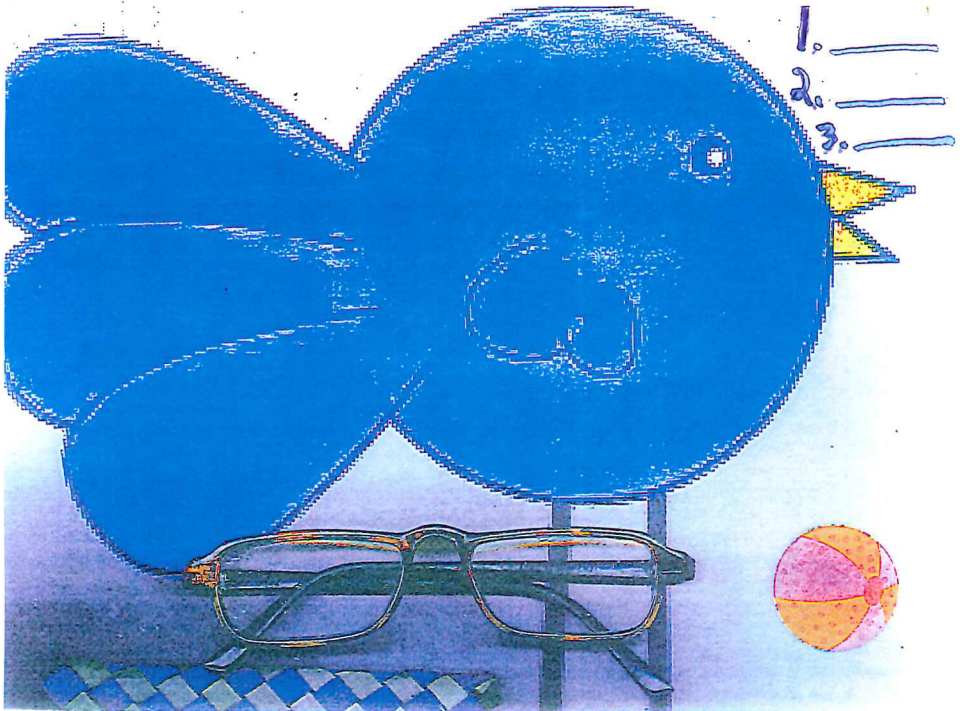


## Caring Boundaries: Codependency

### Live Better Series: “I can live a vital and meaningful life.”

Tom Lavin MFT, LCADC, ACATA, Marque Munger, MHT1/Northern Nevada Adult Mental Health Services



**Bluebird:** I can live a vital, meaningful life. And, I accept I will sometimes have pain, and other times have joy, in my life.

**New Pair of Glasses:** to change my life, and grow in wisdom, I need to look at things differently.

**Beach ball:** I need to stop avoiding my life by pushing thoughts and feeling underwater. By being mindful, I will let my thoughts and feelings come up and accept them for what they are.

**Finger trap:** It is healthy for me to “accept what is as it is”. When I struggle against “what is”, I trap myself and cause suffering for myself. Accepting does not necessarily mean I like it.

**1, 2, 3:** I can live a vital and meaningful life by choosing and committing to values that are important to me—NIKE Therapy “Just do it!”, make a plan, don’t procrastinate, take action. Letting go and letting be is also a way of taking positive action.

It’s not always easy to maintain loving, caring relationships.

When someone we love has a crisis or chronic physical or mental illness or an addiction it’s sometimes very difficult to have the wisdom to know

-- When and how to step in and help

--when it’s the most loving and effective thing to not be involved, to let go

Have you ever had this dilemma before, or has your family had this dilemma with you—whether the loving thing is to get involved or to let go?

Explain

---

---

How can it hurt the one we love if we step in and help too much?

---

---

What does it mean to be over-responsible/over controlling?

\_\_\_\_\_ Can you  
give an example from your life? \_\_\_\_\_

What does it mean—to let go, and let the person work things out themselves and experience the consequences of the behavior \_\_\_\_\_

Can you give a positive or negative example of this from your life?

---

The following are “red flags” that you may be involved in a “codependent relationship pattern” : circle ones that apply to you, and discuss. (with permission of Dr. Timen Cermack)

--excessive worry about the person you care about

--trying to control the behavior of the one you care about

--Feeling responsible for that person’s behavior      --feeling guilty about not doing enough

--Taking over that person’s responsibilities      --covering up what is going on with them

--not taking care of your own needs, but spending time and energy helping others get their needs met

-- Often feeling overwhelmed or inadequate, feeling fatigued

--making excuses for the person you care for

--Frequent anxiety      --frequent sadness      --frequently recuing him/her

Healthy self-care: 9 healthy caring strategies. Please check off strategies you will continue or add.

1. Continue to be responsible, but let go of trying to control
2. Ask for help from others
3. Set boundaries for yourself and communicate this with the person you are helping
4. Have to courage to let go...when appropriate, let the person experience the consequences of their behavior...and let go of any guilt you may have about doing this
5. Accept and be at peace with your limitations
6. Develop a strong plan of your own self-care(physical, emotional, spiritual)
7. Forgive yourself for mistakes you have made
8. Forgive others for mistakes they’ve made
9. Accept that you can change yourself; you cannot change others—maybe influence them, but change—no.