



HEALTH & WELLNESS / LIFESTYLE

## On Addiction and Codependency (Pt. 1)

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Most patterns of codependency, or addiction of any sort, have a tap root down to the abandonment of the self and the destabilization of the earth element. Making sense of a dependence on a substance or a person to fill a void left by the inability to truly occupy the self is hard for some people to imagine, as it is based on a neural patterning that often is hard for the sovereign mind to untangle. In the throws of the addiction or the codependent behavioral pattern, the ego knows no truth, only the physical need for the object of the desire to sustain.

I really appreciate working with people on the journey of recovery from abuse, trauma, or addiction, as I am always in good company with this population, and have experienced this road myself more than a few times in my family of origin.

One of the most impressive things that a person in recovery can show all of us is the ability to challenge their own ego and overcome. Everyone who has ever gone through a recovery process of anything knows that it is not easy.

The recovery of the self from a process such as a mental or physical dependency on something, especially that which one cannot often view the outward signs of, is even more impressive. We outsiders cannot really ever see what is going on with someone's personal journey beyond the surface that is shown to us.

I feel that in a way, this is one of the most prolific struggles a person in recovery can wrestle with: the desire to overcome, without any real ability to be seen or validated for their internal progress through the struggle. This is a key reason why support groups are so impactful; if you know, you know. In these groups, those in recovery feel seen by others; others who have gone through something similar and can appreciate the struggle.

It is important that everyone understand the impact of addiction and codependency, if not to recognize it within themselves, should they fall into such a trap, but also to be an observer to those around them; to help build awareness and the trust that is so very much needed, and to help

support those in addiction or recovery in their process of feeling seen.

It is essential to offer those close to us going through these trials the space and support that can catalyze their transformation. For most everyone, the journey of occupying the self is one of constant return to internal awareness; and for some, it is a place that they have never known.

I have observed some continuity when working with those who have experienced addiction or codependency in the past. Often the case goes that a person's spirit falls into an addiction to, or dependency on, something, whether it be a substance or a relationship, because of an intrinsically unhealed and unbalanced earth element.

Whereas one's ability to cultivate and nourish a support of the self was impacted by their experience of life in some way; and whereas, the spirit *shen* that reside within the organ of the heart, when the heart is full of love, sometimes get displaced due to abuse or trauma; the spirit *yi*, that usually reside within the spleen, being nourishers and cultivators as they are, become compelled to assist the *shen* as they seek refuge within the earth element. The *shen* are then assisted and attended to by their holographic counterpart, the *shen*, spirit affiliation of the earth element.<sup>1</sup>

I have observed many clients with this condition to various degrees. In every instance there was a spectrum of codependent behavior manifesting in the lives of the individuals, always a result of neglect or abuse; the inability to occupy the self.

The *shen*, displaced from their nest in the heart, usually take refuge behind the stomach, close to the pancreas and spleen. The *yin* aspects of these earthy organs provide a comfort and a safe place within the body home. However, this can lead to a host of mental and physical imbalance, as you can imagine, not only affecting the stomach, but also the pancreas and spleen. So, the digestion and immune system often are significantly affected.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence of addiction also rises as the body tries to compensate for a lack of healthy love and affection, with a flood of dopamine from other stimuli. I recently had a client session that was a powerful exhibit of this phenomenon.

This client was in recovery from alcoholism and had recently gone through a divorce. Their new way of living was spurred from the decision to begin a healing journey when they realized that they finally could start choosing themselves, and began to align with their soul's path in life. They recalled that when they had gotten married many years ago, they "didn't even know they could say no." They expressed that they had not really known what love was, to even have known if they had been in it.

They grew up in an adopted family that they described as being on the spectrum of an abusive environment in many ways. They were adopted when they were only 7 days old. The trauma of abandonment was heavy on their heart. As they spoke very briefly about this early attachment experience, they were noticeably reserved, but present with the emotion. They are here for it: the healing journey.

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*Editor's Note:* Part 2 of this article (August issue) details the treatment flow for this patient. References supporting both parts accompany pt. 2.

