

## The Promises

*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 Twelve Steps

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

The *Twelve Steps* reprinted  
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## Recommended Reading

- Welcome to CoDA
- Am I Codependent?
- Communication and Recovery
- Establishing Boundaries in Recovery
- CoDA Book
- Newcomers Handbook

Website: [www.codacanada.ca](http://www.codacanada.ca)

More information about CoDA can be found on the CoDA website: [www.codacanada.ca](http://www.codacanada.ca). There you will find links to literature, meetings and other service documents.

Local CoDA information may be placed in the area below:

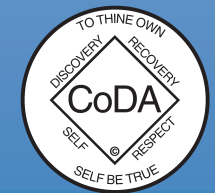
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Item #1002c

# Co-Dependents Anonymous

## Your First Meeting



*We admitted we were  
powerless over others...*

## What is CoDA?

“Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women whose common purpose is to develop healthy relationships.”

“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.”

*From Preamble and Welcome*

## What is Codependency?

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers. There are 5 main patterns: denial, low self esteem, compliance, control, and avoidance.

These are some characteristics:

- Have trouble setting healthy priorities and boundaries
- Freely offer advice and direction without being asked
- Attempt to convince others what to think, do or feel
- Compromise their own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger
- Put aside their own interests in order to do what others want
- Do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom they are attracted
- Have difficulty identifying what they are feeling
- Express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways

*From Am I Codependent*

## Who can attend a meeting?

Tradition Three states “the only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships”.

## Do I need to sign up?

There is no need to register. You can just drop in. Meeting information can be found on the coda.org site. A group contact can provide you with additional information.

## How much does it cost to attend?

There is no charge for attendance. CoDA meetings are self supporting. Contribute as you are able. CoDA accepts no advertising and no sponsorship by any outside entity.

## Can I bring a Friend?

If a meeting is an “open” meeting, and most are, you are welcome to bring a friend or family member.

## Can I get advice?

CoDA is a 12 step fellowship and peer support group. We do not give advice and we do not take the place of counsellors. Members share their own experiences and recovery.

## Is CoDA a Religious Group?

Like other 12-step fellowships, CoDA is considered “spiritual” in the broadest sense, since it deals with inner change. Members may belong to various religious faiths or consider themselves agnostics or atheists. Everyone is welcome in CoDA.

## What Happens at a Meeting?

### Welcome

You will be welcomed at the meeting. Some meetings even have “Greeters” that meet you at the door. Some meetings give hand-outs or Welcome Chips to newcomers.

### The Meeting Format

The Format will vary depending on Meeting emphasis—sharing, topics, CoDA book, the Steps and Traditions, are examples.

### A Typical Meeting:

- The Serenity Prayer or CoDA Opening Prayer starts the meeting.
- We use first names only.
- In some meetings, people may sign in with first names.
- Readings help us focus on why we are here—The four “Foundation Documents”—Preamble, Welcome, Twelve Steps, and Twelve Traditions—must be read, but most meetings read more.
- Members introduce themselves by their first name. You will say that it is your first meeting.
- A “Seventh Tradition” donation is taken to pay for literature, rent, etc.

### Sharing

You will have an opportunity to share, or not. It is not required. Newcomers usually share about why they have come. Some meetings have special newcomers groups. Most sharing is 2 to 3 minutes. We do not comment or give advice.

### At the end

We end with “the Serenity Prayer” or “The CoDA Closing Prayer”. Some read “the Promises”.

## Afterwards

Many meetings go out for coffee and fellowship. This is a good opportunity to meet people and practice your recovery.

## Safety is Important!

### Anonymity

Our identity and sharing stays within the room. Tradition Twelve reminds us that by not focusing on who we are, we are free to focus on our recovery. At the end of the meeting, we are reminded: “Let what is said here, who you see here, when you leave here, let it stay here.”

### The No Crosstalk Rule

“Basically, any sharing which is not simply one’s sharing honestly about themselves.”  
“Crosstalk happens when you interrupt, or turn into a therapist/mother/advisor by telling the person what they should do, or get into a conversation about what the other person is talking about.”

*From Experiences with Crosstalk*

## 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.