



Coda-tulsa.org

November, 2012 Revision (Wed/Sat Groups)

The Meeting Starter Packet of Co-Dependents Anonymous Pending Conference Approval 2010

Section I - OPEN

Good (evening) (morning) and welcome to this meeting of CoDA: Co-Dependents Anonymous. We ask those with cell phones to please turn them off or set them to silent ringing during this meeting.

After a moment of silence, those who wish to are encouraged to join me in the Serenity Prayer.

God, (slight pause) grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy and fulfilling relationships. These meetings are open to all who wish to achieve that goal in their personal life.

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 12 Traditions for knowledge and wisdom. These are the principles of our program and guide 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 allow others the same privilege.

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

CoDA Opening Prayer (read by person leading):

In the spirit of love and truth, we ask our Higher Power
To guide us as we share our experience, strength and hope.
We open our hearts to the light of wisdom,
The warmth of love and the joy of acceptance.

New Comer(s)? *If so, **take turns** reading the Welcome below. Otherwise skip to Section II below.*

Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous©
(Short version)

We welcome you to Co-Dependents Anonymous - a program of recovery from codependence, where each of us may share our experience, strength, and hope in our efforts to find freedom where there has been bondage, and peace where there has been turmoil in our relationships with others and ourselves.

Codependence is a deeply-rooted, compulsive behavior. It is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional family systems. We attempted to use others as our sole source of identity, value, well being, and as a way of trying to restore our emotional losses. Our histories may include other powerful addictions which we have used to cope with our codependency.

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We have all learned to survive life, but in CoDA we are learning to live life. Through applying the *Twelve Steps* and principles found in CoDA to our daily lives and relationships, both present and past, we can experience a new freedom from our self-defeating lifestyles. Our sharing helps us to free the emotional bonds of our past and the compulsive control of our present.

No matter how traumatic your past or despairing your present may seem, there is hope for a new day in the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous. May you find a new strength within to be that which God intended - Precious and Free.

Section II - PATTERNS

Now let's read *the **Patterns & Characteristics of Codependence*** one section at a time on the next page. Feel free to pass if you want.



Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence

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.

Low Self Esteem Patterns:

I have difficulty making decisions.

I judge everything I think, say or do harshly, as never "good enough."

I am embarrassed to receive recognition and praise or gifts.

I do not ask others to meet my needs or desires.

I value others' approval of my thinking, feelings and behavior over my own.

I do not perceive myself as a lovable or worthwhile person.

Compliance Patterns:

I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others' anger.

I am very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the same.

I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.

I value others' opinions and feelings more than my own and am afraid to express differing opinions and feelings of my own.

I put aside my own interests and hobbies in order to do what others want.

I accept sex when I want love.

Control Patterns:

I believe most other people are incapable of taking care of themselves.

I attempt to convince others of what they "should" think and how they "truly" feel.

I become resentful when others will not let me help them.

I freely offer others advice and directions without being asked.

I lavish gifts and favors on those I care about.

I use sex to gain approval and acceptance.

I have to be "needed" in order to have a relationship with others.

Section III - STEPS

The guideline for our individual recovery is **CoDA's 12 Steps**. From the next page we'll now take turns reading the steps one at a time. Feel free to "pass" if you'd like.



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 codependents, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Section IV – SHARING

As we begin this CoDA meeting I'd like to remind you that all are encouraged to share, but should not feel like they have to. A few things to remember:

Sharing is done in no particular order. If you share, please start by stating your first name and if you are comfortable doing so follow your name with an indication you're a codependent. (I'm *firstname* and I'm a codependent)

Try to keep what you share in first person with references to "I, me and mine" instead of "you, us and "ours" and avoid advice giving to others.

Each sharing should be restricted to 3-5 minutes. Please show consideration for others by taking note of the time on the wall clock as you begin.

A person sharing indicates he or she is done simply by thanking the group. No person should share a second time until all who wish to have had an opportunity.

No crosstalk. There should be no conversations or talk across the circle of this meeting. Please save those until after the meeting has concluded.

As you listen to another share, feel free to offer nods or other forms of reinforcement that do not distract or interrupt. However, please resist the urge to chime in and disrupt the meeting making comments, asking questions or giving judgment or giving advice to the person sharing.

And remember our meetings are held with trust in each other. What you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

(Tuesday and Wednesday)

Ask for volunteer to read from **Melody Beattie's "The Language of Letting Go.** Meeting proceeds from reading or person leading may introduce an additional topic.

(Saturday)

This meeting is focused primarily on studying the 12 steps as a group. We are currently studying Step (#) (*read step*).

- Ask for volunteer to read from **Melody Beattie's "The Language of Letting Go"** followed as applicable by Pia Mellody "Spirituality Audio").
- Take turns reading from **Melody Beattie's "Codependents Guide to the 12 Steps"**

Section V – CLOSING

I can expect a miraculous change in my life by working the program of Codependents 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.

(Section V – Closing Cont'd)

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a program free to all who wish to attend and its cornerstone is trust in one another. We believe that by helping and supporting each other with the help of a power greater than ourselves, we can find more meaningful, loving and peaceful lives.

Please remember those attending these meetings wish to remain anonymous and what was spoken and shared was done in confidence. What you saw here, what you heard here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

...and now the CoDA Closing Prayer (read by leader)

We thank our Higher Power

For all that we received from this meeting.

As we close, may we take with us

Wisdom, love, acceptance and hope of recovery.

After a moment of silence, those who wish to are encouraged to join me in the Serenity Prayer.

God, **(pause)**

Grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change,

The courage to change the things I can,

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Thank you for being here! Keep coming back!

*Has anyone reached 1 month, 2 months, 3 months, 6 months or 9 months?
Is anyone due an annual coin?*