

# Reality

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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 ...**