



Meeting in Print

December 2022 (Ed. 25)

“Transforming in Recovery”

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-Caryn T.

Greetings from your CoDA Co-NNections Committee

Welcome to the quarterly issue of Meeting in Print, a CoDA recovery and support publication. Recovery is for everyone, and we hope you enjoy reading these shares. Meeting in Print contains CoDA-approved literature, as well as shares, uplifting quotes and artistic material from CoDA members. We hope you find this issue both enjoyable and insightful. Please feel free to contact us with comments and suggestions – and, as always, *your contributions!*

Warmly,

Your Meeting in Print Subcommittee

Opening Readings

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 families 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.

The Preamble of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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, we can each realize a new joy, acceptance, and serenity in our lives.



-Jim H.

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 our affairs.

The Twelve Traditions of Codependents 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, films, television, and all other forms of public communication.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Community Shares



-Caryn T.

“Love Brought Me Here”

My journey into the 12-Steps began years before I was formally introduced to them. In my story, there are significant experiences that align to the 12 Steps.

I was married to a covert narcissist. He didn't drink. He didn't do drugs. He was devoted to “the family”. He had strong morals, a strong work ethic and a strong desire to improve the station of “the family”. I was a devoted wife and mother, employed full time and I shared in many of his activities – either actively or with my presence and moral support.

When he met me, I was overweight. My weight shifted up and down about 30 pounds throughout our relationship, including the birth of our daughter. I let him try to fix me. I let him “motivate” me through an off-and-on fitness journey; all the while thinking that we would reach an incredible state of bliss if I was able to manifest the strength and fitness that would make me his ultimate wife.

Fast forward 15 years into our marriage, I'm deep in the midst of a spiritual crisis because of a growing trend of bullying, hostility, manipulation and rage. I'm being blamed for his dissatisfaction with his life. I'm being confronted with ultimatums because I'm not attractive enough, I'm working too many hours, I'm avoiding conversations with him, I'm not giving him enough sexual attention – because he has made a “poor choice” by marrying me.

The reality I experienced outside of my marriage was filled with recognition, gratitude, and I was a valued contributor to my employer. Colleagues and friends regarded me as helpful, caring and dedicated. My husband reminded me daily of my shortcomings and he couldn't understand why he wasn't reaping the rewards of my work persona. I developed anxiety about coming home after work, sitting with him one-on-one, even going to bed at night. I was escaping to my job in order to avoid him. (Step 8)

May 14, 2017, I went to church seeking a connection with God to guide me through this spiritual crisis. I was powerless in effectively managing my life (Step 1) – my work and home life were totally out of balance. I didn't believe that my marriage was healthy, but I also didn't believe (yet) that he was abusing me. On that day, the sermon was about Love. I recognized that there was no love between me and my husband and I was showing very little love for myself (Step 4).

This realization set me on a path to reset expectations of myself and of him (Step 6). Whenever he was cruel, I asked him to be mindful in three ways: 1) say I'm sorry, 2) say I love you, 3) be more kind. I chanted this like a mantra because I was also putting this into practice with him, my daughter, my family, friends and colleagues (Step 9). I chanted this mantra and demonstrated this practice for the next two years. I also stopped getting embroiled in debates over topics that were not important. I "agreed to disagree" and I stopped contributing to conversations that were unproductive. I started to speak more honestly about my needs. I didn't lie any longer when I was asked to commit to things that I was never going to honor (Step 10).

Often, while honoring my boundaries, he would become deeply frustrated. He might choose to yell and intimidate me. I lost the need to be right because I understood that it was a trap. I lost the desire to try to correct him – but still pleaded for grace and compassion (Step 7). I met his anger with detachment. With every insult and threat he cast, a little more of my heart light for him would become dim.

I left my husband April 5, 2019. My heart for him had gone completely cold. I lost all compassion for him. I needed to leave the marriage because I could not be a wife to him any longer (Step 8). I didn't see in him the man I thought I married.

Since that time, I have independently pursued spiritual counseling and I've done some inner child work (Step 11). I have become aware of my co-dependency and its source (childhood trauma, tricky family, early sexual abuse). I was referred to CoDA during a recent therapy session to complete my journey of recovery (Step 2).

I'm ready to push through this dark night of the soul. I have been caught in a cycle of fear, anxiety and negative thinking about my past trauma. I procrastinate on important tasks (my divorce) and many aspects of my self-care (exercise, medical & dental check-ups) while pursuing distractions (TV, internet, online shopping). I feel aimless and without a mission in my life. I humbly give myself over to God and surrender to the structure and mission of the 12 Steps. I'm tired of carrying this burden. It's time to heal my heart.

Tiffany P.

“The Road to Becoming a Grandparent”

When my daughter told us that she was expecting a baby, I was elated for her. Her road to motherhood had not been a smooth one and I prayed that she would get her wish of becoming a mother.

The problem, however, was that I WAS NOT happy about becoming a grandparent. Having recently given up role playing, I was resentful that I was being thrust into another role, one that I had no say in. While everyone around me declared how happy I must be, feelings of hopelessness, shame and guilt plagued me. I thought I was being selfish but I couldn't help it. I was so conflicted! The best I could do under the circumstances was to withdraw. My daughter knew that I wasn't fully engaged, and one day she said to me “Mom, you're coming on this journey with me!”

That was the turning point for me. Afraid that I may not get many opportunities to journey, I decided to get down to some 12 Step work. I began admitting my feelings to my sponsor and trusted fellows. I went to meetings and listened and shared. I prayed for serenity. Eventually, I took pen to paper and using the metaphor of a road trip, I began mapping my reluctant journey to becoming a grandparent. Firstly, I envisioned my mode of transport. Sadly, it was a tired, and beaten up jalopy. Next, I envisioned who I would be sharing the road with; my daughter's in-laws. They were a large close-knit fleet of cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents. I, on the other hand, would be traveling with my husband but I could not count on the rest of my fragmented family. The in-laws were experienced travelers and would have all the bells and whistles. My husband and I would have none. When I looked back on previous experiences with my parents at the wheel and when I was the driver for my own children, I saw a lot of wreckage. There was a lot of pain and suffering, a lot of wounded passengers. No wonder I was reluctant to embark on any further family road trips!

That knowledge wasn't enough to get me back on the road so I had to keep at it. Eventually, I recognized several roadblocks all based in fear; fear that I would be left behind, fear that I wasn't good enough, fear that I would be judged, and fear that I would repeat past mistakes. But, as I worked through the Steps and forgave myself and others, I began to see the road ahead more clearly. I let go of my old driving habits and developed new ones. I grew faith that I could navigate more safely for both myself and others. I threw out the old tapes that I used to listen to and downloaded more current, positive ones.

Today, I am humbled and grateful to be back on the road! With gratitude for its service, I traded in that old jalopy, my old way of being, for a more smooth, reliable ride. I have the 12 Step tools packed in the trunk. I stop for regular maintenance and take in all the views. I stay in my own lane, and I travel one day at a time. For the first time in many years, I am no longer afraid of what's around the corner. I am no longer afraid of hitting the ditch. I have faith that I can navigate wherever the road may lead. Oh, and the most miraculous change of all is... I am no longer the driver! My Higher Power is! And with God at the wheel, I am experiencing joy and freedom beyond my wildest dreams!

And... it's a girl! Grandma's coming. Beep Beep!

Jackie A.



- Caryn T.

“Haikus”

all alone suffering
in isolation pain grows
unopposed darkness
+
seek out fellowship
burdens shared become lighter
hope rewards the brave

Caryn T.

“How I Changed From A Helpless Hamster To A Mighty Mouse”

Hello. My name is Linda C. and I am codependent. One of the character defects I identified when I worked Step 4 of my program was Fear and I am going to share how I am working to overcome that Fear by using two familiar animals--a hamster and a mighty mouse. A famous person in America's history once said, "There is nothing to fear but fear itself." No truer words were ever spoken. I try to remember that but I have to admit, sometimes I do fail.

Now, Fear comes in many shapes and forms. I have used a female hamster in my story who keeps running around and around in a circle and a mighty mouse who taught me what I should do. My story includes: a) how my character defect was like a vicious cycle (the hamster), b) describes how and what I need to do to overcome my fear of failure (mighty mouse) and c) why I think my Fear caused me a lot of problems which I brought on myself.

As I share my story and being the visual person I am, please imagine, a lonely, female hamster going around and around her hamster wheel. I was that female hamster until I recognized what I was doing and how it affected me and those around me. So this is what I did and still continue to do but less often.

My Fear made the lonely hamster a Perfectionist and of course we all know that no one is perfect. But because the lonely hamster (me), did not realize that, she failed every time. Well, that gave the hamster low self-esteem. Not to be outdone, the lonely hamster figured if she failed at everything and doesn't think she will ever succeed - the answer is simple. She will just be less accountable and responsible, and therefore wouldn't have to make any decisions. But even though the hamster was lonely, she was smart and she soon realized that wasn't working either. Because of her Fear, she thought she had to be a Perfectionist and because she failed, she had low self-esteem, which caused her to "Ease God Out" of her life. Of course, she prayed and prayed but to no avail. So, being dismayed and distraught, she decided to be less accountable and responsible. Then, one day, the lonely hamster (me), got tired of running and getting nowhere. And do you know what? The lonely hamster turned into a mighty mouse because all of sudden she became more CONFIDENT. HOW DID SHE DO THIS?

First, as a mighty mouse, she decided instead of running away from her Fear.. the best thing to do was to face it head on. In order to do that she had to realize that she was not perfect, learned to laugh at herself when she made a mistake, learn from it, and try harder next time.

Second, as a mighty mouse, she realized with each little success she had, her self-esteem increased and as a mighty mouse she began to Ease God In. As she became more and more of a mighty mouse, she realized that the God of her Understanding was not invasive. (mighty mouse). He won't answer her problems unless she admits to him that she cannot solve her problems alone and need his help.

Third, the mighty mouse started making decisions. Sometimes they were poor.. but they were her decisions and she was responsible for them. Sometimes they were impulsive, but each time she made a decision, it became easier.

Finally, the mighty mouse was Resolved and Determined to do the best she could and realized she is not perfect and pat herself on the back each time she did succeed. That increased her self-esteem.

Believe it or not, both the hamster and mighty mouse used Acronyms. One negative and one positive.

The lonely hamster is Negative

F = Fear of Failure

E = Eased God Out of Her Life and had Low Self-Esteem

A = Used Avoidance to answer her problems by becoming less Accountable and Responsible

R = Refused to admit she had a problem, thus had difficulty making decisions so she continued to run around and around in her hamster wheel.

The transformation into a mighty mouse is Positive

F = Faced my Fear head on with courage and integrity

E = Eased God In My Life and Increased my Self Esteem by asking the God my Understanding that I cannot conquer my fear alone.

A = I became Aware of my Fear and know that my Attitude will determine my success.

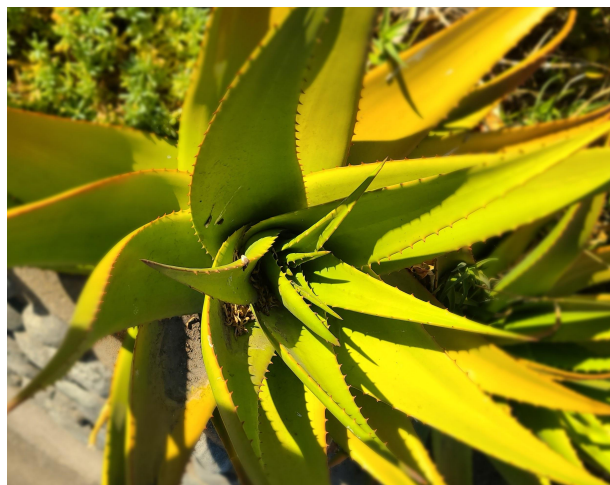
R = Resolve, Recognition, and Determination

Because I was oppressed, socially, emotionally, and physically as a child, I developed many codependent behaviors which I portrayed as a lonely hamster and how I am turning into a mighty mouse. With the help of the CoDA program, the Steps and Traditions, the Promises, my friends, and my Higher Power, I am realizing that I no longer have to just survive life and I am learning to live life. I do this by praying, going to meetings, writing, reading, listening, and talking out issues of the heart.

I know that as I continue down my Path to Recovery, I will gain more strength, courage, and faith. Becoming a mighty mouse is a goal that I am striving for, because I know I am not alone.

May God Bless You Always.

Linda C.



Jim H.

Closing Readings

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference.

Some Affirmations

“I am self-affirming.”

“I am grateful for my life, each and every day.”

“I am able to establish and uphold healthy boundaries.”

CoDA Resources:

- Newcomers - <https://coda.org/outreach/supporting-members/supporting-newcomers/>
- Find a Meeting - <https://coda.org/find-a-meeting/>
- Subscribe to announcement lists - <https://www.codependents.org/sub.htm>
- Download literature - <https://coda.org/meeting-materials/service-materials/>
- Events Calendar - <https://coda.org/calendar/>
- YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0oWXZDpoVdKbyJ0YDh1zTQ/playlists>

If links are not active, copy and paste the url into your browser.

Call for Content

This publication thrives when fellow CoDAs share their recovery. This is a great place to express your creativity through prose, poetry and artistic images, as long as it follows the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Editorial Policy.

See <https://coda.org/service-info/connections-service-info-page/> for more information.

Twelve 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.

CoDA Recovery Prayer

God help me to:

Accept other people as they are,

Recognize my own feelings,

Meet my own needs, and

Love myself just as I am.

CoDA Closing Prayer

We thank our Higher Power for all that we have received from this meeting.

As we close, may we take with us the wisdom, love, acceptance, and hope of recovery.



- Caryn T.