMPULSIVE ACTIONS: smoking; alcohol or drug use; overeating; nail-biting; busy-ness; impulse buying; viewing TV or pornography; housecleaning; dieting; raging and throwing tantrums; talking, etc.

OBSESSION, on the other hand, is persistent disturbing preoccupation with an idea of being or feeling.⁹ Examples of BEING OR FEELING: smart; strong; pretty; clean; laid back; right; safe; thin; religious; aloof; sexy; cool; in control, etc.

Obsessive/compulsive talking is NOT about communication; rather it is an exhausting attempt at relieving internal pressure.

OBSESSION with another human being, or a problem is an awful thing to be caught up in. Have you ever seen someone who is obsessed with someone or something? That person can talk about nothing else, can think of nothing else.... appears to be listening when you talk... (but)... doesn't hear you. His mind is tossing and turning, and crashing and banging around and around on an endless racetrack of compulsive thought. He is preoccupied. He relates whatever you say, to the object of his obsession. He says the same things, over and over... He is bursting with the jarring energy that obsession is made of. He has a problem or a concern that is not only bothering (worrying) him – it is controlling him... it's wasted energy. Worrying and obsessing keep us so tangled in our heads we can't solve our (own) problems. Whenever we become attached in these ways to someone or something, we become detached from ourselves.¹⁰

The next chapter will take these in-depth descriptions of feelings and distortions (condensed into ONE key word), and correlate that word with the temperament strengths and weaknesses.

- SELF-FORFEITURE
- SELF-CONTEMPT
- SELF-IMPORTANCE
- SELF-DECEPTION
- FEAR
- ANGER

- SELF-SUFFICIENCY

One of these traits will appear to the right of each lettered group of temperament qualities. If a specific characteristic within that group is best identified by a different trait, then that will also be shown. Example below uses Pessimism to show one of the MELANCHOLY WEAKNESSES.

C. PESSIMISM	FEAR
1.	
2.	
3. Difficult time forgiving... can be vengeful	ANGER

SUMMARY WITH CHART

GIVEN THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE AND STORY, THIS CANNOT BE AN ABSOLUTE CORRELATION OF "EXACT SCIENCE". RATHER, IT IS AN ATTEMPT TO HYPOTHESIZE AND DEMONSTRATE HOW TEMPERAMENT MAY INDEED INFLUENCE THE INTENSITY AND DIRECTION OF CODEPENDENT BEHAVIOR.

Please refer to the SUMMARY chart which follows. It compares the frequency of the likely and predictable codependent traits within each temperament. The three BOLD numbers in each temperament column highlight the three most frequently occurring codependent traits.

Anyone using the results of a Temperament Analysis Profile (TAP) must always remember that it reveals temperament, not actual behavior. It is the counselor's responsibility to determine if the client's actual behavior is conducive to their temperament.

The wider the gap between temperament and actual behavior, the greater the individual's anxiety levels. The accuracy of a TAP is subject to the client's honesty in response to the questions.

Environment and learned behavior may magnify or lessen the intensity of a person's temperament. Spiritual giftings also impact temperament. Since spiritual maturity enables a person to overcome temperament weaknesses, some clients will realize that certain weaknesses are no longer an issue for them.

Because pure temperaments are rare, the case studies all involve blends. Each case subject was chosen because of the dominance of the temperament type under discussion being exhibited in his or her blend. For contrast the Conclusion sections use both gender references. The

author has used her own story, written in third person, for the chapter on the Melancholy temperament.

The other four case studies are about special people who are actively involved in various stages of recovery from codependency. All have found the TAP to be positive, beneficial, and enlightening. Each one hopes that their story will shed light on the path of others who are ready to start the recovery journey.

SEVEN TRAITS AND TEMPERAMENTS

Codependent Tendencies/Traits	Melancholy	Phlegmatic	Supine	Choleric	Sanguine
Forfeiture De-Selfing	5	5	9	0	8
Contempt Worthlessness	3	4	12	0	4
Importance Control	8	2	2	12	4
Sufficiency Stay Safe	7	10	1	7	1
Deception Denial	10	8	7	7	14
Anger Rage	5	3	3	5	4
Fear Obsession	17	12	10	5	5
TOTALS	55	44	44	36	40

NOTES

- 1 C. W. Neal, YOUR THIRTY DAY JOURNEY TO POWER OVER CODEPENDENCY (Nashville, 1992), p. 13-16.
- 2 Nancy Groom, "Codependency", Conference for Christian Counselors, Titusville, FL, 1992, Cassette.
- 3 SELF-IMPORTANCE has been substituted for clarity for Groom's trait called SELF-AGGRANDIZEMENT.
- 4 Timmen L. Cermak, A TIME TO HEAL, quoted by Nancy Groom in BONDAGE TO BONDING (Colorado Springs, 1991), p. 68.
- 5 Tim LaHaye, SPIRIT-CONTROLLED TEMPERAMENT (Wheaton, 1966), p. 69-79.
- 6 Melody Beattie, CODEPENDENT NO MORE (San Francisco, 1987), p. 151-52.
- 7 LaHaye, p. 80-93.
- 8 "Compulsion," NEW WORLD DICTIONARY Second Edition
- 9 "Obsession," NEW WORLD DICTIONARY Second Edition
- 10 Beattie, p .58-59.

Chart graphics by Mark Hancock

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