

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 ...**