



Karen Gardinier

Is your “helping” behavior actually **CO-DEPENDENCY**



By Karen Gardinier



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Is your “helping” behavior co-dependency?

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you have a hard time saying no to others even when you are terribly busy, financially broke, or completely exhausted?
- Are you always sacrificing your own needs for everyone else?
- Do you feel more worthy as a human being because you have taken on a helping role?
- If you stopped helping your friends, would you feel guilty or worthless?
- Would you know how to be in a friendship that does not revolve around you being the helper?
- If your friends eventually did not need your help, would you still be friends with them, or would you look around for someone else to help?
- Do you feel resentful when others are not grateful enough to you for your efforts at rescuing them or fixing their lives?
- Do you sometimes feel like more of a social worker than a friend in your relationships?
- Do you feel uncomfortable receiving help from other people? Is the role of helping others a much more natural role for you to play in your relationships?
- Does it seem as if many of your friends have particularly chaotic lives with one crisis after another?
- Did you grow up in a family that had a lot of emotional chaos or addiction problems?
- Are any of your friends addicts or do they have serious emotional and social problems?
- As you were growing up, did you think it was up to you to keep the family functioning?
- As an adult, is it important for you to be thought of as the dependable one?

If you answered yes to a lot of these questions, you may indeed have a problem with co-dependency.

This does not mean that you are a flawed person. It means that you are spending a lot of energy on other people and little time on yourself.

If it seems that a lot of your friendships are based on co-dependent rescuing behaviors rather than mutual liking and respect between equals, you may wish to step back and rethink your role in the relationship.



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If you suspect that your helping behavior is a form of co-dependency, a good therapist or counselor can help you gain perspective on your actions and learn a more balanced way of relating to others.

There are excellent books available about co-dependency. I highly recommend a Support groups such as Al-Anon and Nar-Anon can also be a huge help and less costly than an individual therapist.