



WELCOME



TO CODA



GSACC WEBSITE: <http://greateraccoda.org>



TM

Welcome to CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS, 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 rely on 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. Through applying the Twelve Steps and principles in CoDA to our daily life and relationships, both present and past, we can experience a new freedom from our self-defeating lifestyles and realize a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

PATTERNS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CODEPENDENCE

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers.

Denial Patterns:

- I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.
- I minimize, alter, or deny how I truly feel.
- I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.
- I lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others.
- I label others with my negative traits.
- I can take care of myself without any help from others.
- I mask my pain in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation.
- I express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.
- I do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom I am attracted.

Low Self Esteem Patterns:

- I have difficulty making decisions.
- I judge what I think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.
- I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings, and behavior over my own.
- I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.
- I constantly seek recognition that I think I deserve.
- I have difficulty admitting that I made a mistake.
- I need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and will even lie to look good.
- I am unable to ask others to meet my needs or desires.
- I perceive myself as superior to others.
- I look to others to provide my sense of safety.
- I have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.
- I have trouble setting healthy priorities.

Compliance Patterns:

- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger.
- I put aside my own interests in order to do what others want.
- I am hyper vigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.
- I am afraid to express my beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.
- I accept sexual attention when I want love.
- I make decisions without regard to the consequences.
- I give up my truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.

Control Patterns:

- I believe most people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
- I attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.
- I freely offer advice and direction to others without being asked.
- I become resentful when others decline my help or reject my advice.
- I lavish gifts and favors on those I want to influence.
- I use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.
- I have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.
- I demand that my needs be met by others.
- I use charm and charisma to convince others of my capacity to be caring and compassionate.
- I use blame and shame to emotionally exploit others.
- I refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.
- I adopt an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes.
- I use terms of recovery in an attempt to control the behavior of others.
- I pretend to agree with others to get what I want.

Avoidance Patterns:

- I act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward me.
- I judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
- I avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a means of maintaining distance.
- I allow my addictions to people, places, and things to distract me from achieving intimacy in relationships.
- I use indirect and evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
- I diminish my capacity to have healthy relationships by declining to use all the tools of recovery.
- I suppress my feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.
- I pull people toward me, but when they get close, I push them away.
- I refuse to give up my self-will to avoid surrendering to a power that is greater than myself.
- I believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.
- I withhold expressions of appreciation.

The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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 co-dependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority -- a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.
4. Each group should remain autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose -- to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.
6. A CoDA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the CoDA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim.
7. A CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. CoDependents Anonymous should remain forever non--professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. CoDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. CoDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CoDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The Twelve Promises
of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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 the 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.

FEELING WORDS

HAPPY

glad
festive
contented
relaxed
calm
complacent
satisfied
serene
comfortable
peaceful
joyous
ecstatic
enthusiastic
inspired
pleased
grateful
cheerful
excited
cheery
lighthearted
carefree
surprised
optimistic
spirited
vivacious
brisk
merry
generous
hilarious
exhilarated
jolly
playful
elated
thrilled
zestful
alive
amiable
amused
free radiant
enchanted

AFFECTIONATE

close
loving
sexy
tender
seductive
passionate
appealing
warm
agreeable
devoted
friendly
gentle

SAD

sorrowful

distrustful
depressed
melancholy
gloomy
somber
dismal
quiet
mournful
dreadful
dreary
flat
blah
dull
sullen
moody
sulky
low
discontented
discouraged
disappointed
concerned
sympathetic
compassionate
shook-up
embarrassed
shameful
ashamed
useless
worthless
awful
heartbroken
bitter
blue
destroyed
hopeless
lost
miserable
rejected

EAGER

keen
earnest
intent
zealous
ardent
avid
anxious
enthusiastic
desirous
excited
proud
active
adventurous
alive
clean
daring
energetic
impatient

ANGRY

mad
resentful
unhappy
enraged
furious
inflamed
furious
sullen
indignant
irate
wrathful
irritated
cross
sulky
bitter
frustrated
grumpy
boiling
fuming
stubborn
belligerent
confused
awkward
bewildered
agitated
contrary
disgusted
displeased
hostile
impatient
incensed

INTERESTED

concerned
fascinated
engrossed
intrigued
absorbed
excited
curious
inquisitive
inquiring
creative
sincere

FEARLESS

encouraged
confident
secure
independent
bold
brave
daring
hardy
determined
loyal

DOUBTFUL

skeptical
torn
suspicious
dubious
uncertain
evasive
wavering
hesitant
perplexed
indecisive
hopeless
powerless
helpless
defeated
pessimistic

HURT

isolated
distressed
in pain
suffering
afflicted
worried
aching
crushed
heartbroken
despair
tortured
lonely
pathetic
cold
upset
alone
bitter
contrary
forlorn
hopeless
rejected

PHYSICAL

taut
uptight
tense
stretched
hollow
empty
strong
weak
sweaty
breathless
nauseated
sluggish
weary
repulsed
tired
alive
feisty

MISCELLANEOUS

humble
mixed-up
envious
jealous
preoccupied
cruel
distant
bored
hypocritical
phony
impatient
kindly
powerful
reckless
safe
secure
strong

AFRAID

fearful
timid
shaky
apprehensive
fidgety
terrified
panicky
tragic
hysterical
alarmed
cautious
shocked
horrified
insecure
impatient
nervous
dependent
anxious
pressured
worried
doubtful
suspicious
hesitant
awed
dismayed
scared
threatened
appalled
petrified
bashful
cautious
desperate
shy

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

JUST FOR TODAY I WILL RESPECT MY OWN AND OTHERS' BOUNDARIES.

JUST FOR TODAY I WILL BE VULNERABLE WITH SOMEONE I TRUST.

JUST FOR TODAY I WILL TAKE ONE COMPLIMENT AND HOLD IT IN MY HEART FOR MORE THAN JUST A FLEETING MOMENT. I WILL LET IT NURTURE ME.

JUST FOR TODAY I WILL ACT IN A WAY THAT I WOULD ADMIRE IN SOMEONE ELSE.

JUST FOR TODAY I WILL NOT CRITICIZE MYSELF OR OTHERS.

I AM A CHILD OF GOD.

I AM A WORTHWHILE PERSON.

I AM A PRECIOUS PERSON.

I AM BEAUTIFUL INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

I LOVE MYSELF UNCONDITIONALLY.

I ALLOW MYSELF AMPLE LEISURE TIME WITHOUT FEELING GUILTY.

I DESERVE TO BE LOVED BY MYSELF AND OTHERS.

I AM LOVED BECAUSE I DESERVE LOVE.

I AM A CHILD OF GOD AND I DESERVE LOVE, PEACE, PROSPERITY, AND SERENITY.

I FORGIVE MYSELF FOR HURTING MYSELF AND OTHERS.

I FORGIVE MYSELF FOR LETTING OTHERS HURT ME.

I FORGIVE MYSELF FOR ACCEPTING SEX WHEN I REALLY WANTED LOVE.

I AM WILLING TO ACCEPT LOVE.

I AM NOT ALONE, I AM ONE WITH GOD AND THE UNIVERSE.

I AM WHOLE AND GOOD.

I AM CAPABLE OF CHANGING.

THE PAIN THAT I MIGHT FEEL BY REMEMBERING CANNOT BE ANY WORSE THAN THE PAIN I FEEL BY KNOWING AND NOT REMEMBERING.

I AM ENOUGH.

These affirmations are offered as a tool to aid in replacing the negative messages of the past with positive messages of hope for the future.

Recovery Patterns of Codependence

	Codependence	Recovery
Denial Patterns	I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.	I am aware of my feelings and identify them, often in the moment.
	I minimize, alter, or deny how I truly feel.	I embrace my feelings as being valid and important. I am truthful with myself.
	I perceive myself as being completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.	I keep the focus on my own well-being. I know the difference between caring and caretaking.
Low Self-Esteem Patterns	I have difficulty making decisions.	I trust my ability to make effective decisions.
	I judge everything I think, say, or do harshly, as never "good enough."	I accept myself as I am. I emphasize progress over perfection.
	I am embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.	I feel appropriately worthy of the recognition, praise, or gifts I receive
	I do not ask others to meet my needs or desires.	I meet my own needs and wants when possible. I reach out for help when it's necessary and appropriate.
	I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings, and behavior over my own.	I have confidence in myself. I no longer seek others' approval of my thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
	I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.	I recognize myself as being a lovable and valuable person.
Compliance Patterns	I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others' anger.	I am rooted in my own values, even if others don't agree or become angry.
	I am very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the same.	I can separate my feelings from the feelings of others.
	I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.	I am committed to my safety and recovery work. I leave situations that feel unsafe or are inconsistent with my goals.
	I value others' opinions and feelings more than my own and am afraid to express differing opinions and feelings of my own.	I respect my own opinions and feelings and express them appropriately.
	I put aside my own interests and hobbies in order to do what others want.	I consider my own interests first when asked to participate in another's plans.
	I accept sex when I want love.	My sexuality is grounded in genuine intimacy and connection. I know the difference between lust and love.
Control Patterns	I believe most other people are incapable of taking care of themselves.	I realize that, with rare exceptions, other adults are capable of managing their own lives. My job is to let them.
	I attempt to convince others of what they "should" think and how they "truly" feel.	I accept and value the differing thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others.
	I become resentful when others will not let me help them.	I feel comfortable when I see others take care of themselves.
	I freely offer others advice and directions without being asked.	I am a compassionate and empathic listener, giving advice only if directly asked.
	I lavish gifts and favors on those I care about.	I carefully and honestly contemplate my motivations when preparing to give a gift.
	I use sex to gain approval and acceptance.	I feel loved and accepted for myself, just the way I am.
	I have to be "needed" in order to have a relationship with others.	I develop relationships with others based on equality, intimacy, and balance.

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SUGGESTED METHOD
FOR WORKING
THE TWELVE STEPS
OF CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS
WITH A SPONSOR

In CoDA, there are many suggested ways to find a Sponsor and work the Twelve Steps. We lovingly offer this as another tool to aid our CoDA community in accomplishing our primary purpose to help the codependent who still suffers. This method suggests a simple strategy for both the Sponsor and the Sponsee to set healthy boundaries, have clarity of goals, and get their needs met for support and flexibility. As a CoDA member commits to working the program using this method, the 30 questions and daily journal checklist will move them gently through the first three steps using the CoDA Blue Book as the reference. This is a work in progress and may be revised from time to time. Last Revision: August 14, 2009

*Keep Coming Back! It works if you work it.
So, work it, 'CAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT!*

The Process:

- The Sponsee needs to have a copy of the CoDA Blue Big Book (Second Edition) and a spiral notebook or three-ring binder with blank paper for the 30 questions & their daily journal writing.
- The Sponsee places a call to the Sponsor, as agreed upon, at the same time each day.
- The call is to last no more than 15 minutes.
- The Sponsee reads the question they received from the Sponsor the day before. Then the Sponsee reads their written answer to the Sponsor.
- After positive encouragement from the Sponsor, the Sponsee is given the next question to write down.
- After giving the Sponsee the next question, the Sponsor asks the Sponsee to read the question back.
- The Sponsor will correct the Sponsee when any words are changed, added to, or dropped from the question.
- This process is repeated for each of the next 30 questions.
- The Sponsee also keeps track of working their CoDA program on the “My Daily CoDA Program Journal” checklist sheet (see attached page 4).

Need the list of 30 questions? Just contact one of our service volunteers on our website or write to us at our address below.

Commitment By Both Sponsor And Sponsee:

- Make a plan for when we do the questions.
- Have a plan for working a question if Sponsor is not available.
- Agree that the Sponsee can end the 30-question process at any time.
- Agree that the Sponsor can stop being a Sponsor at any time by verbal or written notification.
- Accept that the Sponsor doesn't sponsor family members.
- Agree that anonymity and confidentiality is practiced throughout the 30-questions work by both Sponsor & Sponsee.

Yes! I want to get a sponsor & work the Twelve Steps!

Benefits Of The Process To Sponsee:

- Keeps Sponsee focused.
- Introduces the Sponsee to the first three steps of recovery and gets Sponsee ready for the fourth step.
- Teaches the Sponsee that recovery takes time and commitment every day, not just the one hour a week at his/her meeting.
- Teaches the Sponsee to use the tools of recovery such as the CoDA Blue Book, Twelve Steps & Traditions.
- Demonstrates using healthy interaction and continuous commitment to the process.
- Starts the process of opening up the Sponsee's ears to hearing what is said by others by being able to test: "This is what I thought I heard you say. Is this correct?"
- Gives Sponsee a format for being a Sponsor.
- Gives Sponsee thirty questions to use with his/her Sponsees.
- At the end of the thirty questions, the Sponsee is ready to help another CoDA member through the 30 questions with the understanding that if they don't give away to another person what they just got, they will lose it. **"YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE IT AWAY TO KEEP IT!"**

What are Sponsors?

Sponsors are people within the CoDA program who help guide us through the Twelve Step recovery process. These people are recovering codependents whose personal recovery is their first priority. They continue to learn how to live happy and fulfilling lives and are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with us. They've usually walked the road of recovery longer than we have. They're who we call for help when we're confused or overwhelmed. They can also be friends who work the program with us.

Sponsors are able to remain objective and detached from feeling responsible for our happiness and recovery. They also refrain from behaving in abusive, critical, or controlling ways that can result in fixing, rescuing, acting as a therapist, sexual manipulation, or personal gain. Sponsors are role models for recovery, sources of loving support, and respectful of our anonymity and individual pace in working the program.

Sponsor's Goals:

- To share with newcomers how I work my twelve step program.
- To share what I was like then and what I am like now.
- To share as a Twelve Step Guide, not as a friend or Higher Power.
- To share in "I" statements but live in "we" actions.
- To share tools I have added to my tool box and how I use these tools today.
- To practice healthy boundaries and be respectful of the Sponsee's reality.

Sponsee's Goals:

- Accept that the Sponsor has high expectations of them as Sponsees. Some of the Sponsor's expectations are:
 - ✓ Sponsee will be open to new ideas.
 - ✓ Sponsee will share their new tools with others.
 - ✓ Sponsee will do the work.
 - ✓ Sponsee will call every day at agreed upon time.
 - ✓ Sponsee will share only for 15 minutes each day.
 - ✓ Sponsee will practice "H O W" – Honesty, Open-mindedness, & Willingness.
 - ✓ Sponsee will leave the "Well But" and "Only If" excuses behind.
 - ✓ Sponsee will be respectful of their and the Sponsor's time and space.
 - ✓ Sponsee will work no more than 30 minutes a day on the answer.
 - ✓ Sponsee will allow the healing process to go as deeply as possible in the time allowed.
 - ✓ Sponsee will trust the process knowing that if more healing work needs to be done on any particular issue, it will come up again.
- Remember: "Progress, Not Perfection"
- If we have agreement at this point, set a time for Sponsee's first call to Sponsor to receive the first question.

The Benefit Of Sponsorship For Both The Sponsor And Sponsee:

- If we continue our step work with others and keep going back to meetings for help and support, we keep finding the tools and knowledge to become the best each of us can be.
- At the same time, we learn we are not alone in our recovery journey, nor are we unusual in any way.

Remember: Progress, Not Perfection!

