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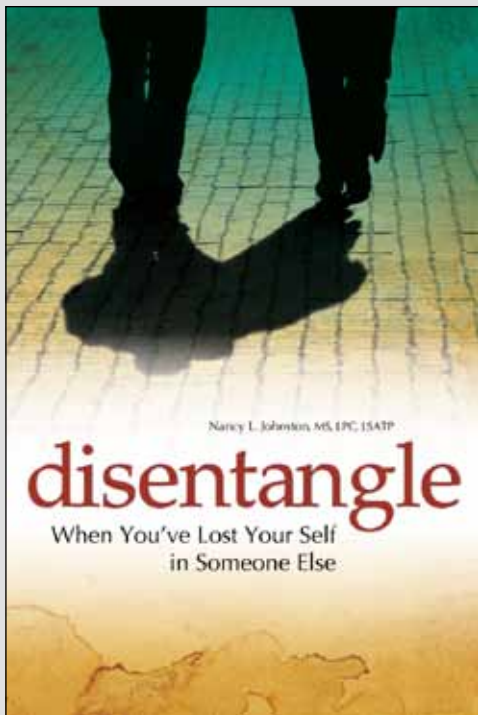
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# *Disentangle*

## *When You've Lost Yourself in Someone Else*

**By Nancy L. Johnston, MS, LPC, LSATP**

*A practical approach for changing the course of your relationships*



By Nancy L. Johnston, MS, LPC, LSATP  
Central Recovery Press  
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**“Disentangle is an extremely valuable guide and workbook for people in difficult family/divorce/matrimonial law disputes. I encourage couples to use this guide not to win their case, but to learn how to win their lives back in a positive, non-adversarial way. Long after the court case is over, the parties have to find ways to co-parent, coexist, and move on to the next best possibility. Until they disentangle, it is all but impossible.”**

– Hon. Joseph Moody Buckner, Chief District Judge,  
Hillsborough, North Carolina

This is an inspiring and solution-oriented guide for people seeking to find emotional freedom within their relationships. Presents clear and compelling information on the challenges people often experience in balancing their own needs and desires with those of another person, and provides strategies for developing the skills necessary for self-care and healthy relationships. This approach can be applied to any significant relationship: intimate partner, parent-child, other family, friends, or those in the workplace.

“Disentangling” is the process of creating enough emotional space between yourself and another person in order to accurately see the realities of any relationship and make healthier decisions about it. This is an easy-to-follow method for changing the course of your relationships by learning how to connect with your true “self” and applying this learning in ways that enhance inner strength and serenity.

**“Nancy Johnston’s *Disentangle* is an exceptionally clear and accessible handbook for doing just that: disentangling from the life patterns that hold us hostage. It’s also a guide for moving on, with a wealth of good counsel on setting healthy boundaries. Favorite chapter: ‘Developing Spirituality,’ which is both inspiring and utterly practical. Bravo!”** –Lisa Tracy  
Journalist and Author of *Objects of Our Affection: Uncovering My Family’s Past, One Chair, Pistol, and Pickle Fork at a Time*

**“A practical, easy-reading guide to codependency, the behavior set first recognized in those living with and around alcoholics and addicts. Using stories from her experiences, Johnston accurately outlines not only the issues of codependency, but also the spiritual tools necessary to unravel the mess created by these behaviors in life’s relationships. The book is a highly valuable read for anyone with a personal or clinical interest in the problems of codependency.”**–David L. Nelson, MD



## About the Author

**Nancy L. Johnston, MS, LPC, LSATP**, a licensed psychotherapist with thirty-two years of clinical experience addressing a wide range of emotional and behavioral issues, has developed the “Disentangle” approach from both her personal and professional experience. She has presented this approach at numerous conferences and workshops. Now, she takes readers on a personal journey through her program for helping people with relationship challenges develop their internal resources so they can create the life and future they desire. Nancy lives with her husband and daughter in an old house on a river in Natural Bridge Station, Virginia.

## Q & A with Nancy L. Johnston

### Why did you write *Disentangle*?

*Disentangle: When You’ve Lost Your Self in Someone Else* began in the early 1990s from clinical work with clients that resonated with personal work I was doing for my own recovery from codependence. The book started as a list, became a handout, and by the late-1990s evolved into book form.

### What makes *Disentangle* unique?

*Disentangle* is the product of both professional and personal work and is a rich blend of counseling theory and techniques as well as twelve-step wisdom, especially Al-Anon wisdom. The origins of the book are in alcoholic family systems, working with what we have come to know about the codependent and what can help them. The form of the book, however, expands beyond the need for the reader to identify as a codependent or as having alcoholism as a primary family problem.

*Disentangle* is different from other books on the market about codependence in that it is a *very* specific reader’s toolbox. It almost microscopically looks at skills the reader may develop to help find and cultivate their self.

*Disentangle* does not ask the reader to identify themselves as codependent. I have no trouble with the word or concept of codependence, but it does remain a controversial word in our fields. We are still working to clinically assess it and thus be able to research it further. We do know it exists, however, and it is a crucial issue for many people at various times in their lives.

### How does *Disentangle* address codependence?

*Disentangle* speaks of codependent behaviors and relationships in terms of entanglements, a word to which many people have had a knowing and useful response. To this end, the book simply invites people who are tangled in their relationships and have lost track of their own life to find ways to re-center and to live with more serenity. From the first page of the book *disentangle* is defined in this way:

***Disentangle:*** *To find your self when you are lost in someone else. To create enough emotional space between your self and another person so you are better able to see the realities of your situation and make healthier decisions about it. To not necessarily leave/divorce/end a relationship but rather create enough space and establish a stronger self so you can then decide what to do about the relationship in which you are entangled.*

With this definition in place, the main body of *Disentangle* presents four areas of individual work involved in disentangling: Facing Illusions, Detaching, Setting Healthy Boundaries, and Developing Spirituality.

### Who is your target audience for this book?

*Disentangle* has been in a self-published form since 2004 and has been well received by both the public and professionals. When I have been asked for whom the book is written, I say for both audiences. It works with the essence of loss of self in ways that can be used by treatment providers in clinical settings and by novices who have happened upon the book and are just starting to learn this healing material.

In terms of the general public, *Disentangle’s* applicability has proven to be wide, including readers who are dealing with the addiction of a family member or friend as well as those who may be recovering from an addiction of their own, raising children and teenagers, dealing with divorce, taking care of aging parents, and/or trying to improve work situations.

In terms of the book’s usefulness to professionals, I have had many opportunities to present to audiences on *Disentangle*. Those professionals have included mental health therapists, substance abuse therapists, physicians, nurses, EAP staff, graduate students, guidance counselors, and teachers.

### Key Features

- Provides clear and straightforward, yet colorful explanations on many challenges inherent in relationships.
- Filled with practical solutions presented in a voice of compassion, empathy, and experience.

### Sales Points

- Based on the author’s vast personal experience, as well as her more than three decades of clinical experience assisting both women and men with relationship challenges.
- Written exercises and self-assessments create an interactive experience, allowing readers to reflect on progress and share their work with support systems and treatment providers.