

Many people are responsible for taking care of an aging parent, an ailing spouse, or a handicapped child and do so out of love, devotion, or obligation, and many others have caretaking occupations in the areas of nursing, social work, counseling, and so on. But there are other less benign caretakers in our midst. These people have an excessive need to be needed, and they assume the caretaking role not out of love, obligation, or choice of profession but due to unconscious motivations over which they have little control. This addiction to pleasing others can be as debilitating as substance addictions. Les Barbanell shows that this addiction, which he calls caretaker personality disorder, masks psychological conflicts and can be a self-destructive force leading to exhaustion, emptiness, even suicide. Barbanell provides strategies for learning to say no, retraining ones focus from others to oneself, gaining freedom from past traumas and abuse, and learning to express rather than repress feelings in order to find a balance between kindness and a pathological level of selflessness. This book is a must-read for those suffering from the addiction to please, their families, and psychotherapists and counselors who work with them. Praise for Les Barbanells Removing the Mask of Kindness Barbanell delineates the pathological side of selflessness and argues, as the title suggests, that kindness can serve as a psychological mechanism for concealing emotional problems. The author effectively charts the defining characteristics of a heretofore-unrecognized diagnostic category: caretaker personality disorder (CPD).

Recommended. -CHOICE Les Barbanell reveals a new and shocking defense mechanism that individuals use to hid psychological conflicts. The caretaker personality disorder helps explain why an accommodating, sacrificing individual, who is always concerned with others, can end up miserable and feeling incomplete. A must read for anyone in the helping professions. -United States Association for Body Psychotherapy Newsletter

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