

BETTER LIVING FOR TODAY

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Resource Library

Tune in Monday through Friday on the following stations to listen to the Meier Clinics Radio program:

KFIA-710 AM — Sacramento
7:30-8:00 p.m.
KGNW-820 AM — Seattle
9:30-10:00 p.m.
KKLA-99.5 FM — Los Angeles
11:00-11:30 p.m.
KWRD-100.7 FM — Dallas
9:00-9:30 p.m.
WABS-780 AM — Baltimore/DC
1:00-1:30 p.m.
WORD-101.5 FM — Pittsburgh
2:30-3:00 a.m.
WPIT-730 AM — Pittsburgh
11:00-11:30 a.m.
WTSJ-1050 AM — Cincinnati
1:00-1:30 p.m.
WYLL-1160 AM — Chicago
8:00-8:30 p.m.

Jan. 3-4 — Dr. Meier will be speaking with Dr. Dobson on the topic of *Breaking Free from What Ails You*. Check www.family.org for stations and air times where you live.



Jan. 5-8 — Dr. Meier is a guest speaker at Awakening held at The Cloister at Sea Island, GA. For more information, go to www.awakeninginc.org.

Jan. 16 — Dr. Meier will be appearing on Jerry Rose's television program on TLN today to discuss

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Paul Meier, M.D.

Codependent Roles in Families

By Paul Meier, MD

I never heard of codependency until I went into psychiatry training in the 1970's. I have written over seventy books since 1976, but my first book on codependency wasn't until 1989 when I wrote *Love is a Choice* (Thomas Nelson, publisher), which sold over a million copies because it "hit a nerve".

In 1993, I wrote a sequel to it, *Don't Let Jerks Get the Best of You*. I discussed this book on the Oprah Winfrey Show that summer, and again it hit a nerve. Dr. Robert Shuler invited me to speak on it at the Crystal Cathedral, but he wouldn't let me use the word "jerk" because he likes to always be positive, so I called my talk, "Dealing With Difficult People."

So what is codependency? In *Love is a Choice*, we defined codependence as "an addiction to people, behavior or things. Codependency is the fallacy of trying to control interior feelings by controlling people, things and events on the outside."

It shouldn't surprise anyone that the very best examples and definitions of codependency were written down thousands of years ago in Scripture. King David was a man whom God called "a man after my own heart." Yet, David, by far, wasn't perfect. He was afraid to face the rejection of his own sons, so he spoiled them and they became womanizers. One of them (Absalom) even tried to kill his father. David didn't say "no" to his lust for Bathsheba and murdered her husband to protect his fear of embarrassment. David had many codependency issues.

In our Day Program, our team and I do individual and group therapy six hours a day for three weeks, searching for these areas of codependency. A typical case was a beautiful movie star I treated for depression when she was 35 years old and recovering from her fifth divorce. All five of her husbands were alcoholics or drug addicts. All of them ran around on her and they all physically abused her.

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If you don't understand codependency, you may be asking yourself, "How could a beautiful, rich movie actress have such horribly bad luck to marry five jerks in a row like that?" But as a psychiatrist who sees these cases every day, I know it is not bad luck and I also know she didn't do it on purpose either. She was severely codependent. She had a "jerk addiction;" a "broken people picker."

On the first session at the Day Program, I ask lots of questions in order to come up with an accurate diagnosis. I ask also about each patient's childhood roles growing up. Were they the family scapegoat? The favored child? The substitute father or mother? The family counselor? The substitute husband or wife (sexual abuse or non-physical, emotional incest)?

In the case of the actress, as soon as I found out about her five similar husbands, I asked her if I could guess what her childhood was like. She thought her five husbands were each nice when she married them and thought she was a victim of bad luck. When I asked her if nice Christian men ever asked her out on dates, she answered, "Yes, but they're so boring!" So I guessed about the type of childhood she might have experienced.

I guessed correctly that her mom was dependent, afraid of rejection, wanted financial security, and was too selfish to protect her daughter from dad as she was growing up. I guessed correctly that her dad was an alcoholic womanizer who was physically abusive and had repeatedly had sex with his daughter, the actress.

At first, the actress got very angry with me and walked out. But she realized I might be right and that she had a codependent need to find husbands just like her father. Her unconscious could tell who they were, even though her conscious mind used denial to avoid seeing the truth and thought she was in love with each of these "wonderful" men.

Through insight-oriented therapy, she recovered from her depression and her codependency, and she

had healthier relationships from then on.

To understand whether you are a victim who can't resist, a rescuer who can't say no, a persecutor who can't control his/her rage, or some other codependent role in your own family and relationships, I recommend you read the above-mentioned books or my latest book on this topic, entitled *Unbreakable Bonds: Practicing the Art of Loving and Being Loved* (Baker Book House, 2002).

I'll close with a look at what Galatians 6 says about codependency. The Bible seems to contradict itself in this chapter, but the Bible never does. In verse two, we read that we should bear each other's burdens. Then in verse five, we read that we should all bear our own burdens. How can we possibly do both?

Well, in the original Greek version that the Bible was written in 2000 years ago, there are actually two different words called "burdens" in English. In the Greek, we are told to each carry our own normal emotional load, but also to carry each other's "overburdens," what we are incapable of doing ourselves.

If you keep supporting an alcoholic mate, you are violating this codependency commandment. If your adult kids mooch off you because they are too lazy, you are fighting against God who is trying to help them grow up.

Remember to bear your own normal burdens and to let others carry their own normal burdens. Also remember to love enough to carry each other's overburdens and to be humble enough to ask others to carry your overburdens and "thereby fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal. 6:2)



I ask lots of questions in order to come up with an accurate diagnosis.



Dr. Meier is the cofounder of Meier Clinics and has an active practice at the clinic in Richardson, Texas. For more information about Dr. Meier and a list of the books he has written, log on to our website at www.meierclinics.org, go to Therapists, Richardson, Texas, and click on Paul Meier.

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"For I know the plans I have for you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Editor & Designer: Sandy Newport

Asst. Editor: Nancy Meier Brown

Proofing: Christine Zielinski

Contributing Writers/Information: Dr. Paul Meier, Joan Buzzard, Justin Buzzard

Subscriptions are free of charge, compliments of Meier Clinics Foundation.

Comments, suggestions, and subscription:

Write: Meier Clinics, Attn: Sandy Newport, 2100

Manchester Road, Suite 1510, Wheaton, IL 60187-4561

E-Mail: snewport@meierclinics.com

Call: 800-848-8872, x338

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^A Denotes locations with an Adolescent Intensive Outpatient program.

For more information about Meier Clinics and our services, call us toll-free at **1-888-7-CLINIC** or visit us at www.meierclinics.org

Thoughts on Grief

By Joan Buzzard, MA, LMFT

Grief, loss. . . it seems like in certain seasons of life we are surrounded by its weight more than others. A thick grey fog envelopes us, blocking our view of any beauty or color around us—changing our view of reality, altering our perceptions of what truly exists. We can't see the sun, or often even more than a few feet in front of our face, but the reality is, the sun is there all along, just above the temporary season of fog, still rising in the East and setting in the West.

Our Father's Son, Jesus, is there with us too in the thick, disorienting fog of grief, even if it doesn't feel like it and all we are aware of is the deep bone chill of loss. We relate to David as he cried out to God in Psalms, "Hear my prayer, O Lord! Listen to my cries for help! Don't ignore my tears. For I am your guest – a traveler passing through... spare me so I can smile again." (Psalm 39:12-13 NLT) We wonder if we'll ever be able to feel the warmth and experience the beauty of the sun again. Our soul is in the season of growth through loss.

One of the blessings of having the privilege to

walk with clients through their losses and grief is that I get to witness first hand their soul growth. Gradually and quite individually, our Lord ministers to broken hearts in specific and personal ways outside of any boxes we may put on the grief process in our culture. This process is not neat and tidy, it's messy and multilayered. Grief comes in unexpected and unwelcome waves of ache beyond expression. Right there, smack in the middle of the pain, is our Father's arms reaching out to transform our broken hearts.

Our brokenness mixed with his love roots us in our relationship and connection with him in ways nothing else can.

This is the ray of hope and sunshine in loss. As Gerald Sittser, in his wonderful book on grief states, "My loss joined brokenness and love together. Brokenness drove me to love, and I found a source of love that I could not find in myself. I found it in community, and in the God who creates and sustains community for broken people like me." (Page 167, *A Grace Disguised*)



It was five years ago when I was diagnosed with cancer and given a very gloomy prognosis. Only someone who thinks they are going to die can understand the overwhelming nature of potentially

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Mission Statement

Meier Clinics is committed to providing excellent mental health care services that address the whole person—physically, emotionally & spiritually.

For the past four years, Meier Clinics has provided around \$1 million annually in charitable counseling care. A large portion of this charitable care has been made possible through the generosity of individuals, organizations, and grants. By partnering together, thousands of people are receiving quality Christian counseling services that they would otherwise not be able to afford.

Many need help in finding hope and healing as the new year begins. Would you partner with us and others by making a charitable, tax-exempt donation? No gift is too small. Thank you.

I would like to be a MCF Partner by committing to a monthly gift of:

\$500 \$250 \$100

\$50 \$25 \$_____

For convenience, I am giving permission for MCF to debit my charge card monthly on the _____ day of each month until further written notice.

I am making a current donation of \$_____.

Charge my VISA MasterCard Discover Am. Express

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I would like to include MCF in my estate plans. Please call me.

Make checks payable to Meier Clinics Foundation. Mail to MCF, 2100 Manchester Road, Suite 1510, Wheaton, IL 60187-4561. You may also make donations online at www.meierclinics.org or by phone at 800-848-8872. Thank you for your generosity.

grieving everyone they love at once. That same summer my oldest son was working at a Christian Camp in Southern California where one of the visiting youth workers tragically drowned in the lake. Justin found this young man's body and was struck with the brevity of life and where our true home is. Needless to say, he thought a lot about life, death, loss, and grief that summer.

There is nothing like pain and reflection to draw the sweetness of our soul's songs right out of our hearts and on to paper. His poem about Heaven, its relational reality, was and is a comfort to my heart, mind, and soul.

God in his grace has allowed my life and ministry at Meier Clinics to continue, and I am grateful for the time and community I have experienced along the way. It's in pain and the sharing of it, that we really connect with others and especially with our Lord. I encourage you to seek and respond to the Father's loving arms, stretched out to hold you in special ways during your times of grief and loss.

Joan has worked at the Meier Clinics in Gold River, California for the past nine years, helping many who are dealing with grief issues, loss, chronic illness, life transitions, and codependency. She has been married for 28 years to the "love of my life" and has two sons, Justin and Mark who are both married "to amazing women."



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"Blue Genes."

Jan 17 — Dr. Meier will be the guest on "Midday Connections" on Moody. This is a national, live call-in program beginning at 12:00 noon Central time.

February—Dr. Meier will be featured on the Paula White Today Show some time this month. (Exact dates were not available at the time of this publication.) Log on to www.paulawhite.org for more information regarding stations and air time.

HEAVEN

The high hope of heaven thrills my soul
Enchanting pink sunsets rapture my eyes
I climb tall trees and sway in the fresh wind
I run, yes I run wild and free in the soft meadows
of my maker
I stand upon the edge of steep cliffs and deep
canyons,
Where there is no border to your glory
All seasons, all colors, all smells, all sounds, all
tastes, all sights,
All thoughts, all good feelings – all these exist at
once and forever –
Life eternal in the land of my Lord
It is not air that gives me life, but deep breaths of
your thick glory
That keeps me ever awake
Your strong and tender embrace is the food that
feeds me
Your laughter is the drink that fills me
All I want is to behold your face, to worship my
King
Each joyous moment of this immeasurable
eternity, Praise to my Jesus
Can be felt in my dance. . . seen in my eyes
It is here in heaven that I am home
I am here forever, with people from every tongue
and tribe
Eternally embraced by the warm towel of your
righteous romance
And tonight, like every night, we shall sit on the
hillside
Under the old oak tree and watch the sunset,
As you tell me of your love for me.

~ Justin Buzzard, 2000



CORPORATE OFFICE
2100 Manchester Road, Suite 1510
Wheaton, IL 60187-4561