

PRESSING ON...

"I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:14



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Live Your Own Life | letting go of codependency

■ by Charlene Brouwer, MA, LAMFT

Some of the words we commonly use can be especially hard to define. According to a project done by Kaplan and Dictionary.com, the top three words with the most definitions are "run" (179 different definitions), "take" (127), and "break" (123).

"Codependence," while not as common, is another word that is complex in meaning. Used since the 1980's in connection with emotional and relational health, this word has been especially popular in addiction recovery circles.

"Codependent" was originally used to describe someone who is dependent in an unhealthy way on someone who is addicted to alcohol, drugs, gambling, etc. However, a person can have codependent tendencies, even if they are not in a relationship with a person who has an addiction.

Melodie Beattie, author of *Codependent No More*, suggests that "The surest way to make ourselves crazy is to get involved in other people's business, and the quickest way to become sane and happy is to tend to our own affairs." We are being codependent when we lose sight of our own life because we are so involved in the life of someone else. In our codependence

we are attempting to fix and control other people, while telling ourselves and others that we are "just trying to be helpful."

Proverbs 19:19 gives us a picture of the chaos and futility that can characterize the life of someone who is codependent, "Short tempered people



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must pay their own penalty. If you rescue them once, you will have to do it again." Repeatedly rescuing others can become a full time job, leaving little time or energy to devote to ourselves.

Letting go of codependency can be particularly challenging for Christians, as we strive to live a life of love and service. While Jesus asks his followers to deny themselves, notice that he asks us to carry our own cross daily. He does not ask us to carry a cross that belongs to someone else (Luke 9:23). In Galatians 6, Paul advises Christ's followers to "Carry each other's

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New staff...



Ginnette Jurgel, MA, LCPC
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor

Office hours in South Holland, IL location
Adolescent & Adult | Individual, Couple, Family & Group Therapy

Ginnette has spent the last 7 years working in various capacities within the community counseling and residential treatment settings. Her background and experience includes working with individuals struggling with eating disorders, substance abuse, self-injury, trauma, anxiety and depressive disorders, anger management, grief and loss, relational issues, and co-occurring illness. She is also passionate about teaching and lecturing at the collegiate level and enjoys speaking on a variety of topics including spirituality, relationships, family, boundaries, codependency, and mental illness. She enjoys working with individuals, couples, families, and groups, and has experience working with adolescent, adult, and geriatric clients. She incorporates a holistic therapeutic approach to address each individual's physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Ginnette received a BA in Psychology from Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights, Illinois and earned a MA in Professional Counseling from Olivet Nazarene University in Bourbonnais, Illinois.



Kathy Konrath, MA, LCPC, LMHC
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (IL) & Licensed Mental Health Counselor (IN)

Office hours in Evergreen Park, IL location
Adolescent & Adult | Individual, Couple & Family Therapy

Kathy has a rich clinical background in residential, church, and outpatient settings, working with adolescents and adults. She has done extensive work with community agencies and emotionally disturbed youth and their families. She also spent several years providing Christian counseling services within churches. Kathy meets each client where they are and helps each gain perspective on what is happening in their emotional, mental, physical, social and/or spiritual life. She is experienced in working with various issues including abuse, addiction, depression, anxiety, relationships, and self esteem. Kathy believes that the process of moving through life involves moments where reflection and care for the soul are not only necessary, but pertinent. At times, stressors cause problems that require outside help, and therapy is often a tool used to bring insight, healing, and recovery needed to carry on.

Kathy received her Master of Arts degree in Counseling Psychology from Ball State University in Muncie, IN and a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, IL.



Terry E. Smith, MS, LMHC
Licensed Mental Health Counselor

Office hours in DeMotte and Schererville, IN locations
Adolescent & Adult | Individual, Couple & Family Therapy

Terry has over 18 years of counseling experience and an additional 20+ years of life experience in helping people as a personnel director and owner of a real estate company. Terry works with adults and adolescents on anger management, stress, marital problems, parenting skills, grief and loss and family issues. He enjoys helping clients change detrimental self-images, poor communication skills including self-talk and to focus on increasing joy and peace in their life. He assists clients with setting goals/plans and not staying focused on past problems/situations. He also has experience as a school counselor working with student's behavioral issues and academic performance. Terry enjoys speaking for organizations and groups on topics including Communication, Self-Talk, Grief and Loss, and Parenting/Discipline Skills.

Terry received his MS in Counseling from Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN and a BS in Business Administration/Accounting from Ball State University, Muncie, IN.

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burdens" (v.2). Later in the same chapter he also states that "Each one should carry his own load" (v.5).

How do we live an emotionally healthy life, free from codependency, when even the Bible seems to give us conflicting messages? Following are some questions to ask ourselves daily:

- What or who occupies most of my daily thoughts, time, and energy?

- What are my true motivations for what I am presently saying or doing?
- What am I feeling and needing in this moment?
- How is God at work in my life at this time?

If you find yourself struggling with codependent tendencies, know that you are not alone! There are many helpful resources available today in the form of psychotherapy, support groups and reading material. In keeping with Step

11 of The Twelve Steps, we can begin by seeking to improve our own relationship with God, "praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out."



Charlene Brouwer, MA, LAMFT
Licensed Associate Marriage & Family Therapist.
She enjoys working with individuals, couples & families in both our Evergreen Park & Orland Park, IL locations.



Single...again.

■ by Deborah Mitchell, MS, LMFT

If this title speaks to you, you have probably lived the old cliché:

Life is what happens when you're making other plans.

At some point, you found somebody to love before something happened to make life turn upside down and inside out.

I chose this topic due to personal life experience. Happily married to my high school sweetheart, the last thing I expected was a call from the hospital telling me my husband had been in a car accident and I should "come quickly." (Widowhood at 22 is not something I'd ever recommend.) I married again at 28. This time, a call came from my mom informing me he had been in an accident at the steel mill and to "please have someone else drive you." I was widowed again at 30, and this time with a small daughter.

I have also seen countless families in therapy and known many outside of therapy where the "single...again" status comes from divorce. Death and divorce have their own struggles, and pain comes from different sources. However, there are some very common issues and some common coping skills.

One thing in common is grief. Grief isn't only about death - it's about change. Anytime there's a change, there's a loss. Grief is frequently taught as stages, but that makes it sound reasonable and orderly. When this is the assumption,

one feels crazy when emotions change by the hour or by the minute.

Another common issue can be the loss of friends. Sometimes they just don't know what to say so they don't call. Sometimes, married friends can become concerned about relationships developing with their spouse. Sometimes, they don't want the reminder that nothing in life is certain.

A FEW TIPS TO COPE:

1. **Stay connected in your faith.**
Even when I was angry at God, He was my biggest support. Isaiah 54:5 says "The Lord your maker is your Husband." We are also known as the bride of Christ. No matter how abandoned we feel by our earthly partners, He will comfort us when we are brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). He's even there when you awaken at 3 AM feeling crushed. No phone needed.

2. **Try to find a support group** that fits your situation. People who understand a little of what you're going through, with some who are coming out the other side can be a valuable resource.
3. **Don't make life-changing decisions** until you've worked through grief- usually a year is recommended (Yes, this applies to new relationships). Grief leaves the brain "fuzzy" and decisions are not always the most rational although you are your most vulnerable.
4. **If there are children, do NOT speak badly of the other parent.** Allow them to talk about the parent if they want. Remember they will be grieving too, and watch for signs of acting out.
5. **Try hard to look for any positives.** It's easy to stay focused on our own turbulent emotions, but we miss out on the peace that comes from a thankful heart that way.
6. **Don't hesitate to get counseling.** There are impacts on many emotional, mental, and spiritual areas with both death and divorce with which counseling can assist.



Debi Mitchell is a Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist. She enjoys working with individuals, couples and families in our Schererville, IN location.



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New Chicago location!

We're excited to announce our 4th Chicago location, in the Galewood neighborhood. We'll be using offices in

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