

# Hope for Healthy Relationships

Once upon a time, I became obsessed with a narcissist. All I wanted was for him to commit to me and me alone. We had so much in common. I loved him and he loved me. This was my unconscious pattern. I'd done it before in my past relationships. I tried everything I could think of to control and manipulate the situation. I tried different ways of saying things.

I tried different ways of acting around him. I tried making him jealous. I threatened to end the relationship if he didn't give me what I wanted. I tried to convince him he was better off without me in hope reverse psychology was still a thing. It wasn't.

Truth is I was feeding his ego and like a vampire draining the life out of their hapless victim, he was sucking the life out of me. Still I couldn't seem to break free. My mind knew the relationship was unhealthy and that I was torturing myself. Every time I tried breaking up, I'd feel this awful emptiness and within a few weeks, we'd be back together.

Little did I realize; I was teaching him how to treat me. I was teaching him not to respect my boundaries. I was teaching him that I didn't follow through. I was teaching him that I had no deal breakers, therefore he didn't have to stop his selfish, hurtful behaviors to keep me in his life.

I struggled over the fact that I kept staying in this harmful situation and could not seem to let go. It was in the program of Co-dependents Anonymous that I found the answers I needed. I learned about how the pain of my past relationships, childhood hurts, family dysfunction, and old beliefs created in me this fertile soil to grow the seeds of codependency. I found the ironic truth that the pain of abandonment flared up even when it was me trying to end a relationship. I couldn't stand the discomfort of being alone. Fear of never finding "love" again kept me hanging on to whatever I could get even if it was abuse or emotional unavailability.

The support in the program helped me start my journey of learning to love the self. I began dating myself and re-parenting my child within. Gaining new tools and practicing with safe people in CoDA, helped me find a new way of living and a freedom from the bonds of codependency. Don't get me wrong, I'm still codependent. I always will be. But I have a new awareness in my life now and I am developing healthy boundaries with myself and others. As I focus on myself, I'm attracting healthier people into my life.

Codependents often remain in harmful situations too long. That was my pattern for most of my life. Toxic love relationships, friendships, jobs. In recovery, I am committed to my safety and leave situations that feel unsafe or are inconsistent with my goals. I am learning about detaching with love and letting others own the consequences of their own choices. Best of all, I believe that I am safe and secure, worthy of love and respect, and can handle whatever comes next. There is hope in the program of Co-dependents Anonymous