

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND CODEPENDENCY

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit, we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolations.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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HAPPINESS – THE LAST END OF MAN





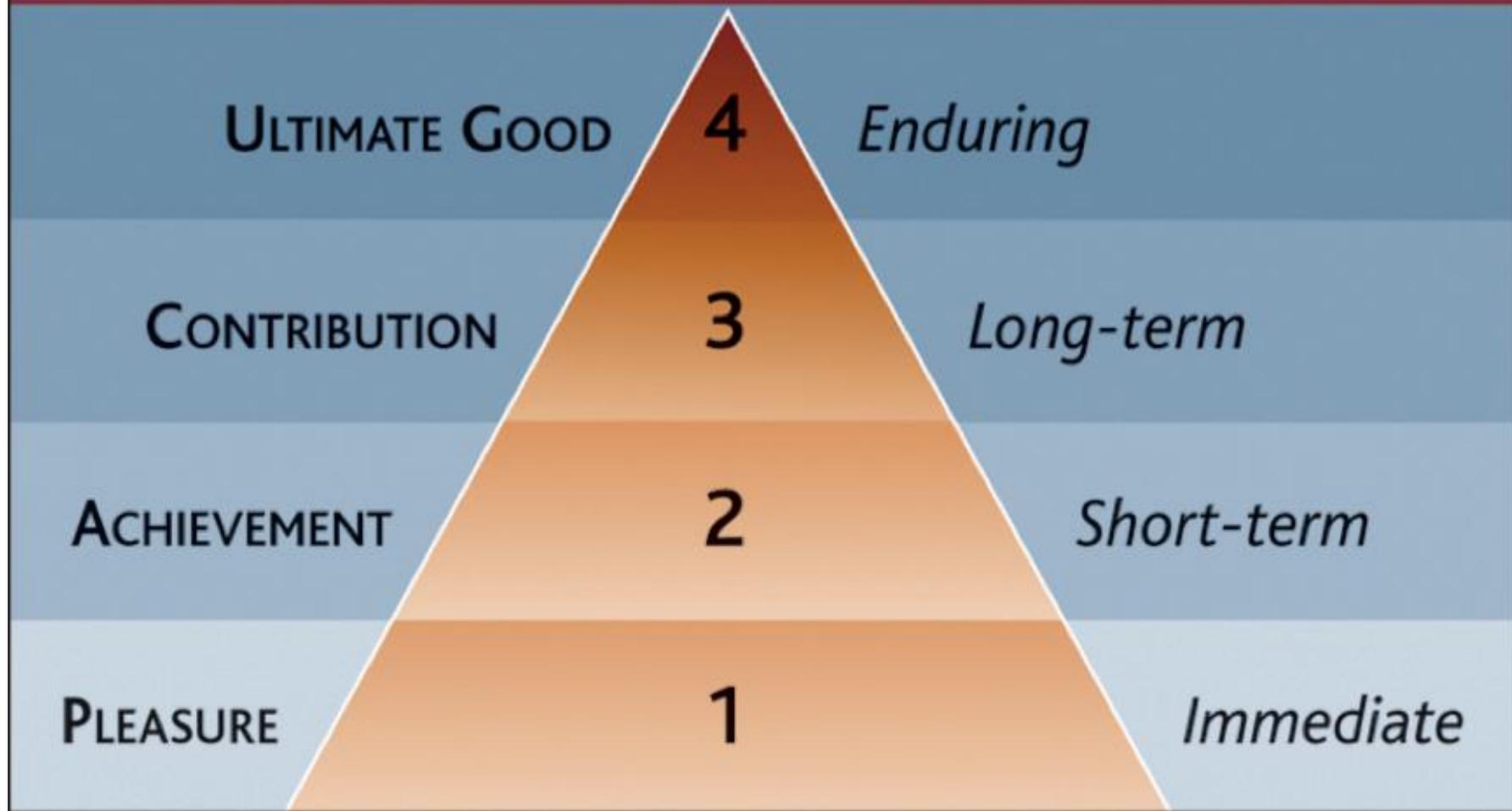
Aristotle defined happiness as the one thing you can choose for itself – everything else is chosen for the sake of happiness.

If Aristotle is correct, this one concept, “happiness” is at the root of every decision we make and every action we perform and therefore it determines whether we think our lives have meaning, whether we are going somewhere, whether we are successful, whether we are worth something (to ourselves), whether life is lived to the full, and whether life is worth living.

Inasmuch as this concept can influence our whole identity and purpose in life, it will probably influence the kind of friends we make, the person we want to marry, the career we pursue, the clubs to which we belong, and just about everything else of relevance.

- Perhaps the most general definition of happiness is, “the fulfillment of desire” (whether that desire be superficial or sublime).
- Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to discover what our major desires are – what drives us; what we yearn for; what we seek for satisfaction and fulfillment.
- Aristotle noticed that what you make as your dominant definition of happiness, will in fact become your purpose in life. If you live your life according to how you understand “happiness” this then will become your identity who you are, your self definition.
- Throughout the centuries philosophers (and later psychologists) have elucidated four major kinds of desire (and therefore four major kinds of happiness).

The Four Levels of Happiness™



The Effects of Happiness

As you move up the levels of happiness from level 1 to level 4, the effects of happiness become more pervasive, enduring and deep.

- **Pervasive** – The effects are going beyond yourself....instead of the good effect lodging inside of you, it manifests itself outside to other people; family, friends and community.
- **Enduring** – The effects last longer. Level 1 doesn't last very long...level 2 lasts longer than level 1 etc. Moving up the levels of happiness, the effects last longer, they are spiritualized.
- **Deep** -- Moving up the levels of happiness, the depth of your experience of happiness increases. You begin to use the highest powers of your intelligence, creativity and spirituality. The emphasis will be on principles, ideals, moral reasoning, empathy and love.

Why Not Just Live in Level 4?

Levels 1 and 2

- Immediate Gratification -- you get satisfied right away.
- More Intensity – physical and ego satisfaction are intense.
- Surface Apparent – Superficial, doesn't require intelligence or reflective thought.

Levels 3 and 4

Need Discipline, Patience and Virtue ... have to give up Immediate gratification, intensity and surface appearance in order to attain things that are pervasive, enduring and deep.

Level 4

Transcendent Happiness

Everyone of us is a transcendent being with a spiritual soul. We are naturally religious and seek God. We are destined for something greater than this world alone.

We have 5 Transcendental desires for perfect and unconditional:

1. Truth
2. Love
3. Justice-Goodness
4. Beauty
5. Being-Home

Transcendent Happiness is found in the Spiritual World.

THE TWO DIMENSIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD –GOD AND NEIGHBOR



The Vertical Dimension (God) is the primary dimension that provides the foundational principles to operate in the Horizontal Dimension.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD

1. There is a God and you're not it.
2. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe you're not.
3. God loves you unconditionally.
4. Your value as a person is based on #3 above, not on what you do, how you look, what you possess, your social status or what other people think of you, including family.

Interpersonal Relationships

- A healthy sense of self based on Spiritual Principles allows for the possibility of building healthy relationships with others.
- Unfortunately most people are unaware or deny these Spiritual Principles and therefore lack a true sense of self, thus they struggle with healthy interpersonal relationships.
- The primary character defect that underlies this problem is Pride (our desire to be “God”) and therefore exercise a misuse of Power and Control over others.

POWER AND CONTROL -- CODEPENDENCY

- Codependency is an emotional and behavioral condition that affects an individual's ability to have a healthy, mutually satisfying relationships. It is also known as the "relationship addiction" because people afflicted with codependency often form or maintain dysfunctional relationships that are one-sided, emotionally destructive and/or abusive.
- A codependent will either look to control or be controlled by another person.
- We live in a society that fosters codependency. Codependent relationships are commonplace and prevalent in families (spouse, parents, children and siblings), amongst friends and at the workplace.

POOR BOUNDARIES

- Boundaries are sort of an imaginary line between you and others.
- It divides up what's yours and somebody else's, and that applies not only to your body, money, and belongings, but also to your feelings, thoughts and needs.
- That's especially where codependents get into trouble. They have blurry or weak boundaries. They feel responsible for other people's feelings and problems or blame their own problems on someone else.



PEOPLE - PLEASING

- It is also known as “human respect” We all want to be liked by other people; the question is on what terms? People pleasers don’t consider their own self-worth or identity, but look to surrender all sense of self to receive the passing approval of others.
- People pleasers oftentimes don’t have any personal boundaries because they are solely interested in being liked by someone else, so they can’t afford to establish a contrary position to those whom they seek to please.
- Codependents usually have a hard time saying “No” to anyone. They go out of their way and sacrifice their own needs to accommodate other people.



CARETAKING

- The “Mommy syndrome” is another effect of poor boundaries. People feel a need to solve everyone else’s problem to the point that you give up yourself in the process.
- It’s natural to feel empathy and sympathy for someone, but codependents start putting other people ahead of themselves. In fact, they need to help and might feel rejected if another person doesn’t want help.
- Moreover, they keep trying to help and fix the other person, even when that person clearly isn’t taking their advice.



PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

- It is important to distinguish healthy social influence from psychological manipulation. Healthy social influence occurs between most people, and is part of the give and take of constructive relationships.
- In psychological manipulation, one person is used for the benefit of another. The manipulator deliberately creates an imbalance of power, and exploits the victim to serve his or her agenda.
- Emotional manipulation is a method of using words, body language and behavior with the intention to seize power, control, benefits and/or privileges at the victim's expense.

EXAMPLES OF MANIPULATIVE BEHAVIOUR

1) Minimizing

“I am feeling so stressed today” (hoping for sympathy and support). Manipulators response: “You don’t know what stress is!”. If you get upset, you will invariably be told “I was only joking!”. There is no validation, empathy or support.

2) Never accepting blame

Manipulative people blame everyone else, they very rarely accept their part to play in life situations. You trip over their shoes/bag etc. at night as they have placed them too near the doorway. When you fall over them you are blamed by the manipulator because you should watch where you are going or you should have turned on the light (the fact that they left their belongings where people walk is not considered or mentioned).

3) Non-verbal signs of manipulative behavior

Eye rolling, sighing, head shaking – these are some of the typical behaviors exhibited by a manipulator. They show disapproval or disappointment without having to say a word and leave the victim feeling shame and guilt. It is all part of the process of making another person doubt themselves – a slow-drip erosion of their confidence occurs over time.

EMOTIONAL BULLYING

- A bully is a person who uses strength or power to harm or intimidate those who are weaker. Fear and insecurity often motivates the bully's behavior, so they try to control external conditions and others as means to keep their anxious insides from spinning out of control.
- Emotional bullies push others around in a vain attempt at feeling better about themselves. Instead of hands, they use words (and volume). Instead of lunch money, they rob relationships of trust and kindness and respect and depth and maturity.



THE SILENT TREATMENT

Silent Treatment - A passive-aggressive form of emotional abuse in which displeasure, disapproval and contempt is exhibited through nonverbal gestures while maintaining verbal silence.



Belittling, Condescending and Patronizing

Belittling, Condescending and Patronizing - This kind of speech is a passive-aggressive approach to giving someone a verbal put-down while maintaining a facade of reasonableness or friendliness.

Examples of Belittling

- "Oh my dear you are looking so much better today."
- "This is far too complicated for you to understand."
- "We're all watching your progress and hoping the best for you."
- "It's nice that you have found a friend."
- "How is your therapy progressing?"
- "Aren't we pretty today?"

DENIAL

- One of the problems people face in getting help for codependency is that they're in denial about it, meaning that they don't face their problem.
- Usually they think the problem is someone else or the situation. They either keep complaining or trying to fix the other person, or go from one relationship or job to another and never own up the fact that they have a problem.



What is the proper response or solution to codependent relationships?



JESUS AND CODEPENDENCY

Dignity of the Human Person

“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

Codependency

“And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true, and care for no man; for you do not regard the position of men, but truly teach the way of God.” (Mark 12:14)

Concerning Retaliation

“You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; (Matthew 5:38-39)

Establishing Boundaries

When he had said this, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand, saying, “Is that how you answer the high priest?” Jesus answered him, “If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” (John 18:22-23)

RECOGNIZE THE FACTS

- The vast majority of people that we interact with on a daily basis including family struggle with codependency. Most are either ignorant of their codependency or are in denial.
- God loves you unconditionally. Your value as a person is immeasurable.
- Because you have value and dignity, you must assert boundaries with those who fail to respect your dignity.
- By asserting boundaries, you cease enabling those that seek to control, thereby beginning the process of identifying and healing the codependency.

