Detaching with Love: Overcoming Enmeshment Using CoDA Tools
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I Am the Dream and I Must Come True

2019 Face Everything and Recover Retreat
"You're in luck. We have one seat left. Oh, right. ... Never mind."
Enmeshment
What is enmeshment?

“A relationship between two or more people in which personal boundaries are permeable and unclear”
How does enmeshment happen?

- Out of necessity
- Multigenerational pattern
- Avoidance of previous generation’s pattern
- Unfulfilled needs
What does enmeshment look like?
You complete me.
I dunno, doc, I guess I'm just always waiting for someone else to validate me.
Why is this a problem? Isn’t it good to be close?

- Loss of identity
  “When you never say what you think, feel, want, in all practicality you don’t exist.” (Margalis Fjelstad “Stop Caretaking the Borderline or Narcissist”)
- Parentification and neglect
- Natural separation is thwarted
- Targets bullies, narcissists, etc.
- Like attracts like
- We burn out
**The Rescuer**
AKA “People Pleaser; Fixer; Peacemaker”
- Rescuing provides a sense of purpose and worth.
- Self-esteem is based on approval and “being good”
- Often “helps” & give advice without being asked.
- Sacrifices their own wants & needs.
- Feels guilty and anxious if doesn’t rescue.

**The Persecutor**
AKA “Bully”
- “I am right.”
- Full of anger and resentment.
- Wants to punish, make them feel as bad as we do
- Critical, bossy, domineering, controlling
- Blames & finger points

**The Victim**
AKA “Savior; Martyr”
- “Poor me.”
- Looks for sympathy & rescuing
- Feels sad, helpless, used, & abused.
- Blameless, powerless, incapable, ashamed
- Dependent, oppressed, hopeless, trapped

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**Karpman’s Drama Triangle (as I see it)**
Why do we stay enmeshed?
Fear.

- Fear of conflict
- Fear of anger
  “As long as you are afraid of anger you will find yourself stuck in the caretaker role.” (Margalis Fjelstad “Stop Caretaking the Borderline or Narcissist”)
- Fear of abandonment
- Fear of the unknown
  Symbiosis is homeostasis
- Fear of ourselves
Obligation.

• Loyalty
• Preoccupation
• Compulsion
Guilt.

• Internal messages
  “I am selfish.”

• Rooted in childhood
  Unconscious messages not to have needs or wants. When we asked we were made to feel ashamed.

• We relive the pain
  Today when we try to assert ourselves the old wounds reopen. We return to our roles to avoid the pain.
Stop the Insanity
Break Denial
Self Esteem & Self Worth

After many years of therapy, Waldo finally finds himself.
KEEP CALM AND PRACTICE SELF-CARE
Detach With Love
Boundaries

I'm sensing you may still have some boundary issues.
Applying Boundaries

1. We have to know what we want.
2. We need to communicate what it is that we want / don’t want (if appropriate).
3. We have to decide what we will do if that boundary is crossed.
4. We have to follow through.
“If you..., then I...”
vs.
“When ______ happens...
I feel ...
I need...”.
No words needed
Loose boundaries vs. rigid boundaries
I seek guidance from my HIGHER POWER.
Get These Recovery Resources from CoDA

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- Codependents Anonymous, The basic text or “Big Book” of Codependence Anonymous
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- TOOLS OF RECOVERY,
- Sponsorship: What’s in it for Me?,
- Peeling the Onion,
- Communication in Recovery,
- Making Choices,
- Twelve Steps Handbook,
- BUILDING CODA COMMUNITY: HEALTHY MEETINGS MATTER,
- Common Threads of Codependency,
- EXPERIENCES WITH CROSSTALK,
- Establishing Boundaries in Recovery,
- CARRYING THE MESSAGE: LIVING THE TWELFTH STEP.

Audio CDs:
- Personal Sharing on the Twelve Steps,
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