# Codependency in the Workplace: How to spot it. What to do about it.

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*“Other people may be there to help us, teach us, guide us along our path, but the lesson to be learned is always ours” -* [*Melody Beattie*](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/4482.Melody_Beattie) I will discuss codependency in the workplace and you will see how a work culture can be poisoned by the behaviors exhibited. Codependency is usually thought of as an addiction to drugs or alcohol. We can also look at the term codependency defined as a dependency on others to give us satisfaction and feelings of self worth. The codependent behavior is that interchange of actions and reactions that eventually become a controlling device between individuals. Codependent behaviors begin in family interactions and find themselves playing out in the workplace. After all, we have been conditioned for many years as a child in families that may have denied dysfunctionality or were not aware of the negative behaviors that contributed to the codependent behavior. We as the individual in the workplace, and perhaps a product of a dysfunctional family, must be aware of how we behave with our peers and how that interaction plays out in the workplace environment.   With this awareness of codependent traits, we can make a situation come to light. We can realize the root cause of an uncomfortable relationship, and be able to stay away from being a victim. With the assistance from professionals, we can encourage the codependents to take action to perform more appropriately.

## Codependency in the workplace: How to spot it:

* An individual may be over involved with his peers to help get “their” work done
* Feeling responsible for solving others’ problems to prevent them from falling “under the bus”.
* Expecting others to do what the codependent suggests otherwise becoming irritated and resentful
* Using extreme energy to solve others’ problems without even receiving approval or recognition
* Taking everything to heart and feeling responsible for others and the victim of the other person’s poor behavior.
* Fears rejection; looks for love and acceptance
* Works harder on the others’ tasks and problems leaving little time for their own needs.
* Need for control of others since there is lack of control of oneself.
* Manipulates others to feel guilty
* Feels bored if they cannot find a crisis
* Looks for needy people
* Expects to be perfect

  In the workplace, the codependent may appear as a very well liked individual always willing to step forward to be helpful to create many positive connections among others. But too much of anything, especially in an overbearing manner, leads to a dysfunctional relationship between two or more individuals.

## Codependency in the workplace: What to do about it.

  If you are behaving along the lines of the traits discussed, it is to your benefit to get professional guidance to be able to help yourself and allow for others to be responsible for their own strengths and failures.   What to do about **your** codependent behavior:

* Set boundaries, verbalize them and do not let others overstep them
* Let go of your need to be there all the time for the other needy individual
* Forgive yourself for feeling bad about not being able to help
* You can love others, but you must love yourself and take care of your needs.
* Believe in yourself -worth
* Seek professional guidance

  What to do about your **employees’** codependent behavior:

* Do not enable others’ behavior
* Be assertive
* Validate other’ needs, but remove yourself from dealing with their problems personal or otherwise.
* Recognize positive behaviors
* Make certain the job goals are understood and acted upon by empowering rather than enabling to encourage them to take on the responsibility
* Document patterns of behavior
* Set boundaries and rely on company policies if things do not improve.

  Melody Beattie, in her book: Codependence No More-How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself coined the word “Codependence”. I recommend it as it makes us aware of how detrimental it is to be the enabler-yes we want to help, we want to love, we want to prevent the failures of others, and in doing so we create a dependency that continues: the dependency of mother and child, of teacher and student, of husband and wife, of employer and employee.   *“It is more worthwhile to teach someone to do something, than to do it for them.” \_Melody Beattie*   [](http://uniquepathways.websitehabitat.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2016/03/12953892-3D-businessman-handling-their-employees-like-marionettes-Rendered-at-high-resolution-on-a-white-back-Stock-Photo.jpg)    After reading Beattie’s book, I saw that codependency is the same problem as being addicted to drugs or alcohol. It is an addiction to controlling others. Knowing what a codependent lives with, lets you know how serious this issue is. Your workplace can be a culture of dysfunction because of codependent behavior. Look for the signs and make others aware of the need to change.   Other books about Codependency in the Workplace: Codependency in the Workplace: A Guide for Employee Assistance and Human Resource Professionals By Seth Allcom   Consider how relationships in your workplace can possibly be tied in to Codependency.  Email me a scenario that fits the criteria mentioned in this blog.  In dong so you may see behaviors that can be changed with someone's assistance.

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For more discussion on these behaviors email: isabel@uniquepathways.com