



Getting Started Working the STEPS – As Easy As 1-2-3! Using the 30 Questions

**SUGGESTED METHOD FOR BEGINNING TO WORK
THE TWELVE STEPS OF CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS
WITH A SPONSOR, A CO-SPONSOR, OR A STEP STUDY GROUP**

In CoDA, there are many suggested ways to find a sponsor and work the Twelve Steps. We lovingly offer this tool as a way to aid our CoDA communities in accomplishing our primary purpose – to carry the CoDA message to the codependent who still suffers. The 30 Questions offer a simple strategy for sponsors, co-sponsors, or Step study groups to set healthy boundaries, have clarity of goals, and get their needs met for support and flexibility. As a CoDA member commits to start working the program using this method, the 30 Questions and My Daily CoDA Program Journal will move them through Steps One, Two, and Three using *Co-Dependents Anonymous* (the CoDA blue book) as the reference. Also, three other recovery tools are introduced: developing a personal "Power of Five" support group, taking care of ourselves by calling a "HALT", and using a "God Box" to "Let Go and Let God."

After using these 30 questions to get started, existing CoDA conference endorsed literature can be used to work through rest of the Twelve Steps; (i.e.: *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, or *The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Workbook*, etc.) Thank you to long-time sponsors who contributed to the development of this tool by sharing their experience, strength, and hope.

**Keep Coming Back! It works if you work it,
so work it, 'cause YOU'RE WORTH IT!!**

How to Get Started:

- Attend CoDA meetings as often as possible (in person, phone, internet) because that presents the opportunity for meeting others in recovery. Take note of who shares on sponsorship, working the Twelve Steps, boundary setting, and using recovery tools. This will help you find those who might assist you in your recovery. If these topics are not discussed at your meeting, ask "Why not?" or find a different meeting. Not all meetings are created equal.
- Take your time and be patient with yourself. You can find someone to work the 30 Questions with by keeping your eyes and ears open. Allow your Higher Power space to work in your life. Maybe you can start a Step study group? Keep track of your recovery progress on My Daily CoDA Program Journal (see page 4). It outlines what working the CoDA recovery program generally consists of. Please note that it is not realistic to check all the boxes every day.

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Sponsorship

Sponsors are people within the CoDA program who help guide us through the Twelve Step recovery process. They are people whose personal recovery is a priority and they know that they have to "give it away to keep it." Through the process of recovery and seeing their own lives becoming more happy and fulfilling they are willing to share their experience, strength, and hope with still-suffering codependents (Tradition Five) as a sponsor, co-sponsor, or step study group member. Sponsors work to remain objective and detached from feeling responsible for the happiness or recovery of others. They refrain from acting in abusive, critical, or controlling ways. It is not their job to fix, rescue, perform therapy, or manipulate others for their personal gain. Sponsors are role models for recovery, sources of loving support, and respectful of the anonymity and individual pace of others working the program.

Commitment By Participants in this Process:

- Make a plan for how to work the questions. Suggested time frame: Ponder each question and literature reading for at least 24 hours, then spend 30-45 minutes writing out the answers. Next share what is written for another 15 minutes and receive the next question. Of course each person can decide what will work best for them.
- Have a plan for how to work a question if the sponsor, co-sponsor, or group is not available.
- Agree that anonymity and confidentiality will be practiced throughout the process by all members involved.
- Agree to develop a "Power of Five" support network, i.e. to reach out regularly to at least five contacts in recovery.
- Agree that this is not work to be done with family members.
- Agree that the sponsee, co-sponsor, or group can end the 30 Question process at any time by written or verbal agreement.

Benefits of Using the 30 Questions Tool:

- Keeps all members focused on a clear path of recovery.
- Introduces new members to active recovery and prepares the newcomer for working Step Four.
- Teaches new members that recovery takes time and daily commitment, not just an hour a week at meetings.
- Teaches newcomers to use the Tools of Recovery: *Co-Dependents Anonymous* ("the CoDA blue book"), *The Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Workbook*, and other CoDA conference endorsed literature.
- Demonstrates using healthy interaction with others and continuous commitment to the process.
- Starts newcomers listening and testing their understanding with such statements as: "This is what I thought I heard you say. Is this what you said?"
- Deepens commitment to continuing recovery work, going to meetings for help and support, finding new tools and knowledge, and becoming the best each of us can be.
- Provides a model for giving back through future sponsorship.
- Reminds us that we are not alone on this journey of recovery.

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Goals:

Sponsor:


- I will share with newcomers how I work my Twelve Step program.
- I will share what I was like then and what I am like now.
- I will share as a Twelve Step “guide,” not as a “friend” or “Higher Power”.
- I will share in “I” statements while recognizing the importance of CoDA unity.
- I will share tools I have added to my recovery tool box and share how I use these tools today.
- I will practice healthy boundaries and be respectful of others’ reality.
- I will remember: Progress, not Perfection!

Sponsee, Co-Sponsor, & Step Study Group Members

- I will be open to new ideas.
- I will do the work.
- I will contemplate each question for at least 24 hours.
- I will call at the time I have agreed to.
- I will share for 15 minutes during my call and request the next question.
- I will practice “HOW” – Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness.
- I will leave the “Well, but” and “Only if” excuses behind.
- I will be respectful of time and space for all.
- I will not overwork my answers to the 30 Questions.
- I will use consistent baby steps; this work is not designed to take over my life.
- I will allow the healing process to go as deeply as possible in the time allowed.
- I will trust the process knowing that if more healing work needs to be done on any particular issue, it will come up again.
- I will share my new tools with others.
- I will remember: Progress, not Perfection!

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<i>My Daily CoDA Program Journal</i> <i>Month of: _____</i>												
	Prayer & Meditation	Attend Meetings	Twelve Step Work	Program Calls	Read CoDA Books & Literature	Awareness of my Feelings & Needs	Journal Writing	Setting Healthy Boundaries	Self-Care: Fun, Play & Relaxation	Family of Origin Work	CoDA Service Work	Self-Talk with Gentleness & Humor
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THE THIRTY QUESTIONS FOR CoDA STEPS ONE, TWO, & THREE

(NOTE TO SPONSORS: PLEASE GIVE THESE QUESTIONS TO THE SPONSEE ONE AT A TIME WHEN THEY CALL AND ASK FOR THE NEXT QUESTION)

1. What is the first time you can remember codependent events happening in your life? Have you lost any time, money, or energy due to unhealthy relationships? Write a brief history of your codependency. Discuss what help you have sought for these problems and your attempts to solve them on your own.

2. Read Step One on pages 28-33 in the CoDA blue book. Discuss and reflect upon the effect that codependency has had on you over the years. Answer the fifteen questions on pages 30-31 to the best of your ability in the time allowed. Do you see that you have been involved in codependent relationships? Do you truly see that you are a codependent? Are you willing to change?

3. Read Chapter One pages 1-9. Recovery starts with an honest self-evaluation. Reflect upon the following questions: What is codependence? Which codependent patterns and characteristics describe yourself? What devastating losses have brought you to CoDA? Discuss.

4. Review Chapter One pages 1-9. Reflect on how codependent patterns have helped you in the past as survival mechanisms. However, survival is not living fully. In CoDA we are learning to live life. How has codependency diminished your life? Why is it important to not push someone in recovery until they are ready?

5. What is the importance of using the telephone in CoDA? What is the importance of anonymity? How are both intertwined? Have you ever experienced the telephone weighing a "thousand pounds?" Discuss the principle of

having a "Power of Five" personal recovery support group vs. isolating or becoming too dependent on only a few people. Are you willing to develop healthy and loving relationships with at least five others? Discuss.

6. Read Chapter One pages 9-13 and the Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous (Page vii). With the help of a loving Higher Power, the program of CoDA, and those who join us on this journey, each of us can experience the hope of recovery. Why is codependence hard to recognize? Why is it important to replace denial and control with acceptance? What experience are you seeking in CoDA recovery?

7. Read Chapter Two pages 15-17. Answer the five questions on page 15. Reflect on what is meant when it says, "When we attempt to codependently control or manipulate others we turn ourselves into a Higher Power to maintain our sense of safety and well-being. When we codependently avoid others, as well as adapt or change our behaviors for others, we give them, instead of our Higher Power, this control and strength." Discuss.

8. Review Chapter Two pages 15-17. Answer these questions:

- What is our "Spiritual Dilemma?"
- What attitudes are reflected when we use control "to any degree?"
- What attitudes and feelings are reflected when we use avoiding behaviors?
- How does the position of "better than" or "less than" play a role in our self-centered ways?
- What does it mean, "Equality is Lost?"

9. Read these sections on pages 16-20

- "Controlling people and circumstances"
- "Avoiding people and circumstances"
- "What drives our need to control and avoid others?"

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- "Fear"
- "Shame"
- "Experiencing fear and shame as children"
- "Continuing this behavior as adults"

What drives your need to control and avoid others? Did you ever experience abuse or neglect while you were growing up? Did that affect your self-image? Describe. Discovering these answers is part of your "family of origin work."

10. Read the sections "What is a shame spiral?" and "What is fear of shame" pages 118-119. Discuss fear of shame. What behaviors do you commonly display when you are afraid of someone hearing about your mistakes? Notice a mistake that you made today. How do you feel about it? Reflect on this saying, I MADE A MISTAKE, BUT I'M NOT A MISTAKE. Discuss.

11. Read both sections on pages 120-122. "What are physical and aggressive forms of abuse and control?" and "What are non-physical and passive forms of abuse and control?" Which ones have you experienced? Discuss.

12. Read the section "What is the difference between being codependent and being thoughtful?" on page 122.

Read the section on pages 110-114 "What are boundaries?" Discuss.

CONGRATULATIONS!
You have completed Step One

13. Read Chapter Two pages 20-24. Discuss building your own concept of a Higher Power. Where have you put your misplaced faith in the past? Discuss surrender and letting go of your controlling and avoidance behaviors.

Read the sections on pages 114-116: "What is enmeshment?", "What is detachment?", and "What is the difference between detachment and avoidance?". How can feelings be resolved? How can you emotionally detach from those on whom you compulsively rely?

Read the section on page 101 "Do I have to believe in God to recover?" Discuss.

14. Read Step Two pages 33-37. Are you willing to entertain the possibility that there is a power that can do for you what you could not do for yourself? Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. Continuing to act in a self-destructive manner is insane, but nothing changes until you turn away from your addictions and from the people with whom you're obsessed. Discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to you in CoDA.

15. Re-read Step Two page 33-37. Make a list of attributes of a Higher Power with whom you would like to have a relationship. What do you really want from your God?

16. Re-read Step Two pages 36-37, beginning with "We remember...". Write what is meant when it says "We begin placing this relationship first." Discuss the statement "your Higher Power does not accomplish your recovery work for you; you must do your share." What is your part? What needs to be done to develop and strengthen your relationship with your Higher Power?

17. Re-read Chapter Two pages 23-24 beginning with the second paragraph "To keep our relationship with our Higher Power in perspective..." Discuss perfectionism and why it is an illusion.

To keep perspective, why is it important to prioritize your relationships? What relationship needs to come first? What relationship comes second? What relationships come third? Discuss the anticipated miracles of recovery.

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18. Read Chapter Three introduction “A suggested program of recovery” on pages 25-28. What does the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous consist of? Are you keeping track of your progress on My Daily CoDA Program Journal?

Why will a half-hearted attempt to work the Steps leave you feeling self-defeated? “Your journey through the Steps may be the most difficult work you ever attempt.” Do you see working the Steps as an overwhelming task? What are the rewards of recovery? Are you willing to work the Steps daily as a part of your personal recovery? Discuss.

19. Re-read Step Two pages 33-37 and the section on page 102-103 “Why doesn’t CoDA refer to God or our Higher Power as he or she?”

Reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concepts. On one side of a two-column balance sheet list your negative feelings and on the other side your positive feelings as they relate to early religious experience. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?

20. Read Step Three pages 37-41. Create another balance sheet. On one side, list all the reasons that you can believe in God. On the other side, list all your reasons for disbelief.

CONGRATULATIONS!
You have completed Step Two

21. Re-read Step Three pages 37-41. Why not give God a chance where you have failed? What do you have to lose but your misery? Discuss why this program is not a “flash in the pan.” Are you willing to ask God for help more than once?

22. Read the section “How do I learn to trust?” on page 123. Did you learn early not to trust? Have you been overly trusting? What is appropriate trust? Why is it important to learn to be able to trust ourselves and our Higher Power first?

23. Discuss the idea of calling a “HALT” when your life gets unmanageable. Taking good care of yourself is your responsibility. HALT reminds you to not allow yourself to get too H = hungry, A = angry, L = lonely, or T = tired.

24. Read the section “What is the purpose of prayer and meditation?” on page 102. Discuss.

Get a box or container that is precious to you. Put it in a special place and dedicate it as your “God Box.” In addition to prayer and meditation, the God box is a physical symbol for taking Step Three. You will use the God box when you get to Question 29.

25. Read the section “Do I have to forgive those who hurt me?” on pages 123-124. Discuss why blaming anyone is actually hurtful to yourself, while forgiving too early can only be a temporary fix. Therefore, what needs to be done before forgiveness can give you a lasting release from blaming? What are the benefits of forgiveness?

26. Re-read Step Three pages 37-41. Are you willing to decide to trust God to care for all you consider precious and important? Are you willing to rely on your Higher Power to provide you with peace, happiness, and well-being? What energy will now be available when others are no longer responsible for your happiness & well-being? Are you frightened to allow God to take care of you and the other people in your life? What are the crossroads where you are standing?

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27. Re-read Step Three pages 39-41. Create a special place and time to sincerely complete this Step. When you are ready, this prayer may be helpful:

“God, I give to You all that I am and all that I will be for Your healing and direction. Make new this day as I release all my worries and fears to You knowing that You are by my side. Please help me to open myself to Your love, to allow Your love to heal my wounds, and allow Your love to flow through me and from me to those around me. May Your will be done this day and always. Amen.”

Make a sincere commitment to your Higher Power to turn your will and all your life over to God’s care. (You may complete this with your sponsor or by yourself. Deep intention is the key to this Step.)

28. Re-read Step Three on pages 39-41 starting at the second paragraph “We remember...” Every morning when you awake, renew your decision to turn your will and your life over to the care of God as you understand God. (You may wish to repeat the Third Step Prayer every day.)

Make a commitment to actively strengthen your relationship with your God. It is your most important relationship. Trust in your Higher Power’s help. Ask God for help and guidance. Do your part. Strive for a life of balance. Look for strength and serenity as you grow in trust of God’s continuing presence and care. Discuss these ideas.

29. Discuss the saying, “Let Go, and Let God.” Is there any person, place, or situation with which you are upset or obsessing today? Each time you are uncomfortable and recognize a lack of peace inside, remember to work Steps One, Two, and Three. Decide to turn the situation over to the care of your loving Higher Power. Say to yourself, “I am powerless over this person....” Write about the situation. What are you feeling? What are you needing? What is their part? What is your part? Prayerfully surrender the outcome to your Higher Power and put it all in your "God Box".

30. Reflect on your own personal surrender. Discuss and share at meetings your experience, strength, and hope from doing these Steps. Celebrate that you have come this far! Are you willing to commit to begin Step Four?

From now on, while you keep progressing with Steps Four through Nine, practice Steps One, Two, and Three every day. Furthermore, practice Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve to the best of your ability. (Suggestion: you may wish to take personal inventory by comparing your behaviors each day to the “Recovery Patterns of Codependence” on www.coda.org)

CONGRATULATIONS!
You have completed Step Three

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