

# Episode 18:

## Enabling vs Mercy

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**[00:02:48]**

Good morning and welcome to the week of July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2015. I'm Jodi Hildebrandt and I'm here with you at ConneXions Classroom Podcast. This morning, we're going to be talking about the different between enabling and mercy.

In the previous podcast, number 63, we talked about how to confront a loved one, and I told you that I would be following up with the next podcast on how to become aware of the enabling power of codependency, of shame, and how mercy actually is an enabling power as well, but it enables constructive behavior instead of enabling destructive behavior.

A lot of times we get mercy and codependency mixed up. Instead of holding someone accountable which is very merciful, and having them go through a process of restitution and honesty, which is merciful, we will get codependent with them. We will enable destructive behavior because either I or they are not aware of what it is that we're supporting because we're listening to their language instead of watching their behavior.

And so, I wanted to do a podcast on helping you understand the important points of what codependency looks like—or another way to say that enabling destructive behavior looks like—versus enabling constructive behavior, which you could call mercy or accountability.

So, the first thing that you have to know is that you are responsible to know yourself. If you do not know you, and what you believe, and what you value, and what you think, then you will have a difficult time knowing how to appropriately enable the person across from you.

Now, we enable ourselves constructively and/or destructively as well. And so, it's not just another person. And so, we've got to look at how we do those two things, and how conscious we are about doing it to ourselves and also doing it to another.

Both entities—ourselves and another person—if we are being enabled to be destructive, it is a very dark hole that we get ourselves into and it's very challenging to get out of it because we believe that we're doing is appropriate, is correct, we like the outcomes that we're getting because we're getting what we want.

But at the same time, we're also having outcomes that we don't like: we might lose friends, we might have people who are upset with us, we might be getting feedback that we're being selfish, or that we're not being thoughtful of other people.

And a lot of times, that's really confusing because I'm getting what I want, which I enjoy, but I'm also having these negative outcomes which I just think people are showing up a bit harsh with me.

So, remember, enabling can go both directions. There's two types. I can enable constructive behavior or I can enable destructive behavior. So, I have to know which enabling outcome I'm giving my support to.

So, whatever behavior you support—now, this is towards self or to another person—whatever **behavior**, that's what you have to look at, not the words that somebody says, not the words that I say.

Like, if I say I'm going to get up every morning and go running, somebody might go “That's great!” And then, they start enabling me, like they wake me up in the morning, or

they have my shoes out on the back porch so that I can put them on, or they make sure they do all my laundry so I always have running clothes to go running with in the morning. And that would be totally inappropriate because I am an adult and I can absolutely do my own laundry, I can wake up for myself, and I can get my shoes. But somebody would say, well I'm just trying to *help* you, I'm trying to make things easier for you. Because that's what enable means, *to make easier*. To make easier for someone or to myself. To enable. To cause that the experience or the situation is easier.

And that's fine sometimes. However, I've got to make sure that I understand why I'm doing it, and if it really is in the person's best interest or in my best interest to enable, to make easier for them. Because when I make something easier for myself or someone else, I might be reinforcing a very destructive behavior where the person does not learn for themselves how to take care of self, how to be responsible for self, how to follow through with commitments to self or to someone else, how to show up in life, how to run a home, how to take care of a car, how to go through school. I mean, the list is endless of what the person will not learn if their behavior is being enabled.

So, whatever behavior you support, whatever behavior you give your money to, whatever behavior you don't address—you just ignore it—whatever behavior you won't confront, whatever behavior you fear or hope will go away, whatever behavior you ignore in yourself or someone else, or you placate, or you tiptoe around, whatever behavior you minimize or allow to be around you, whatever behavior you tolerate or act passive or aggressive with, whatever behavior you try to control, ameliorate, deny, respond with confusion, whatever behavior you don't hold accountable for how it affects you and others, those behaviors will be the behavior the person (or you—because remember, you can enable yourself)—those will be the behaviors that you will continue to express.

So, it's very important what I just said to you. All those behaviors that you ignore, that you don't confront, that you're afraid of, that you'll tolerate, that you try to control. All those behaviors will be the ones that you will continue to express or continue to act out. Because those are the ones that you're enabling.

You get to decide what behaviors those are. So, which behavior do you support in word and deed? Do you support enabling constructive behavior or do you support enabling destructive behavior?

If you verbally don't support but in action do support, you still will be enabling. Let me say that again. If you are not willing to support the verbal, like somebody says, "I'm going to go running." And you say, "Well, we'll see if that's possible." And then the person says, "Hey, will you do my laundry and get my shoes out?" And then, you support that behavior, you're like, "Yeah, I'll do the laundry and get your shoes out." Then you are still enabling them because they're not doing what they can and ought to do for themselves.

So, this is about you. It's not about the other person that you're hoping, wishing, praying will stop their behavior. This is about your confusion between mercy and enabling, mercy

and codependency. A lot of people will say well, I'm being merciful, or I'm being helpful, or I'm trying to support, or I'm trying to be Christ-like. We have these terms that we use, but the outcome of what we're doing is actually making things worse because the person on the other side of me (or me) never learns to mature or grow up because they're constantly making choices and not being held accountable for those choices.

It's like they get choice and accountability all screwed up in their head. They keep choosing things but they never have accurate consequences for what they choose, because we, in the spirit of having mercy for them, are really codependent with them and we're enabling them to be destructive.

### **[00:11:29] What is Mercy?**

So, let's look at mercy. What is mercy?

Mercy is compassion, having empathy for, really learning how to unconditionally love. And a lot of us will say "Well, I know how to love." And I would encourage you to look that word up and really understand what unconditional love is because if you understood that, then you would not be enabling.

Mercy is understanding. Mercy is connecting. But whatever you're having mercy on, is it the being or the behavior of the person? So, you have to decide, *what am I having mercy on? Like, where is my mercy focused? Is it on the being or is it on the behaviors?*

So, you've got to be able to focus. You. It's not about them, it's about you. Where is your focus?

Let me ask you some things. This is how you're going to know if you're having mercy or if you're being codependent, which means you're enabling. Are the behaviors that the person is exhibiting a violation to you or to them? And do they agree that their behaviors are appropriate or inappropriate? Can they see how their behaviors are showing up? Are they appropriate behaviors or inappropriate behaviors? Can they see that?

So, it goes back to what I said right at the beginning. In order to have mercy, you must understand yourself, and what you believe in, and what you value, and what you espouse to **be**. Because if you can't do that, if you don't know that about yourself, then you're not going to be able to appropriately interpret the behaviors of the other person because you'll have nothing to juxtapose it to, nothing to compare it to.

If you say that gossiping about someone is not that big of a deal because it doesn't measure on your Richter scale of appropriate or inappropriate behaviors, then when somebody's gossiping, it's not going to alert, it's not going to awaken you, it's not going to "go off" in you and tell you that hey, that's inappropriate, because you don't have that as inappropriate moral behavior inside you. So, you won't know how to hold that person accountable if that doesn't register inside your own system.

So, again, can you separate the being from the behavior? Or are they one and the same?

So, what I mean by that is, it's fine to have mercy towards the being, like you feel compassion towards the being, you feel empathy, you feel love, and you understand why they're doing or feeling the way that they are. But you don't want to enable their behavior—that is not merciful.

So, if you have mercy towards the being, towards the person, and then you enable their behavior, you will be enabling the being as well. And what you're saying is, is that your behavior is such that I don't want to hold you accountable because I don't want the outcome that might come towards me by holding you accountable. And so, really, I'm not loving you, I'm not really connecting with you, I'm not doing what it is in your best interest because I'm more concerned about my best interest and not feeling uncomfortable by holding this thing accountable.

Or I don't know how. I haven't thought that there's a difference between mercy and enabling. I thought they were all the same. I thought if I'm kind, and loving, and nice, and helpful, that that's all good. And I haven't even thought that maybe my being that way would be hurtful to another person.

So, that's another scenario that people run into. It may not be that they just don't want to do it, they may not have any idea that that's what's necessary.

#### **[00:15:32] Are You Being Merciful?**

Another question to know if you're being merciful: Is there a pattern of behaviors? Do the behaviors have a continuation that doesn't stop or appears that it can't stop? So, is the person behaving in a pattern-like way that hasn't stopped or appears that it doesn't stop?

This is how you're going to know whether you've been enabling. If you're enabling someone, it's that the pattern just continues, it doesn't stop.

Here's another one. The person wants to stop their behavior but they can't, or the person doesn't see how they're affecting others. That's another example of being enabled or being in codependency with someone. So, this is about trying to become aware of when I enable versus when I have mercy. Those few questions that I just asked you are ways for you to diagnose whether you are in a merciful relationship with someone where you're holding them accountable, where you're showing compassion, where you're being emotionally honest with them. Or whether you're in a relationship where you're being codependent and you're enabling them to further be in destructive behavior.

So, you must understand what offering mercy is truly doing for the other person. Mercy is not justifying, or covering up, or denying behaviors hoping that they'll disappear. That is not mercy.

Mercy is validating the person, seeing the person, offering compassion, empathy, and—and, and—holding the person accountable for their choices and their consequences. Always. Always, always, always. That is mercy.

Mercy does not take responsibility for the other person I'm helping, and it doesn't say *it's my fault that \_\_\_\_\_, or they didn't know, or I expected too much.* People who are enabling say that, like *"Oh, well, they didn't know,"* or *"I should have explained it further,"* or *"I expected too much of them,"* or *"It's my fault because I didn't get done."* That's somebody who is enabling, that gives a person an excuse to not follow through. Mercy does not mean or is not measured by whether the person is happy or not at the end of the exchange. When I'm enabling, that is my measuring stick, like *are you okay with me now? Are we good? Are you happy with me?*

That is a question that people who are enabling think. If the person is upset with them, then they think *oh my goodness, I must not have interacted with them appropriately because now they're upset.* And that's not the case at all.

Holding someone accountable for poor behavior is **merciful**. It doesn't mean that you threaten them, or you attack them, or you blame them, or you defame, or annihilate them verbally. It means that you clearly state their behavior, you clearly state what behavior is inappropriate, and you invite them to change. That's mercy.

Mercy does not negate personal responsibility for choices made, or the consequences that follow that choice. Mercy is not turning an eye to behavior because the consequence will be uncomfortable for both parties. Let me say that again. It's really important. Mercy is **not** turning an eye to behavior because the behavior and the consequences will be uncomfortable for both parties.

Mercy is having the person walk through the repentance process thoroughly and be responsible for how they have affected others, themselves, God, and make restitution completely. That is a thorough process. That is mercy.

Because what you're saying is you're inviting that person into honesty and personal accountability and asking them to humble themselves and hold boundaries with them. Mercy is a healing balm that, once applied and accepted, heals the person. And the person changes their behavior and makes different choices.

The outcomes of mercy is that the person is able to feel relaxed, connected, they live in honesty, they're accountable for their choices, they can be vulnerable and express validation for self and others, they share compassion, they don't react to their shame messages because when they hear them, they challenge the veracity of those. So, when shame comes in and says *oh, well, you can't make this right because it's too late.* The person who has learned how to have mercy for themselves says, *"That's not true—it's never too late. And I can always be responsible for my choices."*

The power of mercy is on a polarized end to the destructive power of enabling or codependency. They are on opposite ends of that spectrum, and so, mercy can be a power that is used to heal.

**[00:20:55] A Story**

I'm going to tell you a story. Last week, I came home from a trip. My son and I had talked prior to my leaving and he had committed to weed and prune the yard. And he's getting ready to go away for a while, and I needed that yard done.

And so, when I pulled up after the weekend, I pulled in, it was a Sunday afternoon, and none of the yard work had been done. And I remember as I pulled into the garage, feeling all those emotions of upset, and confusion, and concern, and worry, and fear, and all those feelings.

And so, as I gathered my luggage together and walked in the house, I had a couple of thoughts that went through my head. One was, *he's getting ready to leave for a long trip and maybe I can just help him out and do this for him.*

Another thought I had was, *I wonder why he didn't get that done? That's not like him, he usually follows through with his commitments.*

Another thought I had was *maybe I asked him to do too much, maybe having him do all of this work was just too overwhelming for him.*

And what I realized when I started thinking those kinds of thoughts was that I was moving towards codependency, I was moving towards rescuing him. Because it really wasn't about the yard work at that point, it was really about he had made a commitment and he did not follow through either with the physical commitment or even call me to talk to me about why or if he could change the commitment that he had made.

And so, that's what became really forefront in my mind, was the fact that he had broken his word. And so, I did not want to enable that, because that would have harmed him. Hopefully that makes sense.

So, it had nothing to do with *he's leaving*, or *maybe he was tired*, or *maybe it was too much*. It had nothing to do with that at that point. It had to do with he made a commitment and he did not follow through with it. Again, not just physically, but did not even follow through with taking the responsibility to call and talk to me about the commitment.

So, I went in the house and I sought him out and he and I had a conversation. And I said, "Help me understand why you broke your commitment." And we started talking about what had "happened" to him over the weekend and why he didn't follow through. And I said, "Well, let me tell you how I'm affected when I hear you say those things."

Because what he was inviting me to do was to enable him. And I said to him, "I understand that you got busy, and you were sidetracked, and you had some parties you wanted to go to *and* you made a commitment to yourself and to me. And that is the one thing that I'm focusing on because if you are allowed to make commitments and not follow through, if you are enabled to do that, then you will learn that your word does not matter. And you will also learn that I don't think your word matters, and that's very, very destructive for you

to learn that lesson. And so, again, this isn't so much about the yard work now, this is about your word."

He and I have had these kind of conversations a lot, and so that made sense to him. And after a little while, a couple of hours, he was willing to think about that and we had another conversation about how he wasn't wanting me to enable him into destructive behavior, and that me holding him accountable—which is very uncomfortable for me, I mean I was crying, I felt badly that he would not see what I was saying to him. At some point, I took it kind of personal, like "*he doesn't care*" and those were just my shame messages coming up telling me those things, like *he doesn't care and he doesn't love me*. And those things were not true at all. And I went into that for a period of time until I could get myself out and say *okay, that's not true*. That's me enabling my shame, listening to my shame and wanting to believe it.

So I had to hold myself accountable as I thought through that, as those shame messages came up through myself. And so, a couple of hours later, we talked again and he was able to own his behavior, and I shared with him my own shame messages that came up and how it felt really personal what he did, and I knew that it wasn't. And by the end of the evening, we were able to work it through and he made another commitment and the next couple of days actually followed through with that commitment.

And so, it was an opportunity for him to learn the power that comes from holding someone accountable and being very merciful. And not looking at their behaviors and saying, *well you know, 80 percent of them is really good, so we'll just let this one slide*. That's not what this is about. It's not about a percentage. It's about never allowing your behavior to be enabled if it is going to support you to be destructive. Never. Never, never, never.

And the same thing for someone else you have charge over. It's not about *well, they're mostly good, they do most things right, so we'll just let this one go*. It's always confronting behavior that could harm the person.

I mean, you would never say to a child who pulled a knife out of the drawer, you wouldn't say "*Well, you know, they're really capable with most utensils, so I trust that this one won't hurt them too much*." You just wouldn't do that. You would always confront somebody that's going to harm them.

So, enabling is, in my opinion, one of the most destructive powers on the planet because what enabling does is it interrupts the learning process of an individual. So, when we make choices—which we're making thousands of them during the day—there are always consequences to those choices. And when those consequences come, those are the things that teach us either to continue in the behavior we're doing, or to make other choices that support us to change the behavior.

When either my own denial tells me a distorted reality or, even worse, when someone else's denial—their distortion of reality—comes into the scene, that message of denial and distortion invites me to believe that the consequences or the outcomes that either naturally

come or are implied, that follow my choices, are accurate and authentic, and right even if some of the outcomes can't all be blocked that I'm experiencing—the ones that I don't like—but I quickly blame those things away because I'm in denial.

So, it's like my denial invites me to go into distortion and say that *it doesn't matter* or I've got someone else's denial coming into the picture saying *it doesn't matter*. So, either way, if I go into distortion, I will not see Reality clearly.

And that's why enabling is so destructive. Because I make a choice and I have a consequence. And when the consequence doesn't come because either I tell myself I don't have to have a consequence, or I hide myself from the consequence, or my denial tells me I don't deserve the consequence, when those things happen, then I tell myself that my choices that I've made, that are actually creating destructive outcomes, are okay; the choices that are creating destructive outcomes are good and are right. See how dangerous that is?

So, if I'm doing something that violates my own moral code but my denial or someone else's denial comes in and says *no it's not*, and I believe it, then the choices I'm making that are actually hurting me, I don't see as harmful. Can you see how dangerous that is?

And so, not only do I not see it as harmful, I will quickly blame them on someone else or something else, so I don't have to experience the emotional discomfort. And that emotional discomfort, my friends, is the indicator inside of me that something's off. But if I don't experience the emotional discomfort, then I will never experience that something's off.

The consequence is what is telling me that something's off, but if I hide myself or if I deny myself from that emotional discomfort/consequence, then I will never feel that something's off, and I will continue making the same wrong, inappropriate, harmful choices over and over and over and over and over again.

“It's not about what I choose, it's about that, or them, or you, or my job,” that's what my denial says. “It's not about what I choose, it's about them, or you, or it, or they.” So, enabling either myself or being enabled by someone else traps me, enslaves me to the lie that I can control my choices.

It also traps me by saying I never have to feel or experience any discomfort because someone or something will always take it away from me. Can you see how powerful that is? Enabling tells me that I don't have to have consequence, that I can be in control of not having consequences, that I can control my life in such a way that I can choose and then not have outcomes.

And then, it also says and by the way, you can choose and you never have to feel anything uncomfortable, because something or someone will always take it away—will always throw a pillow down between your choice and consequence that you never feel the discomfort. Can you see how destructive that is? Can you see how you never can learn if you are being enabled?

I have seen people be enabled to their graves. Dead. All in the name of “I love them,” “But I love them.” And then it's past tense—“I loved them.” And sometimes, even though people have already died, the loved one still does not see that they are the ones that walked them in hand-in-hand to their graves by not holding them accountable. And that is a very stark Reality to awake to, that I was a facilitator in someone's death. Whether it's a physical death, a spiritual death, an emotional death. If I am acting in inappropriate behavior and I am not being held accountable, I will slowly die if not in one of those categories, all three of them. And the people who are enabling me will be facilitators of that death.

And so, we are all responsible for the things that we are aware of. Consider yourself alerted now. Now that you've listened to this podcast, you understand about enabling, or maybe you don't understand fully but you're curious about it. Please, please gather more information because you can enable someone to their grave. And you can keep saying *but I love them, but I want to help them, but I feel bad for them*. And that's really not what's motivating you. What's motivating you is selfishness.

Enabling is not allowing myself or someone else to truly experience the outcomes of their own choices. It's that simple. I take the opportunity away from the other person. I take the opportunity away from them—the experience of cause and effect. I give them an outcome or I control the outcome to their choices that they have made, according to what *I* feel they should experience, instead of allowing the natural order of things to happen and allowing them to learn.

Let me say that again, that is so important. When I enable, I take the opportunity away from the experience of cause and effect. *I* give them an outcome that *I* control to the choices that they have made, according to what *I* think should happen or what *I* think they should experience, instead of allowing the natural order of things to happen in their life—choice and consequence—and allowing them to learn from the choices they make and the outcomes that follow.

The Truth is, enabling is self-serving, prideful, full of arrogance, and only being concerned for self. And most of the time, when people are enabling, they're very unconscious. It's a very unconscious act most of the time.

And so, again, consider yourself alerted, acknowledged. Consider yourself being taught right now, so that you're not unconscious anymore. Because the unconsciousness of the people around us that enable us is so caustic to someone's emotional and spiritual growth, and sometimes physical growth.

## **[00:34:56] Why People Enable**

So, here's why people enable. You ready? I just told you that enabling is a self-serving, prideful, very arrogant act. Here's why we do it.

One, I don't want you to have consequence. Of what? I don't want you to have the consequence of you choosing to bounce checks, of you choosing to wreck cars, of you choosing to come home past curfew. I don't want you to have consequences of lying to me, breaking commitments, taking something that doesn't belong to you, cheating on someone, using them for your own greed and on, and on, and on. I don't want you to have those kinds of consequences.

So, I support you—or another way to say it, I go into denial with you and distort the reality with you by *rationalizing* why you came home late, or *justifying* why you bounced the check, or agreeing with you that you're a victim of circumstances that you broke your commitments, or you *intellectualize*, or you create *distractions*, or you make *excuses* for why you came home late, or you *compartmentalize*, or you act *helpless and hopeless*, or you *compare*, or you *omit* information, or you *manipulate* why it's not fair that we gave money to your sister and not to you.

There's just all these denial strategies that because I don't want you to have consequence, I enter into those denial strategies with you and we make up stories together—you and I—I'm the one that's manipulating or I'm the one that's enabling you. You and I make up stories together that feel comfortable, and when we do that, the person will never change, and neither will I, the enabler.

And I say to myself, *don't upset them, if we don't upset them, then they'll change*. Or I say, *give them another chance, give them another opportunity to make them appreciate what they have, and then they'll change*. And it never happens.

So, then I say, *give them some money, that will help, if you give them some money, then they'll change*. And that never helps.

And these are all ways that I deny the Reality of your choice and your consequences that I don't want you to have because why? Remember how I just talked about why we enable? We enable because it's a self-serving, prideful, only being concerned for self act. And that's really hard for people to see that because it doesn't feel like that, it feels like I'm worried for them, I'm scared for them, so I want to enable them.

## **[00:37:37] Why People Enable**

If you really look at why you're enabling, you will see that you don't want to the discomfort that's going to come. And for some people—and I want to say this again—for some people, they don't even know they're enabling. This is just how they've learned how to love and so, they wouldn't call it enabling, they call it loving, but once you are aware, you are then responsible to stop. Stop enabling that person. You are killing them emotionally, spiritually, financially, socially. You are creating an invalid. You are maiming them. They

cannot fully mature because you won't allow them to have the outcome that their choices are supposed to teach them through.

Here's another reason. I don't want you to have consequence because I feel badly for what you're going through. You might have a trauma, a divorce, an adoption, betrayal, physical sexual assault—whatever it may be—I feel badly about this abuse. And so, this person or myself somehow is not supposed to experience the thing that they did.

So, because I said they shouldn't have had that experience, therefore it's my responsibility to make it go away or to make it "right" by interfering with the natural order of choice and consequence.

Let me say that again. It's important. I don't want you have you have a consequence because I feel badly for what you're going through, so I go into denial with you and I say to myself, *that shouldn't of happened to you, that trauma shouldn't have happened to you, the divorce shouldn't have happened to you, the betrayal shouldn't have happened to you*, and so I feel badly, and so because it shouldn't have happened to you, then I'm going to act like God in your life, and I'm going to try to make it right by interfering with the natural order of your choices and your consequences to make it right, what shouldn't have happened, because I feel badly.

Or here's another one. I don't want you to have consequence because of my fear or my experience.

So, these are reasons why people don't allow other people to have consequences.

So, the first one is *I'll feel bad*. The second one is *I fear the experience*. I don't want you to have consequences because of *my* experience, like what I experienced. So, when I was young, this happened to me and so it can't happen to you. Or if I do this thing, they will leave me, or hate me, or react in some way that I don't want them to, and it will hurt me. I fear that. And so, I try to control it and not let you have the consequences of the choices you're making, because my experience was bad so then your experience is going to be bad.

Here's another reason why we want to interrupt people's consequences, is because of discomfort. I don't want you to have consequence because *I* will have to feel uncomfortable, *I* will have to uncomfortable, I will be inconvenienced, or bothered to have to get involved, or be scared, or I fear you'll hate me, or blame me, or not see me as nice or kind. I will feel discomfort, so that's why I don't want you to have consequence.

Here's another one. I don't want you to have consequence because *I* believe you shouldn't have them. *I* know better for you, I'm right, this will work, you're better than, you're unique and different, you're like me and you don't have to experience this. That's called pride. I don't want you to have consequence because you don't have to. You **shouldn't** have to. I know what's best for you.

Another reason is I don't want you to have consequence because I'm confused or uneducated and I don't have boundaries.

There are these different reasons why I don't want you to have consequences: I'll feel bad, I'll feel fear, I'll feel discomfort, I'll feel pride, I'll feel confused. And so, when we enable, it's always about **me**.

So, just look at those examples I just gave. Look how many times I said I, I, I. I enable because it's about **me**. I enable. I don't want you to, because of *I*. Enabling maims the person's growth potential. They become arrested in their development and cannot move forward. They cannot grow, they cannot develop, or mature, or really become *them*. It's impossible.

Over time, they begin to not only believe or feel like they can't become them, they *know* they can't, because the messages of the loved one or the enabler is clear. Here's the message, you ready? You probably don't know you're sending this, but this is the message you send to people that you enable: *"I don't believe in you. I don't trust you. I don't believe you are responsible for the things you did that were wrong. What you value, what you believe, what you hold as sacred, is **not**, to you or me. You are incapable. I don't respect you or care about your worth."*

Those are the messages that you send to someone when you're enabling them. Though I know you don't intend to do that, that is what they hear. They hear that *you can't, or it's impossible, or you're not capable*. These types of messages are sent, and how many, many, many times have I heard someone who is being enabled say *"Why won't you just hold me accountable? Don't you love me? Why won't you let me fall? Why won't you let me have the consequences that my choices create?"*

Here's another angle. When the enabling has gone on for an extended period of time, the person starts becoming numb, angry, entitled, blaming, prideful, disconnected, vindictive. And they will no longer feel at all connected to the inappropriateness of what they're doing to themselves or others. And they will demand that the enabling continue as a sign of love, caring, devotion, and dedication to them and the relationship. See how screwed up that is? It's like if you keep enabling somebody, they'll just go numb, and when you try to stop, they'll see it as a sign of not loving them.

At this point, they and you are in grave danger. The enabling will have caused all sorts of chaos, havoc, instability, fighting, conflicts, physical altercations possibly. Any and all manners of discord, lying, using, manipulation, exploitations, and abuses.

You at this point **must** wake up to your own denial and distortion. You **must** look at what is driving you to enable. Look at those five points we talked about. The reasons for me to not give you consequence are:

1. I feel bad
2. I feel fear
3. I feel discomfort
4. I feel pride
5. I feel confused

Look at those five points and see where you are in those points of why you won't allow the person to grow up.

Another one I just thought of is sometimes, I feel shame, I feel guilt, I feel responsible, and therefore, I won't let them grow up, I won't let them mature.

So, the person being enabled is not going to wake up. They are caught in a seductive trap of listening to the lies their shame is telling them about who they are, what they've done, and what that thing they've done means. Shame is moving them back and forth from telling them that they're worthless, unworthy, bad, not enough, not lovable. And then, it moves them to the other side and it says it's not their fault, people are too demanding, nobody understands them, they aren't appreciated, they deserve what they want, they deserve what they should have, they feel entitled to things, "I don't have to do that if I don't want to." And they cannot get out of this by themselves. They need the enabling to stop.

Now, I cannot say that strongly enough. They **need** the enabling to stop. They **need** you to really learn what love is and **stop enabling them**. Have true mercy on them and share with them.

#### **[00:46:25] How to Share True Mercy**

Here's how you share. You first validate them. And if you don't know validation means, I'm not going to go into that because I've already been talking for about 45 minutes. Go listen to a [validation podcast](#) and learn about validation.

So, here's what you do. You validate them, and you tell them how you've been impacted by them, and then you validate them again. And then you share some emotionally honesty about how they're impacting you, and then you validate them again. And then you tell them what they're doing that is not responsible in their life, and then you validate them again. And then you hold a boundary, and then you validate them again. And then you tell them what you want in your life—not the distortion of their reality—you don't want their anger, their blame, their victim, their lack of commitments, and on and on.

This, my friends, is mercy. This is unconditional love. It's self-love. And it's inviting them into having love for them themselves. This is calling their spirit back to clarity, connection, vulnerability, and to you, and your relationship with them. This is the healing balm of mercy.

So, a lot to think about. I get really impassioned when I talk about enabling because I just have so many people flash through my mind who are being enabled or are enabling. And how destructive of a behavior that is.

So, I ask you, I plead with you, look at your behaviors. Look at if you are being enabled or if you are being the enabler. Or maybe you're doing both, maybe you're being enabled by someone or even by yourself, or if you're enabling someone else, and **stop**. Stop the enabling. Have mercy on yourself and another person, and be validating, and accountable, and be emotionally honest, and hold boundaries.

So, I hope that you enjoyed this podcast. Hopefully it was helpful. And we will talk to each other next week. Between now and then, stay connected and we'll talk soon. Bye bye.

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