



Breaking Free from Codependency & People-Pleasing

A Self-Discovery Guide for Women Ready to
Reclaim Their Worth

Coaching with Mel XOXO

Table of content

Welcome.....	page 3
The 5 Steps to Breaking Free from Codependency & People-Pleasing.....	page 4
Learning.....	page 5
Identifying.....	page 10
Accepting and Healing.....	page 10
Changing	page 12
Growing & Evolving.....	page 18

Welcome and Congratulations,

You have just taken the first step towards your journey to a brighter and happier you.

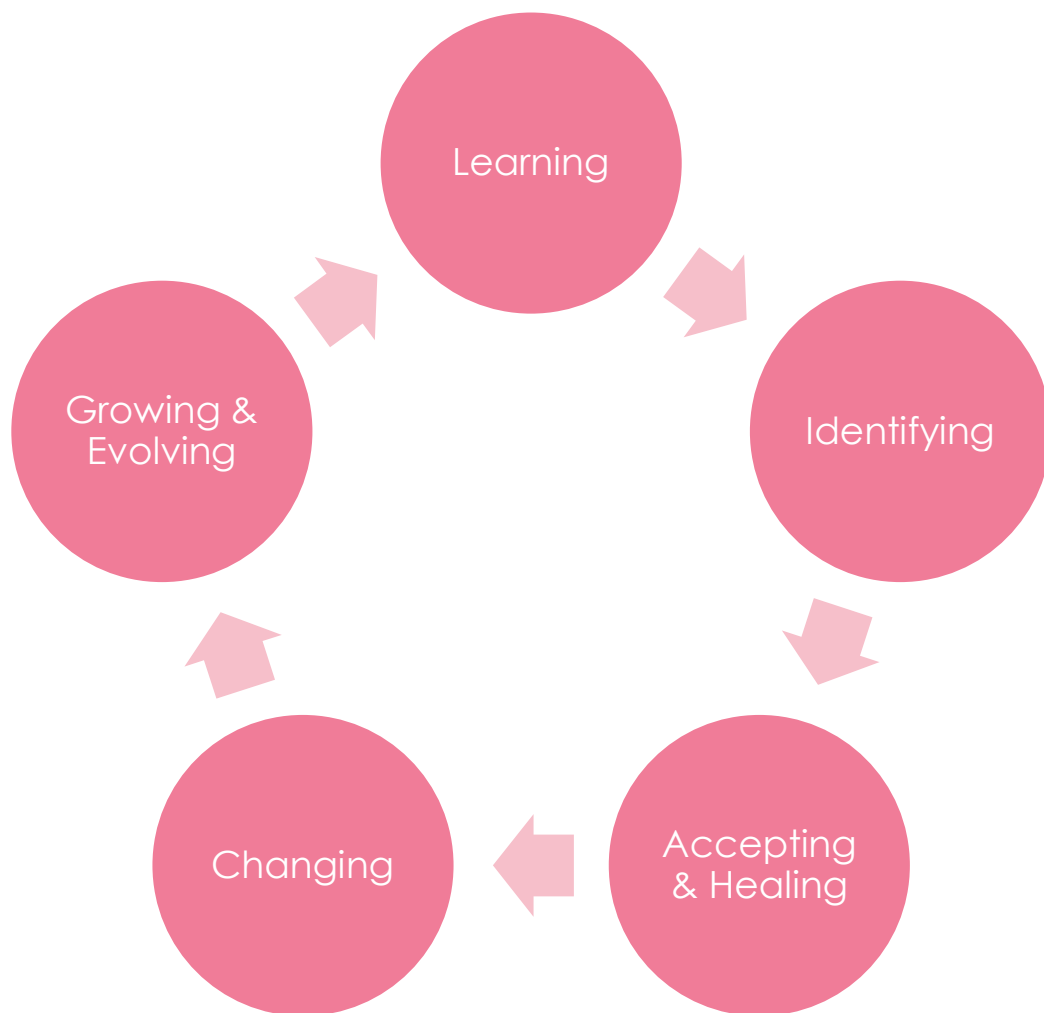
If you are someone who is always putting others first, struggling to say no, or losing sight of your own needs, you're not alone. Many women carry patterns of codependency and people-pleasing that keep them stuck in cycles of exhaustion and self-doubt.

This free guide will help you have a better understanding of the signs, reconnect with your authentic self, reflect through journaling, and take a quick quiz to see where you stand.



Let's get started

The 5 Steps to Breaking Free from Codependency & People-Pleasing



Learning

What is Codependency?

Codependency is an unhealthy relational pattern where a person's sense of identity, self-worth, and emotional security become heavily dependent on another person's approval, needs, or behaviors. In simple terms, it means prioritizing someone else's well-being to the point of neglecting your own. While caring for others is natural and healthy, codependency crosses into self-sacrifice that erodes boundaries, creates imbalance in relationships, and often leads to feelings of resentment, exhaustion, or loss of self.

These are all common behaviours that women experience or demonstrate however, they only just realize that they are codependent when they hit a breaking point. For most women, they have been suffering from codependency for years but just didn't know it.

Who suffers from Codependency?

Codependency can affect anyone regardless of age, gender, or background. However, it's especially common among individuals who grew up in environments where:

- Love and safety felt conditional.
- Emotional needs were dismissed, ignored, or minimized.
- A parent or caregiver struggled with addiction, illness, or emotional instability.

Adults who identify as “fixers,” “caretakers,” or “peacekeepers” often struggle with codependency, and it can show up in romantic relationships, friendships, family dynamics, or even workplace settings.

A few examples are,

- Partner/loved one of an addict or an alcoholics.
- Someone who grew up in a home where their parents or caretaker suffered from addiction.
- Someone who grew up in home where they had to emotionally and physically take on the parenting role.
- Someone who lacked the presence of security as a child and felt or had to navigate life on their own.
- Someone who was neglected, dismissed, or minimized emotionally.
- Someone who grow up in a home where love and safety felt conditional.
- Someone who doesn't like conflict and puts a lot of pressure to please and succeed at work (fear of failure and lack of self-confidence).
- Someone who feels the need to fix people and take on everyone's emotions and problems.
- The parent/partner who gives and gives in the relationship with no boundaries and feels guilt, and shame if they take time for themselves.

How is Codependency learned?

Codependency is not something we're born with—it's learned through repeated experiences, often in childhood. For example:

- If a child grows up needing to “take care of” a parent emotionally, they may learn that their value comes from meeting others' needs.
- If love, attention, or approval were given only when they behaved a certain way, they may internalize that being “good” or “helpful” is the only way to be loved.
- Environments where conflict or neglect were present often teach children to minimize their own needs to keep peace or avoid rejection.

Over time, these survival strategies solidify into adult behavior patterns.

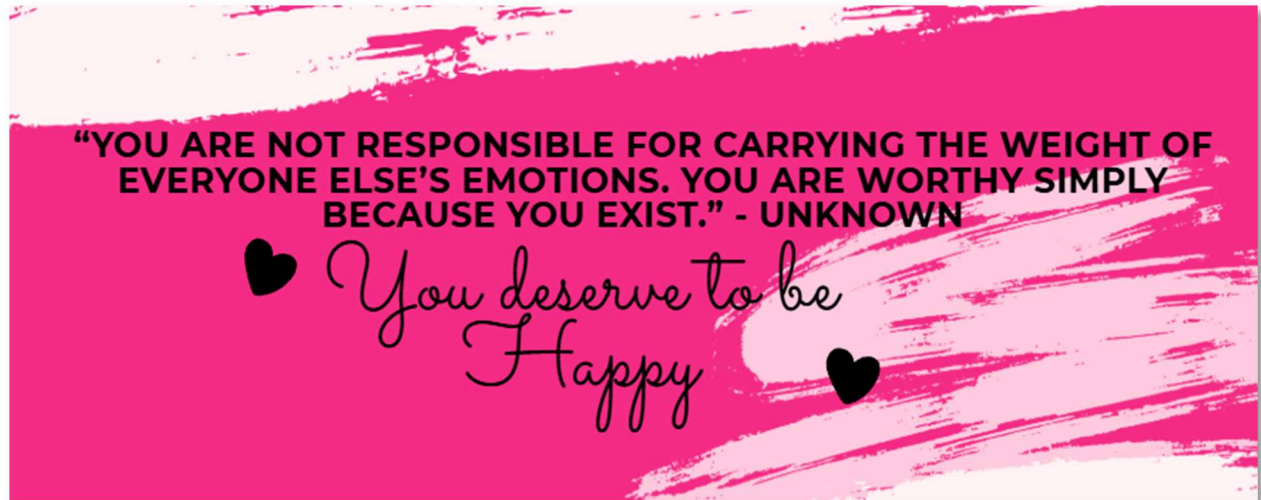
What are some Codependency traits?

While experiences differ, many people with codependent tendencies share common traits:

- Difficulty setting or enforcing boundaries.
- A strong need for approval and external validation.
- Fear of rejection, abandonment, or disappointing others.
- Chronic people-pleasing or caretaking at their own expense.
- Low self-esteem or identity confusion (“I don’t know who I am outside of this relationship”).
- Difficulty expressing needs, desires, or emotions directly.
- Feeling responsible for others’ happiness, moods, or choices.
- Anxiety or guilt when focusing on themselves.

When do people learn Codependency?

Codependency usually begins in childhood as a learned response to an unstable, emotionally unavailable, or inconsistent caregiving environment. However, it can also be reinforced later in life through experiences such as being in a relationship with a partner who is emotionally manipulative, dependent, or struggling with addiction. Essentially, it forms when people learn early on that “being myself isn’t enough—I must take care of others to be safe, loved, or valued.”



How is codependency treated?

Treatment involves both unlearning unhealthy patterns and building new, healthier ways of relating. Some common approaches include:

- **Therapy or Coaching:** Learning to identify patterns, build self-awareness, and practice new behaviors.
- **Inner Child Healing:** Addressing the root experiences that created the need for external validation.
- **Boundary Work:** Practicing how to set, enforce, and maintain healthy boundaries.
- **Self-Esteem Building:** Reconnecting with one's authentic identity, values, and needs.
- **Support Groups:** Finding community and accountability with others who share similar struggles.
- **Mindfulness & Emotional Regulation:** Learning how to tolerate discomfort without rushing to "fix" others.

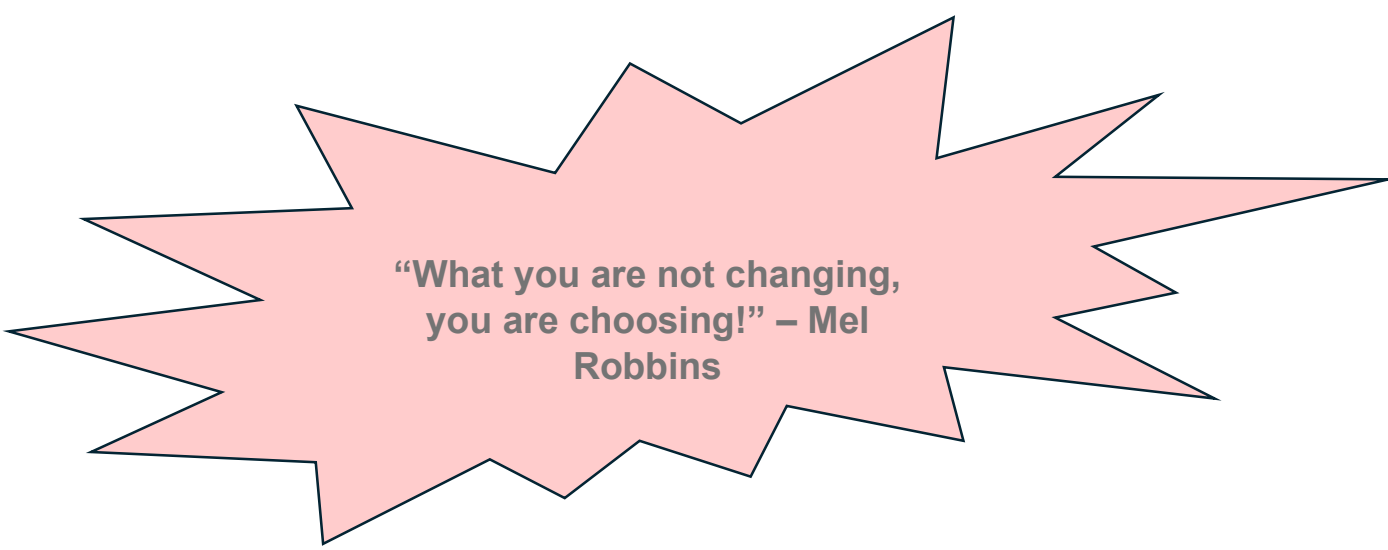
Recovery is a gradual process—it's about creating a new, balanced relationship with yourself and others.

What is the difference between Codependency and People Pleasing

Though they overlap, they are not the same:

- **People-Pleasing:** A behavior pattern where someone prioritizes others' comfort, opinions, or desires to avoid conflict, gain approval, or be liked. It is often situational and can show up in work, friendships, or relationships without completely defining the person's identity.
- **Codependency:** A deeper relational pattern where a person's entire sense of worth is tied to another's well-being. Unlike people-pleasing, codependency often involves enmeshment (loss of self), difficulty functioning independently, and a chronic imbalance of giving more than receiving in relationships.

Essentially, all codependents' people-please, but not all people-pleasers are codependent. People-pleasing can be a habit; codependency is a relational identity.



**“What you are not changing,
you are choosing!” – Mel
Robbins**

Identifying

Quick Self-Assessment Quiz

Answer Yes or No:

1. Do I often feel responsible for other people's emotions?
2. Do I avoid speaking my truth because I fear upsetting someone?
3. Do I feel anxious if someone is upset with me?
4. Do I neglect my needs to keep the peace?
5. Do I struggle to make decisions without reassurance?
6. Do I apologize frequently, even when unnecessary?
7. Do I feel unworthy when I prioritize myself?

Results: 0–2 Yes: occasional 3–5 Yes: moderate 6–7 Yes: strong influence

Now that you have a better understanding of what codependency and people-pleasing is, this is the part where you will be able to identify these patterns in your own relationships as well as within yourself.

This is very important because, knowledge is power. Once you fully understand how you behave towards others, it's easier to identify when others are lying, manipulating, or gaslighting you. You start to have clarity of the situation, and things start to make sense.

Accepting that you are codependent can be a hard pill to swallow however, accepting it and healing will be your next step.

Accepting & Healing

It's very important to note that the first step to healing, is accepting that there is a problem. This can be very challenging for some people because that mean looking at yourself in the mirror and seeing things for what they really are.

Below are a few steps that you can take to help you get started on your journey to accepting and healing.

➤ **Acknowledge and Accept Without Shame**

- Don't be in denial, give yourself grace for the way you have responded to your challenges in the past. You were doing the best that you could.

➤ **Shift the Focus Back to Yourself**

- Understand what is in your control. You can't control how other people feel or choose to live their lives. You may not agree, or it may hurt to see them behave a certain way, but that is not your choice to make.

➤ **Practice Boundaries**

- Practice boundaries with yourself (what you will accept for you) and set boundaries for others, how you will allow others to treat you.

➤ **Heal the Inner Child**

- Your inner child is the part of psyche that was impacted by trauma, abuse, neglect etc. and today these emotions arise when you are triggered. Doing inner child work will benefit you on your healing journey.

➤ **Develop Emotional Awareness**

- Be aware of your triggers and what they are telling you. If someone is doing something to make you angry, ask yourself why I am so upset? And reflect on it.
- The key thing is to look at your triggers as indicators of what needs to heal. People will mirror things back to us.
 - EX: An office worker is being rude to you. Instead of worrying what her problem is with you, ask yourself, why does it bother me so much that she is treating me this way. What part of me needs to heal. If you were

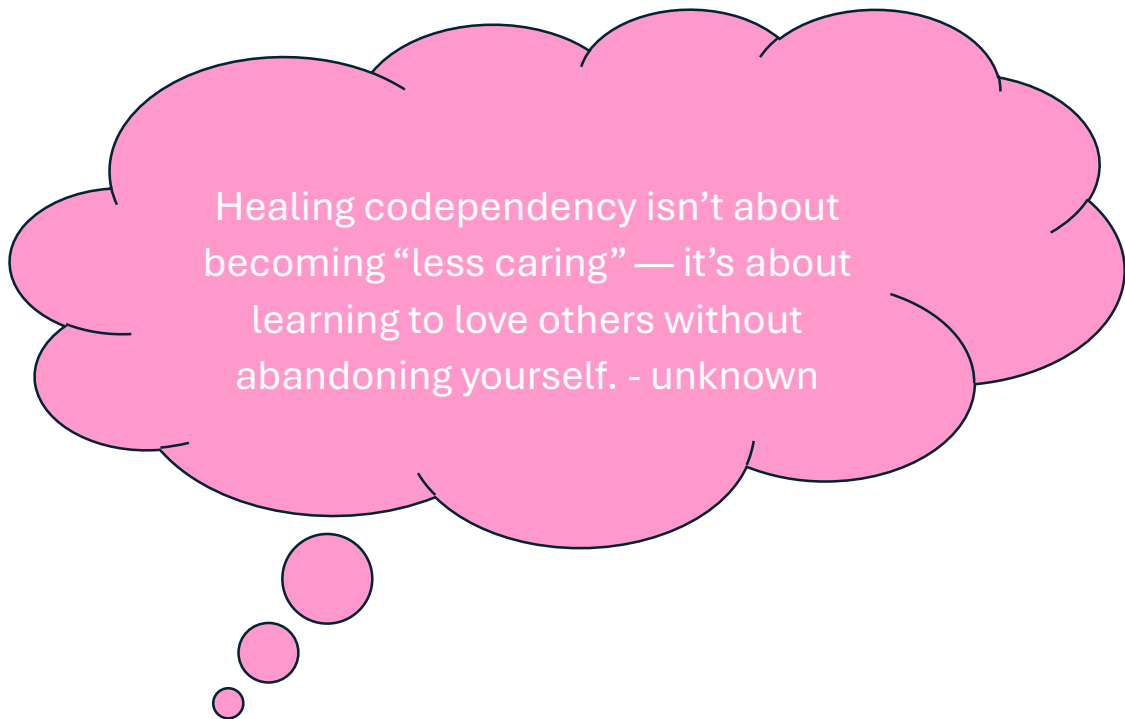
completely healed, you wouldn't give a shit what people thought of you. (let that sink in 😊)

➤ **Seek Support**

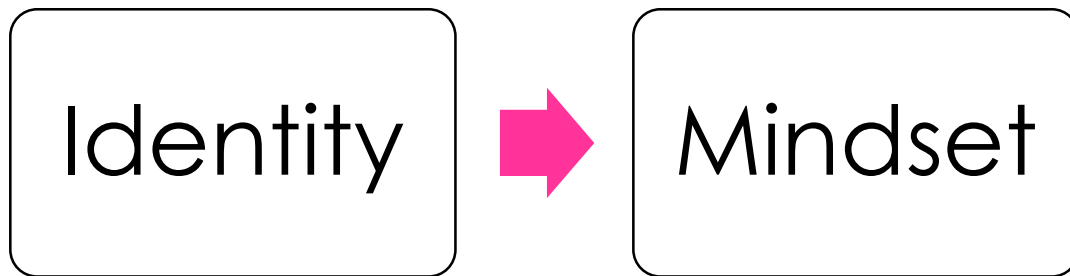
- Working with a Coach, or a therapist is so important in order to have someone hold you accountable for your own actions, but also to help support you in a none-judgemental way.

➤ **Practice Letting Go**

- Learn to surrender and trust the process. If someone is update with you, and you know you didn't do anything wrong, let them! Let go of fear, because fear is holding you back from being the best version of yourself.



Changing



Your identity is formed based on thoughts and beliefs that stem from your childhood and environment. As a codependent and people-pleaser, you often believe that you have been dealt a shitty hand in life and therefore play the **victim card**. You now identify as a victim in life.

Tony Robbins said it well when he explained that our identity is the driving force behind all results in your life, in other words, how you identify as a person, will determine your life's outcome.

For example, if you were raised in a household where your parents called you "stupid" all the time and didn't believe in you. Furthermore, you struggled in school to have good grades – all these events would cause you to identify as someone who was not intelligent and capable of succeeding in life; essentially, you see yourself as a failure and therefore, might struggle to keep a job, or become depressed with low self-esteem.

Changing your mindset

Your mind and thoughts are extremely powerful, and thoughts and emotions are what forms your identity.

Below are 6 different ways that your thoughts will influence the outcome of events in your life.

✓ Your Mind Shapes Your Perception

- **Example:** One person loses a job and thinks "I'm a failure" → they spiral into hopelessness. Another thinks, "This is an

opportunity for something better” → they take action and grow.

✓ **Thoughts Influence Emotions & Behavior**

- Negative thought: “I’m not good enough” → leads to anxiety, self-sabotage, or avoidance.
- Positive thought: “I am capable of learning this” → leads to confidence, persistence, and better results.

✓ **Neuroscience Proof – Neuroplasticity**

- The brain physically rewires itself based on what you focus on most.
 - Ex: if you have always had a negative attitude, you will be drawn to negative outcomes however, by changing your thought patterns, you are rewiring the neural pathways in your brain.

✓ **Your Mind Affects Your Body**

- Studies show that chronic negative thinking (stress, worry, self-criticism) can increase cortisol levels, weaken the immunity, and harm your health.

✓ **Your Thoughts Shape Your Reality**

- Thoughts lead to beliefs → beliefs lead to actions → actions create results.
- If you believe “I can’t change,” you’ll act in ways that reinforce being stuck.

✓ **Energy & Attraction**

- Like attracts like — focus on fear and lack, and you attract more of it; focus on gratitude and abundance, and you open yourself to opportunities.

What is in your control?

When you start to understand that you **CANNOT** change someone, only they can change their behaviors, thoughts, and emotions. Putting this into perspective, look how challenging it is for you to change your own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors therefore, understanding that someone **MUST** choose to change on their own as well as do their own inner work towards change.

A great example of this would be if you saw your best friend in an abusive relationship. It's easy to get upset with her, and tell her to leave however, if she is not 100% ready to leave, it won't happen. Sure, she might leave for a few days, but eventually she will return, leaving you feeling disappointed and defeated. What is in your control at this point? You can love her, try and support her, find her help but, at some point, it might become too much of a burden for you to handle, and that's where you **must** set boundaries for yourself. This is where the hard work comes in for the codependent!!

Bottomline, in any situation, always ask yourself, what is in my control and reflect on that – because the only thing that is truly in your control, is HOW YOU CHOOSE TO REACT TO THE SITUATION and HANDLE IT.

Not in your control	In your control
Your spouse's addiction.	Love, support, boundaries you set and your ability to enable.
People don't appreciate all my help.	Communication, and setting boundaries
Someone doesn't like the work you do.	Communication, change it or be proud of your work and leave it.

However, when you start to change your mindset, and asking yourself what is in your control, we begin to see things from a different perspective. Now, we are choosing to take our power back and choosing a different narrative. When you start to change your narrative, and the way you see yourself,

you start to change your identity. Other ways of changing your narrative would be,

“Life isn’t happening to me; it’s happening for me” or “we learn to grow from the challenges we experience in life”. I absolutely love the following line: you can’t fully appreciate the light without walking through the darkness first.

The more you practice this, the more you start to shift your identity from being a victim to being the leader of your life.

Side note: your subconscious mind believes everything you tell it. A great example of that would be, a person who is anorexic. This person is constantly telling themselves that they are overweight, and with time, when they look in the mirror, they physically see someone who is overweight. However, they are literally dying, and 80lbs. That is how powerful the mind is, and therefore, neuroplasticity is a real thing. You can rewire your neural pathways in your brain just by the way you speak to yourself or choose to see certain situations.

I go deeper into this in my course and coaching program which will be launching at the end of October 2025.

Journaling

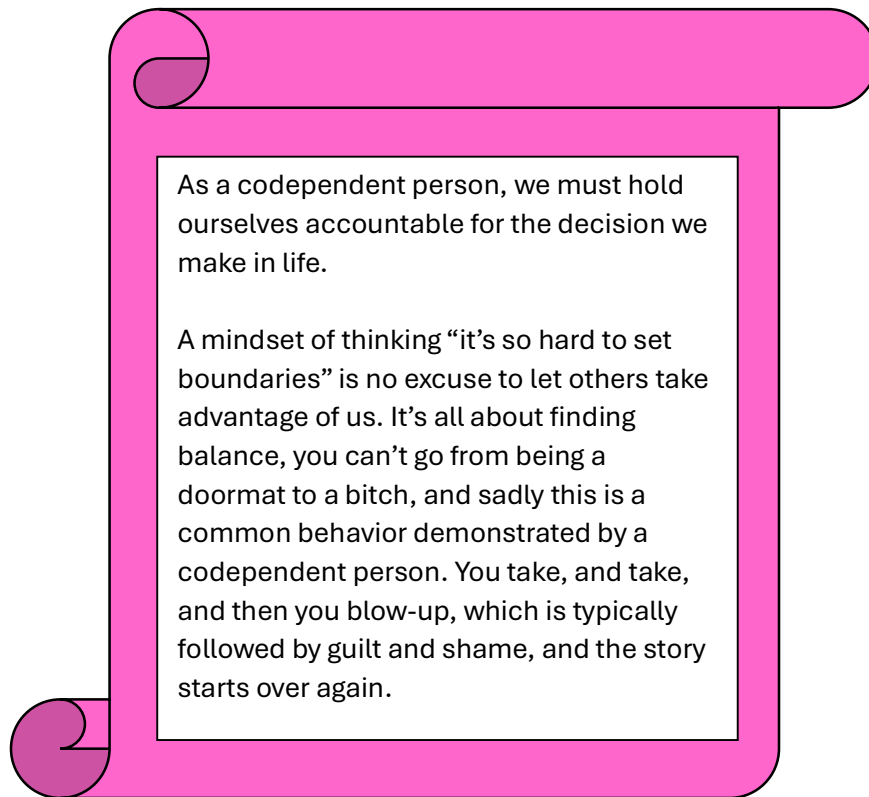
Below, are a few questions that will help you reflect on inner emotions and feelings. Please take the time to be aware of what comes up during this time as this is your higher self speaking to you.

Journaling is a very powerful tool because you are putting word to paper.

We can have responsibilities in life, but that doesn’t mean we are not allowed to experience true authenticity and happiness. Remember, **only you have control of that 😊**

- 1) Currently, who do you identify as in this moment?
- 2) I would like you to pick 3 people that you feel responsible for and ask yourself; can I really make these people change for what I believe is best for them? *(Even if they do change, it normally lasts a few days to weeks, human nature says that people always revert to old patterns if they really don't want to change. Also, change takes time but also takes effort...remember that).*
- 3) When was the last time you said “yes”, when you really wanted to say no, and how did you feel afterwards.
- 4) What does my inner voice say when I try to put myself first?
- 5) What would it look like if you could truly be authentic for one day? (this could be at work, with your family, or friends)
- 6) Can you think of situations where you dimmed your light to make others feel better or avoid confrontation.
- 7) What would it feel like if you could let your inner child out, and truly experience happiness and freedom?
- 8) Who am I when I'm not trying to keep everyone else happy?

Take some time and review your answers, and ask yourself...what is in my control currently? How can I take one step closer to making my dreams come true?



Growing & Evolving

My favorite quote is “Life is a journey, not a destination”; something I reflect on often as I continue to go through my own journey of growing and evolving. One thing I would like to also mention, is that it took years and years to reach the point where you are at, and I ask that you please be patient with yourself as you move through this journey. You will get there, and you will continue to evolve into the best version of yourself.

With that said, it is very important to note that once you start to see change, that you must continue to evolve because in life, we should always be striving to be better...and remember, nobody is ever perfect.

Below, I have noted things that I continue to do in order to remain grounded and aware of old patterns when they start to sneak up.

Suggested Tools to Help you Continue your Journey,

- ✓ Continue working with a coach/spiritual coach.
- ✓ Practice mindfulness and being present.
- ✓ Move your body – mindful walks, Yoga, weightlifting.
- ✓ Continue being aware of your actions and avoid reverting to old patterns.
- ✓ Continue challenging yourself by taking uncomfortable action.
- ✓ Find something that give you a purpose.
- ✓ Try and eat clean and avoid excessive alcohol.
- ✓ Stay organized (clutter can be overwhelming).
- ✓ Get creative and explore hobbies that make you happy.
- ✓ It's ok to treat yourself (massage, spa, facials etc.)
- ✓ Meditation/guided meditation (this can be challenging; however, the benefits are incredible).
- ✓ When emotions arise, don't suppress them, deal with them and let them go.
- ✓ Let your inner child out, dance, sing, move, and have fun.
- ✓ Put your thoughts and feelings on paper by journaling.
- ✓ Set goals for yourself.

Your Next Step

Awareness and knowledge are the first steps - but true change happens when you have the tools and support to break old patterns. You don't realize how much inner strength and perseverance you have until you have reached a certain point in your journey where you look back and think, I'm one tough woman. With the right amount of dedication, self-love, and guidance, you can, and you will reach a point where you are able to say no without guilt, feel loved for who you truly are, and create boundaries that protect your energy. This is exactly what I help women create inside my Course & Coaching Programs.

Sending lots of Love

Mel xoxo