Here is the transcript for: Codependency Recovery with AVAIYA Teacher, Dr. Rhoberta Shaler

Ande Anderson [00:00:00]:
Hello, Avaiya family. I'm Ande Anderson. My partner, Ikal, and I are teachers, mentors, and the co owners of Avaiya University. Avaiya is the creator of over a 1000 books, films, courses, teachings, and other supportive resources. Thank you so much for joining us. Our fellow teacher, doctor Roberta Shaler, is here to talk with us today about 7 codependent patterns to stop to avoid attracting toxic relationships. Welcome back to Avaiya, Roberta.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:00:27]:
Thank you so much, Ande. It's really a pleasure to be with you.

Ande Anderson [00:00:30]:
Yeah. I'm so glad that we could have another conversation here at Avaya and, let let's just dive into it. So I know this is a this is a big area of expertise for you. So so what what would you say is emotional and psychological codependency outside of the substance abuse discussion where the term kind of originated?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:00:53]:
Well, it's a couple of things, and that's a great question because we think we know. And so let's be very specific. It's when you become overly reliant on another human. When you are looking to them for your sense of self, your sense of your place in the world, for your importance, and you focus on other people's problems and feelings and needs and wants and minimize your own. So they're always getting bigger. You're always getting smaller.



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You're always leaning in, and they are always your source of supply, which puts you into imbalance. And when you make other people more important than yourself in order to feel needed and loved and worthwhile, then you can be in a codependent state.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:01:38]:
The good news is is you can cut out of it.

Ande Anderson [00:01:41]:
Awesome. Thank you. I appreciate that. Yeah. And I can totally resonate with all of what you just said as it relates to that. So so how does a person in your experience become codependent?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:01:54]:
Well, it's a very early on process in most situations. They've had modeling that shows them this is the way it is. Let's always remember. We forget this. You know, people say, oh, babies don't notice anything. Babies learn everything by watching and listening. So they are watching the model. How

do you speak? How do you stand? How do you respond to things? What's the look on your face? And then as they grow up, they continue with their brain development to take in, okay, how do you respond to something? What do you say? Does that make people happy? So when you're learning all of those things, particularly before the age of 6, 7, when you get parietal and prefrontal lobe development, you are taking in how do I fit in the world.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:02:41]:
And if I am in a home where I am told that I am the king of the castle and you have to do everything right, I am the queen of everything and you have to keep me happy. You can become codependent because you are passive. You will lean in. You will be looking to please, and you will continue in that realm. Everybody else's needs and wants are more important than yours. You've been taught that, and so the pattern continues.

Ande Anderson [00:03:12]:
Mhmm. Yeah. Absolutely. Thank you for talking a little about the origins of how we develop codependent tendencies. So so let's talk about codependency as it relates to toxic relationships. How does codependency make someone more vulnerable to toxic relationships?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:03:30]:
Well, if you're supposed to please people and that's what gets you up in the morning, you have become codependent, then a person who is toxic to you, a person I call a hijack call, you know, Andy, I trademark that term so people would stop going to Google look for clinical mental health diagnosis, and stop talking about that. Talk about the patterns, traits, behaviors, and cycles of people who are toxic to us. So hijack holes are on the lookout for people who are pre groomed to please them, then they have to do less work. So if you're pre groomed by your early experience in life, and then you are just sitting there emitting, okay. Pick me. Pick me. Please pick me. And then they come on with their love bombing and they tell you you're the best thing that ever happened to them.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:04:28]:
They can hardly wait to marry you, move in with you, or have a baby with you, and they know they love you even though they've just met you, you've got a problem. But a codependent person is like, oh, good. Somebody likes me. Somebody loves me. Somebody wants me. And, you know, I'm I'm doing it in the extreme, Andy, but that's what's the underlying piece. You may not even resonate with the, oh, somebody likes me piece. But underneath, there is a part of you that's brightening saying, oh, I can just make myself into a pretzel for this person, which they will demand, and they will demand it over time.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:05:05]:
And you will continue to evolve and actually devolve in this situation. Mhmm.

Ande Anderson [00:05:11]:
And in your experience of hijackles, do you do you think most people who are hijackles are, like, doing that grooming consciously or unconsciously?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:05:23]:
It's all they know to do. You know, that that's how they survived in the world. That's again, you go back to their first 7 years of life. What they're all about is avoiding shame. So they are going to be the ones on top of the pile. If we're looking at overt hijackles, the ones that we think of, you know, the ones that are always the smartest person in the room, the ones who are demanding attention, the ones who are very obvious. And in the case of covert hijackles, those are the ones who are always playing the victim. Nobody cares about me.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:06:00]:
None of that. So they were groomed in their early life to behave that way. And so that's, that's the dynamic. They don't actually sit around and say, let me go and find somebody who's codependent. They simply know, oh, okay. I see the dynamic. I feel the energetic difference. I observe them in space for a little while and then, got it.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:06:24]:
This is one for me to swoop in on. And there you have it. You know, that that bond that creates between the person who's looking to be chosen and the one who appears to be choosing, and therefore, we have a lack of the 3 must haves of a healthy adult relationship. We're going to have a lack of equality, a lack of reciprocity, and a lack of mutuality. And it starts right in that moment.

Ande Anderson [00:06:51]:
Yeah. Awesome. I wanna dive into, like, a little further into, like, what makes up a healthy relationship in a little bit. But before we start there, let's talk about the patterns. We talked about 7 patterns today we're gonna be looking at. So so what would you say is the number one pattern out of those 7 to

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:07:09]:
stop? The first one is people pleasing. And really understand you are not in this world to live up to the expectations of another adult when you're an adult. You are here to be fully realized, to be you, to know who you are, and to know what you value, to know what you believe, and to express it every day. And if somebody is coming in and squashing that and wanting you to be like them or wanting you to be like they want you to be, that's the number one problem. Stop trying to please another person and get into balance between pleasing yourself and pleasing others, then we have healthy balance. So that is the number one big red flag. If you are a people pleaser, you are going to just be a sitting duck for a hijack all to swoop down and take up. Mhmm.

Ande Anderson [00:08:07]:
So, like, in the moment, you know, I I personally struggle with people pleasing also as I'm sure most people watching do. Like, let's say someone is in the moment and they know, like, what they're doing is people pleasing or what they're about to do is please and they're aware of it. My experience sometimes I get I like the emotion of it. It's like it's difficult. It's difficult to

change that pattern in the moment. So, obviously, well worth it, but difficult. So any any thoughts for for that for people who struggle with that shift?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:08:39]:
1st and foremost, use your posture, use your breath, use your gaze pattern. Sit up, bring your shoulders back, lift your chest. You'll take up more space. You'll breathe better. And then lift your gaze pattern. People who are codependent tend to have this pattern. So they're looking up at the world just a little bit. These things will change.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:09:04]:
When you breathe more deeply, it will change. So start with your physiology. Start with feeling how different that is when you actually open your chest and take your shoulders back a bit. You get your chin parallel to the floor, not up, not down, and you breathe more deeply. Really good start.

Ande Anderson [00:09:26]:
I love it. Thank you. I appreciate that, tip on how to do that. So so let's talk. We talked about people pleasing. Now what about the other six patterns, Lou? Can we dive into those?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:09:36]:
Oh, absolutely. Number 2 is stop enabling. Now everybody thinks they know what enabling is, and I created a definition of that, which I'd like to share with you because here's what it is. It's when you usually step in to solve or fix or excuse or rationalize or justify or make the consequences go away for the poor choices of another human. Now we're talking adult relationships here, not children. But if you are truly the person who jumps in, let me fix you. Let me advise you. Let me help you.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:10:15]:
Oh, you poor dear. You made a mistake. Okay. Let me take care of the consequences. You are in a codependent relationship and you are enabling it to continue. You're enabling the other human. And I don't believe that's

loving, Andy. I don't think it's loving to allow other people to be unloving to us.



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Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:10:37]:
And it is really important to not be enabling the poor behaviors of others. Mhmm. Got it. Yeah. That's an important one. The next one is connected to the people pleasing, but really understand that you are not here to to live up to the expectations of other humans. Yes. There's give and take.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:11:00]:
Yes. Of course, there is that item that I talk about of reciprocity. That's not a scorecard. That's not a tit for tat. It's just, okay. I do things for you. You do things for me. We have a nice balance.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:11:13]:
We feel safe in it. We feel we can trust it. And that's really important. But if I am putting out vibes or feeling myself that I'm in a down position to other humans and I should be doing whatever they want to please them, I'm

gonna stay in that place and I'm not gonna be happy. So stop living up to the expectations of others when they that is a persistent pattern. Mhmm. Gotcha. Really important.

Ande Anderson [00:11:41]:
It also reminds me of, like, so many people who are co have codependent tendencies also struggle with resentment. Right? If we if we continue to like people please and enable and not take care of ourselves and not all those kinds of things, a lot of us can then get into being upset and resentful towards other people, You know, whether they've asked us to do anything or not. I I noticed in myself, it's my codependent tendencies are so strong that, like, even if someone outside of me is not, like, there's no they don't have an expectation. I think they do.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:12:16]:
Well, that's true. And let's think about the credit card analogy. Okay. You you have cash. You spend the cash. You need to keep spending because the person is demanding more and more. So you'll take out your credit card. Oh, great.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:12:34]:
I can continue to pay. Then the bill comes and you can't pay the bill. And now, like, that's not fair. And then the next bill comes and you got all this interest on it, and it just keeps getting worse and worse and less and less fair. That's what happens when you go too far down that road of not having that balance, not seeing the relationship for it must be imbalance. Mhmm. Now when we don't do that and we get out of our credit card and we have interest, that leads directly to the resentment that you spoke of. And then if you've been raised to be truly codependent, when you feel the resentment, what do you do? Feel guilty.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:13:19]:
You say to yourself, oh, I'm not a very good person. I'm terrible. I shouldn't feel that way. Oh, you know, and then you put it all on yourself again. And it's a downward spiral. Let's lift that up. Mhmm.

Ande Anderson [00:13:33]:
Yeah. Yeah. That is a a very, yep, very common pattern there. So where where were we? We got through what? 3 or 4 so far?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:13:41]:
Yeah. This is number 4, which is stop the perfectionism. If you were raised to be codependent, you may very well have that comorbidity of perfectionism that you never think you'll be good enough because you're not perfect enough. And beyond that, that you're not perfect enough in every single human you know's eyes. So the perfectionism goes well beyond doing something well or doing something perfectly or keeping a perfect house or getting perfect scores or grades. It is I will never be good enough because I cannot please everybody. And, you know, you can't. Some people are the red queen and Alice in Wonderland.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:14:27]:
No matter what you do, it's gonna be off with your head. Right? So come to understand that that is not going to happen in this lifetime, and you must stop the perfectionism pursuit.

Ande Anderson [00:14:43]:
Mhmm. Yeah. That is that is so so resonates with me for sure. And and, yes, just like you said, a co comorbidity of codependency. Absolutely.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:14:54]:
Yeah. So the next one is stop over accommodating. And you need to have a balance between compassion for others and compassion for yourself. And, again, that goes back to the credit card analogy. All these things are deeply connected. But if you are extending yourself too long in compassion for others and finding it becoming a lifestyle, which is often what happens to codependence, then that that balance sheet is going to be way off. And for many people who have been raised to be codependent, it's a big happy learning to say, I'm allowed to have compassion for myself. I'm allowed to say when I'm tired and I can rest.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:15:37]:
I'm allowed to say I don't wanna go when I don't wanna go. I don't have to give a reason for why I don't want to do what you want me to do. I can simply say no. It's a big moment.

Ande Anderson [00:15:50]:
Mhmm. Yes. It is. That's another of those, like, shifting the pattern in the moment to be able to to stop. Gotcha.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:15:58]:
Yeah. And then stop over delivering. Learn to say that no. Learn to say no and no. It's a full sentence. You know, Andy, I'll give you an example back in the day, and I'm certainly a long time ago when I learned this because I was quite young and the Tupperware parties were really big deal. Everybody's having Tupperware parties. Now one thing that didn't compute for me, Andy, was you go to a Tupperware party, they tell you it'll last a lifetime, then how many pieces of this stuff do I need? Right? I just could never figure that out.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:16:36]:
So to use that example, people will continue to invite me to Tupperware parties, and I didn't wanna go. First of all, I don't like dropping clothespins and bottles and playing games, but I did not need more Tupperware. So I realized that what was really happening for people who didn't say no to these things when they didn't want to go is that they were thinking that I have to come up with a reason that you will buy why I don't want to do what you want me to do. Right. And clearly, that is not logical. So learn that no is a complete sentence said with a smile. And if you want to extend it, you could say no. I I don't care to do that.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:17:22]:
Maybe we could do something else. And in the case of the Tupperware parties, I got to say, thank you. I have enough Tupperware to last me. I

really am pleased that you reached out for me. And if you would like to get together sometime and have coffee, I'd love to visit with you.

Ande Anderson [00:17:38]:
Mhmm.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:17:40]:
And so just know that no is a complete sentence, and sometimes, Andy, it has to be.

Ande Anderson [00:17:47]:
Yeah. Yeah. I love that because I I know in myself, like, I notice my tendencies to justify a no. Right? If I'm gonna say no or set a boundary or whatever, the immediate reaction that's about to come out of my mouth afterwards is some kind of justification. Right? Some kind of why why I answered in that way. That's such a a knee jerk reaction.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:18:09]:
Well, I had someone say to me the other day, because I have clients all over the world and I just happened to catch it when she said it. And she said, I don't wanna do that if that's alright with you. And I was, what do you mean? You're going to qualify your no right then? Like, what if I if I have any power and particularly if I'm a high hijackle and you say to me if it's alright with me and no, it's not alright with me. I need you to do what I want you to do, and I don't care how inconvenient or unpleasant it is for you. So there she was and we caught that pattern and we spent a whole hour just talking about where that pattern came from and how to release, erase, and replace. Right? Because that's what I teach people to do, release, erase, or or replace. Gotcha. Whatever these old patterns are and there was one for her.

Ande Anderson [00:19:02]:
Yeah. Yeah. And like another one I think of is, and I particularly see this in women more than men is just like apologizing for everything.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:19:11]:
Well, I'm Canadian. And so we apologize a lot. You know? And so when I moved to the United States, I've really became very aware of that. Okay. And it's just it's not because we feel less than, it's because we happen to be super polite, you know, like we're always in that situation of how is it for you? You know, can I make it easier for you? And so it, it is a big deal to learn, to not be apologizing all the time, and not be self deprecating. I also had another client this week, and I just happened to have that moment when I caught her. And she said, you know, I'm really interested in this topic and I bought a book about it. And then she went, I know it's stupid, but I did it.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:19:55]:
What stupid about you following an interest in buying a book? But there was the pattern. That's when it showed up. And we shone a light on that one and got rid of the darkness because that's the way it showed up. Mhmm.

Ande Anderson [00:20:14]:
Awesome. Thank you for sharing examples. And and going back to your Tupperware story, when you said that, of course, it reminded me of my mother's pantry when I was a kid back in the eighties. And I have, like, I can literally remember the different types of Tupperware that we had. She didn't have very much, but, like, I just yeah. It brought back great, great memories of of childhood Tupperware.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:20:35]:
Yeah. I'm sure my kids had great memories of it too because I was always saying where's the lid? Of course.

Ande Anderson [00:20:41]:
Always. Don't we all for that? So you went through all 7. Right, Roberta?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:20:46]:

No. There's one more. Okay. Good. It's a big one. K. And that is learn to clarify, express, and maintain nonnegotiable boundaries. You know, boundaries may be saying no, but boundaries can be small.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:21:05]:
And many people get afraid of setting a boundary because they think it's gonna be a really big deal. But when I'm working with people in my emerging empowered program, I want them to learn, set a little boundary, just a little space in there, Claim a little ground and then see what happens. And then claim a little more or do it in a different arena of life and then make them nonnegotiable. You know, when I was raising my kids, which I did mostly alone, I have 3 kids, the most important thing that I learned, and I was working full time and getting my PhD, was the word nonnegotiable. You know, to say to the children, okay. This is absolute for sure and nonnegotiable. This is the way it's going to be. And they would go, oh, they try to push.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:21:55]:
They'd have a tent. You know, that's interesting. You can use all that energy for all that, but remember, it's nonnegotiable. And one of the big moments in my life was when my daughter turned to her son, Andy, and she excused herself from talking with me on the phone. And she said to him, she said, hey, that's nonnegotiable. And it was a big moment. So learn that you deserve to know who you are, what's okay with you, what's not okay with you. Learn good communications, skills to express it, and then maintain, maintain, maintain.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:22:32]:
Don't ever set a boundary that you're gonna waffle on. It's about you. It's who you are. So set a boundary, learn to express it in a way that's kind and honest at the same time. That's my big watchword for good communication, and then maintain it. You may have to remind somebody. But if you've reminded them once, you tell them the second time, if you do it again, we're done. This is not going to continue to happen, and that's where you start to regain your personal power.

Ande Anderson [00:23:04]:
Right. Yeah. Absolutely. I love it. Thank you. So since we've gone through those and I I remember near the beginning, you mentioned the 3 must haves of a healthy relationship as an adult. Can you dive a little deeper into what those 3 are?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:23:18]:
Absolutely. And people can find a whole podcast on it. It's episode 115 of Save Your Sanity. And the reason that I did the episode was because I talk about this all the time in every kind of relationship. And if the absolute bedrock of a healthy adult relationship, any healthy adult relationship, equality, reciprocity, and mutuality. And if those things are not there, when you get into a closer relationship and particularly a romantic relationship, the 5 relational gifts from my book, Kaizen for couples, have to sit on top of equality, reciprocity, and mutuality. So if those three things aren't there and you can't find them and you can't work them out in a relationship with your friend, your partner, your mother, your father, your sister, the person in the next cubicle, recognize that if there's no willingness to have equality, reciprocity, and mutuality, you got nothing. And you cannot put honesty, safety, trust, respect, and reliability on top of nothing.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:24:31]:
Right. So that's what's really important.

Ande Anderson [00:24:33]:
So what specifically is mutuality?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:24:36]:
It's a really good question everybody asks. Mhmm. Mutuality is something that we really have to get deep inside us. Mutuality means that I have an interest in you. I have an interest in you getting what you want in life. I am wanting to be mutually supportive of that. I will, it is an equal relationship. It has reciprocity in it.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:25:03]:
But the mutuality is we're in it to win it together for both of us. That there is that desire to do that and that we will continue to have that relationship. It also looks like in a primary romantic relationship, I've got my person. My person will walk behind me when I'm out in front and support me. They'll walk beside me when we're going through life together. They'll walk ahead of me when I'm feeling tired or hurt or afraid, and we will do it together. And that's what builds mutuality.

Ande Anderson [00:25:41]:
That's beautiful. I love that. Thank you. I appreciate you. Because I was I knew what the other 2 were, but I wasn't quite sure about that.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:25:48]:
And there's a whole lot about it in Kaizen for couples.

Ande Anderson [00:25:51]:
Yeah. I love the example of being in front of, beside, or behind depending on, you know, whatever's going on in in your your life and your partner. So that's beautiful. I'd love it if you'd share a little bit about your free ebook you have for everybody as well as your offer and everyone watching. There's a couple buttons below that lead over to Roberta site. So what do you have for us?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:26:11]:
Well, the free gift is if you have heard a few things about toxic relationships, the first one, the free ebook is how to spot a hijack call. Now Now let me give you the definition of a hijack call, Andy. It's my term. I trademarked it so we would stop doing clinical diagnosis via the Google doctor. But a hijack call is a person who hijacks relationships for their own purposes and then relentlessly scavenges them for power, status, and control. So you wanna be able to spot a hijackal as soon as possible. You want to know what are all the red flags and they're in there and at no cost to you. And the offer that I have just for your folks is 42% off my seeing the cycles program.



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Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:27:00]:
And seeing the cycles is a 13 video program with work sheets and everything. It's an online course. Allows you to learn the 10 hallmarks of hijackles, uses examples, takes it to deep levels, and then has worksheets for you to do self reflection and really get underneath the hood and find out at what level you are experiencing those hallmarks of hijackals in a person you have in mind.

Ande Anderson [00:27:31]:
So thank you. Thank you so much for that. And everyone watching again, those buttons are below that link over to both of those. Do you have any last insights? Anything else you feel like we left out or you wanna talk about before we wrap up?

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:27:44]:
Well, yes. I do. One of the most important things that I share with my clients is that you must make a little a little tattoo on the inside of your forehead, and that tattoo needs to say a b b. And why that's so important is

that if you have any codependency tendencies, you are not using ABB. And ABB stands for always believe behavior. When you're codependent, you are more likely to believe words because it's easier, simpler, and you don't run into any conflict. But what's really important in every relationship in everybody's life, even your own, is always believe behavior.

Ande Anderson [00:28:34]:
I love that. You have a lot of good, little things in there to think about. That was great. Awesome. Thank you for doing this. I really appreciate it.

Dr. Rhoberta Shaler [00:28:43]:
It was great to talk to you, Ande, and I look forward to other times when we'll talk about emotional abuse.

Ande Anderson [00:28:49]:
Yes. More more to come. And thank you everyone who's watching or listening from the Avaya family. Just thanks for showing up for yourself and and going on this journey with us, and we will see you all again very soon. Take care. Hey, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us for this latest class with doctor Roberta Schaller. She talked with us about 7 codependent patterns to stop to avoid attracting toxic relationships.

Ande Anderson [00:29:11]:
And one of my favorite parts of this conversation is when we dove into how no is a complete sentence. I don't know about you, but I have a tendency after I say no to someone to then defend myself and tell them all the reasons why I said no. Because I am focused on pleasing them and avoiding conflict and those kinds of codependent tendencies rather than just setting a boundary and standing within my boundary. So if this is something that you do, just something to be aware of and to try to catch yourself in those moments so that we break that pattern. We break that codependent tendency pattern, and choose something different. Right? We're literally rewiring our brains in those moments in order to choose a new path. Another thing that that I do and I know a lot of people do is maybe we say no and then we apologize for saying no. So that's kind of another defense.

Ande Anderson [00:30:01]:
How can we break the pattern of always having to over apologize for things when we don't feel like doing something. We can just say no or no thank you and move along.