


8 WAYS
TO HONOR
Yourself IN
CODEPENDENT
RELATIONSHIPS

A decorative flourish consisting of a horizontal line with a central diamond shape and a small circle in the middle.

By Michelle Farris, LMFT



8 Ways To Honor Yourself In Codependent Relationships

✓ **STRIVE FOR CREATING A BALANCE OF GIVING AND RECEIVING IN RELATIONSHIPS.**

While it's lovely to be generous and helpful, persistent over-giving creates an unhealthy dynamic that leads to resentment. Reciprocity is important in transforming codependent relationships.

By letting yourself receive, your relationships stay balanced. Loving yourself means showing others that your needs are important too. Be willing to ask for what you need so the giving stays mutual.

✓ **PRIORITIZE SELF-CARE**

Your ability to handle stress decreases when self-care is neglected. Making your well-being a priority will prevent you from becoming overly focused on what other people need.

By prioritizing your needs, you are honoring yourself in a way that fosters a healthy sense of self. You'll also be less resentful in relationships because you won't be neglecting yourself for the sake of others.

✓ **SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES**

Boundaries are limits that you set for yourself, not for others. You get to choose what to participate in and when to leave. When you can set boundaries you get control over your time and energy.

Saying no is a powerful way to establish healthy boundaries instead of being overly concerned with pleasing others. Start small and practice with trusted friends to gain confidence.



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✓ **PRACTICE DETACHING WITH LOVE**

Detaching means letting others solve their own problems. or making their own mistakes, complete with consequences. When we try to save people or fix their problems, we are preventing them from taking responsibility. Instead, show respect by letting them figure things out on their own.

For instance, avoid the habit of giving unsolicited advice. It's challenging but sometimes it is kinder to keep your opinions to yourself. It can save your sanity. Ask yourself, "Is this really my responsibility?"

✓ **KEEP UP WITH YOUR OWN INTERESTS**

Relationships are more balanced when we allow ourselves to pursue our own interests and hobbies. Give yourself permission to do what feeds your soul. Fulfill a dream or learn something new.

By doing more of what you love, you are taking responsibility for your own happiness. As a result you can create a life worth living and avoid looking to others to fill an empty void.

✓ **GET THE RIGHT SUPPORT**

Family and friends aren't always neutral when you need support. You might be embarrassed or afraid to admit what's really happening when there is addiction or abuse. Having people who don't judge you is important.

Seek out a counselor or check out Al-Anon, a free 12 step support group that provides valuable relationship tools while loving you until you can learn to love yourself.



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FIND HEALTHY WAYS TO EXPRESS FEELINGS

When you can't honor your true feelings, they will eventually leak out in destructive ways like sarcasm, rage, guilt trips and resentment. Acknowledging how you feel is critical for taking care of yourself in relationships.

Journal writing is a great way to vent painful feelings and avoid people pleasing. By sharing how you feel using "I" statements, you are focusing on your subjective experience rather than being right.



BE YOUR AUTHENTIC SELF

It's hard to be authentic when you're people-pleasing but when you aren't revealing your true self, you will never be truly known. The fear of being judged or labelled selfish are common struggles that may get in your way.

Work to let go old beliefs that you are not enough. Start by sharing yourself in the moment without having to think about it first. Even admitting fear takes courage because it's authentic. You deserve to be accepted for exactly who you are and that starts with you!

Not sure where to start? Pick the one that is making the biggest impact in your life right now. One behavior at a time, we can heal.

Michelle Farris