

## What is CoDA?

Co-Dependents Anonymous, CoDA, is a fellowship of people whose common purpose is to develop healthy and loving relationships.

CoDA was founded in the mid 1980's in Phoenix, AZ, by individuals in Alcoholics Anonymous, AA, who saw the need for a recovery program for people in dysfunctional relationships. For the purpose of founding CoDA, members adapted, with permission, The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA and wrote The Preamble and The Welcome. The founders wrote CoDA's basic text, *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, also known as "the blue book" and "the big book."

The CoDA Fellowship is comprised of meetings across the US and around the world.

## Other Twelve Step Programs

Many CoDA members attend other twelve step fellowships. CoDA is not a replacement for other twelve step programs, just as other programs are not a replacement for CoDA.

## Our Foundational Documents:

### The Preamble of Co-Dependents

Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women 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 family 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.

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### 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 all our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all people 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 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 practice these principles in all our affairs.

## 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. A 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, and films.

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

The *Twelve Steps* and *Twelve Traditions* are adapted and printed with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

*For more information about the CoDA program of recovery:*

- *Co-Dependents Anonymous* (“the blue book”)
- *Attending Meetings, 2.0*
- *Welcome to CoDA, 2.0*
- *Am I Codependent? 2.0*
- *Newcomer Handbook*
- *Building CoDA Community: Healthy Meetings Matter*

## BACK COVER

## CoDA SEAL

## COPYRIGHT AND CODA CONTACT INFO

This pamphlet contains the four foundational documents which are read at every CoDA meeting.

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## BOX FOR MEETING INFO HERE

## FRONT COVER

What is CoDA? 2.0