

NEWCOMER BOOKLET

Co-Dependents Anonymous



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All foundational documents contained herein can be found on the CoDA World Fellowship Website:

www.coda.org

I am alive, I am here, and I am worthy of all that life can bring me.
Peace, love and living life wholly are my gifts today.
I trust my own process and allow myself to heal in God's time, not mine.
I will create safe ways to express my anger.
As I allow myself to grieve, I heal my sadness and create space for the new.
I can allow myself to be cherished and supported in healthy ways.
I will be vulnerable when it is safe.
I am beautiful, strong and energetic.
I am a powerful and loving person. I count.
With God, all things are possible.
I release myself of the old ways.
A friend is a gift I give myself.
I am creating a healthy body and mind.
I feel confident and comfortable with other people.
I attract beauty, joy, and abundance into my life.
I am grateful for all change and growth in my life.
I feel loving and free today.
I feel the presence of a power greater than myself.
I have been, am now, and will continue to take steps to improve my life.
I release the past and allow love to heal every area of my life.
I feel precious even when I know that I have made a mistake.
I forgive myself for any abuse I allowed myself to experience in the past.



What Is Codependency

Many of us struggle with these questions: What is codependence? Am I codependent? We want precise definitions and diagnostic criteria before we will decide.

Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA), as stated in its Eighth Tradition, is a non-professional fellowship. We offer no definitions or diagnostic criteria for codependence, respectfully allowing psychiatric and psychological professionals to accomplish that task. What we do offer from our own experience are characteristic attitudes and behavior patterns that describe what our codependent histories have been like.

We believe that recovery begins with honest self-diagnosis. We come to accept our inability to maintain healthy and nurturing relationships with ourselves and others. We begin to recognize that the cause lay in long-standing destructive patterns of living. We have found these patterns fall into four major categories: denial, low self-esteem, compliance and control.

The following checklist is offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. It may be particularly helpful to newcomers as they begin to understand codependence. It may aid those who have been in recovery a while to determine what traits still need attention and transformation. We suggest that it might be helpful to think of the notations always, usually, sometimes, or never as one evaluates each item on the checklist.

Promises of Recovery

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.



The Preamble of CoDA

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships. The only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.

We gather together to support and share with each other in a journey of self-discovery -- learning to love the self. Living the program allows each of us to become increasingly honest with ourselves about our personal histories and our own codependent behaviors.

We rely upon the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions for knowledge and wisdom. These are the principles of our program and guides to developing honest and fulfilling relationships with ourselves and others. In CoDA, we each learn to build a bridge to a Higher Power of our own understanding, and we allow others the same privilege.

This renewal process is a gift of healing for us. By actively working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous, we can each realize a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.



The Twelve Promises of CoDA

I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. As I make an honest effort to work the Twelve Steps and follow the Twelve Traditions...

1. I know a new sense of belonging. The feeling of emptiness and loneliness will disappear.
2. I am no longer controlled by my fears. I overcome my fears and act with courage, integrity and dignity.
3. I know a new freedom.
4. I release myself from worry, guilt, and regret about my past and present. I am aware enough not to repeat it.
5. I know a new love and acceptance of myself and others. I feel genuinely lovable, loving and loved.
6. I learn to see myself as equal to others. My new and renewed relationships are all with equal partners.
7. I am capable of developing and maintaining healthy and loving relationships. The need to control and manipulate others will disappear as I learn to trust those who are trustworthy.
8. I learn that it is possible to mend - to become more loving, intimate and supportive. I have the choice of communicating with my family in a way which is safe for me and respectful of them.
9. I acknowledge that I am a unique and precious creation.
10. I no longer need to rely solely on others to provide my sense of worth.
11. I trust a guidance I receive from my Higher Power and come to believe in my own capabilities.
12. I gradually experience serenity, strength, and spiritual growth in my daily life.

How Does Recovery in CoDA Work?

Attending Meetings – Individual recovery does not occur in isolation. Attending meetings is necessary for recovery. It is helpful if you attend several meetings before you decide whether or not CoDA is for you. You may also want to try several different groups in your area.

Sharing – We share our experience strength and hope with other CoDA members. Every member has a chance to share in meetings. Our fellowship creates feelings of belonging and provides us with support and camaraderie.

Fellowship – Fellowship is friendship, relatedness, and connection with fellow members in CoDA. Fellowship offers freedom from isolation and helps us to realize we are not alone in our recovery. Fellowship allows us to make new friends who also seek healthy and loving relationships, and it provides us a platform to practice with each other, in a safe environment, some of the skills we learn from the program. In its simplest form, fellowship consists of talking to one another before and after the meeting. Many members call/email other members or their sponsors using meeting phone/email lists. We respect others' anonymity by contacting only those on the list, by exercising discretion when we call or leave messages, and by keeping the lists confidential. Many groups have coffee or meals at a nearby restaurant following meetings.

Working The Steps – CoDA is a program of recovery based on working the Twelve Steps of Codependents Anonymous which are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. Working the steps helps us realize that many of our problems have solutions. The promise of the program is that when we are diligent in working the steps, we will achieve recovery over personal problems of codependence.

The Twelve Steps of CoDA

1. We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Tools of Our Program

The Twelve Steps – CoDA is a program of recovery based on working the Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous. The 12 Steps are the spiritual guidelines for our individual recovery. They steer us from a path of self-defeating behaviors toward healthy and loving relationships with our Higher Power, ourselves, and others.

The Twelve Traditions - The 12 Traditions are the guiding principles for our meeting. They are the spiritual principles for the membership of CoDA as a whole. They help CoDA to remain spiritually centered and to operate from a state of integrity.

The Twelve Promises - We can expect a miraculous change in our lives by working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. As we make an honest effort to work the Twelve Steps and follow the Twelve Traditions, the promises of the program begin to come true in our lives.

CoDA Blue Book – This is CoDA's equivalent of the AA Big Book. It contains foundational documents, detailed description of the steps, and personal stories, among other things.

CoDA Green Book – This is the workbook for the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of CoDA.

Other Foundational Documents - These include the Preamble, Welcome, Patterns, Serenity Prayer, CoDA Closing and Opening Prayers, CoDA Third and Seventh Step Prayers, etc. which are dispersed throughout this booklet.