

Reality

From ***Facing Codependence*** by Pia Mellody, Andrea Miller, & J. Keith Miller

What is it?

- Each individual has their own unique way of interpreting life
- Reality comes from within
- Reality is shaped by our history and the way we respond to the environment
- Two people can experience the same event
 - Both have different thoughts and feelings about the event
 - Both decide to take different actions in response to the event
- **The Four Areas** of our Reality
 - **THINKING:** Understanding how we think and give meaning to sensory input
 - **FEELING:** Recognizing and experiencing our emotions
 - **BEHAVIOR:** What we do and don't do; how it impacts others.
 - **BODY:** How we look and how our bodies function

Can you own it?

- Codependents often say that they don't know who they are
- Being aware of the four areas of our Reality gives us a sense of who we are
- The Inner Journey is about accurately experiencing and sharing your personal environment
- Difficulty owning your reality means
 - Struggling to experience who you are, and share that with others
 - This can occur in any or all of the four areas (thinking, feeling behavior, body)
 - We try to convince others of who we are (change their reality about us)
 - We try to control what others think to fulfill someone else's expectations
- Owning our reality is on a gradient.
 - We may not know our reality or we may know it, but we are not able to share it; or we may know our reality and be able to share it regardless of what others may think.
 - Where we are at on the gradient may depend on the situation that we are in or the people we are interacting with

What is the goal?

- Definition of a healthy, mature adult:
 - A person who can share their reality with another person without judgement or a need to fix, change, or teach anything
- We accomplish this by learning to acknowledge, own, express, and support our reality
- We learn to accept others without judgment.

Negative Control

- Our frustration and confusion as codependents stems primarily from our attempts to control the reality of others and from letting others control our reality.
- Negative control of reality happens when
 - I give myself permission to determine for another person what he or she should look like, think, feel, or do.
 - I allow someone else to determine what I should look like, think, feel, or do.
- Words of negative control include **should** (guilt trips), **always, never, need**.
- The opposite of negative control is giving choices to another person.

Reasons we refrain from telling others who we are

- Fear of rejection
- We are not sure who we are or what we want to say
- We have been inhibited and controlled by family (or family rules)
- We believe it is NOT okay to be who we are
- We don't like ourselves
- We don't trust our thoughts
- We don't trust our feelings
- We don't think our opinions are valuable
- We don't think we have the right to say no
- We are not sure what we need or want
- We feel guilty about our needs and wants
- We feel ashamed of our problems
- We don't trust our ability to identify problems

Reality Tools

- Be aware
 - Are others wanting to change your reality or are you wanting to change another's reality? Did you give another permission to share their thoughts?
- Claim it
 - Learn to surface, own, express, and support your own reality by becoming aware of your body, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors
- Own it
 - Where are you at on the gradient and how do you strengthen your sense of reality by bringing your reality into your awareness then expressing your reality to others
- Practice
 - Allowing others to have their own reality even when it conflicts with your reality (about yourself)
- TRUE – NOT TRUE - QUESTIONABLE
 - Use a situation that you are dealing with, and ask yourself questions to find the truth of the situation (this may require a safe person to help give you perspective)
 - The question you ask yourself is **Is it True, Not True, or Questionable that ...**

Group Courtesies

- We ask you to share, but no one should feel pressured to participate and may pass.
- Look on the group sessions as a place for everyone to process their options, and not just a venting place for yourself. Limit your sharing so that others in the group will be able to share.
- Try to share from the heart as honestly as you can. You can cry, laugh, be angry in the group, without the fear of condemnation from others.
- Please do not sit in judgement on another group member or verbally attack another group member.
- Please...NO CROSS TALK. Cross talk occurs when individuals speak out of turn and interrupt one another. The group is disrupted, and it loses its focus of respect for the member whose turn it is to speak.
- Avoid offering suggestions or methods of fixing. We are here to listen, to support, and to be supported by each other in the group, not to give advice. Please save any questions until after the group is dismissed.
- Speak in the "I" form instead of "we", "they", or "you." This helps us take responsibility for our feelings and accept them as being valid. Examples: "I believe....," rather than "They say...." "I felt angry that....," rather than "She made me so angry...."
- We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting.

Group Questions

- Which of these would you statements you most relate to?
 - I don't know my reality and therefore can't share it
 - I know my reality but can't/won't share it
 - I know my reality and share it regardless of what others think
- What part of your reality is hardest for you to own?
 - Whites tend to struggle with owning their feelings
 - Blues tend to struggle with owning their thoughts
 - Reds tend to struggle with owning their behaviors
 - Yellows tend to struggle with owning their choices
- Share a example of positive/negative control you experienced this week