

The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook
of
Co-Dependents Anonymous

Twenty Year Anniversary Edition

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*The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook
of Co-Dependents Anonymous Twenty Year Anniversary Edition*
is CoDA Conference endorsed literature
Fourth Consolidated Edition
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Fourth Consolidated Edition: **MONTH**, 2023
Third Consolidated Edition: June, 2018
Second Consolidated Edition: October, 2007
First Consolidated Edition: September, 2003

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ISBN# **TO COME**

Dear CoDA Members,

Guided by our Higher Power, the Fourth Edition of *The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook* is the result of a long and rewarding group conscience process. The wisdom in this workbook has evolved over many years.

This project started when a dedicated group of nine members of Co-Dependents Anonymous recognized the need for a workbook that reflected CoDA's perspective on the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The group met weekly, from 1997 to 2001. Their manuscripts were sent, one Step and one Tradition at a time, to the National Literature Committee (NLC), now known as CoDA Literature Committee (CLC). Because the Fellowship was so eager for a workbook, the content was originally published and distributed in four sections, each containing three Steps and three Traditions. The National Service Conference (NSC), now known as the CoDA Service Conference (CSC) endorsed each section separately, 1998-2002. Finally, in 2003 all four sections were put together into the First Consolidated Edition of *The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook of Co-Dependents Anonymous*.

We welcome newcomers and those who have been in recovery a while to join each other in using and benefitting from the wisdom and guidance in this Fourth Consolidated Edition of the CoDA workbook. There are many ways to use this workbook: one-on-one with a sponsor or other CoDA member, in CoDA meetings, and in dedicated CoDA Step and Tradition study groups, meeting face to face, online or using other forms of media.

This workbook is a living document. Since its original printing, members have continued to grow in understanding of the disease of codependency and in our journey of recovery in CoDA. While the essence of the original transcript remains, multiple changes have been made with the intention of reflecting this new understanding and reaching the codependent who still suffers.

We are full of gratitude to have had the opportunity to share the deeper awareness, expanded knowledge, and spiritual growth we have gained in updating this workbook.

We hope you enjoy the journey!

The CoDA Literature Committee

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Preface

As the material for this workbook was prepared, it became evident that there are three areas covered in *The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous*:

OUR EXPERIENCE

Identifying our codependent characteristics and their manifestations in our lives.

OUR STRENGTH

Using the tools in our program.

OUR HOPE

Living our lives in recovery, co-creating healthier and more loving relationships.

The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous offer us principles to guide our deepening recovery, our service work, and living our program in all our relationships.

UNITY

We support ourselves and each other when we find common ground.

PURPOSE

We grow as we keep our focus on creating healthy and loving relationships.

SPIRITUALITY

We rely more and more on the guidance of our Higher Power, allowing others to do the same.

ANONYMITY

We release our codependency as we rely on principles, not personalities, in all our relationships.

Codependency as a Disease

Throughout this workbook you will find codependency referred to as a disease. A dictionary definition of disease is “a condition that impairs the performance of a vital function; sickness; malady; trouble; harmful development.” It is in the spirit of this definition that we describe codependency as a disease.

Many found this definition helpful in understanding the effects of codependency. Much as we might do in recovery from any other disease, as we recover, we learn to identify when codependent symptoms surface, and we learn to apply the self-care tools of our program in a loving manner. This thought also brings, for many of us, a continuing sense of acceptance about our codependency as we walk our path of recovery.

“When I heard others refer to what I had as a disease, it released me from being responsible for my codependency. I could feel free of shame and blame and move on.”

“As with any other disease, recovery takes action.”

“I wouldn’t treat anyone else like I mistreat myself. I recognize that my go-to position is self-neglect, abandonment, and withdrawal into silence. I’ve learned codependence kills!”

Applying the Program in Our Daily Life

When we study both the Steps and Traditions, it becomes evident that they offer essential guidelines for working and living with others. CoDA service provides a safe place to practice the principles. We acknowledged our need to work the Steps and be steadfast in our allegiance to the Traditions. We saw that the awareness gained in our Step work can be used in our application of the Traditions in our service work, our meetings, and in all our relationships.

Finding Hope

As codependents, we acknowledge that we are people unskilled in managing our own lives and relationships. Whatever our issues, we find hope through a common solution: *The Twelve Steps* and *The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous*. It is not necessary for us to understand how or why the Steps, Traditions, or our Higher Power work, but rather we learn to trust that they do. This trust is well placed; we see those among us realizing the Promises of the CoDA program every day. We have faith that the spiritual principles found in our Steps and Traditions support our recovery and our CoDA Fellowship.

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

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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. Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, 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, films, television, and all other public forms of communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Step One

*We admitted we were powerless over others —
that our lives had become unmanageable.*

Step One begins our personal relationship with the Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous. We admit we are powerless over our disease of codependency to ourselves and to others. As we do this, many of us begin to experience a sense of belonging and we see that we are not alone. Even though new behavior may feel uncomfortable, we can address each situation in our lives one at a time with the Steps and the Traditions, beginning with Step One. We can stop trying to control; we begin to establish a new relationship with ourselves.

Saying we are powerless over our disease, out loud to the group, starts us on our road of truth. We discover what we are powerless over and see the manifestations of our disease. We begin to identify some of the untruths we have learned. We come to realize that being powerless does not mean we are weak; controlling others does not make us safe; looking to others for our direction does not support us in living our own lives; judging others is not our business; and believing we are all-powerful is painful. We experience how old recorded messages playing in our heads can control us. We discover that thinking or judging in the extreme terms of right and wrong or good and bad is rigid and limiting.

As we work Step One, we begin to find the tools of recovery. Most of us find that using our CoDA literature, as well as listening to others when they share their codependent characteristics, is helpful in the identification process required in Step One. We focus on ourselves and work on staying in the present. As we let go, we begin to release responsibility for others. We let go of what others think about us, knowing we are adults and have choices.

We learn to ask ourselves:

- What do I feel?
- What do I need?
- What do I want?

We can make a checklist of tools to support our recovery. We begin to establish healthy boundaries to better take care of ourselves. For example, we can leave, call someone, write, or take a walk around the block. We learn that we have done enough when we have listened to our gut, prayed, written, or realized we don't have to make a decision right away. We also learn that it isn't necessary to like everything that we accept. We can learn the lessons of true humility and recognize we don't have all the answers. As we begin to let go of control to a power greater than ourselves, we are better able to accept the realities of being human. We find peace.

We are released from false obligations and thinking we are responsible for everything. We experience freedom, personal integrity, and self-empowerment. Developing a genuine interest in taking care of ourselves and honoring our intuition becomes a priority. As we let go of the need to control others, we begin to focus on that which we can take care of: OURSELVES.

The more we accept our powerlessness over others, the more we feel relief as our unmanageability begins to subside. We can take our time and act with grace and dignity. When we are connected with ourselves and this Step, we begin to have faith that we are capable of changing, and we learn to release our fears. Beginning to recognize we are worthwhile and valuable. We can say "thank you" and give ourselves daily positive affirmations.

In this moment, I do not have to control anyone, including me. And if I feel uncomfortable with what another person is doing or not doing, I can remind myself that I am powerless over this person and I am powerless over my compulsion to act in inappropriate ways.

Step One Prayer

Questions to help us work Step One:

1. In what ways does my life feel out of control?

2. How do I use control in my daily life?

3. Why might I want to control?

4. What is the difference between feeling powerless versus feeling empowered?

5. How does empowerment make my life more manageable?

6. How does my fear of what others think about me affect me?

7. How does taking care of myself affect me?

8. How does admitting and accepting my powerlessness over others assist me?

9. Why does this Step say “admitted we were powerless” instead of “admitted I was powerless”?

10. Which of my codependent characteristics or behaviors prevent me from taking Step One?

11. What signs, feelings, or behaviors might indicate that I’m in denial?

12. When do I know I've done enough?

13. Am I powerless over my codependent behavior?

14. Am I willing to recognize that trying to change anyone else may bring on unmanageability, hostility, resentment?

Tradition One

Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.

Beginning with Tradition One, we practice new behaviors and follow new guidelines in order to restructure our beliefs and our lives in recovery. We become willing to recognize and let go of our own egos and personal agendas in order to support the common welfare of CoDA. We learn to speak our truth and we allow others the same privilege. We honor the group conscience process by acknowledging our Higher Power. We let go of our need to control the outcome and accept the results of an informed group conscience where each member has a voice and a vote.

Tradition One supports us in all levels of our service work whether this be at our home group, intergroup, committee, voting entity (VE), or CoDA World service. It helps us create a functional environment wherein we can attend to the business of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

We find that keeping the spirit of common welfare in our minds and hearts is essential to working with others. We can, with the help of our Higher Power, speak our truth even when there might be disagreement. Having acknowledged our difficulties in forming and maintaining functional relationships, we look to Tradition One: our common welfare should come first and our personal recovery depends upon our unity. Although it takes time, trust, and communication, our CoDA group conscience decision-making process can be practiced in all areas of our lives: primary relationships, families, friends, business, etc.

As we do our service work, our Step One issues are sure to surface. We find ourselves wanting to control and might actively attempt to manipulate situations according to our rigid ideas. We might want or attempt to be a Higher Power or believe we have the right answers. We may look to others to be our Higher Power and provide all our answers. We can become overly attached to our own opinions or see our differences with others as attacks or threats. Again, we need to place the focus back where it belongs, our common welfare, upon which the unity of our program depends. By actively applying the principles of our program, we see that neither control nor compliance supports our common welfare and unity. We learn to listen, to open our minds and our hearts, and to make room for a Higher Power. We seek serenity within ourselves.

Tradition One allows us the opportunity to restructure our beliefs and our lives both inside and then outside the meeting rooms of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Tradition One serves as a guideline as we learn to practice recovery in our daily lives. Again, we make room for a Higher Power and loosen our tight grasp of how we believe things should be. We learn to care for ourselves by identifying and expressing our feelings, needs, and boundaries moderately. We allow others to do the same.

Caring about our own needs is healthy. Allowing others to care for their needs is healthy and supports the structure of a safe and loving environment. The idea of common welfare and unity being primary can be brought into our recovery in CoDA, as well as with our families and other relationships.

With our deepening awareness of Tradition One, we begin to truly understand how essential the unity of the program is to our personal recovery. Without a strong spiritual structure, most of us believe that, over time, Co-Dependents Anonymous would cease to exist. Therefore, without consistent practice of this Tradition, there would be no place for our recovery. Even the simple process of saying in a meeting, "I am _____, and I am codependent," and having our name repeated, promotes our common welfare. We identify as codependents and acknowledge there is a place for each and every one of us in our program. This process allows for acceptance by helping us remember that no one is more important than another, and we all share a common trait: our codependence.

Higher Power, deepen my awareness to include the welfare of the whole, setting aside my discomfort and personal agenda. Help me speak my truth and allow others the same privilege, trusting that the spirit of unity supports my own recovery.

Tradition One Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition One:

1. What does CoDA unity mean?

2. Why is CoDA unity important to my personal recovery?

3. What is our common welfare?

4. What beliefs and behaviors prevent me from applying the principle of our common welfare to my personal relationships?

5. How can Tradition One support me in all my relationships?

6. How does my surrounding environment support me in functional living?

7. How do I value myself and yet have our common welfare come first?

8. What reminds me that others are entitled to their opinions, as am I?

9. How does working Step One support the principle of Tradition One?

10. How might I apply Tradition One in my daily life?

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Step Two

*Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves
could restore us to sanity.*

Having admitted our powerlessness in Step One, Step Two asks us to be willing to learn to trust. We acknowledge our need to believe in, and rely on, something greater than ourselves. For many of us, this is the first time we are able to recognize that we are not the center of the universe. That belief is a remnant of our childhood which no longer serves us. There is a power greater than anything we could possibly imagine on our own. We can experience humility, let go of grandiosity, and our obsession to control. We are not the “power greater than ourselves,” nor can others be this power for us. We begin to see how these patterns of thinking and behaving created unmanageability in our lives. Believing in a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity if we are willing.

We may now recognize the painful consequences of allowing others to be this power for us. As children, our parents, caregivers, or others were that power greater than ourselves. If these experiences left us unable to trust, we may now find it difficult to rely on anything or anyone, even ourselves. We may have learned that this power greater than ourselves was punishing, mean, unforgiving, unavailable, judgmental, and the list goes on and on. We may believe that we are unworthy of love and guidance. As we seek help, letting go of control can often be a terrifying prospect.

At this point, we can remember that the program allows us complete freedom to define this power for ourselves. Some of us find that our definition of, and relationship with, a power greater than ourselves changes over time. Each of us can begin with whatever belief provides the most comfort, using whatever degree of faith we have at the moment.

Some may define this power as:

- the harmony of the universe
- the power of meetings
- God
- nature
- unconditional love
- faith in what works for those who have come before us, believing because they believe
- the process of creating art
- an inner light
- Higher Power

Begin to create your own concept of a power greater than yourself.

Our definitions matter less than our willingness to work Step Two. Our childhood view of a power greater than ourselves, a Higher Power, or the idea of God can often be distorted or absent. Step Two provides a new opportunity to define our view of our own Higher Power. Our group experience shows us it is important to trust that this power cares for us unconditionally, has our best interests at heart, and can offer us the loving and healing guidance we seek.

Step Two is a daily part of our program of recovery. The words “came to believe” remind us that this is a process. Our faith and serenity grow and deepen through our willingness to trust this process. We practice using the tools of our program, and we act upon our desire to believe by going to meetings, reaching out to others, finding service commitments, listening to others, feeling our feelings, finding a sponsor, praying, and meditating. As we practice letting go, we can relax and remember that we are not in charge, and we can ask for guidance from a power greater than ourselves. By working Step Two, we come to believe that this power can restore us to sanity.

In this moment, I can believe that I am never alone; I can experience the sense of freedom that having a Higher Power offers me. I can remind myself that believing is also an action, and if I am willing to practice it, one moment at a time, I will develop faith.

Step Two Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Two:

1. What does “came to believe” mean to me?

2. What does a “power greater than ourselves” mean to me?

3. What does sanity mean to me?

4. What does “restore us to sanity” mean to me?

5. Do I need to believe in any power other than my own? Why?

6. What, if anything, prevents me from believing in a power greater than myself

7. What was my image of a Higher Power before I came to CoDA?

8. What supportive qualities would I like or need in my Higher Power?

9. What new attitudes and actions can help me find and trust a power greater than myself?

9. How do grandiosity and obsessive control manifest themselves in my life?

10. In what ways am I still suffering?

11. As a result of working Step Two, what new behaviors am I practicing?

12. How can this Step help bring healing into my relationships?

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Tradition Two

*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.*

Tradition Two reminds us that a loving Higher Power is greater than the individual, group, or trusted servant. This allows us to experience humility by recognizing where the source of our guidance comes from. Tradition Two points out that no one person leads the group, makes plans for the group, or provides answers for the group.

Tradition Two begins to define the structure of our program:

1. A loving Higher Power
2. The group conscience
3. Trusted servants

The group conscience process offers us safety. Without crosstalk, arguing, or shaming, we become willing to speak our truth. We listen to what is being said, instead of noticing who is saying it. We remain open to the opinions of other members and let go of the results. Knowing we can take care of ourselves; we can experience our feelings of vulnerability. We are afforded the opportunity to say we have changed our minds. We can release our extreme thinking, such as: “If I am right, you are wrong,” or “I must have all the answers.” or “The leaders must have all the solutions”. Knowing that group members can only speak from their place in recovery, we strive to avoid judging one another. We believe in progress, not perfection. We honor the outcome of the group conscience.

We accept the outcome of group conscience decisions in CoDA because we trust the process. Tradition Two allows for all concepts of Higher Power to share the room. We begin to experience humility in the give and take of our discussions. Ideally, the discussion leads to a unanimous decision. However, the majority vote is considered to be the group conscience. We let go of our own agenda, trust the group conscience, and remember that we can accept a decision even if we do not like it.

There are very few issues that require an immediate decision, in our meetings or in CoDA committees, if there is no resolution to be found, it is OK to postpone the vote.

This allows members time for meditation and conscious contact with our Higher Power before reaching a group conscience decision. In our old way of thinking, we had to have the answers right away, sometimes even before the questions were asked. Today, as we work our program, we learn to choose our response instead of reacting immediately.

Issues brought to our local, regional, or international levels of service come to a vote after having gone through the group conscience process at each respective level. This allows Higher Power to work throughout the Fellowship. Trusted servants have the opportunity for wider conversations and input from members and groups, and time for meditation and conscious contact with their Higher Power before reaching a group conscience decision.

Tradition Two provides a way to the unity we need to recover. Without unity we are lost and alone.

Tradition Two encourages members to find their voice and speak their truth in a safe environment. Experiencing unity in CoDA meetings and in service work shows us how to work towards common welfare in our personal relationships. Healthy relationships are based on mutual respect, honest communication, and unity of purpose. When we are guided by our Higher Power, we learn to speak up and put aside our egos to create serenity and harmony.

“We do strive to be trustworthy and trusted. We act to serve the well-being of our relationships, friends, and family.” *Traditionally Speaking* booklet, page 11

Higher Power, grant me the humility to be a trusted servant, remembering that no one person governs. Together we seek the guidance and loving expression of Your will through our informed group conscience process.

Tradition Two Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Two:

1. In light of Tradition Two, what does a “loving Higher Power” mean to me today?

2. How does the group conscience begin to establish CoDA structure?

3. How does Tradition Two help me to accept the group conscience?

4. How can accepting the group conscience bring me serenity?

5. How do I learn to trust my Higher Power?

6. How does my Higher Power help me to trust myself?

7. What does "our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern" mean to me?

8. How does being a trusted servant relate to my recovery?

9. Why is the word “loving” so important in the application of Tradition Two?

10. What is my experience with Tradition Two in CoDA?

11. How do I apply the principle of Tradition Two in my personal life?

Step Three

*Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of
God as we understood God.*

Step Three offers us the opportunity to make a decision and to have faith in a power greater than ourselves. Many of us begin working this Step by deciding not to fix someone, allowing our feelings to just be there, or choosing not to control, for a few moments at a time. As we experience the benefits of working Step Three, we find ourselves more willing to trust the care of our loving Higher Power and to experience faith.

The primary purpose of this Step is to begin living our lives in a new way. Finally, we have a tool that works and provides us the freedom and acceptance we were incapable of finding through self-will alone. This Step suggests a willingness to live in this decision. We surrender ourselves to a Higher Power of our own understanding. When we do this, we can begin new, more satisfying relationships with ourselves and others. As we develop the courage and willingness required in Step Three, many of us come to acknowledge and believe that we are part of our Higher Power's plan. We become increasingly capable of knowing ourselves as our Higher Power knows us.

As codependents, our false gods have often been other powerful forces. We may have been ruled by fear, anger, resentment, guilt, willfulness, and a powerful urge to take care of, or be taken care of, by those we have invested with "authority" to govern our lives. In Step Three, we can begin to let go of these powerful forces which have controlled us. Instead, we align ourselves, our thinking, and our actions with the loving, compassionate care of our Higher Power.

Letting go can be seen as a decision to trust in a Higher Power. Doing our best to take whatever actions are necessary to care for ourselves, we live in this power's will today, without attempting to control the results of tomorrow. It can be frightening to trust in something we cannot see or to have faith that all is happening in our Higher Power's time. As codependents, we may have been unable to trust our caregivers or other authority figures throughout our childhood years. However, most of us find this struggle to trust well worth our efforts. We can courageously embrace our fear, ask our Higher Power's guidance, and practice faith. In this way, we give ourselves permission to begin, or to expand, whatever amount of belief we may have.

Some of us believed that making a decision to "turn our will and our lives over to the care of God" meant that we needed to give up our selves: what we thought, wanted, and felt. Indeed, for many years, we often did lose our sense of self and autonomy. Our fear of this may cause great resistance. Many of us find comfort in those who have walked before us, when we see and hear how this Step transformed them into the people they were meant to be.

We can allow ourselves to be cradled in care and faith. We can learn to be in the present moment and live our Higher Power's will for us. We can let go of using control to make things okay, because this no longer works for us or protects us. Relying on our Higher Power, we have the ability to be who and what we are as well as who and what we are not. We can develop faith in ourselves with the help of a Higher Power and we can learn to understand that our answers are only for ourselves.

Feeling a sense of urgency, feeling that we have to do something different, or feeling resentment, can all be signals that we need to let go and work Step Three. Positive affirmations support us in learning new behavior. Using these affirmations to replace the old, recorded messages in our heads can open us to our Higher Power's will. Learning new behavior takes time. We can give ourselves permission to be human.

When we let go, we begin to feel the rewards of this Step. The more we trust in this process, the more we are able to let go. We learn to practice patience and acceptance. Our lives translate into results when we accept Step One, have faith with Step Two guiding us, and let go with Step Three. We repeatedly make the "decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of" our Higher Power, as we understand this Higher Power, again and again and again. Conscious contact with our Higher Power and vigilance in our CoDA program are essential for our recovery. Many of us find great freedom in the daily action, practice, and renewal of Step Three.

Step Three Tools

These tools have been offered by members of CoDA in the spirit of light, love, and the hope of recovery.

- Acknowledge that we are codependent and need the help of our Higher Power on our road of recovery.
- Let go so that our Higher Power can work in our lives.
- Be still, accept our feelings, and allow them to serve us.
- Ask our Higher Power for help and recognize that we do not have to do it alone.
- Contact our sponsor
- Create a group of three to five CoDA friends, including yourself, who commit to support each other between meetings with phone calls in times of stress, loneliness, and for fellowship.
- Go to Step One, admit we are powerless, move into Step Two (acknowledge our belief in a Higher Power), and work Step Three (accept that our Higher Power has a plan for us greater than any we could imagine, and let go).
- Recite the Serenity Prayer or other favorite prayer to reconnect to our program.
- Remind ourselves of previous situations in which we let go, and later discovered that things worked out well.
- Reflect on the fact that we may not understand our Higher Power.
- Repeat the affirmation "I am capable of changing."
- Ask the question, "Am I ready to let go and let God?"
- Understand that we do not have, nor do we need to have, all the answers.
- Acknowledge that we can turn things over to the care of our Higher Power, again and again and again.
- Observe others in recovery, acknowledge the changes in them as a result of Step Three, and become willing to change.
- Recognize that old feelings may be triggered by events happening today and ask for our Higher Power's guidance.
- Remind ourselves that things don't always happen the way we fear they might; they often work out better.
- Go to a meeting.
- Meditate.
- Write it down.
- Read CoDA Conference endorsed literature.
- Be of service.
- Breathe.
- Move your body
- Write a gratitude list.
- Read or create positive affirmations.

Create your own list, starting with the tools that work for you. Add new tools as you experiment and find the tools that help you.

In this moment, I can choose my own Higher Power. I can set aside all the old beliefs about who I am not and be who I am — a child of God. I can remind myself that a faith in a Higher Power becomes a faith in me, and that my recovery lies in being true to myself and to my Higher Power.

Step Three Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Three:

1. What does “made a decision” mean to me?

2. How do I know when I need to let go?

3. How do I let go?

4. What does “as we understood God” mean to me?

5. Am I ready to let go of my willfulness and let my Higher Power have a hand in managing my life?

6. What does “to the care of God” mean to me?

7. What does “turning it over” mean to me?

8. How does letting go of results help me work this Step better?

9. How can I be in touch with my Higher Power's will for me?

10. In what ways does my Higher Power speak to me?

11. What does "my will and my life" mean to me?

12. If I do not trust myself, how can I trust my Higher Power?

13. How do I practice trusting my Higher Power?

DRAFT

Tradition Three

The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.

The program of Co-Dependents Anonymous is open to anyone with a desire for healthy and loving relationships. Our process includes facing our histories, healing our wounds, and finding tools to live life instead of just surviving life.

Because it is so broad in its definition, Tradition Three allows each of us to belong. It helps us to stay out of our judgments about who should and should not attend meetings. We cannot touch, see, or prove whether anyone else has the desire referred to in this Tradition. It does not matter how we look or what we believe, whether we are young or old, what color or gender we are, our religion, or socioeconomic situation. Many of us have looked for reasons not to belong. Focusing on our differences has often covered up our fear of not belonging. This Tradition can help us acknowledge that each of us is deserving of recovery.

While many people in CoDA may be substance or behavior addicts who are benefitting from working the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous, please be aware that CoDA does not directly address substance or behavior addiction. It is important for these members to seek the help they need in a Twelve Step abstinence program. Some may use in-patient or out-patient therapy, or other resources.

Many of us found this Tradition comforting when we heard these words at our first meeting. We have the freedom to attend meetings even if we minimize, alter, or deny our experience. We do not have to justify our membership in CoDA. Tradition Three frees us from having to work through our issues, or determine if we are codependent, before beginning our program of recovery. Even if we believe our codependency is our fault, even if we are in constant denial, even if we are still behaving in old ways, even if we feel we have nothing to contribute, even if we have neglected to attend meetings, we are always welcome in CoDA. Our presence is a vital part of meetings.

We can become increasingly mindful of this Tradition as we work our program with other members. We can embrace this Tradition as it applies to our daily life and relationships with others and ourselves. Saying to myself, "I have a desire for healthier and more loving relationships" is a positive affirmation which can assist us in our application of this Tradition. Step Three and Tradition Three are direct and can be difficult for us to take. We tend to put many things in front of this Tradition, battling with the desire to protect ourselves and to control others.

As we begin our recovery, we often struggle with our ideas of what "healthy" and "loving" behaviors mean. We may fear change and find it confusing and uncomfortable. Others react to our changing behavior, and it may feel easier not to change. Once we have made the decision to have healthier and more loving relationships, we can ask our Higher Power to help us.

Codependency can be a subtle, deadly disease. To have healthy and loving relationships, we must decide that this is truly what we want. Keeping this desire in our hearts and minds helps us replace our impulse to over protect ourselves from feeling vulnerable, or from feeling pain, at all times and at all costs. CoDA's third Promise states, "I know a new freedom." We begin to feel this freedom when we make the decision to have healthy, loving relationships.

Before recovery, we lived life according to what we assumed another person wanted. Now, choosing daily to place our desire for a healthy relationship with ourselves first, we are learning a new way of life. When we love and honor ourselves, we have healthier relationships with others. A loving relationship includes honesty, openness, willingness, acceptance, compassion, and taking care of ourselves first. The need to be filled from the outside is replaced by allowing our Higher Power to fill us from within. Loyalty to ourselves always needs to come first, over any other relationship.

As we do our service work, we can set healthier and more functional boundaries. We can keep Tradition Three, and our new ideas about healthier and more loving relationships, in our hearts and minds. When we are struggling with someone or something, we can remind ourselves that we are working on being healthy, not perfect. Although we may not always like what is happening, we can let go and love ourselves and others. We can recognize those who are working at being healthier too. It helps us to accept others with compassion when we understand that each person is on their own unique recovery journey and that we have much to learn from each other. We can recognize and release our desire to manipulate others and our need to control the outcomes of the group conscience process. We can come to our service work without expectations. We learn to speak our truth, and to respect and listen to others, trusting in our Higher Power for guidance.

DRAFT

Higher Power, help me let go of my fear and expectations in my desire for healthy and loving relationships. Grant me courage to be honest, open-minded, and willing to acknowledge healthy boundaries as I accept myself and others.

Tradition Three Prayer

Questions to help us understand Tradition Three:

1. What does "desire" mean to me?

2. Do I truly desire healthy and loving relationships?

3. How do I describe a healthy and loving relationship?

4. What will it take for me to have healthier and more fulfilling relationships?

5. How might my past relationships have been cloaked in fantasy?

6. Where can I see healthier relationships in action?

7. Which tools can help me to remember this Tradition?

8. How does Tradition Three assist me in my service work?

9. Which codependent compulsions or behaviors, such as controlling, needing to be right, people pleasing, and avoiding, might be stronger than my desire for healthier and more loving relationships?

10. How can I let go of these old behaviors?

11. What might this Tradition allow me to do that I don't currently do?

12. How might I apply this Tradition in my daily life?

DRAFT

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The first three Steps provide the foundation for our Fourth Step work. In Step One, we admitted that we were powerless over others. In Step Two, we came to believe in a power greater than ourselves. Then, in Step Three, we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God. With this spiritual foundation, we now focus on Step Four. We prepare for this by talking with our sponsor, meditating, and praying for guidance.

Step Four requires us to do “a searching and fearless moral inventory.” This is the Step where we begin to see our part in our own lives and relationships. In our inventory, we include our behaviors and character defects that have been harmful. This Step is not an invitation to be overly critical or used to hurt ourselves, but rather an invitation to write and stand in our own truth. Working the inventory process within CoDA is one of the most loving things we can do for ourselves. Although it may be painful to acknowledge and put into writing the harmful situations we may have caused ourselves and others, it can be more painful to allow it to fester within.

As we prepare to do a Fourth Step, we put aside worrying about Step Five. We only do one Step at a time, in the order they are written. We let go of what others may think; this is about being honest with ourselves. For some of us, guilt and shame about our lives, the way we were treated, or that which comes from believing the lies we were told as children may have trapped us in a vicious cycle. But, if we never change our beliefs and thoughts about ourselves, we never change our behaviors. It is the act of taking Step Four that offers us the possibility of understanding and then releasing our shame. We begin to see that we are not mistakes (shame); we have only made mistakes (guilt). The vicious cycle of old beliefs becomes a precious pathway to recovery.

At one time, our childhood survival skills served us and served us well. As little ones in the small world we lived in, they did help us survive. They defended our lives and developed our character. As we grew up and went into the bigger world, we continued to use these character defenses, because they were familiar coping skills for us. However, as time went by, we began tripping over them.

In working Step Four, many codependents find that we share certain character defects. One common characteristic is our need to be right. If proved wrong, we felt we were wrong, bad, or stupid. We had learned that being right meant we were safe, powerful, and in control. It may feel frightening to imagine letting go of this characteristic..

We needed these “character defenses” as our security blankets in order to survive our childhood traumas. These childhood survival skills have become adult codependent Patterns and Characteristics that no longer serve us.

Worrying is another characteristic we may have used to cope with our fears. One indication that we are worrying is when our mind is stuck in the future, demanding an answer to the question, “what if.” We hear members share that they thought if they could just figure out everything that could possibly go wrong, then they would be prepared for anything. But the reality is, no matter how much we obsess, worrying does not change outcomes.

When we compare ourselves to others, we hurt and doubt ourselves. This is sometimes referred to as “comparing our insides to others’ outsides”. We believed these judgments would protect us however in CoDA we are learning they are destructive.

As we list our codependent behaviors, we acknowledge and accept the feelings that come with them. We find that we can sit with all our feelings, including the pain. This is a powerful gift. We find connecting with our Higher Power, our sponsors, and others in recovery nurturing and reassuring. Many of us experience our faith in our Higher Power growing stronger. We begin to trust ourselves and have faith in our recovery.

A Fourth Step inventory helps us examine how codependency has kept us hidden from ourselves. This Step is about facing our past with honesty and courage. We do this with faith and trust in the safety of our Higher Power's unconditional love. We acknowledge the losses and pain we have experienced and allow ourselves to grieve. We recognize old behaviors which have gotten in the way. We remind ourselves we are not alone. We begin to have a relationship with ourselves that is based on integrity. Understanding that recovery doesn't have a timetable, we accept that we heal in our Higher Power's time, not in our own.

Believing in a loving power greater than ourselves helps us to let go and turn our will and our lives over to the care of that Higher Power. In our searching and fearless moral inventory, it is important that we list our positive character traits: our strengths, values, assets, and talents. Many of us find it difficult to include our good qualities. In the past, it may have been implied that by focusing on our positive qualities we were bragging, being conceited, boastful, self-absorbed, or egotistical. In order to bring balance to our Fourth Step work, we acknowledge the need to embrace our strengths and positive character traits.

We may find ourselves returning to Step Four to clear up issues we were originally unaware of or to look at a specific behavior and uncover the truth behind it. This is not a one-time inventory. Step Four is an integral part of our recovery. We work the Steps as often as needed. Some recovering codependents find it most helpful to use this tool annually.

We want recovery from our codependency. We pray for the freedom we have heard comes from writing a Fourth Step inventory. So, somewhere, anywhere, we begin to write.

DRAFT

In this moment, I am willing to see myself as I truly am: a growing, unfolding spiritual being resting in the hands of a loving God. I can separate who I am from what I've done knowing that the real me is emerging—loving, joyful, and whole.

Step Four Prayer

As we begin our Fourth Step inventory, we may want to consider the following questions:

1. How can I use Steps One, Two, and Three to do Step Four?

2. What does “fearless” mean to me?

3. What fears do I still have about doing Step Four?

4. Are they childhood fears?

5. How might I have experienced fear and shame as a child?

6. Where might my childhood emotional conflicts and survival patterns continue into adult life?

7. What tools might I use to deal with my fears?

8. What does “moral inventory” mean to me?

9. What tools might I use to help me take this inventory?

10. Which of the formats listed on the following page will I use to do my Fourth Step?

Suggested Formats For Working a Fourth Step Inventory

Step Four is an action Step.

Below is a list of suggested inventory approaches that CoDA members have found useful. This is *your* Fourth Step; you get to decide which format or formats to use to work your own written inventory.

1. Write out the full list of “Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence”, preceding each pattern with the phrase:

“Ways I have harmed myself and others by _____ are _____.”

Example: “Ways I have harmed myself and others by having difficulty identifying what I am feeling are _____.”

2. Make a list of the incidents in your life when you felt pain, fear, confusion, anger, resentment, or shame. Including those times when you have felt criticized, judged, or condemned. Examine those incidents and list the codependent beliefs or behaviors you adopted from those experiences.
3. Inventory your positive behaviors and see the good in yourself. What qualities, attributes, values, and talents bring you joy, comfort, passion, serenity, or acceptance?
4. Inventory all your current or past relationships that come to mind. This list may include parents, siblings, friends, Higher Power, God, institutions, lovers, spouse, children, boss, co-workers, self, pets, work, money, traffic, home, clutter, teachers, preachers, guru, recovery...What feels healthy and what doesn't?
5. Break down your history by age periods and note the patterns of your disease or positive qualities or behaviors that still work well for you. What incidents come to mind in these cycles of your life: birth to 7, 7 to 14, 14 to 21, 21 to 28, 28 to 35, etc.?
7. Inventory the times that you believe you behaved immorally for which you feel remorse or guilt today.
8. *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, Chapter 3, Step One provides a list of questions that are useful in a Fourth Step inventory.
9. *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, Chapter 3, Step Four, includes the suggestion of a chart format.
10. When we are ready to sponsor others, the section “How do we set initial boundaries with our sponsees?” has a short list of questions to consider. Once we are sponsoring, the section “What if we hate sponsoring?” has an excellent list of questions to consider before ending the relationship.

11. The following questions may serve as a Step Four inventory.

1. What positive characteristics do I have?
2. What are my best qualities?
3. What are my talents?
4. What successes am I most proud of?
5. As a child, was anyone there to talk with or otherwise support me?
6. What conclusions have I drawn about this?
7. What codependent behaviors did my caregivers demonstrate?
8. How did I feel about these behaviors at the time?
9. In what ways have their behaviors affected me?
10. What conclusions or beliefs have I drawn from these behaviors?
11. Do I feel I deserve good things? If not, why?
12. What positive experiences were parts of my childhood?
13. What did I gain from these experiences?
14. What positive messages were given to me in childhood?
15. Who or what was the source of these messages?
16. How did I feel about these messages?
17. How might I have experienced fear and shame as a child?
18. Where might childhood survival patterns have continued into my adult life?
19. What behaviors am I acting out today that were done to me as a child?
20. What self-defeating behaviors have I carried into my adult life from my family of origin?
21. In what places, other than my family, did I learn these
22. How have I, as an adult, caused harm to myself?
23. How do I criticize and condemn myself and others and under what circumstances?
24. How do I allow other people's opinions to influence my behavior? Why?
25. What personal values do I ignore in order to fit in?
26. How have I disregarded myself?
27. Where did I learn to disregard myself?
28. How do I feel when I disregard myself?
29. Why do I place more importance on what others think than what I think?
30. When I have attempted to control with worry, what have been the outcomes?
31. As an adult, what is my payoff in believing I am a victim? Give examples.
32. What codependent behaviors am I holding on to?

33. What am I trying to cover up with my codependent behaviors?
34. Whose behaviors do I believe are my fault or my responsibility?
35. What learning experiences have I denied others in my efforts to control them?
36. Give examples of when I took on more responsibility than I needed to, or thought I was in charge, but was not.
37. What was the outcome when I took on more responsibility than I needed to?
38. What resentments am I holding on to?
39. How do resentments affect my life and my recovery?
40. What situations and feelings am I avoiding? Why?
41. How do I feel when someone negates my feelings?
42. How do I know when I am feeling angry?
43. What boundaries may have been crossed that trigger my anger?
44. When have I owned my power?
45. How has my recovery benefited me?
46. What do I love about myself?

DRAFT

Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence

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 codependency. It may aid those who have been in recovery a while to determine what traits still need attention and transformation.

Denial Patterns:

Codependents often. . .

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

Low Self-esteem Patterns:

Codependents often. . .

- have difficulty making decisions.
- judge what they think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.
- are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.
- value others' approval of their thinking, feelings, and behavior over their own.
- do not perceive themselves as lovable or worthwhile persons.
- seek recognition and praise to overcome feeling less than.
- have difficulty admitting a mistake.
- need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and may even lie to look good.
- are unable to identify or ask for what they need and want.
- perceive themselves as superior to others.
- look to others to provide their sense of safety.
- have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.
- have trouble setting healthy priorities and boundaries.

Compliance Patterns:

Codependents often. . .

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

Control Patterns:

Codependents often. . .

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

Avoidance Patterns:

Codependents often. . .

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

Strengths and Positive Attributes List

adaptable	exuberant	placid
adventurous	fair-minded	plucky
affable	faithful	polite
affectionate	fearless	powerful
agreeable	forceful	practical
ambitious	frank	pro-active
amiable	friendly	quick-witted
amicable	funny	quiet
amusing	generous	rational
artistic	gentle	reliable
brave	good	reader
bright	gregarious	reserved
broad-minded	hard-working	resilient
calm	helpful	resourceful
careful	honest	romantic
caring	humorous	self-confident
charming	imaginative	self-disciplined
communicative	impartial	sensible
compassionate	independent	sensitive
conscientious	intellectual	shy
considerate	intelligent	sincere
convivial	intuitive	smart
courageous	inventive	sociable
courteous	kind	straightforward
creative	loving	strong
curious	loyal	studious
decisive	modest	sympathetic
determined	musical	thoughtful
diligent	neat	tidy
diplomatic	nice	tough
discreet	observant	unassuming
discerning	open minded	understanding
dynamic	optimistic	versatile
easygoing	passionate	warmhearted
emotional	patient	welcoming
empathetic	persistent	willing
energetic	pioneering	witty
enthusiastic	philosophical	writer

Tradition Four

Each group should remain autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole.

In Step Four, we take our own individual inventory. In Tradition Four, we can use the inventory process to evaluate our group's effect on other meetings or on CoDA as a whole. We can do this by considering how our group's behaviors and attitudes affect the Fellowship. We may choose to take time at a separate meeting to assess whether or not we are supporting CoDA as a whole. We use the Steps and Traditions as guides to search our hearts in this process.

The creativity of our meetings can flourish because of our commitment to autonomy in this Tradition. CoDA meeting venues might be in-person, virtual, online, or phone. See coda.org for a complete list. Various meeting formats exist to support us in recovery such as: Steps, Traditions, Service Concepts, CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature study, open topic sharing, speaker, writing, meditation, or newcomer meetings. Codependents might prefer to attend a variety of meetings to hear the message of recovery. We respect each meeting's autonomy in carrying the message of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Members are encouraged to study CoDA's Twelve Traditions, exploring their deep value, before making decisions in a meeting's group conscience. The diversity, created by autonomy, helps meet our individual needs and those of the CoDA Fellowship.

As much as we value autonomy, in CoDA we value unity more. In Tradition One, we acknowledge we are part of a greater whole, the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Any decision we make as a group should be centered in our common welfare. Because the Steps, Traditions, Preamble, and Welcome define the CoDA program and our message of recovery, they are read at every meeting as written. CoDA meetings read our basic text, Co-Dependents Anonymous. The structure and consistency of our CoDA Fellowship's message needs to be something on which we can depend. The knowledge that a meeting's basic structure is the same, no matter where we go, provides safety and consistency for us. This structure creates a healthy boundary by keeping the focus on our primary spiritual aim which is described in Tradition Six. Its emphasis on the basic tools of recovery are essential to both the newcomer and those who have longer experience in the program. Using non-CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature in our meetings detracts from CoDA unity. Reading outside literature in meetings distracts us and can prevent us from hearing CoDA's message of recovery.

When reflecting on the Fourth Tradition and the autonomy of our groups, it is important to ask ourselves how accessible our meetings are to the newcomer. We support the continued strength of our CoDA Fellowship by providing a welcoming atmosphere. The structure of the meeting format helps newcomers grasp the basic tools of recovery in Co-Dependents Anonymous. CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature, meeting schedules, member contact lists, and our willingness to fill service commitments, all support our primary purpose.

It is not always easy to know what will affect other groups or CoDA as a whole. However, by applying the CoDA Traditions, we do our best to support both autonomy and unity. We look at issues that arise in our groups and ask ourselves to remember our responsibility to the program. For instance, how a meeting uses its Seventh Tradition donations is a matter of autonomy.

Thus, we review our financial responsibilities, not only to our meeting, but also to the service structure of CoDA. In this way, we acknowledge that CoDA meetings, intergroups, voting entities, and CoDA World are all part of the definition of CoDA as a whole. We make better choices when we examine all the Traditions, linking our decisions to the welfare of the CoDA Fellowship.

Sharing our experience, strength, and hope at the meeting level and engaging in our service work are positive examples of how our autonomous actions contribute to the well-being of CoDA. We pass on the recovery benefits of our service experience and encourage others to join us. When doing service work, we speak and act on behalf of those we serve. In meetings, we do our best to remember the worldwide Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous and hold in our hearts the reality that we are part of this greater whole.

Higher Power, let me embrace the spiritual principles of autonomy and unity. Help me become aware of how my decisions affect other people and the community as a whole. May I honor You, using the gifts I have received to give service as I recover.

Tradition Four Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Four:

1. What is "CoDA as a whole?"

2. How does my Group relate to the wider CoDA Fellowship?

3. What is my understanding of group autonomy?

4. Why might it be difficult for me or my group to embrace the concept of CoDA as a whole?

5. How does my CoDA home group honor the need for CoDA unity?

6. How would using non-CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature during my meeting harm my meeting as well as CoDA as a whole?

7. What role does Tradition Four play in service work?

8. How does service within my home group, as well as in the wider CoDA community, enhance my understanding of Tradition Four?

9. How do my actions in sponsorship and service work affect CoDA as a whole?

10. How do I, or my group, contribute to the CoDA Fellowship?

11. How does reading CoDA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Preamble, Welcome, and our basic text, Co-Dependents Anonymous, at every meeting support my meeting and CoDA as a whole?

12. What individual actions might I take if I believe that CoDA's Traditions are not being upheld within my meeting?

13. How might I apply Tradition Four in my life?

DRAFT

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Step Five directs us to take specific action and make three indispensable connections. The first of these connections is with a Higher Power of our own understanding. The order of the Fifth Step reinforces a basic truth of recovery: our relationship with our Higher Power comes first. We can take time in prayer and meditation to open our hearts and communicate with our Higher Power about the exact nature of our wrongs, our codependent behaviors, thoughts, and beliefs. Many of us choose to make a list of these behaviors and beliefs from our Fourth Step before talking with our Higher Power. This level of honesty can be an intimate and powerful experience. We can be comforted that there are no secrets between ourselves and our Higher Power. We begin to be relieved of the burden of our secrets and learn to trust our Higher Power even more. This Step helps us understand that our Higher Power loves us unconditionally just as we are.

After connecting with our Higher Power, Step Five guides us to make our second connection with ourselves. We look more closely at the behaviors that have created our unmanageability. Though at first it may seem we have already accomplished this in the course of completing our Fourth Step inventory, the Fifth Step guides us to solidify the truths we have uncovered. We may choose to read our inventory out loud to ourselves, reflecting on the nature of what we have discovered. As we take the truths of our codependent history into our hearts, we begin to connect with ourselves on a deeper level. Admitting our self-defeating beliefs, thoughts, and behaviors which have harmed both ourselves and others puts us in touch with the exact nature of our wrongs as never before. The pain caused by our denial becomes more clear to us. An honest Fifth Step supports recovery, helps us understand why our lives were so unmanageable and breaks through to greater honesty, self-awareness, and acceptance.

Because codependency is a disease of silence and isolation, the final instruction of Step Five requires us to connect with another human being. Most of us accomplish this task by reading our inventory and admitting the exact nature of our wrongs to a person who feels safe to us. We seek out someone who will actively listen with compassion and care, without shaming or judging. This person could be our sponsor or someone else whose recovery program we respect: a close friend, a spiritual advisor, a therapist, or a Step study group of recovering codependents. Trusting the Steps and acknowledging that this process has worked for many others can help us push through our fear. As we do our Fifth Step work, we recognize our codependent behavior patterns, where they came from, and the harm they have caused. Taking this Step, sharing what we have learned, begins to open the door to our truth, joy, and freedom.

Sharing our Fifth Step in the recommended order creates:

1. Safety with our Higher Power's unconditional love
2. Courage to stand in our own truth
3. Willingness to share our reality with others

Taking care of ourselves means asking for what we need. Establishing a mutually agreeable time and place to share our Fifth Step creates safety. Setting healthy boundaries involves asking to be heard either without comment or with feedback. Trusting our Higher Power, ourselves, and another human being, supports us in working this Step.

Step Five opens the door to truth and freedom. Step Five teaches us to be vulnerable and to trust. Step Five is about letting go.

Keep the process simple. Just do it.

Suggested boundaries to consider when working Step Five:

1. It can be helpful and comforting to share in a prayer to remember the spiritual aspect and to bring Higher Power into the process.
2. Know that everything necessary will be provided by Higher Power.
3. The receiver practices detachment and listens with openness, acceptance, and compassion without arguing, judging, or assuming.
4. The sharer keeps the focus on their inventory and lets go of the stories they created in the process of growing up.
5. Together, decide how, when, and where this Step will happen.
6. Set aside ample time and choose a comfortable, safe space.
7. The receiver listens with openness, acceptance, and compassion without arguing, judging, or assuming

Gifts received from sharing a Fifth Step:

1. When we talk about our codependency, we gain clarity concerning our own behavior—for instance, our need to control, our moods, our need to be right, our need to defend.
2. We can let go of old behaviors and learn to be accountable and responsible.
3. Our spirits are lifted as we share our truth.
4. We enjoy the freedom and comfort of knowing we are not alone.
5. We let go of old belief systems and fears. For example, we do not die if we tell the truth, we do not disintegrate if we admit we were wrong.
6. We finally talk about our family secrets with people whom we trust.
7. We accept the past, realizing how much energy it took to deny it.
8. We build trust with another person.
9. We feel relief at completing a task we may have feared.
10. We gain a clearer perspective of our strengths and weaknesses.
11. Our connection with our Higher Power is strengthened.

Gifts received from hearing a Fifth Step

1. We have the opportunity to be trustworthy
2. We practice listening without judging or giving advice.
3. We gain compassion for the other person as well as ourselves.
4. We practice unconditional loving acceptance.
5. We feel the presence of our Higher Power.

In this moment, I will acknowledge myself for doing what was most difficult for me. I will rest in the accepting presence of my Higher Power. I know I have deepened my commitment to the journey of recovery by opening myself and my heart to a fellow human being.

Step Five Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Five:

1. What fears and worries do I have about working Step Five?

2. How can I let go of my fears of being judged or shamed when sharing my Fifth Step?

3. What does "admitted" mean to me?

4. What does “exact nature of our wrongs” mean to me?

5. What does it mean to me to give my Fifth Step to my Higher Power?

6. What does it mean to me to give my Fifth Step to myself?

7. What does it mean to me to give my Fifth Step to another human being?

8. Why is it important to admit my faults privately in my meditation and prayers?

9. How can I let go of the need to defend my actions so that I can admit the truth?

10. How will I bring my Higher Power into my Fifth Step?

11. How do I trust another person with the information contained in my Fifth Step?

12. What are some boundaries I might want to set for taking my Fifth Step?

13. When receiving someone's Fifth Step, what might I do if the person strays from their own inventory?

DRAFT

Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.

Tradition Five sets a boundary by establishing that each CoDA group and its members “has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer.” We are here for one reason, to share our recovery journey from codependence. We support each other by keeping our focus on CoDA’s primary purpose. We carry the message, by staying involved, sponsoring, giving service, and remembering that Higher Power is in charge.

“Primary” refers to what we consider the most important principle, the one that comes before all others. The survival and growth of our program depends on our willingness to carry the message of hope and recovery by using the CoDA Steps and following the CoDA Traditions. Codependents who still suffer include people who have never attended a meeting, CoDA newcomers, and members with years of experience. It is necessary to continue to share the message of recovery in order to gain and maintain our recovery. Tradition Five creates a responsibility for each group and its members to uphold our Fellowship’s primary purpose. Although our methods of carrying the message may vary, the primary purpose of all our groups remains the same.

Newcomers are often searching for ways to understand and find relief from their codependency issues; they are an important part of Tradition Five. When current members arrive early to the meeting to welcome and speak with newcomers they create a supportive atmosphere. Having CoDA literature and current contact lists available are tools to carry the message of recovery. Harmful and controlling behaviors, such as childish cliques and popularity contests, have no place in CoDA because they divert us from our primary purpose and are dangerous to all members of the group. Losing focus on our primary purpose deprives a still suffering codependent of the CoDA message. CoDA’s Fifth Tradition serves as a spiritual reminder when we have strayed from our purpose. When we share our experience, strength, and hope with our newer members and become willing to sponsor, our own recovery is enhanced.

Sharing what life was like before recovery, the tools we have used in recovery, and what life is like for us now supports Tradition Five. We share our struggles and our triumphs. We wonder how long any of us would have stayed if we had not heard the hope and seen changes occur in those around us. We practice Tradition Five whenever we share in our meetings, with sponsees or sponsors, with friends and family members, or with members of the public.

Supporting each other in recovery is another way that we carry the message. We can choose to stay for Fellowship after our meetings and we can keep in touch with each other between meetings. Our behavior carries a strong message. Tradition Five reminds us to make the message one of healthy recovery.

In addition to CoDA meetings, members need to support local, regional, and international service groups in order to carry the message of recovery. Service commitments to these groups may include providing public service information about CoDA, providing outreach to hospitals and institutions, distributing literature, and attending CoDA events. To learn more about CoDA service and CoDA structure see the booklet *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter and Carrying The Message: Living the Twelfth Step*.

Higher Power, help me carry the CoDA message of hope, sharing my struggles as well as my triumphs with other codependents who still suffer. May I listen with an open heart and an open mind. Help me accept responsibility for my part in creating more loving relationships and healthier CoDA meetings.

Tradition Five Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Five:

1. What do I think is meant by “but one primary purpose”?

2. How can I keep my focus on this purpose?

3. What is my understanding of the CoDA message?

4. How was the message initially carried to me?

5. How do I carry the message in CoDA?

6. How does my CoDA group carry the message?

7. How might outside literature divert the focus of our meeting away from the CoDA message and CoDA as a whole?

8. How does sharing my journey carry the message of recovery to those who still suffer?

9. How can I apply Tradition Five in all areas of my life?

DRAFT

Step Six

*Were entirely ready to have God remove
all these defects of character.*

Having identified our character defects in Step Four, and having shared them with our Higher Power, ourselves, and another human being in Step Five, we become ready for our Higher Power to remove them in Step Six.

“Entirely ready” means completely prepared. Accepting our defects with humility allows our healing to begin. Learning to be rigorously honest with our Higher Power and ourselves plays a major role in becoming entirely ready. We begin to let go of trying to control our defects. We are asked to be entirely ready as we work our program, writing, sharing, meditating, and asking for knowledge of our Higher Power’s will in our lives. Being entirely ready becomes a way of life, not a one-time event. It is a continuous journey.

Defects can be seen as behaviors and beliefs that stand in the way of our recovery. Whereas defects of character are not who we are spiritually; they are the codependent patterns and characteristics that we have used to survive life. The Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence are listed in Step Four of this workbook. Defenses which were useful in childhood have become character defects in our adult relationships. In becoming entirely ready, we learn to acknowledge our defects. When we ask our Higher Power to guide us, trusting in this process, we have a spiritual experience. The keys to Step Six are willingness, a feeling of safety, and trusting the connection with our Higher Power.

Step Three teaches us to accept, even when we do not understand. Step Six does not say how or when our defects will be removed. Often, we notice that a defect has been removed even though we may not be sure how it happened.

We have relied on these character defects for many years. Because of this, we struggle to let go and be entirely ready. Indeed, it takes effort and it is not easy to let go of these “old friends.”

When we recognize a character defect with which we are struggling, there are tools to help us. We can speak to our sponsor, attend a meeting or workshop, read CoDA literature, write in our journal, and ask our Higher Power for guidance. We can use positive affirmations if we feel overwhelmed as we work this Step. We recognize that Step Six is clearly about progress, not perfection; it is not about how far we have come, nor how far we have to go, but about being on the path of recovery. We begin to trust our intuitive selves. We invite our Higher Power into our lives, letting go of the results. As our old patterns and characteristics are replaced with healthier behaviors, our relationships begin to improve. Though our progress may not seem fast enough, our job is to continue to work our CoDA program, to the best of our ability, one day at a time.

When preparing to take Step Six, it may help to look through this list of character defects. Often re-stated as codependent characteristics, this list is meant to help you identify two or three characteristics that are most troublesome to you.

- obsessing
- needing to be right
- people-pleasing
- being judgmental
- fear
- shame
- guilt
- anger
- rage
- resentments
- procrastination
- perfectionism
- denial
- low self-esteem
- compliance
- control
- avoidance
- _____

We now become entirely ready, so that our Higher Power can remove our character defects. Like Step Three, Step Six reminds us how important it is to practice letting go.

In this moment, I am entirely ready to be freed of all my shortcomings. In this moment, I am ready to surrender these defects of character to God, knowing that the power of willingness to heal is great. Each new Step I take in my recovery, no matter how small it may appear, is an affirmation of my wholeness.

Step Six Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Six:

1. How do I define the phrase “defects of character”?

2. Does the phrase “defects of character” make me feel defensive?

3. How can I overcome any resistance I feel to hearing I have defects of character?

4. How do the Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence relate to my own defects of character?

5. What are my most troublesome codependent characteristics?

6. What do my codependent behaviors, or character defects, feel like?

7. What prompts me to justify or minimize these characteristics?

8. What might I expect to gain by holding on to old, unhealthy behaviors?

9. How do the Steps help me to accept my character defects?

10. Do I believe my unhealthy behaviors will be removed by my Higher Power?

11. How and when might I expect my unhealthy behaviors to be removed?

12. What is my part in loosening my grip on my troublesome behaviors and closely held beliefs that no longer serve me?

13. How can I encourage myself to make these important changes and choices in my life?

14. How might I become “entirely ready”?

15. How does trusting my Higher Power give me the courage to become ready?

16. What does it feel like to be entirely ready?

17. Why is Step Six a crucial bridge between Steps Five and Seven?

DRAFT

Tradition Six

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.

The spiritual foundation of our program becomes clear as we continue to study all our Traditions. Tradition Five teaches us that we come together for no other reason than to recover from codependency, and to carry the message to other codependents. Tradition Six details how to focus on our “primary spiritual aim”.

With that purpose in mind, we keep ourselves from engaging in outside obligations and responsibilities. If we lend our name to a building, recovery facility, place of worship, or institution, we create an obligation outside our program. Outside obligations divert us from our primary spiritual aim. Our focus is always on our spiritual aim, conveying our CoDA program to those who still suffer from codependency. If we lose that focus, our program’s spiritual foundations will be lost.

Within the Fellowship, we recognize the need to separate material issues from our spiritual aim. We avoid problems of money, property, and prestige by assigning legal and financial responsibilities to the CoDA Board of Trustees. We may have experienced the distraction created when the wisdom of this Tradition was disregarded, and spiritual and material interests were mixed.

Co-Dependents Anonymous, does not endorse books, authors, programs, or organizations outside of our Twelve Step Fellowship. In our CoDA meetings and in CoDA sponsorship, we work our CoDA program of recovery, with CoDA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, our basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, and other CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature.

This framework applies to all CoDA activities, which include regular CoDA meetings, business meetings, speakers, workshops, conferences, and conventions. As CoDA sponsors or other trusted servants, we are responsible for keeping our program within the CoDA’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Out of respect for Tradition Six, we never endorse or lend the CoDA name to outside enterprises.

Professionals who desire healthy and loving relationships are welcome to join CoDA to work their own recovery program. However, we are diverted from our primary spiritual aim when professionals host or join a CoDA meeting for their own professional or monetary gain. In our disease, we may believe someone with prestige would be better able to help us in our recovery than other CoDA members or our Higher Power. Using names of well-known individuals or organizations divert us from our primary spiritual aim. This is a humble program, where there is no place for prestige or personal gain. The power of our program is in the simplicity of one codependent sharing experience, strength, and hope with another as equals.

Higher Power, help me keep my focus on the primary spiritual aim and the power of the CoDA principles. Show me how to build equal relationships with others, releasing control, the misuse of power, and overconcern with material possessions.

Tradition Six Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Six:

1. What is our primary spiritual aim?

2. How can issues of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim?

3. What problems do we create when we divert our focus from CoDA's primary spiritual aim by using non-CoDA literature?

a. As a CoDA member

b. In a meeting

c. As a sponsor

d. As a trusted servant

e. As a workshop leader

4. How can we stay within this Tradition and be creative in presenting a workshop?

5. How does placing an individual on a pedestal cause harm or impede our recovery?

6. What harm is there in allowing a treatment facility to use our name?

7. In what ways might people exploit a meeting for personal gain?

8. How does misuse of this Tradition divert us from our primary spiritual aim?

9. What is my responsibility to the group and my program when I believe we have lost focus on our primary spiritual aim?

10. How can I gain the courage to speak when I believe Tradition Six is not being followed?

11. How might I apply this Tradition in my daily life?

Step Seven

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

The direction in this Step is simple. It is not results oriented; we ask and then we let go. With the acceptance of a loving Higher Power in our lives, we become willing to believe our shortcomings will be removed.

By the time we get to Step Seven, we may have strong feelings about our shortcomings and our past behaviors. We realize that our shortcomings have become a burden. In our self-will, we see our reluctance to change has caused great harm to ourselves and others. We now humbly ask our Higher Power to remove them.

Asking that our shortcomings be removed may be scary. In our childhoods, when we were vulnerable and admitted our imperfections, terrible things happened. Because of this history, it may never occur to us to allow ourselves to be vulnerable and ask something of our Higher Power. We may still be making choices today based on our old survival behavior. In the past, we may have learned, "If it is to be, it is up to me," or "Never let anyone see you are struggling." We may have believed we couldn't rely on anyone or anything, except our own abilities and strength. As recovering codependent adults, we ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, including our fears, self-criticism, and perfectionism. We then let go.

In working Step Seven, we choose living, loving ourselves, and working our recovery program. We accept that we have shortcomings. We ask that our shortcomings be removed. and become willing to trust in our Higher Power's timing.

When we share at meetings, we gain clarity about our self-defeating behaviors. When others share, we find similarities in our patterns of codependency. Speaking the truth and asking that our shortcomings be removed increases our awareness that a Higher Power is present in our lives. We accept that we are not perfect, realizing the truth that our Higher Power can remove our shortcomings, and, by ourselves, we can't. We learn to focus on what our Higher Power wants for us on a daily basis.

In asking our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, some of us seek out a peaceful or sacred place. Some may be drawn to nature or a place of worship or contemplation. With humility, we accept our Higher Power's plan for us.

We may have learned in childhood that humility meant humiliation; today we believe differently. We may not have known then that we had a right to ask our Higher Power for help with all things. We become willing to have the courage to ask our Higher Power for that help and to let go of control of the outcome. We learn to accept ourselves, without being controlled by what others think of us. We accept the past and the disasters we created by trying to do it all ourselves. We accept our place in the universe, no better, or worse, no bigger, or smaller. Our Higher Power will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. Our Higher Power has seen all we have experienced and done in our lives and loves us unconditionally. We let go and let God.

The following are examples of shortcomings we may ask our Higher Power to remove:

- procrastination
- lack of trust
- belief we are in control
- fear of letting go
- fear of what others may think or feel about us
- fear of others' anger
- dishonesty
- manipulation, overt or covert
- raging
- self-abuse
- reacting rather than acting
- need to be right
- need to do everything ourselves
- inability to ask for help
- demand others do it our way
- perfectionism
- addictions
- guilt
- resentments
- self-righteousness
- isolation
- shame
- self-abandonment
- abandoning others
- lack of compassion
- expectations of ourselves and others
- belief that we have to act on our feelings
- need to look good
- comparing ourselves to others
- neglect
- vindictiveness
- need to get even
- fear of speaking up
- always seeing ourselves as a victim
- martyrdom
- What can you add?

In this moment, I ask my Higher Power to remove all of my shortcomings, relieving me of the burden of my past. In this moment, I place my hand in God's, trusting that the void I experience is being filled with my Higher Power's unconditional love for me and those in my life.

Step Seven Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Seven:

1. What does "Humbly asked God" mean to me?

2. How is "humbly asking" different from being "entirely ready?"

3. What does humility mean to me?

4. How do I humbly ask?

5. How do I define shortcomings?

6. What are my shortcomings?

7. What reluctance or fears do I have about releasing my shortcomings?

8. What do I gain by holding on to my shortcomings?

9. How does shame keep me in my codependency?

10. How can I accept myself unconditionally as I work Step Seven?

11. In what ways might Step Seven assist me in my recovery?

12. How can I let go of my self-will as I work Step Seven?

13. How does the affirmation, "My Higher Power knows everything about me and loves me as I am," help me work this Step?

DRAFT

Tradition Seven

*Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting,
declining outside contributions.*

Our Seventh Tradition directs us to create and sustain fully self-supporting CoDA meetings and service groups, such as intergroup, voting entity, and CoDA World. Being self-supporting is how we learn to take responsibility for the health and existence of our meetings.

Each of us relies on CoDA meetings to be there when we need them. We may not realize it or want to think about it, but CoDA is maintained by volunteers at all levels. We support ourselves, our meeting, and CoDA as a whole, by volunteering to be of service. CoDA would cease to exist if no one volunteered for service.

When CoDA members join together to create a meeting or group, it is important that everyone is an equal participant with equal say, and that the responsibility for that group is shared by all. If one individual is doing too much, it takes away from the equal participation of others. Conversely, if an individual does too little, this burdens the rest of the group. Doing our individual part in service, as guided by our Higher Power, supports Tradition Seven.

In CoDA, there are two crucial opportunities to practice self-support. One is providing adequate financial support, which ensures CoDA has enough funds to thrive. The other equally crucial and rewarding aspect of self-support is service.

We may ask ourselves, in what ways do I contribute to the wellbeing of CoDA? We may be surprised to find we are already giving service.

- attend meetings regularly
- time
- attention
- enthusiasm
- energy
- compassion
- trust
- respect
- welcome newcomers
- listen without crosstalk
- financial support
- share our experience, strength, and hope
- volunteer for a service position
- participate as an equal in group conscience decisions
- say yes to sponsorship

By working with others, we begin to realize we belong. We build self-esteem and gain confidence in ourselves as we become trusted servants. Service can be the beginning of a journey out of isolation and an opportunity to practice healthy personal relationships. Sponsors guide us in working the Steps, understanding the Traditions, and finding opportunities for service. The qualities we practice in service and sponsorship are the same qualities we find in healthy personal relationships.

For many codependents, part of our disease is investing too much time and energy in helping and supporting others. We may feel burned out and resistant to volunteering for service in CoDA. Self-care does not mean that we say “no” to service. We learn how to say “yes” in healthy, balanced ways.

Being involved in service within CoDA is vital to our individual recovery and can be challenging and fun. We start where we can, beginning to learn about the structure of CoDA and the service opportunities offered within our meetings, our intergroup, our voting entity, and CoDA World. As our recovery grows, the depth of our service can also grow and change.

**For more information about service in CoDA, see the booklets *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter*, *Carrying the Message Living the Twelfth Step*, and *The Twelve Service Concepts, Alive and Well*.

Service at any level is vital. When each person does some kind of service, CoDA works for all of us. It is just as important to say “yes” when we are asked to read The Twelve Steps aloud during a meeting as it is to say “yes” to taking a turn as a group representative to your local Intergroup, or to say “yes” to serving on a CoDA World Service committee. We can talk to our sponsor and program friends about how we might like to be of service. We can read about service in our literature, such as the Newcomer Handbook. Most importantly, we can rely on our Higher Power’s guidance every step of the way. We can take a risk by starting small, doing more as we are able.

Sponsorship in the CoDA Fellowship carries the message of recovery. Sponsorship is a vital and accessible form of service. It enhances the recovery of sponsee, sponsor, and CoDA as a whole. Finding a sponsor often takes time and discernment. In choosing a sponsor, it is suggested that members ask another recovering CoDA member who has what they want, modeling healthy CoDA recovery and service.

Once we have acknowledged our individual responsibility to the CoDA meeting or group, we then acknowledge that every member and CoDA group has the responsibility for the survival of CoDA as a whole.

Although there are no dues or fees for membership in CoDA, we have the opportunity to express our gratitude by contributing financially as we are able. Self-supporting means that groups look within themselves for funding. Tradition Seven reminds us to avoid accepting outside donations because they create outside affiliations, influence, and obligations,

Groups and meetings are self-supporting, in part, when they:

- are listed on coda.org and update the listing annually
- at every meeting, read aloud, as written, CoDA’s four Foundational Documents: *The Preamble*, *The Welcome*, *The Twelve Steps*, and *The Twelve Traditions*, making the meeting a part of CoDA as a whole
- read CoDA’s basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, often called the CoDA Book or the Blue Book, in meetings
- welcome new members
- encourage sponsorship
- support the formation of Step and Tradition study groups
- introduce, read, sell, or guide people to coda.org to purchase, CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature
- pay for their meeting space and, if required, public liability insurance
- make donations to CoDA’s service structure: local, regional, and World.
- Find information about making donations at coda.org.

- share experience, strength, and hope on a regular basis
- fill service positions
- rotate service positions, including leadership of meetings
- establish a transparent, prudent reserve for future needs when possible
- members participate with voice and vote in the informed group conscience decision making process
- Engage in discussion and vote on motions to guide service representatives
- participate in the broader service structure by sending a representative to these service groups: local intergroup, voting entity, or CoDA world

If we find ourselves participating in a CoDA group that is struggling because of non-support, the group may choose to hold a special meeting called a group inventory. Doing a group inventory is a recovery tool that helps groups determine cooperatively what solutions may be available to solve problems. Suggestions for group inventory formats can be found in the back of this workbook and in the booklets *Traditionally Speaking* and *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter*.

If there is a surplus of money, questions of what to do with it can arise. Suggestions include: donating to your local intergroup, voting entity, or CoDA World committees such as Hospitals and Institutions or Co-Dependents Anonymous Inc., the administrative structure serving the world Fellowship. There are many CoDA services that need support. You may consider doing outreach in your own community by donating *Co-Dependents Anonymous* and other CoDA literature to local libraries and institutions where people go for help. It is helpful to call an informed group conscience in which all members have voice and vote in making decisions.

Through the guidance of our Higher Power, we learn to be fully self-supporting, reap the many rewards of giving service, and grow in our recovery.

Higher Power, help me become self-supporting; financially, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Carry me through my discomfort as I become accountable for my behavior. Guide me to give service and financial support humbly, wholeheartedly, and enthusiastically to ensure the health and growth of our CoDA community. May I cooperate as an equal partner in all my relationships so all may benefit, including me.

Tradition Seven Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Seven:

1. What does self-supporting mean to me?

2. How can meetings and service groups be self-supporting?

3. What talents might I contribute to CoDA through service?

4. Which of my shortcomings hold me back from saying “yes” to doing service?

5. How does it harm the group when one person is doing all the work?

6. How do I know when I’m taking on the right amount of service work?

7. What am I looking to gain by doing more than my fair share?

8. What is my part in my group maintaining self-support?

9. What happens if a meeting or group can not cover expenses?

10. What are some ideas of what to do with excess money?

11. What constitutes an outside contribution in my meeting?

12. In what ways has giving service helped me in my CoDA recovery?

13. Do I believe I deserve the freedom of being self-supporting?

14. What can I do to become more self-supporting in my personal life?

15. Do I allow my family and friends the freedom of being self-supporting? Give examples.

16. In what ways can this Tradition apply to our service structure, in meetings, intergroups, voting entities, and World?

DRAFT

Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

The first part of Step Eight asks us to list all the people we have harmed, regardless of the circumstances. The Step work we have done to this point can be helpful and supportive as we identify all those we have harmed.

Many of us have found it easier to see how we have harmed others, denying how we have harmed ourselves. Sometimes it takes a spiritual lightning bolt of clarity and awareness in order for us to admit just how we have been harmed by our own behavior. We consider if we would treat someone else as badly as we treat ourselves. If shame or guilt overwhelms us, we can rely on our Higher Power and remember our Step Three decision to live by our Higher Power's will. We find peace and strength when we let go and trust our CoDA recovery process. We no longer waste energy pushing down our memories or our feelings. We use them to recover.

In the second part of Step Eight, we are asked *only to become willing* to make amends. We are not asked to make amends now. In this Step, we do not need to decide how or when the amends will be made.

If we feel frightened and vulnerable, we can rely on Steps One, Two, and Three to support us as we become willing to be open and honest. We can release the belief that harm will come if we tell the truth of our past behavior. The fear of being wrong or of being judged can be offset with a positive affirmation such as, "I am not a mistake; I have made mistakes and I learn from them." If we continue to struggle with this Step, we take another look at Steps Six and Seven, reading the CoDA booklet, *Making Choices: Affirmations for Working Steps Six and Seven*.

Feelings of fear and trepidation about making our amends in Step Nine may block us from beginning our Step Eight list. With prayer and meditation, our Higher Power can help set aside our fears and resentments and get started in listing the harms we have done. We acknowledge our loving Higher Power has always been present and already knows everything we have done. With the support and guidance of our Higher Power, sponsor, and recovery friends, we can let go of the fear that harm will come if we tell the truth.

The list we make in Step Eight acknowledges our harmful behavior in a new way, and we become accountable to ourselves and our Higher Power for what we have done. We may want to make lists from different perspectives, like the harm that we have caused ourselves, the harm that we have caused others, or the resentments that we hold.

We begin to understand how important it is to see our destructive behavior. We no longer have to hold on to the secrets of our past or live in denial. We understand we have harmed because we were harmed. With this kind of honesty, change can begin; we can start to restore our relationships with others and ourselves in healthy and loving ways.

The list may grow as more is revealed and awareness is gained. When we acknowledge we no longer wish to ignore our feelings, we work Step Eight and find the possibility of relief encourages us to carry on. Our recovery continues to bring awareness of old behaviors and ways we have harmed ourselves and others. We also become aware of how we continue old behaviors in our lives today. We stay open to what is revealed, and we acknowledge we do not know everything about ourselves. We recognize our behaviors have affected ourselves and others in ways that we may not have realized.

The following may be ways we have harmed others or ourselves:

- holding resentments
- being attached to expectations
- acting or speaking based on assumptions about others
- acting out
- isolating out of fear of intimacy
- shaming ourselves and others
- manipulating and controlling
- cheating, lying, and stealing
- obsessing or worrying
- blaming and judging
- emotionally abusing
- physically abusing
- neglecting our responsibilities
- creating financial stress
- abandoning ourselves
- acting less than or acting better than
- disconnecting from our spiritual selves

See *The Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence* in Step Four of this workbook. A more extensive reading about physical or non-physical forms of abuse and control may be found in Chapter Five of *Co-Dependents Anonymous*. Many in our Fellowship have found that reading about Step Eight in our basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, and in CoDA's *Twelve Steps Handbook* to be valuable resources. We may be surprised that it is suggested to place our name at the top of our list.

If, once we have made our list, feelings of resentment, anger, guilt, or shame seem to be holding us back from moving on to Step Nine, we remember Steps One and Two. We are powerless over others and there is a power greater than ourselves that will restore us to sanity.

Service in CoDA and in our daily lives brings forward unresolved feelings and patterns of codependency. We work the Steps, over and over, to remain in the truth that is revealed. Keep practicing!

In this moment, I see the impossible become not only possible, but real. As I forgive myself for my shortcomings, I am able to forgive others, opening the way for a true and lasting change in my behavior. Thank you, God.

Step Eight Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Eight:

1. What does, become “willing to make amends” mean to me?

2. How do I become willing?

3. What is my definition of “amends”?

4. In what ways have anger, resentment, and fear prevented me from looking at myself?

5. How can I process and overcome fear, anger, and resentment as I work this Step?

6. Which Steps and other tools will I use as I work Step Eight?

7. What harm have I caused myself and others by believing I was better or less than?

8. How do I get from feeling I am insignificant to recognizing I have harmed others?

9. How did my dishonesty harm others or myself?

10. Who have I harmed because of my use of codependent patterns?

- Denial

- Low Self-Esteem

- Compliance

- Control

- Avoidance

11. How have I harmed others by projecting my unresolved feelings and experiences onto them?

12. About whom do I still feel hard-hearted, fearful, or defensive?

13. How can I forgive myself and let go of my feelings of guilt and shame?

DRAFT

Tradition Eight

Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Tradition Eight gives us an important guideline: CoDA should remain forever nonprofessional. We gather together as codependents for one purpose, to carry the message of recovery by sharing our experience, strength, and hope. CoDA members with professional credentials participate in meetings only as recovering members of our Fellowship, not in their professional capacity. The principle of anonymity reminds us that our careers must be put aside as we share in meetings or workshops. This Tradition helps us to maintain our equality and humility, valuing each other as fellow members in spiritual recovery.

As we do our service work for CoDA, we may find it necessary to employ special workers for some of the Fellowship's needs. These special workers fill positions that CoDA volunteers may not be able to fill because of time constraints, feasibility, or special skills. Special workers may include administrative help, editors, illustrators, people with computer skills, accountants, and lawyers.

The members of our Fellowship who come forward to be of service do so in a nonprofessional way. Trusted servants who volunteer are accountable to those they serve. They do not create their own responsibilities; they take on only those jobs asked of them. We remember that trusted servants are codependents in recovery just like us. We also remember that for CoDA's purpose there is but one ultimate authority as defined in our Second Tradition, a loving Higher Power as expressed to our group conscience.

At every meeting we are reminded that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our program, as stated in Tradition Twelve. If some of our trusted servants lead professional lives, they have an obligation to establish a healthy boundary, keeping their participation and service in the program separate from their professional livelihood. In Tradition Six, we learned the importance of not being diverted from our primary spiritual aim by money, property, and prestige.

Codependents can be impressed by another person's professional status. Being mindful of the servant position helps us remember our aim is a spiritual one, not a professional one. All of this protects our program so that members of our CoDA Fellowship experience their own spiritual recovery. Recovery is a spiritual journey of equality. Our relationships are only healthy when they are equal.

In our CoDA meetings, workshops, conferences, and conventions, we must remember that what members have to offer is their own experience, strength, and hope. In CoDA, no one is paid to share, whether at meetings, as sponsors, or in any other Twelve Step activity. We do not offer advice to other members; we only voice our personal experience, no one else's. This nonprofessional approach creates trust and safety. We are free to take what we want and leave the rest, using the guidance of our Higher Power. Within this environment, each of us can experience the safety to work our own program and volunteer to do service.

Our program is based on CoDA's Twelve Steps, and Twelve Traditions. CoDA members and meetings use a variety of CoDA Conference endorsed literature, including our basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous* (aka the CoDA book or blue book). CoDA literature is written anonymously by members of our CoDA Fellowship who share their experience, strength, and hope about their recovery from codependency.

Tradition Eight protects us from ourselves setting up healthy boundaries within the Fellowship. We learn to set aside egos, finding humility and strength. We let go of our dependence on others and receive what we need from our Higher Power.

Higher Power, may I appreciate that each of us is a precious creation with unique and valuable abilities and talents. May we contribute as equals, to seek shared solutions for the benefit of all. Give me courage to say yes to service requests that will help me grow.

--Tradition Eight Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Eight:

1. What is the difference between professional and nonprofessional workers?

2. Why is it important for CoDA to remain nonprofessional?

3. How does the principle of Tradition Eight guide us to use CoDA Conference endorsed literature?

4. Under what circumstances would CoDA employ a special worker?

5. Why don't we pay professional speakers or workshop leaders?

6. Why is it important for fellowship service workers to be members of CoDA?

7. Which positions can be filled by outside special workers who are not CoDA members?

8. How does Tradition Eight protect us from ourselves?

9. How does admitting we cannot do it all help us appreciate our own capabilities and limitations, while respecting those of others?

10. How does Tradition Eight support the spirituality of our program?

11. How does the second part of this Tradition relate to the first part?

12. How might I apply this Tradition in my daily life?

DRAFT

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

The Step work we have already done prepares us to take the action of Step Nine. We have written about our lives during our moral inventory, and acknowledged our familiar codependent patterns of behavior, which developed as adaptations to early trauma. Continuing our recovery, we experience being entirely ready to have our Higher Power work in our lives. We learn to humbly ask our Higher Power to remove what no longer helps or serves us. This brings us to a place of truth and vulnerable honesty as we prepare to make our amends.

In the past, we may have minimized or been unaware of how our behaviors affected others and ourselves. It is difficult to take responsibility for our actions if we believe they have no impact. We no longer believe that what we do is insignificant. We now recognize that our actions have consequences.

In Step Eight, we were truthful with ourselves about our past behavior and made our list. Having done this honestly, we found that we were released from some of our guilt and shame. This work prepares us to be more honest as we make our amends. Amends are our pure truth without blame, distraction, justification, or manipulation; we are taking responsibility for our actions. We understand that making amends means we are truly committed to changing our behavior, with the help of our Higher Power.

If we are thorough about this stage of our recovery, we consider ourselves important enough to be included in our amends. We may have believed we mattered less than others, however when we have harmed others, we have harmed ourselves.

How do we make amends to ourselves? The answers are as varied and creative as are the members of our Fellowship. When we contemplate truly making amends to ourselves, we understand this action has the power to bring us healing and joy.

Making amends to ourselves may mean letting go of guilt and shame, forgiving ourselves for our imperfections. We speak to ourselves with kindness, love, and respect. We do our best not to abandon ourselves. We value our own needs, and we consider what we want and how we feel. We must have compassion for ourselves. We cannot give away to others that which we have not first given to ourselves.

Resentments get in the way of making genuine amends. One tool to remove resentments might be to write a letter to the person we resent, expressing everything we want to say to them. We do not send this letter. Then we write a letter from them back to ourselves, imagining their voice expressing their heartfelt apologies to us. We then read both letters to our ourselves, our Higher Power, and our sponsor. We turn our resentments over to our Higher Power. Letting go of resentments is an amend, a healing and loving gift we can give ourselves. Once we accept the truth about our past, we become able to let it go. We begin to feel a new inner peace. Sometimes, this is our first experience with forgiveness. As that experience deepens, we can more easily forgive others as well. This opens the door to restoring our relationships.

Step Nine is not a time to “act as if.” As we become honest with ourselves and others, we rely on our Higher Power to guide and support us. In times of confusion, it is helpful to talk to our sponsor or others in recovery to gain clarity and to determine what is ours and what is not. We need to let go of the other person’s part and be responsible for our part only, even if it is clear the fault was greater for them. Making amends is our job and our job alone. It leads us to the experience of freedom from

the burden of shame, guilt, and over-responsibility. Being free of resentments is an amend in and of itself.

As we prepare to make our amends, we remember it is an inside job and that our Higher Power is always with us. The real purpose of making amends is to resolve the inner conflicts of our past so that we can finally let go. We use our list to make our plan and share it with our sponsor. We can prepare ourselves beforehand to let go of the results, regardless of how our amends are received. Our plan may include calling our sponsor after making our amends.

In this Step, we are instructed to make direct amends wherever possible. There may be people on our list with whom we do not feel safe. It may not be advisable to make direct amends in these cases. We can find meaningful ways to make our amends that will safeguard our well-being. We can discuss possible options with our sponsor. With the help of our Higher Power, we take care of ourselves.

Step Nine states that we make amends “wherever possible.” However, we may owe amends to someone who has died, or whose whereabouts are unknown. In some cases reaching out may cause more harm than good. There may be people who are unable or unwilling to hear what we have to say. In these situations, our amends may be written in a letter to them without needing to send and in your journal and shared with our sponsor.

Some living amends we can make to ourselves and others are:

- be kind, loving, and compassionate with ourselves and others.
- say “no” in order to take care of ourselves.
- let go of our fear of what others may think, say, or do.
- learn ways to express a differing opinion.
- let go of our belief that everyone needs to be, think, and feel the same.
- allow others the dignity to live their lives in their own way.
- live our lives differently because we are in recovery.
- learn to trust our Higher Power.
- consider ideas for living amends that apply to your life.

Amends are not about getting things off our chest at the expense of others. They are not simply about clearing the air. Amends are spiritual exercises in humility, whereby we are watchful of our attitudes and actions. With our Higher Power’s help, we can see our past in a different light.

We are able to release our fear, guilt, and shame, letting the past become part of our story. Our most powerful amend is our changed behavior. This is a testament to our recovery and the greatest gift of Step Nine.

Higher Power, support me as I do my part, humbly sharing in the rotation of service, remembering that no individual is in charge. May I loosen my control and accept the informed group conscience as an expression of Your loving spiritual guidance.

Step Nine Prayer

Questions to help us work Step Nine:

1. What is my understanding of the word “amends”?

2. What is the difference between an amend and an apology?

3. What tools or Steps might I use to keep it simple, safe, and clear?

4. How does making direct amends help me in my CoDA recovery?

5. What is my motivation for making amends?

6. What is the purpose of making amends?

7. How do I decide whether my amends would injure others or myself?

8. How can I forgive myself and others and let go of my resentments?

9. Is forgiveness necessary prior to making amends?

10. What are my expectations for making amends?

11. Why is it so important to let go of my expectations before making amends?

12. How do I let go of my expectations of the outcome?

13. What alternative actions can I take if direct amends aren't possible?

14. How do I take care of myself while making amends?

15. What amends do I need to make to myself?

16. How might I go about making amends to myself?

17. What is the difference between “direct amends” and “living amends”?

DRAFT

Tradition Nine

CoDA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

This Tradition protects the service structure of CoDA to serve the changing needs of the Fellowship by stating that CoDA, as such, ought never be organized. The Fellowship gives direction to the service groups made up of trusted servants, and the work is done accordingly. These trusted servants do not govern: guidance comes from CoDA's Steps, Traditions, and Service Concepts, and our Higher Power as revealed to us through our informed group conscience process. We must practice patience and learn to trust the wisdom of this process.

Each CoDA meeting is free to attend to the direct needs of its members within The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous. Tradition Nine protects this freedom for each CoDA group. Every meeting or service group can support this Tradition by rotating service positions. When responsibilities are handed over, an active flow of service and energy exists. Rotating positions prevents dominance from individuals who might take control. When all members share responsibility by contributing and participating in service, a healthy, balanced meeting thrives.

The CoDA Steps are our personal guides for our spiritual growth. The CoDA Traditions guide us in the spiritual role of service work, and in our everyday lives. Trusted servants also find *The Twelve CoDA Service Concepts* a useful tool.

Our Step work helps us with the application of this Tradition. One of the links between Step Nine and Tradition Nine is that both ask us to take responsibility. In Step Nine, we become aware of our responsibility to ourselves for our actions, and acknowledge our right to be, think, and feel; we acknowledge others' rights to do the same. In Tradition Nine, we trust the authority of the informed group conscience. We let go of our personal agendas and are reminded that the true power in CoDA lies in our collective Higher Power and the informed group conscience of the Fellowship. Trusted servants must be diligent in their direct responsibility to follow the informed group conscience of those they serve.

CoDA's service structure is made up of members who volunteer to serve the needs of the Fellowship. Our boards, committees, and a few paid Fellowship Service Workers (FSW) accomplish various tasks that are vital to the internal functioning of CoDA.

The CoDA Service Conference (CSC) is held annually to conduct the business of the Fellowship. Decisions are made by Voting Entities (regions or countries) through their delegates who are in attendance, either in person or virtually. When CSC is not in session, the Fellowship grants its elected Board of Trustees the responsibility to carry out the business management of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

Co-Dependents Anonymous, Incorporated (CoDA) and CoDA Resource Publishing, Incorporated (CoRe) are separate, not-for-profit corporations with specific legal duties and responsibilities. Their common purpose is to serve the CoDA Fellowship. All CoDA and CoRe board members, and members of the Issues and Mediation Committee (IMC), are elected during the annual CoDA Service Conference (CSC).

Tradition Two and Tradition Nine remind us that CoDA is guided, not by a few, but by our Higher Power through informed group conscience, from local meetings to CoDA as a whole. Following the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous is our path to spiritual harmony.

Some of the services provided by CoDA World Service are:

- fulfilling the legal obligations of Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc.
- maintenance of CoDA's website, coda.org
- creation, publication, and distribution of CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature
- translation of CoDA literature
- communication with the Fellowship
- worldwide outreach
- serving hospitals and institutions
- financial management
- safeguarding intellectual property of the Fellowship such as our name and our literature
- organizing events
- mediation of issues
- maintenance of the Fellowship Service Manual (FSM)

DRAFT

Higher Power, support me as I do my part, humbly sharing in the rotation of service, remembering that no individual is in charge. May I loosen my control and accept the informed group conscience as an expression of Your loving spiritual guidance.

Tradition Nine Prayer

Questions to help us apply Tradition Nine:

1. What is the difference between an organization and a Fellowship?

2. What does “organized” mean to me as used in this Tradition?

3. What is the importance of letting go of any personal agenda when acting as a trusted servant?

4. How can my Step work assist me in the application of Tradition Nine?

5. What do CoDA's committees and service boards do?

6. How does trusting my Higher Power's will guide me to offer service on committees or service boards?

7. What talents and experiences can I share in service to the Fellowship?

8. What type of service interests me, even if it challenges my comfort zone?

9. How does my fear of commitment and responsibility prevent me from offering service to CoDA?

10. How does CoDA's rotating volunteer and informal service structure affect my willingness to do service work?

11. How do I rely on CoDA's Twelve Service Concepts to encourage me to have healthy attitudes and behaviors when doing service work?

12. How does Tradition Nine support my recovery?

13. How might I apply Tradition Nine in my daily life?

DRAFT

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

By suggesting that we take our personal inventories on a daily basis, Step Ten shows us a way to live our lives one day at a time. Working Step Ten is like working Steps Four through Nine, examining our behavior of the past twenty-four hours. This work connects us to our Higher Power, ourselves, and the CoDA program.

Step Ten talks about a “personal” inventory which is an indispensable tool for increasing our awareness and growth. The moral inventory in Step Four helped us understand our history. A personal inventory helps us see the choices we are making and the actions we are taking now. We may ask ourselves, “Are our choices and actions supporting and assisting us in our recovery and our lives today?”

When we have been wrong in our choices or actions, Step Ten encourages us to admit it promptly before it grows and festers. We take personal responsibility and accept the consequences. The wording of Step Ten offers a clear perspective on our being human. “When we were wrong” says that sometimes we are wrong. We make mistakes, but we are not a mistake. In CoDA, our goal is progress, not perfection.

The action of taking a daily inventory will reconnect us with our Higher Power and ourselves. This recovery tool can be used anytime the need arises, such as when we feel disturbed or uncomfortable. Maybe we have said or done something that we regret. Taking an inventory can show us what we can do to keep from holding on to guilt, shame, and resentments.

A daily inventory can show us how much progress we have made. We focus on our recovery rather than our codependency. Without making a daily inventory, we may not realize how strong and courageous we have become. Looking at our attributes is just as important as looking at our liabilities.

Step Ten supports us in staying current and present in our lives. By using the Tenth Step, we experience personal accountability on a daily basis. Have we completed what we said we would do today? Did we let go of codependent behaviors such as trying to change or trying to control others? Did we observe the positives and celebrate new behavior and recovery?

Having different feelings from another does not mean we are wrong. Using Step Ten helps us understand what our part is and what we are responsible for. This Step is not used to get approval, to be right, or solve our feeling of anxiety. In recovery, before we react, we slow down, look at a situation clearly, and then take action if needed.

We remind ourselves daily that it is human not to be perfect and that it is OK. Admitting that we are human, we are then free to focus on recovery. With our Higher Power, it is possible for us to change by being honest about our wrongs and admitting them. As we admit and let go, we are empowered to live our Higher Power’s will. We can forgive ourselves and develop a loving relationship with ourselves.

When we admit our mistakes, we let go of the impossible goal of being perfect. It is liberating to admit when we are wrong. Accepting responsibility prompts action before we talk ourselves out of it. When we are in doubt about our need to make amends, we can ask our Higher Power and our sponsor for clarity and perhaps use the tool of writing.

When we need to make direct amends to a person who is not available, we can work with our sponsor or another CoDA member and our Higher Power to find a way forward. We can write in our journal remembering to have compassion for ourselves and others, and to help us let go of any of our expectations. When we admit our wrongs, we experience a new freedom.

Since codependency is a deeply rooted, compulsive behavior, we can't change a lifetime of habitual behaviors on our own. We need to review and amend our behaviors daily. Working Step Ten is a loving act which helps us see how to live more loving, honest, and fulfilling lives, and to see how far we have come. Step Ten is a daily anchor in our recovery process, which frees us from the bonds of codependency.

You might create a daily checklist for Step Ten. Here are some ideas to consider:

- When or how have I handed my day over to my Higher Power?
- What am I grateful for today?
- Have I prayed or meditated today?
- How have I connected with my spirituality today?
- What positive affirmation have I given myself today?
- Have I communicated in healthy and loving ways today?
- What codependent behaviors did I notice in myself today and how did I respond?
- Have I had enough sleep or rest today?
- Have I exercised or done any other self-care activities today?
- Have I given myself a healthy diet today?
- How have I honored my feelings today?
- Am I learning to value myself?
- Have I given myself permission to have fun today?
- Include recovery behaviors you would like to encourage in your everyday life.

In this moment, I live my life in a new way. As I continue to open my heart and mind, little by little, one day at a time, I reveal my true self, mend my relationships, and touch God.

Step Ten Prayer

These questions are intended to help you work Step Ten:

1. What is the purpose of Step Ten?

2. How does Step Ten relate to Step Four?

3. How does the discipline of doing a Tenth Step daily enhance my recovery?

4. Which of my codependent behaviors would be useful to include on a Tenth Step checklist?

5. What is my list of assets for my Tenth Step today?

6. Why is it important to list my assets along with my codependent behaviors?

7. How do I know when I have made a mistake; how do I feel, and what behavior patterns do I exhibit?

8. What prevents me from admitting my mistakes?

9. How does thinking I'm always wrong or always right relate to Step Ten?

10. How does working Step Ten keep me right sized?

11. How does Step Ten remind me to live in the present?

12. Am I willing to incorporate Step Ten into my daily routine?

13. How will I incorporate Step Ten into my daily routine?

DRAFT

Tradition Ten

CoDA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the CoDA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Tradition Ten gives the CoDA Fellowship a direct guideline: CoDA has no opinion on outside issues. These words define a healthy boundary for CoDA. By following this guideline, the Fellowship is able to avoid public controversy. As members of the Fellowship, we don't represent Co-Dependents Anonymous in public regarding any issue. CoDA has no opinions on any literature, any therapies, or anything outside of our Fellowship.

Just as we avoid controversy on a personal level by not giving advice to others, we avoid controversy for the Fellowship by not offering opinions on matters unrelated to CoDA. One way that we eliminate controversy for the group is not recommending outside sources, such as books or workshops. In CoDA, we use the Steps and Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous and CoDA Conference endorsed literature for guidance. This creates a safe environment for newcomers, ourselves, and CoDA as a whole.

CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature is written by CoDA members, endorsed by delegates at an annual world CoDA Service Conference (CSC). CoDA books, booklets, and pamphlets are published, sold, and distributed by CoDA Resource Publishing, Inc. (CoRe). CoRe is an affiliated, separate not-for-profit corporation, administered by CoDA volunteers, whose sole purpose is to publish CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature. CoRe also sells chips, medallions, and other CoDA materials. Proceeds from sales financially supports the Fellowship and carries the CoDA message of recovery. Service items, such as CoDA pamphlets, are available for free download on coda.org.

When we gather together in CoDA, we place our common welfare first. Our personal recovery depends upon this commitment to CoDA's unity. We experience strength in our Fellowship when we keep the commitment to our common welfare. With our primary purpose foremost in our minds, we put aside our differences and welcome all those who desire healthy and loving relationships. We learn that an outside issue is anything that has the potential to distract us from our primary purpose as stated in Tradition Five, "Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer."

Tradition Ten protects the spiritual nature of our program. We gather together to share our personal experience, strength, and hope of recovery from codependency. CoDA meetings are not the place to discuss our opinions about outside issues. Honoring this Tradition, we provide a place of safety for everyone, regardless of religious or political preference. Whoever we are and whatever we do, we come together in our desire for healthy and loving relationships. Because of this unifying goal, we work the CoDA Steps and follow the CoDA Traditions.

Higher Power, encourage me to contribute to a safe environment by keeping our meetings focused on CoDA recovery. Help me stay away from hurtful controversy and outside issues, creating space for healthy relationships to grow.

Tradition Ten Prayer

These questions are intended to help us apply Tradition Ten:

1. What boundaries are established by this Tradition?

2. What does “outside issue” mean to me?

3. What does “public controversy” mean to me?

4. How does this Tradition support the newcomer?

5. What can I do when I observe people expressing opinions about outside issues such as politics, religion, or published authors, in CoDA meetings?

6. How does Step One relate to Tradition Ten?

7. How do I practice this Tradition?

8. How does this Tradition protect the spiritual foundation of our program?

9. If my meeting uses a published author's writing instead of CoDA Conference endorsed literature, how does that violate the spirit of Tradition Ten?

10. How might I apply the spirit of Tradition Ten in my daily life?

Step Eleven

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.

Step Eleven is an essential tool we use in our recovery from codependency. It reminds us that this program is ongoing, requiring daily maintenance. As we improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation, we gain knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us. We let go of our struggle to control. We turn to "a power greater than ourselves," as stated in Step Two, accepting direction and guidance.

Prayer and meditation connect us to our spiritual nature and help us develop more honest and loving relationships with ourselves and others. When we are willing to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power, we humbly accept our journey of recovery.

When we practice prayer and meditation daily, we honor ourselves and connect with a Higher Power of our understanding. We become aware that we are not alone.

Recovering codependents approach prayer and meditation in many different ways.

Some approaches include:

- communing with nature and the outdoors
- repeating words such as "serenity", "peace", and "love" to feel quiet within
- repeating affirmations to bring Higher Power to mind
- sitting or kneeling in quiet repose
- focusing awareness on breathing
- listening to or playing music
- walking or running or other movement
- creating art
- working on crafts
- concentrating on an object or image
- fully taking in sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and physical sensations
- reading and contemplating
- writing
- coloring
- Add your own...

How we choose to pray and meditate does not matter; what matters is that we do it daily.

Many in CoDA define prayer as talking to their Higher Power and meditation as listening to their Higher Power. Step Eleven asks us to pray only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry that out. It is up to each of us to listen to the intuitive voice within. Prayer and meditation create a safe and loving space inside, enabling us to receive our Higher Power's guidance.

With daily practice, our conscious contact can become second nature and our awareness of our authentic selves increases. Practicing Step Eleven can be a time to contemplate how our patterns and characteristics stand in the way of our connection with our Higher Power. These may have helped and protected us in the past, but they now prevent us from listening to and trusting our Higher Power. With humility and gratitude, we begin to recognize the progress we are making on this journey. When our intuition and our Higher Power's will become aligned. Step Eleven becomes an integral part of our lives.

We came to believe there is a power greater than ourselves in Step Two and became willing to "turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God", as stated in Step Three.

Through the regular practice of prayer and meditation, we are able to reflect on the wonder of our new life, with gratitude for the gifts of CoDA recovery.

DRAFT

In this moment, I quiet my thoughts and open my mind and heart to God's guidance for me. In this moment, I feel the gentle peace that conscious contact with God allows. If I am troubled and in doubt, or joyful and serene, I turn to God. I know my path will be revealed and the way to my highest good will be made known.

Step Eleven Prayer

These questions are intended to help us work Step Eleven:

1. What helps me remember to use this Step and integrate prayer and meditation into my daily routine?

2. How can I use Step Eleven when I have a problem?

3. How might I use Step Eleven to support my recovery?

4. How does praying for knowledge of my Higher Power's will simplify my life?

5. What does prayer mean to me?

6. What does meditation mean to me?

7. What qualities does the Higher Power of my understanding have today?

8. How might I improve my conscious contact with my Higher Power?

9. How can I trust that my intuition and my Higher Power's will are aligned?

10. What power do I have to carry out my Higher Power's will for me?

11. Why does this Step instruct us to pray "only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out?"

12. How have my thoughts about spirituality changed as a result of working this Step?

13. How might improving my conscious connection with my Higher Power change my life?

DRAFT

Tradition Eleven

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and all other public forms of communication.

Tradition Eleven provides boundaries for the Fellowship and its individual members about how to interact with the public. Two guidelines are established. First, CoDA's "public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion." Second, as CoDA members, we each "maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and all other public forms of communication."

What is attraction? Attraction is a force that draws things or people together. Every CoDA member practicing recovery has an inner quality that attracts others. We rely on this quality when we engage with the public concerning CoDA, instead of relying on outside publications or professionals. What are appropriate methods to attract new members? We make known the time and location of CoDA meetings without promising results, and we read and distribute CoDA's Conference endorsed literature.

Simply by living our program, attraction is possible. When others recognize our changes, our serenity, our honesty, we begin to hear questions such as, "How did you change?" or "What did you do?" If appropriate, we may choose to answer their questions, share parts of our recovery story, and direct them to the coda.org website for more information.

Tradition Eleven asks us to avoid promotion. What is promotion? Promotion can be trying to convince people to come to CoDA, for example, offering particular outcomes such as suggesting that attending CoDA meetings will straighten out a marriage or promising "you'll feel better within a month". Another form of promotion would be advertising that goes beyond simply informing the public about meeting locations and times. CoDA is anonymous, not invisible.

Another aspect of this Tradition speaks to anonymity. Anonymous means unidentified or undeclared. Personal anonymity supports a boundary for each CoDA member to stay unidentified at the public relations level. When all in recovery maintain personal anonymity, we find the CoDA unity we need for personal recovery. We rely on living our individual programs. CoDA has no hierarchy; therefore, no one person speaks for CoDA as a whole.

Why do we have a public relations policy? CoDA is a spiritual program of attraction, with a unique, collective voice. Keeping the message consistent safeguards the integrity of our program. Living by the principles of the CoDA program is more powerful in carrying the message than promising definitive results.

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to other codependents who still suffer," according to the Fifth Tradition. Furthermore, Step Twelve tells us "to carry this message to other codependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs." In order for us to carry out our purpose, we provide meeting information and CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature. We offer our experience, strength, and hope and leave the rest to our Higher Power.

Higher Power, may I be mindful in all forms of public communication. May my life reflect the CoDA principles, attracting new faces to our Fellowship. Help me remember to speak for myself, or for CoDA as a whole.

Tradition Eleven Prayer

These questions are intended to help us apply Tradition Eleven:

1. What does CoDA's public relations policy of "attraction rather than promotion" mean to me?

2. How is attraction different from promotion?

3. What does maintaining personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, television, and all other public forms of communication" mean to me?

4. Why do I think it's important to maintain personal anonymity in our public relations?

5. How do I maintain my personal anonymity?

6. In what ways does practicing Tradition Eleven enhance my spirituality?

7. How do I apply Tradition Eleven when I'm talking about my experience with someone outside the program?

8. What feelings or thoughts come up for me as I work Tradition Eleven?

9. What deeper understanding have I discovered as a result of practicing Tradition Eleven?

10. How do anonymity and attraction relate to each other?

11. How do we address promotion which falls under public forms of communication?

12. How does breaking anonymity harm both CoDA and ourselves?

13. How does my home meeting attract and welcome newcomers?

14. What is my part in attracting and welcoming newcomers?

15. How might I apply Tradition Eleven in my daily life?

Step Twelve

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.

Step Twelve tells us that the result of working the Steps is a spiritual awakening. A spiritual awakening could be described as the way members find their Higher Power and what each member has received from working the Twelve Steps. There will be a transformation; we will see and understand ourselves differently.

Some ways members have described their spiritual awakening are:

“The same events are happening as before. It’s my perception of the events that is different.”

“One gift I receive from working the Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous is a deepening awareness of my Higher Power.”

“My spiritual awakening is that I am becoming a spiritual human being.”

Sharing about our spiritual awakenings in meetings is one way we can carry the message and bring hope to codependents. Seeing the change in others who are working the Steps inspires us and gives us faith that the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous can work for us.

Sometimes spiritual awakenings are gradual and experienced through hindsight, such as coming to the realization that we are the ones who need to change; we cannot change others. We are reminded that our spiritual awakening is a direct result of the time spent working the CoDA program. We are capable of change when we use the tools found in the five-parts of our program, described in the *Newcomer Handbook*. The five parts are:

1. Attending meetings
2. Sharing and fellowship
3. Working the Steps
4. Sponsorship
5. Service

Continuing to use the suggested tools we have available, taking inventory, making amends, using a daily Tenth Step, meditating, and praying., helps sustain our spiritual awakenings. As a member shared, “I have spiritual awakenings all the time, each time I go from a place of codependency to a place of God’s will.” We come to believe that our Higher Power is within us, not separate from us.

Step Twelve gives CoDA members a directive. We try to carry the message of our spiritual awakening to other codependents. The word “try” implies that we make the effort and let go of the results. We plant the seed of hope. Gradually, we come to understand that our recovery is the message. Having worked through *The Twelve Steps* and *The Twelve Traditions*, we are different; our lives have changed. Simply living our lives of recovery is important to us and to others. We don’t always know when someone suffering is listening to or noticing us. Humbly sharing our experiences of recovery in meetings sustains our own recovery and, at the same time, carries the message of recovery.

There are many creative ways to carry the message. We can start a new meeting or bring meetings to those who are confined in hospitals, prisons, or other institutions; make ourselves available to sponsor when asked; speak when invited; help organize workshops and retreats; participate in service at all levels of CoDA. It is important to have CoDA Conference endorsed literature available.

Codependency has profoundly affected all areas of our lives. We can apply our knowledge of the principles of our Steps and Traditions, learning to live life differently. We integrate our recovery in all aspects of our lives.

The principles of our program are the road map to a more sane way of living. They help us see ourselves more clearly. We no longer have to feel crazy, confused, or isolated without a place to go. We have *The Twelve Steps*, *The Twelve Traditions*, tools for recovery, the CoDA Fellowship, and our Higher Power. We make wiser decisions. We experience life in a new way, continuing to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

DRAFT

In this moment, I thank God for my spiritual awakening. In this moment, I choose to live all the principles of this simple program. I know the wisdom working through me will touch all I meet with God's love and understanding. I am at peace.

Step Twelve Prayer

These questions are intended to help us work Step Twelve:

1. What does "spiritual awakening" mean to me?

2. What might separate me from my spiritual awakening or Higher Power?

3. As the result of working these Steps, how would I describe my spiritual awakening?

4. How does my spiritual awakening affect my life?

5. How is the hope of our program conveyed in Step Twelve?

6. What do the words “these principles” refer to in Step Twelve?

7. How do I practice these principles in all areas of my life?

8. What is my experience in trying to carry the message?

9. What does the phrase “I can’t keep it, unless I give it away” mean to me?

10. How has working CoDA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions enriched my life?

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Tradition Twelve states that “anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions.” When we practice anonymity, we create safety and trust within our meetings and groups. Maintaining anonymity in our ever-changing world of public media is vital but challenging.

In Tradition Eleven, we talked about the meaning of maintaining anonymity in our public relations policy. Now, in Tradition Twelve, we look at coming together in our meetings and CoDA service work with the spirit of anonymity. In CoDA, we are inspired by the fact that we are all equal, although we come from different backgrounds. We leave outside the masks we wear and the roles we play in our everyday lives. Within CoDA, we refrain from sharing outside issues, such as our social, economic, religious, and political views. We focus on our codependency and CoDA recovery. This reduces the possibility of comparing ourselves to others. Anonymity unifies rather than separates. Anonymity is an equalizer.

Every member can focus on recovery from codependency because we have the unique opportunity to listen to and work with people who are on the same path. The boundary of anonymity reminds us that we come together for one primary purpose, to carry the CoDA message of recovery to codependents who still suffer.

Anonymity creates safety because it establishes an environment where we can speak with less fear of being judged or quoted. As one member shared, “I’ve had the painful experience of being judged by others. Now, in my program, I can make a choice not to behave in that same judgmental way. I remember that everyone is entitled to their own opinion. When I listen, consider, and accept, then I know I have heard the principle of what was said.”

When we honor the concepts of unity and anonymity, we place “principles before personalities.” Thus, we listen to what is said, not who is saying it, or how it is said. We don’t bring our personal agendas to CoDA; we bring our concern of recovery from codependency.

Each of us is on our own unique spiritual journey. Co-Dependents Anonymous is a safe place for all who seek a deeper meaning in their lives. Here we are free to seek our own definitions of “spirituality”, “God”, and “Higher Power”.

Tradition Twelve guides us to place principles before personalities in our daily lives. CoDA maintains a healthy existence when we honor this principle. All the Traditions remind each member and group of Co-Dependents Anonymous to cherish our anonymity, spirituality, and inclusivity within the CoDA Fellowship.

Higher Power, thank you for the principle of anonymity as the spiritual foundation of CoDA's Twelve Traditions. Help me let go of expectations and my need for recognition. May I remember to base my decisions on principles rather than personalities.

Tradition Twelve Prayer

These questions are intended to help us apply Tradition Twelve:

1. What does the boundary of anonymity mean to me?

2. What masks do I wear to distance myself from others, my spiritual path, and Tradition Twelve?

3. How does anonymity create a spiritual foundation for our Traditions?

4. Why is it important for my group to uphold anonymity?

5. How do I practice the principle of anonymity?

6. What does “reminding us to place principles before personalities” mean to me?

7. How does anonymity help me to place principles before personalities?

8. How does Tradition Twelve keep my meeting safe and protect our CoDA program?

9. In what ways does honoring The Twelve Steps and The Twelve Traditions create a place for my personal recovery?

10. Which of my CoDA experiences have deepened my understanding of the CoDA program?

11. How might I apply this Tradition in my daily life?

12. What is next on my spiritual journey?

DRAFT

Traditions Checklist for Group Inventory

Here is a checklist CoDA meetings and service groups may use to support healthy functioning. Groups may do the inventory annually or when a particular issue arises.

The Tradition questions in this workbook may also be helpful.

1. In what ways do we ensure that our common welfare comes first as we do service work?
2. In what ways do we rely on our loving Higher Power as our ultimate authority in our group conscience process?
3. In what ways do we remember that the only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships?
4. In what ways do we honor each group's autonomy except in matters affecting other groups or CoDA as a whole?
5. In what ways do we remember that our group's primary purpose is to carry the message of recovery to codependents who still suffer?
6. In what ways does avoiding endorsement of outside enterprises help us focus on the primary spiritual aim of our CoDA program?
7. In what ways are we self-supporting?
8. In what ways do we remain nonprofessional in our service?
9. In what ways are we directly responsible to those we serve?
10. In what ways do we avoid drawing CoDA into public controversy, remembering that CoDA has no opinion on outside issues?
11. In what ways do we use attraction rather than promotion in sharing our message of recovery?
12. In what ways does honoring the principle of anonymity create safety?

More Group Inventories are included in these booklets:

Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter

Traditionally Speaking: Finding Solutions

Working The Steps and The Traditions as a Group

Many meetings read CoDA literature that focuses on the Steps and Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous, followed by sharing, as they would any CoDA topic, such as boundaries, fear, or affirmations, etc. Some CoDA meetings dedicate one week each month to the Steps, rotating the Step that corresponds with the number of the month, as in January for Step One, February for Step Two, and so on. Some meetings do the same rotation with the Twelve Traditions. These meetings help members learn about the principles found in the Steps and Traditions, but it is not the same thing as working the Steps.

Working the Steps and Traditions takes time, focus, and discipline. It requires sustained attention, studying CoDA literature, writing about our histories and our lives, and sharing regularly with a sponsor. A sponsor can mentor the sponsee through the Steps and Traditions because they have had experience working the Steps and Traditions with their own sponsor.

When a recovering codependent is willing and able to commit to deepening their recovery, working the Steps in a group can be a wonderful opportunity to learn and grow and to be of service to others in the group.

It is recommended to use *The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook* as a study guide. This workbook was created by experienced members of Co-Dependents Anonymous for the Fellowship and is structured in a comprehensive format, providing reading, followed by questions for pondering, writing, and discussion.

Other pieces of CoDA literature that focus on the Steps and Traditions can be found in Appendix D.

What are some of the advantages of working the Steps and Traditions within a separate, committed group?

1. Follow a framework that has been used by recovering codependents
2. Time to explore the subject matter more deeply and fully
3. Accountability in a safe environment
4. Practice and recognize trustworthiness
5. An opportunity to risk intimate sharing
6. Mutual support while working through painful insights
7. An opportunity to practice healthier behaviors in relationships
8. A place to practice the group conscience process
9. The satisfaction of making progress through the Steps and Traditions
10. The ability to celebrate growth and progress with others
11. A way to acquire notes, knowledge, and experience that we can use when we sponsor others
12. An opportunity to practice creating healthy and loving relationships
13. Engage the power of the group process.

Here are some comments from CoDA members about the rewards they received participating in a dedicated Step and Tradition study group:

“Others’ shares opened up new avenues of self-discovery for me to explore.”

“No one else is doing this perfectly either.”

“Seeing others deal with the same issues I’m going through, I see others and myself in a new light; I got more points of view.”

“For me, working the Steps in a committed group used my own codependence as a strategy for my growth; I was afraid to let down the group, so my fear drove my need to complete the Steps and not give up mid-way through.”

“Continuing my commitment while others dropped out and dealing with the disappointment of expectations helped me experience the grief of my dreams of these new relationships I didn’t even know I had, and to re-commit to my own recovery journey.”

“I got to celebrate the successful completion of our commitment to each other and ourselves with the remaining members.”

“I also have my written margin notes and answers to all the questions to share so I can more easily say ‘yes’ when others have since asked me to sponsor them through the Steps and Traditions.”

“I am willing to show up for others much more readily than just for myself to do my homework, sometimes remembering my feelings of healthy shame when thinking of not doing it.”

“I really appreciated the pacing of the group especially because I had bogged down and had not been able to complete my Step Four.”

How do I find a Step and Tradition Study?

Step and Tradition Study groups that are looking for members may be announced at your home group or at a local CoDA event. Other avenues for finding out about these groups may be to:

- ask your sponsor.
- ask other members at your meeting during fellowship.
- search on coda.org.
- check your intergroup or regional / Voting Entity’s website.
- start your own... see below.

Anyone can start a Step Study. There are no special skills or requirements needed beyond a willingness to serve and perhaps to step out of your comfort zone. Members simply seek out one or more others in CoDA, to discuss creating a Step and Tradition study group. A workshop or information session may be held to create interest.

Once a time and place (physical or virtual) are chosen, members may reach out to other meetings and their intergroup to publicize and attract more participants to their step study. See Appendix B for a mock flyer.

Here's a comment from one participant who started such a group:

"When I wanted to work The Steps, I mentioned it at fellowship after the meeting. Another person responded that she was interested too. The two of us decided the best day and time for us, where we could meet, and when we could begin. If no one else wanted to work Steps and Traditions, we were a group. For a few weeks, we announced our new Step group at all the CoDA meetings we attended.

We created flyers announcing starting date, time, location, and contact information. We handed them out in meetings and posted them on bulletin boards at meeting sites. We also made an electronic copy of our flyer to post on our intergroup's website.

At the first meeting, those who attended began planning the meeting format using the group conscience process. We went from there."

How to Make Decisions as a Group: The Group Conscience Process

From the CoDA booklet *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter*, pages 7-8:

"Decisions are made in CoDA through a process of thoughtful discussion called group conscience. In this process, every member present has voice and vote. With the help of a loving Higher Power, members open their minds to all viewpoints presented and then cast a vote for the one seen as best for CoDA.

A group conscience decision grows out of the combined wisdom of the whole group. While every person has the right to express opinions, the group conscience determines the particular course of action. A group conscience discussion may be over quickly if everyone agrees. In other cases, sharing may continue for an extended time as people discuss the issue in terms of several different Traditions. For some questions, group members may want to announce in advance that a specific issue will be addressed at the next business meeting. Ideally, during the group conscience discussion, members reach a consensus. If they do not, then a vote is taken and the majority reflects the group conscience."

Group conscience is about putting aside the "self" and looking to a loving Higher Power for guidance. We demonstrate our openness to the will of our Higher Power by accepting the outcome, even when we disagree. This is a humbling process—one that is new for many of us. "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" (Tradition Two).

Through the group conscience, we establish healthier ways of relating to one another: we create boundaries for the group, learn to compromise, and resolve conflicts. Learn more about the group conscience process in the Fellowship Service Manual (FSM) on coda.org."

Questions for Group Conscience before starting a study group

CoDA is structured according to the Twelve Traditions. The Fourth Tradition gives each group the freedom to choose its own structure, which is decided by group conscience, guided by Higher Power.

Some structural decisions include:

1. What guidelines will we use for sharing?
2. How might the meeting deal with crosstalk?
3. Decide the time boundaries for introducing new members.
4. Will we meet in-person, virtually, or hybrid?
5. What are the group's financial needs and Seventh Tradition obligations? How will those needs be met?
6. Arrange a regular meeting day, time, and place, in-person or virtually.
7. How long will each session last?
8. What format will our group use? (see Appendix A for a sample format)
9. Will we use other CoDA Conference endorsed literature in addition to this workbook?
12. How many absences determines a member is no longer interested?
13. Will we require reading or writing between sessions?
14. How often will business meetings occur?
15. Other concerns expressed by members.

Helpful CoDA resources for groups:

Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter, pp 6, 8-9

FSM, Part II Meeting Handbook, contains a wealth of information and guidelines on meeting structure

CoDA pamphlet, *Dealing with Disagreements*

CoDA pamphlet *Experiences with Crosstalk*

Do I still need a sponsor if I am in a Step Study?

It is our experience that, as in any relationship, there are times we become triggered. The in-depth work we are doing may churn up pain or trauma from our past. The actions of other members will likely trigger us at times, as well. Ongoing communication with a sponsor outside the group may offer support and a more objective view.

Consider reading part one of the CoDA Booklet, *Sponsorship: What's in it for me?* and *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, Chapter 5, "What are Sponsors?". CoDA's booklet *Tools for Recovery* offers other ways to choose healthier ways of dealing with problems.

Does the group need a leader?

Our Eighth Tradition reminds us that CoDA groups do not use professionals and our Second Tradition reminds us of the spirit of equality. All members participate in CoDA meetings as individual recovering codependents, not as leaders or teachers. Each meeting is facilitated by a member who reads the script. Everyone rotates into this responsibility.

Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter, page 17 states:

Tradition Eight

“In CoDA, no one is paid to share experience, strength, and hope, whether at meetings, as sponsors, or in any other Twelve Step related activity. Professionals attending CoDA meetings do so as members only, and do not use the Fellowship to further their business interests.”

At times, a sponsor may be willing to take on several new sponsees and lead several sponsees through the Steps together at one time. By necessity, this is efficiency in sponsoring, not leading or teaching. Here are comments from one sponsor who leads groups of her sponsees through the Steps together:

*“I used to get irritated when the people at my home group shared about their codependency issues without ever mentioning how they were working the Steps to solve their problems. So I decided to take a group through the Steps using *The CoDA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook* over a period of several months. I discovered that the ideal schedule was to meet once a week for 90 minutes and spend two weeks on each Step with two extra weeks for the participants to work on their Fourth Step inventories for a total of 26 weeks. At each meeting we would also spend some time discussing some topic related to recovery such as boundaries, communication skills, how to find a sponsor, etc.*

Before we started, I needed to be very clear about my expectations: that everyone would stick it out to the end, that they would keep up with the homework, and that they would all be ready to sponsor others when we finished. As it turned out, all of these expectations went unmet: half the people who started were gone by the last workshop, only one or two kept up with the assignments, and only one started sponsoring at the end. I got to practice that part of my recovery where I do the footwork and let go of the results.

I’m happy to report that I recently finished my fourth series of workshops. Each time I’ve done this, the shares at my meeting have moved toward carrying the message, not the mess, if only for a while.”

Do we share our Fourth and Fifth Steps with the whole group?

This is a question best answered in a group conscience. Below are some personal experiences CoDA members have had working Steps Four and Five in their study groups:

“All of the members of my Step Study had sponsors. Each of us shared with our sponsor. With the group, we shared about the feelings that came up when doing the Fourth and Fifth Steps and summarized what we found out about ourselves.”

“In my most recent small group experience, we each shared our answers to the questions and prompts from the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook with each other. My compassion for others grew and our intimacy with each other did too.”

“Hearing others in our small group share openly and from the heart modeled that new behavior for me. I found that others’ courage gave me courage, and that I felt more equality with others knowing that we dealt with similar codependency issues.”

“In our most recent Step Study group experience we studied the workbook material for both Steps Four and Five before beginning our personal work on the Fourth and sharing our Fifth Steps. We became familiar with the purposes and gifts of the writing, the giving, and the receiving of the Fourth and Fifth Steps. We then made our group conscience decision regarding how we would proceed. Which Fourth Step formats would we use and in what order?”

Appendix A:

CoDA Step and Tradition Study Meeting Format Sample

1. Welcome. My name is _____ and I am codependent. I am your meeting leader today. Please turn off all cell phones for the duration of the meeting.
Please join me in a moment of silence followed by the CoDA Opening Prayer:

*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.*

2. May I please have volunteers to read _____ from the workbook.
(The readings agreed upon in your group conscience.)
Thank you.
3. We will now follow the agreed upon rotation of reading, writing, sharing, or a combination.
Let us begin on page _____ of our workbooks.
Will someone read the CoDA Step or Tradition Prayer for this work.
Weeks that we read:
We will read one paragraph at a time and the reader can share for up to 3 minutes on what this paragraph meant to them. Others may share after that.

Weeks that we answer questions:
We will each share our written responses.

Weeks that we Share our Fourth Step Writing will take place after we have studied Steps Four and Five.

*** No one is required to Read their Fourth Step in the group. If you do not wish to read when it becomes your turn, please state your name, and say that you pass. It is recommended that you do your Fifth Step with someone you trust.

4. That is all the time we have for sharing.
5. CoDA is an anonymous program. We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person in this meeting. We ask that who you see here, what is said here, when you leave here, let it stay here.
6. Homework for next week is _____.
7. Are there any CoDA announcements?
8. Thank you for the opportunity to be of service.
9. Who will lead next week?
10. Please join me in the CoDA Closing Prayer.

*We thank our Higher Power
for all that we have received from this meeting.
As we close, may we take with us
the wisdom, love, acceptance, and hope of recovery.*

Appendix B: Flyer Sample

New CoDA Step and Tradition Study Group forming

Optional: Group Title

We will use CoDA's
The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook
Available for purchase: corepublications.org

Please bring your workbook to each meeting.

First meeting: (date)

Meets: (day, time, and time zone)

We plan to meet weekly

Location: Name of place, address,
directions

For More information, contact:

First name, email, phone
Email, text, or call and leave a message

First name, email, phone
Email, text, or call and leave a message

Post or announce at local meetings, Intergroup websites, workshops, etc

Appendix C:

CoDA literature with a focus on Steps and Traditions

Steps:

Co-Dependents Anonymous, our basic text covers *The Twelve Steps*

Chapter Two, “Our Spiritual Dilemma”

Chapter Three, “A Suggested Program of Recovery”

The Twelve Steps Handbook

Carrying the Message booklet

Making Choices in Recovery booklet

The 30 Questions, download online from coda.org

The 40 Questions, download online from coda.org

Traditions:

The Twelve-Piece Relationship Toolkit booklet

Traditionally Speaking booklet

Using the Twelve Traditions pamphlet

Other recommended CoDA publications:

Common Threads of Codependency booklet

Newcomer Handbook

Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter booklet

Experiences with Crosstalk booklet

Dealing with Disagreements, on coda.org

Peeling the Onion: Codependents look at love, sex, & relationship addiction and avoidance booklet

Sponsorship, What’s in it for Me? booklet

Tools for Recovery booklet

The Fellowship Service Manual (FSM), on coda.org

Appendix D:

Readings in CoDA meetings

In CoDA meetings, we read, as written:

The Preamble of Co-Dependents Anonymous

The Welcome of Co-Dependents Anonymous

The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous

The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous

CoDA meetings must have copies of our basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, to read and study during meetings.

Meetings may also read:

The Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous

A variety of prayers to open and close the meeting

Committees and other service groups may read some or all of:

The Twelve Service Concepts of Co-Dependents Anonymous

The Preamble of Co-Dependents Anonymous ©

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of people 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 Welcome of Co-Dependents Anonymous ©

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 codependence is a most deeply rooted compulsive behavior and that it is born out of our sometimes moderately, sometimes extremely dysfunctional families and other 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, 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.

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 for me 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.

The CoDA Opening Prayer ©

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.

The CoDA Closing Prayer ©

We thank our Higher Power

For all that we have received from this meeting.

As we close, may we take with us

the wisdom, love, acceptance, and hope of recovery.

The Recovery Prayer ©

The God help me to:

Accept other people as they are,

Recognize my own feelings,

Meet my own needs, and

Love myself just as I am.

The Longer Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the Serenity

to accept the things I cannot change,

Courage to change the things I can,

and Wisdom to know the difference.

Grant me

Patience with the changes that take time,

Appreciation of all that I have,

Tolerance of those with different struggles,

And the Strength to get up and try again,

One Day at a Time.

Twelve Service Concepts of Co-Dependents Anonymous ©

1. The members of the Fellowship of Co-Dependents Anonymous, in carrying out the will of a loving Higher Power, advance their individual recoveries, work to insure the continuance of their groups and their program, and carry the message to codependents who still suffer. They may also collectively authorize and establish service boards or committees and empower trusted servants to perform service work.
2. The Fellowship of CoDA has the responsibility of determining, through its group conscience, the service work to be performed, and the best manner to perform such work. This authority is expressed through our group conscience. Authority carries responsibility; thus, CoDA groups conscientiously provide adequate funding and support for the service work they authorize.
3. Decisions about service work in the Fellowship and all CoDA affairs are made through the group conscience decision making process. For this spiritual democratic process to work, every member of the group is encouraged to participate, consider all the facts and options concerning the issue, listen respectfully to all opinions expressed, then reflect and meditate to find a loving Higher Power's will. Finally, we deliberate honestly and respectfully to determine the proper course of action. Unanimity in the group is the desired outcome; a majority vote is a group conscience.
4. All those who volunteer to do service work for CoDA by serving on committees, boards, or corporations are trusted servants, not authority figures. Ideally, trusted servants volunteer out of a desire to follow their Higher Power's will, out of gratitude for the gifts they have received from CoDA, out of a desire to grow in their ability to create and keep healthy relationships, and to contribute what they can of themselves to CoDA. The Fellowship recognizes the need to select the most qualified people willing to serve as trusted servants. At times, trusted servants may hire individuals outside of the Fellowship for commercial services.
5. Trusted servants are directly responsible to those they serve and are bound to honor the group conscience decision making process and uphold those decisions concerning their service work. The Fellowship also recognizes the need and right for members to honor their own experience, strength, and hope and their Higher Power's will as expressed to them. When the group conscience violates an individual's own truth and makes participation impossible, the individual may relinquish the service position.
6. The Fellowship guarantees trusted servants the right and authority to freely make decisions commensurate with their responsibilities and the right to participate in group conscience decisions affecting their responsibilities. Each CoDA member is also guaranteed the right to respectfully dissent during the group conscience decision making process. A member may freely and safely express any personal grievances as long as no particular person or group is unexpectedly singled out as the subject of the grievance. Members are encouraged to honor their own integrity as well as the integrity of others.

7. Trusted servants do practice the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in their service work and in all of their affairs. Trusted servants do not seek power, prestige, wealth, status, or acclaim; do not govern, coerce, or attempt to control others; and do not push a personal agenda, promote controversy, or advance outside issues at CoDA's expense. Since issues over authority, will, money, property, and prestige can and do arise in service work, trusted servants need to practice emotional sobriety, including anonymity, humility, tolerance, gratitude, making amends, and forgiveness.
8. The CoDA Service Conference (Conference), through its group conscience decision making process, guides the Fellowship in making policy decisions and in following the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. The Conference, though providing guidelines, holds no authority over the decision making process of individual groups. The group conscience process is our decision making process. Failure to honor this process may violate Traditions One and Four and a sanction may be imposed. The harshest sanction Conference can impose on an individual or group is to no longer recognize it as belonging to CoDA; this sanction may only be imposed on those who consistently violate the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, as determined by guidelines accepted by Conference.
9. By tradition, the CoDA Service Conference gives responsibilities to working committees composed of Conference Delegates and other CoDA volunteers or to separate service boards or corporations. All are directly responsible to the Conference. The scope of the work a committee does is determined by the Conference group conscience. The chairperson of each committee assumes the responsibility to ensure the work assigned to the committee is completed in a timely manner.
10. When the CoDA Service Conference is in session, the CoDA Board of Trustees is directly responsible to the Conference. When not in session, the Conference assigns its decision-making authority on material matters to the Trustees. The Board of Trustees is authorized to monitor the work of Conference-appointed service committees and may provide assistance or guidelines when necessary. The Trustees serve as the boards of directors of CoDA, Inc., the non-profit corporation, are assigned custodial control of all money and property held in trust for the Fellowship, and are responsible for prudent management of its finances.
11. The powers of the CoDA Service Conference derive from the pre-eminent authority of the group conscience decision-making process. Arizona State law gives the Board of Trustees legal rights and responsibilities to act for the Fellowship in certain situations. CoDA, Inc.'s Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws are legal documents enumerating these Board rights and responsibilities.
12. The Fellowship strives to practice and encourage spiritual principles in all its material, financial, and business affairs, including fairness, equality, and respect for individual rights. Every member within CoDA has a voice and is encouraged to use it. Every member has the right to know what is happening within our organization. To honor this right, and in the spirit of CoDA unity, our CoDA, Inc. organization publishes and distributes group conscience decisions, such as minutes of our service boards and motions from our CoDA Service Conferences, in the most inclusive and timely manner possible.