

WELCOME TO CoDA

The secretaries lines have been highlighted in blue

Welcome to the Thursday 8pm meeting of Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is _____ and I am co-dependent. This is a sharing meeting that ends at 9:45 p.m., so would all who care to join me in the serenity prayer?

***God Grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot
change,
The courage to change the things I can
And the wisdom to know the difference.***

THE CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS PROGRAM OF RECOVERY
Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships.

I have asked someone to read "THE WELCOME"

The Welcome

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.

Most of us have been searching for ways to overcome the dilemmas of the conflicts in our relationships and our childhoods. Many of us were raised in families where addictions existed—some of us were not. In either case, we have found in each of our lives that co-dependence is most deeply-rooted compulsive behavior, and that it is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional family systems. We have each experienced in our own ways the painful trauma of the emptiness of our childhood and relationships throughout our lives.

We attempted to use others -- our mates, our friends, and even our children --as our sole source of identity, value, and well-being and as a way of trying to restore within us the emotional losses from our childhoods. Our histories may include other powerful addictions which at times we have used to cope with our codependence.

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 life and relationships, both present and past, we can experience a new freedom from our self-defeating lifestyles. It is an individual growth process. Each of us is growing at our own pace and will continue to do so as we remain open to God's will for us on a daily basis. Our sharing is our way of identification and 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. No longer do you need to rely on others as a power greater than yourself. May you instead find here a new strength within to be that which God intended -- Precious and Free.

[I have asked someone to read "TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS of a CO-DEPENDENT"](#)

TYPICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF CO-DEPENDENTS

- We assume responsibility for other's feelings and/or behaviors.
- We feel overly responsible for other's feelings and/or behaviors.
- We have difficulty identifying feelings. Am I angry? Lonely? Sad? Happy?
- We have difficulty expressing feelings, such as "I am feeling happy ... sad ... hurt ... joyful."

- We tend to fear and/or worry how others may respond to our feelings.
- We have difficulty forming and/or maintaining close relationships.
- We are afraid of being hurt and/or rejected by others.
- We are perfectionistic and place too many expectations on ourselves.
- We have difficulty making decisions.
- We tend to minimize, alter, or even deny the truth about how we feel.
- Other people's actions and attitudes tend to determine how we respond/react.
- We tend to put other people's wants and needs first.
- Our fear of others' feelings (anger) determines what we say and do.
- We question or ignore our own values to connect with significant others.
- We value others' opinions more than our own.
- Our self-esteem is bolstered by outer/other influences. We cannot acknowledge good things about ourselves.
- Our serenity and mental attention is determined by how others are feeling and/or behaving.
- We tend to judge everything we do, think, or say harshly, by someone else's standards. Nothing is done, said, or thought "good enough."

- We do not know that being vulnerable and asking for help is both ok and normal.
- We do not know that it is ok to talk about problems outside of the family or that feelings just are - and it is better to share them than to deny, minimize, or justify them.
- We tend to put other people's wants and needs before our own.
- We are steadfastly loyal, even when the loyalty is unjustified, and often even personally harmful.

I have asked someone to read "[CO-DEPENDENTS NEED BOUNDARIES](#)"

CO-DEPENDENTS NEED BOUNDARIES

What are boundaries? One possible answer is the setting of limits for yourself. For example: We need to set limits on what we will allow people to do to and for us. The people we relate to need to know that we have boundaries. It will help them and us. This is not to suggest that we become tyrants or absolutely inflexible, but we can understand our own limits, and as we grow and change, we may want to change our boundaries. Some examples of boundaries common to co-dependents who are recovering are:

1. I will not allow anyone to physically or verbally abuse me.
2. I will not knowingly believe or support lies.
3. I will not allow abuse in my home.
4. I will not rescue people from the consequences of their abuse or from their irresponsible behavior.
5. I will not finance any person's irresponsible behavior.
6. I will not lie to protect you or me from your diseases, compulsions and obsessions of any kind.

7. If you want to act crazy, that is your business, but you can't do it in front of me. Either you will leave or I will walk away.
8. You can spoil your fun, your day, your life--That is your business, but I will not allow you to spoil my fun, my day, or my life.
9. I will set a special boundary, if I feel that it is necessary to a particular relationship.
10. I will set up boundaries, and in doing so, I will make sure that they are my own boundaries.

CLUES TO SOME BOUNDARIES

Things that we are sick of, can't stand, or make threats about. Mean what you say; say what you mean. Don't feel guilty. Stick to your boundaries. People may get angry, threaten us, and try to make us feel guilty, or just not believe us. Guess what? They do these things because they can't use or abuse us anymore. Enforce your boundaries. Tell people what your boundaries are – once, quietly and in peace. Then watch your tolerance level. IT IS WORTH IT. I AM WORTH IT. WE ARE WORTH IT.

I have asked someone to read "THE TWELVE STEPS"

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 our 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 voluntary sign-in sheet will be passed around during the sharing. Add your name to the list as you wish. Occasionally the list will be typed up and distributed. Until then, feel to copy down the numbers of those with whom you have identified.

Nothing we have to say is unimportant or stupid. We share with "I" statements. We avoid sharing with "you" statements. We discourage cross talk or feedback, since as Co-dependents we are working to achieve our own realities, and break away from what others think, feel or

advice. We ask you to please NOT INTERRUPT someone else's sharing. DO NOT COMMENT on another person's share or use their proper name while talking about yourself.

Sharing is limited as indicated by the timer. Please bring your share to a close when you hear the second beep. The leader calls on the first person to share and then that person calls on the next and so on. Who would like to share? (Sharing until 9:30 p.m.)

(At 9:30p.m.)

It is now time for the SEVENTH TRADITION which states that we are self-supporting.

I have asked someone to read THE TWELVE TRADITIONS of Co-Dependents Anonymous. (Pass the basket)

So, are there any secretary's announcements? Literature announcements? Treasurer's announcements? Other announcements?

I want to thank everyone for speaking today and thank those who have been of service to this meeting.

Please remember that CoDA is an anonymous program. We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting. What you hear in this meeting is not for gossip or outside disclosure.

Please remember to clean up the area around you and put any furniture back into place.

We will now pass the affirmations. Please read one or make up your own. (Stop when everyone has said one.)

After a moment of silent meditation would _____ please lead us in the UNITY PRAYER.

***I put my hands in yours
And together we can do
What we could never do alone.***

***No longer is there a sense of hopelessness.
No longer must we depend,
Upon our own unsteady willpower.***

***We are together now.
Reaching out our hands for strength
Greater than our own.***

***And as we join hands.
We find love and understanding,
Beyond our wildest dreams.***