



# Conquering Codependency: Restoring Your Self-identity

By James V Potter PhD, Paula M Potter MA

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## Conquering Codependency: Restoring Your Self-identity By James V Potter PhD, Paula M Potter MA

When any member of a family falls victim to codependency, it infects and impacts every member of the family regardless of age, education or gender. Unless treated, codependency develops into a primary emotional disorder, recognized as a disease – as chronic, progressive and deadly as any addiction. An even greater concern is the fact that codependency is not only, in a sense, a communicable disease – being passed from one member of the family to the others; it also results in genetic mutation, becoming a genetic disorder, passed on transgenerationally from one generation to the next. Codependents have poorly developed, and often fractured, self-concepts or self-identity. Their sense of identity stems more from an ego-mass that is enmeshed with that of their family of origin – or other group. This, coupled with their mis-beliefs, that they must live their life according to the values and principles of that group, stifles their creativity, distorting their self-concept, self-identity and reality. Codependents usually have an equally vague sense of personal values and self-worth. All codependent families are dysfunctional and, the individual codependent is keenly aware of their family's dysfunction, feeling incompetent and uncomfortable around more healthy individuals, which produces toxic shame. Codependents – unless treated – escape their families of origin only to create other codependent families: families where everyone feels like they are walking on eggshells around one another, where no one believes that he/she can be their real self. All march to another person's drum – much like they are a puppet on a string; everyone feels trapped but so desperately fears rejection and abandonment – a fear so great, that most choose to stay in what they themselves recognize to be sick, destructive relationships. Codependency destroys families, friends, churches, business relationships, and one's own sense of personhood and self-worth. Codependency is a vortex that will readily engulf the unsuspecting. Yet, much like other addictions, codependency can be conquered, enabling sufferers to emerge and go on to enjoy happy, healthy, meaningful personal lives, with the ability to establish healthy fulfilling relationships. The primary goal of this text is to help the reader and/or those that one is ministering to, the ability to break free from their codependent identity and behavior patterns and develop a healthy self-concept and positive sense of self-worth. To accomplish these goals, this skill-building program draws on aspects of social-learning, family systems theory and

therapy, cognitive therapy and behavioral modification therapy. Unlike many other models that use a high level of confrontational intervention, this course has a psychoeducational focus, based on the premise that 'knowledge is power.' It compares the ineffective communication and conflict-resolution patterns of codependents to the more functional norms, introducing students and readers to the skills necessary to embrace these new skills and behaviors. It helps those who are committed to change, direction for learning to express themselves appropriately through emotional detachment from the other person's identity, employing psychodrama, role-playing and other practice assignments. Through these combined approaches, committed readers and students are able to achieve almost immediate results, manifest through improved communication and problem-solving abilities, as they embark on the journey of conquering codependency and discovering their own unique identity. As one's new self-identity emerges, students report gaining a renewed sense of personal worth, self-confidence and competence. Graduates of the skill-development training exercises contained in this text, who practice the skills set forth, do change, and as they change, the families they are a part of change as well. Family systems function like organic organism - when one part changes, it affects the whole organism.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **About the Author**

Dr. James V. Potter, and Paula M. Potter, husband and wife, are the authors of more than two dozen titles, most focused on family relationships. They are uniquely qualified in this field, by a combination of education, training and clinical-based empirical experience. Dr. Potter holds Doctorates in Philosophy, with an emphasis in professional counseling; and in Psychology, with an emphasis in the integration of theology and psychology. He is listed in numerous editions of Who's Who in America; Who's Who in the World; Who's Who in Religion; and Who's Who in Education. He is also listed in the Men of Achievement Directory. He is a national presenter in the fields of Addiction Rehabilitation, Family Relationships, Domestic Violence Prevention and Abatement. Dr. Potter is a member of the World Association of Online Educators and mentors online students worldwide who are completing their Bachelor and Masters Degrees in Pastoral Care, Counseling and theology. He also has completed numerous trainings and certification programs associated with the treatment of at-risk individuals and families. Dr. Potter is certified as a Pastoral Care Specialist, a Domestic Violence and Abuse Prevention and Treatment Specialist, an Addiction Prevention and Rehabilitation Specialist. Paula Potter holds her Masters Degree in Professional Counseling, with an emphasis in Marriage and Family therapy. Paula is certified as a Grief and Bereavement Counselor, an Addiction Prevention and Rehabilitation Specialist, a Domestic Violence Prevention and Abatement Specialist, and is a specialist in the area of counseling survivors of domestic violence, sexual violations, and other trauma. Dr. and Paula Potter have founded and operated for more than two decades, community based, Christian Counseling Centers in Hawaii and California. the Potters have trained scores of counselors in their Save Our Families program curricula in the Abatement of Family Violence and Abuse, and the Prevention and Rehabilitation of Addictions - the first faith-based curricula to be recognized nationally; their Domestic Violence Program being approved as meeting the requirements for Batterers Intervention Treatment, as defined under the California Penal Code and Family Law; and their Addictions Rehabilitation Day-Treatment and Outpatient Program approved by the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs.

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