

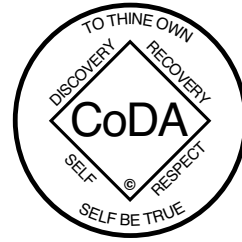
At the beginning, most of us found that we identified with several characteristics in each category. Some of us identified most strongly with one or two categories. As we attended meetings, read CoDA literature, and worked with our sponsors, we were surprised to see other characteristics show up in our lives.

As we shared our stories, and listened to others share, we began to recognize that the causes of our pain were due to long-standing, unhealthy patterns of living. Patterns which began as a way to cope with overwhelming childhood stress, abuse, and neglect.

In CoDA, we learn we are not alone. We come to accept that our pain is a wake-up call. A call to learn a new way to live and thrive. We discover we are ready to change and grow as we work the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous.

*Find more information about CoDA:*

- Welcome to Co-Dependents Anonymous
- Attending Meetings
- What is CoDA?
- Newcomer Handbook
- Co-Dependents Anonymous



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**MEETINGS:**

**Am I Codependent?  
Co-Dependents Anonymous**

Many arrive at Co-Dependents Anonymous, CoDA, unsure if we belong. Recovery begins with an honest self-assessment.

For self evaluation, we offer a list of common attitudes and behavior patterns that CoDA members have observed in our own lives.

## Denial Patterns

Codependents often...

1. have difficulty identifying what they are feeling.
2. minimize, alter, or deny how they truly feel.
3. perceive themselves as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.

## Low Self-esteem Patterns

Codependents often....

1. have difficulty making decisions.
2. judge what they think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.
3. are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.
4. are unable to identify or ask for what they need and want.
5. value others' approval of their thinking, feelings, and behavior over their own.
6. do not perceive themselves as lovable or worthwhile persons.

## Compliance Patterns

Codependents often....

1. compromise their values and integrity to avoid rejection and other people's anger.
2. are very sensitive to other's feelings and assume the same feelings.
3. are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
4. place a higher value on other's opinions and feelings and are afraid to express differing viewpoints or feelings.
5. put aside their own interests in order to do what others want.
6. accept sex as a substitute for love.

## Control Patterns

Codependents often...

1. believe people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
2. attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.
3. become resentful when others decline their help or reject their advice.
4. freely offer advice and direction without being asked.
5. lavish gifts and favors on those they want to influence.
6. use sex to gain approval and acceptance.
7. have to feel needed in order to have a relationship with others.

## Avoidance Patterns

Codependents often...

1. act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward them.
2. judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
3. avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy to avoid feeling vulnerable.
4. allow addictions to people, places, and things to distract them from achieving intimacy in relationships.
5. use indirect or evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
6. believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.

*Note: a longer list of patterns and characteristics is available in other pieces of CoDA literature and online at [coda.org](http://coda.org)*

## Am I Codependent?

Personal crises or unbearable, chronic, emotional pain brought many of us to CoDA. We came to our first meeting feeling hopeless and helpless. We wondered why our efforts to fix ourselves and others were not working, no matter how hard we tried. We had come to a crossroad: continue our old ways of coping or look for a new way out of our pain.