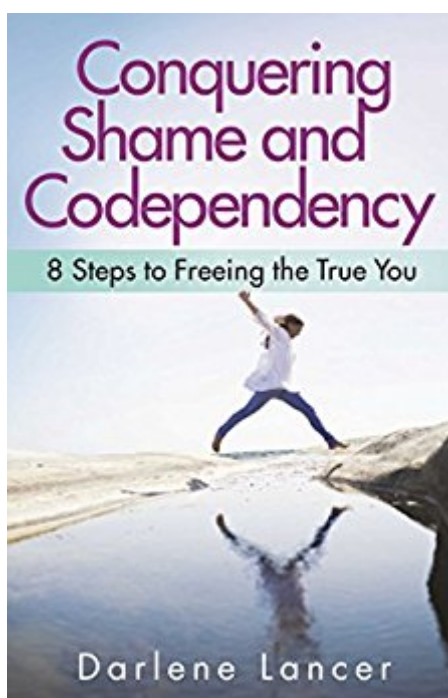


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Conquering Shame And Codependency: 8 Steps To Freeing The True You



Synopsis

A nationally recognized author, speaker and codependency expert examines the roots of shame and its connection with codependent relationships. Learn how to heal from their destructive hold by implementing eight steps that will empower the real you and lead to healthier relationships. A nationally recognized author and codependency expert examines the roots of shame and its connection with codependent relationships. Learn how to heal from their destructive hold by implementing eight steps that will empower the real you, and lead to healthier relationships. Shame: the torment you feel when you're exposed, humiliated, or rejected; the feeling of not being good enough. It's a deeply painful and universal emotion, yet is not frequently discussed. For some, shame lurks in the unconscious, undermining self-esteem, destroying confidence, and leading to codependency. These codependent relationships--where we overlook our own needs and desires as we try to care for, protect, or please another--often cover up abuse, addiction, or other harmful behaviors. Shame and codependency feed off one another, making us feel stuck, never able to let go, move on, and become the true self we were meant to be. In *Conquering Shame and Codependency*, Darlene Lancer sheds new light on shame: how codependents' feelings and beliefs about shame affect their identity, their behavior, and how shame can corrode relationships, destroying trust and love. She then provides eight steps to heal from shame, learn to love yourself, and develop healthy relationships.

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Customer Reviews

Overall, this book is well-researched and has the not-so-obvious insights I enjoy when I invest the time for self-improvement. I would recommend this book to those who struggle with codependency issues and are having trouble putting their finger on *“why”*. Yes, it has to do with your childhood as most counselors will tell you, but this book shows how the *“separation of self”* actually occurs due to shame. The concepts are easy to digest, and it’s presented in a way that makes it easy to see how this might have happened in your life. The book opens with a discussion on shame and how it underlies addiction. Shame is a natural part of life, but culture can shape how we use it. For example, in China shame is the beginning of integrity. But in the west, we tend not to share our shame in spite of the fact we sometimes never forget our shameful experiences. Nonetheless, we need to be fortified with coping skills to be resilient to shame. *“Becoming independent and self-supporting is a milestone that, if not reached, can trigger a sense of failure for not meeting societal norms for success.”* The book explains that there’s a common confusion between shame and other things, like shyness or guilt. Guilt, while perceived as negative, can actually be an indicator of something that needs corrected. The difference is that while guilt is awareness that **SOMETHING WE DID WAS WRONG**, shame is a belief that there’s **SOMETHING WRONG WITH US**. We also learn in Chapter 1 that too much shame, or shame about the *“wrong”* things, sabotages relationships and can lead to anti-social behavior, addiction, and codependency. And when shame becomes chronic, it can take over our identity and our ability to enjoy life, chipping away at the trust we have in the world and ourselves. It’s the feeling of being a bad or unworthy person. Chronic shame no longer needs an external event to be triggered. This is when shame becomes a paralyzing problem. *“Whatever we feel ashamed of, at its foundation is an often unconscious belief of inferiority or unacceptability of being unlovable.”* Another statement that rang true for me is that we imagine others see and judge us as we judge ourselves. Often we think people are judging us or judging our loved ones

when they are not. It's reminiscent of Don Miguel Ruiz's The Four Agreements, the second of which is Don't Make Assumptions. In later chapters, the author describes the effect that chronic shame has on the developing self. Essentially, if parts of us are denied, rejected, ignored, or invalidated, or if we go through a traumatic event, we may cope by creating unreal identities (Ideal Self) which we then try to actualize instead of actualizing our True Self. Our True Self thrives in warmth, nurturing, and affirmation. When we don't receive these things, our True Self recedes and becomes overshadowed by shame which we internalize over time.

"Our ideal self reflects on how we think we should be in order to survive in the family, but instead of protecting our real self, the ideal self further alienates us from who we really are. From childhood onward, the Critic expects the unattainable by insisting that we suppress authentic feelings and traits that conflict with our internal ideal. We conform to who it thinks we should be and what it believes we should feel, think, do, and need.

The interesting correlation the book draws is how this shame and separation of self actually precipitates codependency. "The codependent self is out of touch with the real self. A codependent is someone who can't function from his or her innate self, but organizes thinking and behavior around another person(s) success, process, or substance; whether addicted to a person, a process (such as gambling or sex), or a substance (such as food, drugs, or alcohol), they all share symptoms and characteristics. The difference is the object(s) of a person's dependency. Codependency is a disease of a lost self, depriving us of vitality, spontaneity, and self-fulfillment.

There's also discussion about intergenerational codependency; it happens especially when one or both parents were codependent. Neglected parents often become overinvolved, and parents that are controlled become too permissive. As a consequence children develop codependent problem around autonomy, boundaries and / or self-trust. When we deny shame instead of integrating it, it gets triggered and we become vulnerable to getting entrenched in it. We might act out, withdraw, become aggressive, project, or avoid altogether, but the shame doesn't go away. Part of Chapter 3 discuss how we cope with this downward shame-spiral, namely by adopting specific personality types, and for codependents, the pervading personality type is called The Accommodator. Those who are addicted to love, romance, or relationships closely resemble the stereotypical codependent.

"Accommodators yearn for happiness and validation with one significant person with whom they can merge to finally achieve wholeness. They don't believe they have rights, and feel guilty stating their needs, of which

they are mostly unaware. This denial of self-interest and fear of conflict and abandonment makes setting boundaries extremely difficult for Accommodators, which allows others to easily abuse and exploit them. This section explains why codependents express their frustration through passive-aggressiveness rather than directness, because they are usually reliving the experience of being shamed as a child, enacted by a partner whom they see as their parent. Emotionally trapped in their past, they are unable to access their power as an adult, further stunting their ability to assert and protect themselves and stop the abuse. Instead, to keep peace, they placate, appease, and communicate indirectly in ways that are dishonest, manipulative, and passive-aggressive. Their aggression is directed at themselves and is expressed indirectly toward others through control, criticism, complaints, and passive manipulation.

In the process of healing, the codependent must drop his or her external focus, which often results in emptiness, since she was used to getting validation, attention or recognition from the outside. There is suddenly a void, a void formerly filled by drama, and just as an addict faces the loss of his drug of choice, the codependent faces a lack of meaning. To move past this, the objective is to voluntarily experience the emptiness that occurs by intentionally not trying to escape despair. Abandon hope as well and allow a humbling powerlessness to occur. This forces a person to get something from herself and get less from the outside. Once expectations are more aligned with reality, change can happen. Meditation was mentioned as a healthy exercise to start getting more aligned. I am always interested to see this technique mentioned as I read books on the topic, as I came to the same conclusion on my own years ago. Of course, if feelings are too intense to process on your own, the author recommends seeking professional help. As one faces the void of emptiness after giving up external focus, there are a host of common issues they may come upon, such as lack of self-trust, feeling unimportant, guilt or anxiety, perfectionism, various forms of controlling, the tyranny of the shoulds.

With some searching, one finds that these issues are largely due to the Inner Critic. Once one can examine and release the Critic's admonishments, their energy returns, their mood lifts, and their real self is free to enjoy the present. At the end, the author lays out an 8-step process for recovery. The steps involve increasing self-awareness to connect with the True Self, processing one's shame, and build self-esteem and self-love. Again, I found this book full of insight and overall it's a great read!

I began reading this book to learn more about codependency and how and why shame has taken a type of foothold in some of my behaviors. As an adult, I felt that somehow I was hard-wired to feelings that seemed to trigger and activate behaviors that I didn't understand. The following are just a few of the examples of what I mean: Why do I withdraw and sometimes even isolate whenever I am criticized? Why do I have a need to please? Why do I hold back my own opinions, and even fear rejection, particularly around other men? I was usually confused about my identity and why I continued these behaviors! I browsed Darlene Lancer's book closely to observe the chapter titles, charts and basic flow. After all, I had noted her success with her book entitled "Codependency for Dummies" and liked her knowledge and depth of understanding codependency and also her writing style. My decision was to read the book slowly, carefully and in depth and work to answer the questions. I seriously hoped to progress with this process. To help me with this study, I purchased 6 copies, keeping one for myself. I gave two family members and 3 friends a copy and asked all 5 of them to join me reading, discussing and sharing as best we could. In this manner, I planned to not hold back on sharing so as to increase my opportunity for growth. As I read, worked and shared, I found a deep rooted shame based set of behaviors that I could understand. I knew my behaviors and used them to uncover the connections in my memories, as I examined my relationship triggers, related thoughts, feelings, and in particular defenses. My shame is deep rooted as I believe everyone's is, and Lancer's 8 steps outline a process for uncovering, sharing, letting go, rebuilding my self esteem and love for myself. I learned that I seemed to addicted to using my own shame based behaviors to survive and it negatively effected my relationships. Shame acts like a medicine to sedate my feelings, and to try and protect me form the reality of my true feelings. When I use it, it rewards me with a lack of intimacy and keeps me trapped into repeated the insanity of the behavior. Is this a powerful book? It is life changing!! Thank you Darlene Lancer!

Of all the codependency books I have reviewed recently, this is the one I chose to use for sponsorship. The added emphasis on Shame was what reeled me in to my choice. It has Melody Beattie as a reference also which is a plus for the book.

Great book w/exercises.

This book gives a good understanding of the origins of codependency and how to conquer it.

Excellent. Wish i knew about this stuff years ago.

Very clear, succinct and easy to read. Extremely helpful!

Excellent book to help in recovery and move forward with our lives. Easy to read and understand and now it is up to us/me to follow the steps.

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