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The C.D.R.* Contract

- Whereas, I, suffer from chronic low self-esteem,
- Whereas, it is difficult for me to like or love myself with any consistency,
- Whereas, I am often unable or unwilling to give myself the love and nurturing I need,
- Whereas, I do not feel particularly worthy of love and attention,
- Whereas, I have little experience with unconditional love given to me,
- Whereas, I believe that you are inherently more worthy than I

Be it henceforth, be noted that the undersigned agree to the following stipulations of our relationship:

On my part,

- 1) I will love and give to you without hesitation,
- 2) I will sacrifice my own energy, time, health, and well being to serve your needs,
- 3) I will ignore to the best of my ability any signs of negative behavior by you towards me,
- 4) I will forgive you any transgressions upon your part, no matter how severe or how frequently they occur,
- 5) I will communicate my needs to you carefully or even suppress them so as not to cause you any anger or upset,

On your part,

- 1) You agree to love me and give to me so that I may fleetingly feel the sense of worth that I do not otherwise possess,
- 2) And, you agree to reciprocate in kind the quality and quantity of love and attention that I give to you.

Date: Always @ Forever Signature of C.D. : _____.

However, if you were to betray me (at least in my eyes) by not returning my love and attention with your love and attention in equal kind, I will (after giving you many many chances against the advice of my relatives and friends and my better judgment) I will turn on you with all the intensity and anger of the betrayed. I will have the REVENGE OF THE CO!

*Co-Dependent Relationship

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The C.D.R. Contract

The Co-Dependent Relationship Contract

- explanation -

The Co-Dependent Relationship Contract is an implicit contract that some people (w/ co-dependent tendencies) tend to invoke with the significant people in their lives. Co-dependent individuals tend to have low self-esteem and have difficulty nurturing or loving themselves. When others praise them, they have trouble internalizing the praise, believing themselves to be unworthy of it. Unable to take credit for their accomplishments, character, or contributions to the family or community, they believe other people are inherently more worthy. As a result, they are fundamentally unable not only to accept validation, but also to give to themselves the validation they need. The implicit Co-Dependent Relationship Contract is an attempt to gain the nurturing and validation co-dependent individuals are unable to provide for themselves.

With the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract, the Co-Dependent commits him/herself wholeheartedly to unconditionally give love, attention, energy, and more to his/her target (love interest, students, family, friends, clients, and so forth). The Co-Dependent will continue to do this despite sometimes overwhelming and debilitating physical, emotional, and psychological costs. Even as this energy is often unappreciated, under-appreciated, or ignored... even as the target individual(s) may be hurtful and negative towards the Co-Dependent, the Co-Dependent continues to give. Occasionally and very carefully, the Co-Dependent may bring up the inequity or openly begrudge his/her treatment by the target. For the most part he/she tends to suppress his/her upset for fear of provoking anger or rejection by the target.

The Co-Dependent expects that the target will, according to the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract, somehow fully recognize and appreciate all that the Co-Dependent is giving to him/her and then fully reciprocate in kind, quality, and quantity of loving energy. When this happens, then the Co-Dependent hopes to find some fleeting sense of love and worth. Unfortunately, the target never fully appreciates extent and depth of loving energy sent to him/her. He/she certainly does not appreciate the desperation and neediness underlying the energy. And, even if and when the target does reciprocate, the target never reciprocates with a perfect unconditional quality. If the Co-Dependent is filled with reciprocal love from the target, the effect is only transitory. In the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract, the date is "Always & Forever" because the need is never ending. The Co-Dependent's neediness and self-doubt is too severe for him/her to take the validation and build upon it in order to sustain him/herself. The Co-Dependent will then demand more love, time, energy, and symbols of validation.

In addition, there is only one signature space on the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract- the signature of the Co-Dependent. The target individual(s) of the Contract **are not even aware of the terms**... the expectations of the Contract, much less having committed him/herself or themselves to it! The target never has "signed on" to the Contract. Yet, the Co-Dependent holds the target to its terms.



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The fine print of the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract holds a secretive and punitive clause. When after repeated disappointments and a deepening sense of betrayal caused by the target's failure to comply with the unknown terms of the Contract (giving the target many chances that he/she is unaware are being given!), the Co-Dependent will eventually be filled with an intense self-righteous rage against the target. The Co-Dependent will then feel completely justified to vindictively punish the target for his/her betrayal. The Revenge of the CO!

The Co-Dependent Relationship is fundamentally unhealthy and the Co-Dependent Relationship Contract is fundamentally flawed. Loving and giving to others does not substitute for loving and giving to oneself. Compulsively taking care of others while denying ones own needs will not result in others in meeting your needs. This type of giving is actually a "purchasing" of nurturing and validation from other people. It is not truly altruistic. Altruistic giving and caring does not expect or demand appreciation or reciprocal action. Betrayal and bitterness is inconsistent with altruism. Betrayal can only come with an investment failing to give an expected return. Healthy people give with an open heart and if they have expectations, they are clear and appropriate ones. Healthy people's self-esteem rises with the act of giving as they are true to their own values and expectations versus their self-esteem rising because of the appreciation coming from those who have received their kindness.

Do not sign yourself to a Co-Dependent Relationship Contract. Do not hold your intimate relationships to the terms of a Co-Dependent Relationship Contract- they did not "sign" it and have no idea of the expectations. Learn to love and nurture yourself. No one else can love and nurture you in the manner and to the degree that you require. If you do not do it, no one else can do it for you. Others can help, but it is up to you in the beginning... and in the end.