

Personal Growth Concepts™

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Q&A Forum - Review

Codependency Withdrawal

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Welcome fellow Q&Aers,

Some great news from Personal Growth Concepts, Inc. before our Q&A: Two of our employees, Janice Mahieu and Mike Abramowitz recently passed their respective licensing exams. Janice is now a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) and Mike is now a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Congratulations to both of them.

Also of note, Joyce Evon, a licensed professional counselor (LPC) with us for the past 8 years, has decided to leave Personal Growth Concepts. We wish her well in all future endeavors.

Since our last Q&A, our business has grown, continued to solidify and our website is under new management. If you haven't checked it out lately I suggest you give it a whirl. We have several forms now on the site. We have also become HIPAA compliant (federal regulations concerning confidentiality of client records) and our Notice of Privacy Policies (both short and long forms) are on the website for your review as well. Our webmaster and I would appreciate any feedback that will make our site more user-friendly and responsive to your needs. Let us know, ok?

Now, onto the Q&A:

Q: One of our first few sessions concentrated on working the "Circles" of CoDependency. We worked on how to strengthen up my own circles so that other people's issues could not break through my outer defenses and affect my personal life. In doing this I have begun to "estrangle" certain family members as they depend on me less and less. I am starting to feel left out of the loop a little. Items or events that would not be considered as codependent issues are not being presented for my participation since I am not participating in other issues that would be considered codependent. Example: I would not respond to a panic call about a trivial household "emergency" that interfered with something I was planning or in the middle of; therefore I was not invited out to a social event (Broadway play) but the person who did respond was. My question is: is there actually a codependency withdrawal process? Am I better off in the long run knowing that the personal gains I am making by breaking the codependent ties far outweigh any menial tangible reward?

A: As far as I know a Codependency Withdrawal Syndrome has not been identified in the literature. It seems reasonable to speculate that there is such a process as one begins to take better care of one's self. Such a syndrome would have some similarities to the addiction withdrawal process, especially since addiction and codependency are so closely related. Withdrawal processes have been delineated for a variety of addictions. This leads to a sidebar question. Is addiction a subset of codependency or is codependency a subset of addiction – or, are they both separate? At any rate, why not focus on the getting healthier – being concerned about the side effects of stopping codependency usually means you are focusing on the flack you are getting from those around you and not on the good feelings you are beginning to engender in your self. When people change, there is always flack, both internal and external. Expect it and keep your focus, a healthier, decisive and balanced you. Here are some other ideas about this question that I jotted down several months ago when I first received it:

- Usually only one person is withdrawing; the other is likely to feel rejected or abandoned and become more dependent or clingy. This invites the person trying to break the pattern back into an unhealthy alliance. If nothing else, it sure gives them a pretty immediate chance to practice mindfulness, their I statements and detaching in a bigger way. Who wins that skirmish is important. To break the cycle of codependency one must persist until one is winning more of the skirmishes than not - and then persist some more. Oftentimes, the relationship breaks.
- When the cycle of codependency in a relationship has been broken one of two things usually results: the relationship is realigned and likely to be healthier or the relationship, because of the unmet dependency needs of one of the partners, crumbles. We don't know at the outset. We do know that if you get better either a) you will have prompted the change that led to a healthier relationship for you or b) you will be in a healthier place to grieve the loss of the relationship. You win, either way.
- I believe that any short term rewards for acting codependent that befall another are just that, short term.
- Addiction, and codependency are often short term solutions which do not work in the long run.
- A byproduct of codependency is always anger and that will usually ultimately destroy the relationship.
- I suggest you keep your self healthy, mindful of all interactions, "I statement" focused (but with a sensitivity to all) and assertive in both words and actions. I wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do. - John

Quote: :If you fall in love with someone's potential, you will live to hope forever. - unknown

Bonus 1:

Sally jumped up as soon as she saw the surgeon come out of the operating room. She said: "How is my little boy? Is he going to be all right? When can I see him?"

The surgeon said, "I'm sorry. We did all we could, but your boy didn't make it." Sally said, "Why do little children get cancer? Doesn't God care anymore? Where were you, God, when my son needed you?"

The surgeon asked, "Would you like some time alone with your son? One of the nurses will be out in a few minutes, before he's transported to the university." Sally asked the nurse to stay with her while she said goodbye to son. She ran her fingers lovingly through his thick red curly hair. "Would you like a lock of his hair?" the nurse asked.

Sally nodded yes. The nurse cut a lock of the boy's hair, put it in a plastic bag and handed it to Sally. The mother said, "It was Jimmy's idea to donate his body to the University for Study. He said it might help somebody else. "I said no at first, but Jimmy said, "Mom, I won't be using it after I die. Maybe it will help some other little boy spend one more day with his Mom." She went on, "My Jimmy had a heart of gold. Always thinking of someone else. Always wanting to help others if he could." Sally walked out of Children's Mercy Hospital for the last time, after spending most of the last six months there. She put the bag with Jimmy's belongings on the seat beside her in the car. The drive home was difficult. It was even harder to enter the empty house.

She carried Jimmy's belongings, and the plastic bag with the lock of his hair to her son's room. She started placing the model cars and other personal things, back in his room exactly where he had always kept them. She laid down across his bed and, hugging his pillow, cried herself to sleep.

It was around midnight when Sally awoke. Lying beside her on the bed was a folded letter. The letter said: Dear Mom, I know you're going to miss me; but don't think that I will ever forget you, or stop loving you, just 'cause I'm not around to say I LOVE YOU. I will always love you, Mom, even more with each day. Someday we will see each other again. Until then, if you want to adopt a little boy so you won't be so lonely, that's okay with me. He can have my room, and old stuff to play with. But, if you decide to get a girl instead, she probably wouldn't so, buy her dolls and stuff girls like, y'know.

"Don't be sad thinking about me. This really is a neat place. Grandma and Grandpa met me as soon as I got here and showed me around some, but it will take a long time to see everything. The angels are so cool. I love to watch them fly. And, you know what? Jesus doesn't look like any of his pictures. Yet, when I saw Him, I knew it was Him. Jesus himself took me to see GOD! And guess what, Mom? I got to sit on God's knee and talk to Him, like I was somebody important. That's when I told Him that I wanted to write you a letter, to tell you goodbye and everything. But I already knew that wasn't allowed. "Well, y'know what Mom? God handed me some paper and His own personal pen to write you this letter. I think Gabriel is the name of the angel who is going to drop this letter off to you. God said for me to give you the answer to one of the questions you asked Him--"Where was He when I needed him?"

"God said He was in the same place with me, as when His son Jesus was on the cross. He was right there, as He always is with all His children. "Oh, by the way, Mom, no one else can see what I've written except you. To everyone else this is just a blank piece of paper. Isn't that cool? I have to give God His pen back now. He needs it to write some more names in the Book of Life. Tonight I get to sit at the table with Jesus for supper. I'm sure the food will be great. "Oh, I almost forgot to tell you. I don't hurt anymore. The cancer is all gone. I'm glad because I couldn't stand that pain anymore ... and God couldn't stand to see me hurt so much, either. That's when He sent The Angel of Mercy to come get me. The Angel said I was Special Delivery! How about that?"

Signed with Love from: God, Jesus & Me

Bonus 2:

"But I will always be sad because I will not see you anymore."

God said, "Your angel will always talk to you about me and will teach you the way to come back to me, even though I will always be next to you."

At that moment there was much peace in heaven, but voices from Earth could be heard and the child hurriedly asked, "God, if I am to leave now, please tell me my angel's name."

Her name is not important. You will simply call her "Grandma"

Bonus 2:

THE SNEEZE

They walked in tandem, each of the ninety-three students filing into the already crowded auditorium. With rich maroon gowns flowing and the traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and moms freely brushed away tears.

This class would not pray during the commencements... not by choice but because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it. The principal

and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling. They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families. The speeches were nice, but they were routine... until the final speech received a standing ovation. A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then he delivered his speech

An astounding - SNEEZE!

The rest of the students rose immediately to their feet, and in unison they said, "GOD BLESS YOU." The audience exploded into applause. The graduating class found a unique way to invoke God's blessing on their future with or without the court's approval.

Bonus 3:

Hello God.....

I called tonight
 To talk a little while
 I need a friend who'll listen
 To my anxiety and trial.
 You see, I can't quite make it
 Through a day just on my own...
 I need your love to guide me,
 So I'll never feel alone.
 I want to ask you please to keep
 My family safe and sound.
 Come and fill their lives with confidence
 For whatever fate they're bound.
 Give me faith, dear God, to face
 Each hour throughout the day,
 And not to worry over things
 I can't change in any way.
 I thank you God for being home
 And listening to my call,
 For giving me such good advice
 When I stumble and fall.
 Your number, God, is the only one
 That answers every time.
 I never get a busy signal,
 Never had to pay a dime.
 So thank you, God, for listening
 To my troubles and my sorrow.
 Good night, God, I love You too,
 And I'll call again tomorrow!

end of bonuses.....

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We wish you peace in who you are and in all that you do!

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