

## 12 SIGNS THAT YOU MIGHT BE CODEPENDENT

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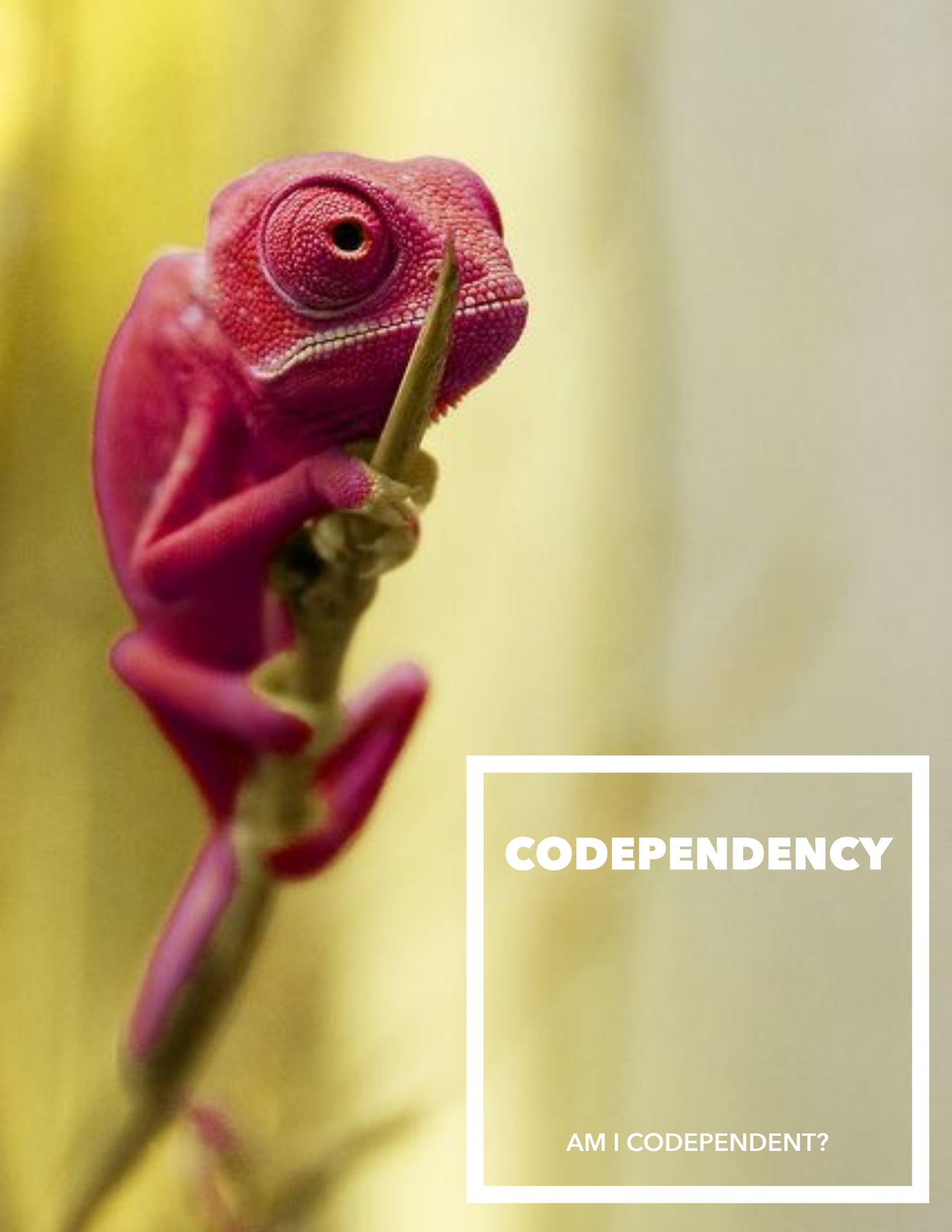
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PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT  
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# **CODEPENDENCY**

**AM I CODEPENDENT?**

**Many people are codependent, and the likelihood increases if you were raised in a dysfunctional family or had an ill parent. The following is a list of symptoms of codependency but you needn't have them all to qualify as a codependent. Though researchers have found that these symptoms get worse if left untreated, the good news is that they're reversible**

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**Low Self-Esteem:** Feeling that you're not good enough or comparing yourself to others are signs of low self-esteem. The tricky thing about self-esteem is that some people think highly of themselves, but it's only a disguise—they actually feel unlovable or inadequate. Underneath, usually hidden from consciousness, are feelings of shame. Guilt and perfectionism often go along with low self-esteem. If everything is perfect, you don't feel bad about yourself.

**People-Pleasing:** It's fine to want to please someone you care about, but codependents usually don't think they have a choice. Saying "No" causes them anxiety. Some codependents have a hard time saying "No" to anyone. They go out of their way and sacrifice their own needs to accommodate other people.

**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 on someone else. Some codependents have rigid boundaries. They are closed off and withdrawn making it hard for other people to get close to them. Sometimes, people flip back and forth between having weak boundaries and having rigid ones.

**Reactivity:** A consequence of poor boundaries is that you react to everyone's thoughts and feelings. If someone says

something you disagree with, you either believe it or become defensive. You absorb their words, because there's no boundary. With a boundary, you'd realize it was just their opinion and not a reflection of you and not feel threatened by disagreements.

**Care-taking:** Another effect of poor boundaries is that if someone else has a problem, you want to help them to the point that you give up yourself. It's natural to feel empathy and sympathy for someone, but codependents start putting other people ahead 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.

**Control:** Control helps codependents feel safe and secure. Everyone needs some control over events in their life. You wouldn't want to live in constant uncertainty and chaos, but for codependents, control limits their ability to take risks and share their feelings. Sometimes they have an addiction that either helps them loosen up, like alcoholism, or help them hold their feelings down, like workaholism, so that they don't feel out of control. Codependents also need to control those close to them, because they need other people to behave in a certain way to feel okay. In fact, people-pleasing and care-taking can be used to control and manipulate people. Alternatively, codependents are bossy and tell you what you should or shouldn't do. This is a violation of someone else's boundary.

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