

The Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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

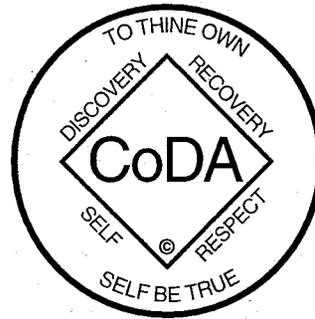
1. I know a new sense of belonging. The feeling of emptiness and loneliness will disappear.
2. I am no longer controlled by my fears. I overcome my fears and act with courage, integrity and dignity.
3. I know a new freedom.
4. I release myself from worry, guilt, and regret about my past and present.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

THE 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.



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WHAT IS CO-DEPENDENCY?

Many of us struggle with the questions: What is co-dependency? Am I codependent? We want precise definitions and diagnostic criteria before we will decide. Co-Dependents Anonymous, as stated in the Eighth Tradition, is a non-professional fellowship. We offer no definition or diagnostic criteria for co-dependency, respectfully allowing psychiatric and psychological professionals to accomplish that task. What we do offer from our own experience are characteristic attitudes and behaviours that describe what our co-dependent histories have been like.

We believe that recovery begins with an honest self-diagnosis. We came to accept our inability to maintain healthy and nurturing relationships with others and ourselves. We began to recognize that the cause lay in long-standing destructive patterns of living. We have found these patterns to fall within two general categories: compliance, (pleasing others) and control, (manipulating others). Following is a checklist of characteristics, behaviours and attitudes. We suggest it might be helpful to use the notations—**Always**, **Usually**, **Sometimes**, **Never**.

CONTROL PATTERNS

- I must be “needed” in order to have a relationship with others.
- I value others’ approval of my thinking, feeling and behaviours over my own.
- I agree with others so they will like me.
- I focus my attention on protecting others.
- I believe most other people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
- I keep score of “good deeds and favours”, becoming very hurt when they are not repaid.
- I am very skilled at guessing how other people are feeling.

- I can anticipate others’ needs and desires, meeting them before they are asked to be met.
- I become resentful when others will not let me help them.
- I am calm and efficient in other people’s crisis situations.
- I feel good about myself only when I am helping others.
- I freely offer others advice and directions without being asked.
- I put aside my own interests and concerns in order to do what others want.
- I ask for help and nurturing only when I am ill, and then reluctantly.
- I cannot tolerate seeing others in pain.
- I lavish gifts and favours on those I care about.
- I use sex to gain approval and acceptance.
- I attempt to convince others of how they “truly” think and “should” feel.
- I perceive myself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

COMPLIANCE PATTERNS

- I assume responsibility for others’ feelings and behaviours.
- I feel guilty about others’ feelings and behaviours
- I have difficulty identifying what I am feeling.
- I have difficulty expressing feelings.
- I am afraid of my anger, yet sometimes erupt in a rage.
- I worry how others may respond to my feelings, opinions and behaviour.
- I have difficulty making decisions.
- I am afraid of being hurt and / or rejected by others.

- I minimize, alter or deny how I truly feel.
- I am very sensitive to how others are feeling and feel the same.
- I am afraid to express differing opinions or feelings.
- I value others’ opinions and feelings more than my own.
- I put other people’s needs and desires before mine.
- I am embarrassed to receive recognition and praise, or gifts.
- I judge everything I think, say or do harshly, as never “good enough”.
- I am perfectionistic.
- I am extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- I do not ask others to meet my needs or desires.
- I do not perceive myself as a lovable and worthwhile person.
- I compromise my own values and integrity to avoid rejection or others’ anger.

After completing this checklist we suggest that you continue attending CoDA meetings for several weeks. Search out members of the fellowship you believe you can trust and discuss your checklist answers with them. If you come to accept that you are, indeed, co-dependent, then you will be ready to seek out a sponsor and begin the Twelve Steps to recovery.