

this Step, the seed of humility produced by our admission of powerlessness in Step One was nurtured. We experienced a sense of freedom and hope by our willingness to have a true Higher Power. At this point our faith emerged.

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.

Having admitted our lives were unmanageable and that help could come from a power greater than ourselves, we were ready to begin Step Three.

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.*

The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents, and to practice these principles in all

2

Step Two

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to sanity**



Step Two

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As active codependents, we were ignorant of our connection to a Higher Power, instead connecting inappropriately with others. We had lost two important connections in our lives — with ourselves and with a power greater than ourselves. We were faced with spiritual bankruptcy and the absence of any hope of change.

In Step One, we admitted we had no power over another. We acknowledged that focusing on others to feel good about ourselves had become a compulsion over which we were powerless. In Step Two, we learned our resources alone were not sufficient for recovery. We were offered an alternative, one for which we had been unknowingly seeking, a relationship with a Higher Power and the assurance that we were not alone. Although coming to believe may have been gradual, in the beginning all we needed to attain it was the willingness to attend CoDA meetings and keep an open mind.

Step Two tells us there is hope. Little by little, one day at a time, we come to believe that we can count on the promise of a loving Higher Power. We are offered a new way of life — one in which we need not be alone.

Came to Believe

In the beginning, we came to believe by attending meetings and listening. We heard others as they described a relationship with a Higher Power. We noticed that those who maintained a regular connection with this power experienced what we sought — RECOVERY.

We decided that, one day at a time, we could “act as if” we had a Higher Power, whether we actually believed in this power or not. Because we were members of a Twelve Step program, the form of this power was left to each of us to discover. For some of us, a Higher Power was unconditional love; for others, this power was divine intelligence. Our “power greater” might have been nature, an image of an ocean, river or tree. Some of us chose our home group of Co-Dependents Anonymous. For others, this power was the thought of limitless space or simply the words, “my Higher Power.” The point was, in the beginning of our time in CoDA, we became willing to entertain the possibility there was something that could do for us what we could not do for ourselves.

We were free to use any of these ideas of a Higher Power. We could borrow someone else’s idea and try it for a while to see if it worked for us. What we discovered was the importance of our willingness to form this relationship.

Restore Us to Sanity

For some of us, the words “restore us to sanity” stimulated our resistance. We saw it as an affront: “I might have a few problems, but I’m not crazy!” With the help of others in the program, we began to look more clearly at our own behavior. We discovered a great truth in Step Two: that continuing to act in a self-destructive manner, no matter how well-meaning we believed we were, was insane. And once this behavior became compulsive, any belief we held that we could control it on our own was equally insane.

Yet there were some of us who still balked. “Weren’t we taught that it’s our duty to help others? We are our brother’s keepers, aren’t we? And what’s wrong with wanting to please those we love — our parents, our spouses, our lovers, our children, our friends? Isn’t that what life is all about?”

With the support of program friends, we examined these old beliefs. We began to wonder what price we had paid for them. Had our own instability and the lack of balance in our relationships affected our family lives, our careers, and our spiritual growth? Had we relegated our own joy and fulfillment to the bottom of our list of needs and wants?

Becoming honest with ourselves was at times painful. The reward was magnificent. As we came to believe and embrace the simple and profound truth offered in