



Meeting in Print

March 2024 (Ed. 30)

"New Perspectives"

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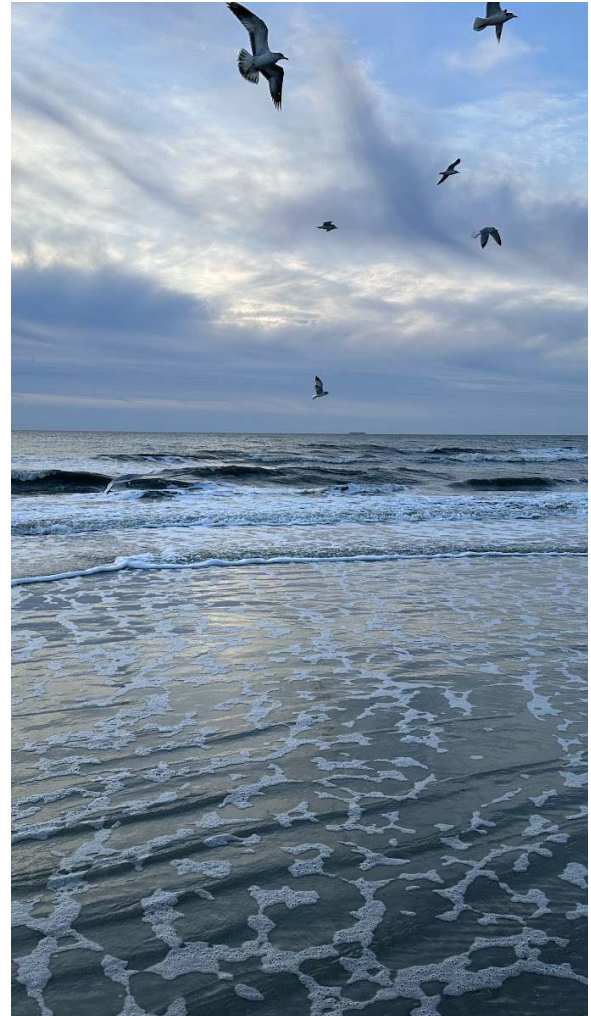


Photo: Alison J.

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 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.

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 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. We're 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



Photo: Steve S

“How a Packet of M&M's Gave Me Serenity”

Hello. My name is Linda C. and I am codependent. Today, I would like to share an experience I recently had while grocery shopping and how a packet of M&M's gave me Serenity.

Before I begin, however, I would like to Congratulate all codependents for being members of CoDA. Why? I think many codependents, myself included, realize that:

- Life is Hard
- Life can be Painful.
- We all have a story and think ours is unique.. As a codependent, I accepted the challenges, struggles, and difficult circumstances by learning to be honest with myself, friends, and family.

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- In CoDA, I learned to discover myself and instead of being in the "dark", I looked for the "light" at the end of the tunnel.

That being said, I just want to say "Thank You" for being part of the CoDA family Fellowship. I have learned a lot from the meetings.

Now to my "M&M" story. I think many of you know my history as a child and how it has affected me, so I will not bore you with the details.

I was grocery shopping one day and ruminating about "Step 4" that I had just completed. I was really quite proud of myself but I still felt like something was missing. I couldn't quite put my finger on it and then I saw a PACKET OF M&M'S.

M&M's come in six different colors. Brown, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue and Red. Interestingly, that is the exact amount of "MIS's" in my story,

I was MISDIAGNOSED and that led to a lot of MISUNDERSTANDING and MISPERCEPTION which led to a lot of MISINFORMATION and MISGUIDEDNESS which led to MISCOMMUNICATION.

Now the Brown M&M represents my MISDIAGNOSIS for 19 years. Back then the medical profession did not know what they do today. When I was growing up, I looked to my parents for guidance and they trusted the medical community to help me and them for the answers to their struggles. I will never criticize or judge my parents for any decisions they made for I know they did the best they could with the tools they had.

The Orange M&M represented MISUNDERSTANDING. Since I was misdiagnosed and believed that the medical community is doing what they think is right, there was bound to be misunderstanding and confusion among the medical community, my parents, and my siblings when things didn't seem to be working.

The Yellow M&M represented MISPERCEPTION. Because of the misdiagnosis and the misunderstanding, a lot of misperception was created by my parents and my family of origin.

The Green M&M represented how MISGUIDED and dysfunctional my family of origin became and still is because of the misdiagnosis, misunderstanding, misperception that was passed down for decades!

The Blue M&M represented all the MISINFORMATION that was received, believed and acted upon by my parents and family of origin because of the misdiagnosis, misunderstanding, misperception, misguidedness, and misinformation.

Lastly, the Red M&M represented MISCOMMUNICATION. The miscommunication developed because of the misdiagnosis, misunderstanding, misperception, misguidedness, and misinformation. The lack of communication, denial, or refusal of acceptance of reality by myself, my parents, and my family of origin really created unrealistic expectations that created havoc for myself, my parents, and my siblings.

What does this equal to? Two things: Dysfunction and full-blown codependency. I was really good at developing those codependent characteristics. But I am now aware of them, have

changed my attitude toward them and it is up to me to take action to change the codependent behavior.

Whew!

That is a lot of "MIS's" in one's lifetime and thanks to CoDA, I am no longer in the dark but in the light. I try to use the Steps, Traditions, Slogans, Affirmations, Meditation, and my CoDA family as I walk my path to recovery.

Now there are two different MIS's. The negative "MIS" stands for continuing to be in a Miserable and Insane Situation. I had lived with and in a miserable and insane situation for decades because the abnormal had become normal to me. I also developed a lot of codependent characteristics and behaviors. But thanks to CoDA I am learning to recognize them and make the necessary changes to get rid of my MIS's.

The positive MIS and the one I have chosen to follow stands for: More Information and acceptance leads to Serenity. Because no one knows what Life has in store, I do know that with a positive attitude and a strong belief in myself and the God of My Understanding, I could discard all the negative MIS's in my life.

Now, I didn't think a small and simple packet of M&M's would give me Serenity, but it did. I looked at the M&M's and was able to establish a different "MIS" for each color. For me, it was like unlocking a ball and chain that I had allowed to burden me for decades.

- I felt more confident and at peace.
- I felt a sense of freedom.
- I had a sense of belonging.
- I felt there was completeness in my life instead of disjointedness.
- I knew I could finally close the door on my past and just focus and live in the present and worry about my future later. My philosophy is to Take One Day at A Time.
- I knew I was not alone.

I hope in sharing my story today about how I found Serenity through a Packet of M&M's, I have conveyed that if I can find Serenity then so can others. I believed I could do it if I:

- Worked the CoDA Program, used the slogans, and prayed to the God of My Understanding for guidance when I got stuck.
- Kept working on my recovery.
- Wasn't afraid to fail but learned from my mistakes.
- Leaned on a friend when I felt overwhelmed because I know I am never alone.

In closing, I would like to share what I have learned and believe: Life isn't about waiting for a storm to pass, but learning to dance in the rain. So, each time I enjoy an M&M, I remind myself of all the "MIS's" in my life and how I overcame them. What a great feeling!

I know the following always helped me because in CoDA I have learned to and still am learning to:

- Accept other people as they are,
- Recognize my own feelings
- Meet my own needs, and

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- Love myself for who I am.

Thank you for listening to me today. God Bless You and have a good day.

Linda C. 8/14/2023



Photo: Alison J.

"In Recovery"

I used to need it all:

the drama...

the projecting...

the complexes...

They let me feel safe

inside the familiar patterns of

codependence,

far beyond what should have been

their expiration date.

You see

I was afraid...

I didn't know who I would be

without them.

But in recovery, there's a knowing,

a feeling in my bones:

that all I have to be is myself, and I

don't have to pretend anything,

anymore.

klm

6/6/23



Photo: Alison J.

"My Invisible Life"

When I was a boy, I learned how to turn myself invisible. At a very young age, I discovered that being unseen was a useful survival skill. Hiding in my room reduced the chances of being yelled at by my parents. The old saying goes, "children should be seen, not heard." In my case, being heard was so problematic, I chose not to be seen.

The other thing I realized in my youth was that having my own opinion was frowned upon by my family. I was often met with antagonism for any disagreement, however innocuous. I recall being grounded for three days after challenging my mother on her belief that getting wet during a heat wave causes pneumonia. I was constantly told to defer to the opinion of others because they knew better than me. Apparently, everyone knew better than me. I eventually stopped giving my opinion on anything and sequestered myself unseen in my room. My family came to the conclusion that I was stupid or mentally slow.

Fast forward to my college days. After 20 years of frustration, I was looking forward to a better life after completing school, when my parents were killed by a drunk driver. I was forced by circumstances to leave school and work a series of menial-labor jobs. My life went into a downward spiral of depression and anxiety. I was further pulled down by my group of slacker friends who had no ambitions in life except to watch movies, play board games and read comic books. My underachieving life gave credence to my family's belief that I was a dim-witted loser who would never amount to anything. I came to believe it, too.

All this led to a lifetime of undervaluing myself. I felt I was a loser. I felt I was dumb.

Self-confidence was foreign to me. I was convinced that a man who didn't earn a large income had no value in the world. I firmly believed that I had no worth or importance. Life had brainwashed me into withholding my opinions and conceding every dispute to others.

This has been the basis for all the relationships in my life. Whether it was a friendship or romantic relationship, I consistently put the wants and needs of others ahead of myself. I always found myself as the junior partner in every close relationship. I said "yes", even if I wanted to say "no". Whenever someone asked me what I wanted to do, I'd say, "I don't care. Whatever you want to do is fine." I would go along to get along.

I don't like to outwardly disagree with others, because I don't have the confidence that I might be right. Also, I am afraid that people will get angry with me for disagreeing with them, just as my parents did. Therefore, I repeatedly put myself in the position where I was the follower, not an equal partner.

The worst example of this occurred after I got married. Spoiler...it didn't last. My wedding took place late in life. Due to my severe lack of confidence and my low income, I'd never had much luck with the ladies I met. I'd only had one long term relationship before meeting the woman I would marry. My only wife. The woman who would leave me.

I was 50 when I met my future ex-wife. Surprisingly, she pursued me, flattering me with compliments and little gifts. One month after our first date, she brought up the topic of marriage. One month after that, she began making wedding plans, without even asking me if I wanted to get married. I knew she was rushing into this far too quickly, but I was so insecure and unwilling to assert myself, I never told her that I wanted to wait. There were numerous red flags which I ignored. Because I devalued myself so much, I feared she would walk away, and I would lose my last chance to ever get married. Regardless of my weak efforts to slow things down, we were married within a year of our first date.

The problems in the marriage quickly came to the surface. I put myself in the back seat, acquiescing to all my wife's directions. I never asserted myself. I simply agreed with everything she wanted and allowed her to lead me around on a leash.

Knowing that my wife was a self-confessed control-fanatic, I felt she'd have no problem with taking the initiative and running things her own way. She had even told me once that one partner in a marriage must have "51% control", so I let it be her. I knew she'd had numerous previous marriages with husbands who, she claimed, were overly aggressive and bullying, thus I chose to be the opposite. I felt I would be the one husband who was kind, accommodating and agreeable. I put her on a pedestal, always letting her have her own way. I thought that was the best thing for the marriage.

I was wrong. When she left, she told me she didn't want to be put on a pedestal and that I was a weak beta-male. When I pleaded with her to stay, I was told my desperation was an unattractive quality. When I asked her to come to couples therapy, she told me I was not strong enough to ever change. She walked out on our anniversary.

I was left alone with too much time to think about what had gone wrong. How had my love and good intentions caused the person I cherished most to view me with such contempt? What had I done to turn “For better or for worse; Till death do us part” into “This marriage is a total failure! There’s nothing here worth saving!”?

At my lowest, overcome by depression and entertaining thoughts of suicide, I began looking for a support group to help me get through this horrible period. Searching online, I found a CoDA group in my area. I knew very little about co-dependency but hoped the meeting would be helpful. I had to talk to someone.

I began to attend meetings, and I found that there were other people who had similar problems to myself. I didn’t know what a common problem codependency was, or how many different ways it could manifest. It was a relief to know that I wasn’t uniquely broken.

I had believed myself to be an incurable lost cause, as so many people had told me I was. In my mid-fifties, I felt I was too badly damaged and irredeemably hopeless to change. Those CoDA meetings helped me realize I was not unalterably worthless. Getting involved in the codependent recovery program gave me hope that my past didn’t need to keep repeating, like a noxious weed regrowing. Change is not easy, and I fully expect my journey to be a challenging one, but the support I get from CoDA makes me believe I can recreate myself. I’m no longer a young man but I have new hope.

Rob Y. 8/10/2023



Photo: Steve S.

“New Eyes”

I always did what I was told or what I thought
was expected of me.

I spent too much time being the good girl.

Years later, regrets abound. Ready to move forward with new eyes!

Andrea G. 7/9/2023

“God Carries Me”

No one could have prepared me for how hard things would be. But my God, how I could feel the prayers! They were lifting each foot as I walked, carrying me around the grocery store and holding me together when I couldn't think straight. They were with me at night when I cried and they sat with me in the morning when I didn't have energy to face the day. They were the reason I was able to persevere through another twenty-four hours when everything in me wanted to quit.

This season has stretched faith muscles long laying dormant.

Leaning into others has never been more important or appreciated. My marriage, family and CoDA sisterhood has never felt more sacred. This time has been one of the hardest seasons for me. Battling depression, questioning God and wanting to give up. My life instantly became harder, my mind more strained. The fatigue has been overwhelming at times, my emotions have been a roller coaster ride, and my freedom to do whatever I want came to a halt.

But within this past year, I have also experienced a new level of being carried. Held up and lifted by prayers. Often wondering how I got myself out of the pit my body and mind feel they are sinking into. I can look back on these weeks of difficulty and uncertainty and remember the power of prayers. I see God's huge hands underneath me carrying my body from place to place and battling the enemy in the territory of my mind. The CoDA sisterhood has been there to support me.

I am reminded of a picture of a man limp with pain trying to stand on his own but completely weak. And God is lovingly embracing him under his arms, holding him up from behind. I can now connect to the pain and compassion in this picture.

Oftentimes I am drained. I don't feel equipped. Yet I know this is not my whole truth. This is not the full story. I can put the defeated thoughts aside and I can choose to remember that God is seeing so much more. He sees my complete mosaic.

He sees that in CoDA recovery; I am so OK. I am enough. There is a grand purpose. I am already healed. And he is telling me don't give up. Ever. Because if I give up, I've given up on him and that's not an option. God is always more than enough. These are reminders that I need to meditate on.

I can just be. I can let God and allow others to carry me along for a while. It will not always be like this.

When the dust settles it will settle perfectly into places that create a beautiful picture of my life. The picture I see sometimes is very messy and dark, but it is also breaking forth into light. I see the light.

I'm experiencing the promises of CoDA and it's beautiful.

I am not ashamed to ask for help or to feel my feelings. I can say no to things without feeling guilty. I can be OK if I screw up because my God fills in all the gaps and voids that I can't.

God has been showing up for me in the form of family members and friends. In ways that are beyond words of description. I am not walking this road alone, no matter how I might feel some days.

Being carried by God is the surrendered place he wants us to be. We can give ourselves permission to stop doing everything, stop filling every minute of our schedules, and allow ourselves to just be. Be with God. Be with ourselves. Be held by our CoDA tribe.

I let go of my expectations and let God carry me in his capable and loving hands.

Marsha J. 6/11/2023



Photo: Debbie R.

“Growth Is Finding Happiness Within the Silence”

Coming out of a 40 year relationship Divorce hit hard. It's been 5 years now and I have recognized all the codependency that I grew up and repeated in the marriage. I almost contaminated my adult children during this time until I found the right therapy. Finally now at 63, through the CoDA fellowship, I am learning to accept and pay attention to me without the voices that called me selfish. Amen

I wrote this poem tonight after a day of bawling my eyes out.

My journey to climb this tree to peace
Begins anew each morning of everyday

I awake each morning
No longer listening to the clock on my desk
But to my own inner mechanism
I know I am not the only one awake
And I find comfort in that

I warm up some coffee and head to my favorite chair
I read books of affirmations
I reflect on my values
I reflect on my growth
I am on my journey to climb this tree to peace

I push past the worms and insects
That noisily try to weaken the tree

Branch by branch I head up the limbs
Until I can rest on the thickest branch
The branch of my happy place

I take note of the clouds
I take note of the birdsong
I take note that I am finding comfort in knowing I am not ever really alone

My heart may feel heavy some days
As my tree looks so different now
Its aged and I am sure has more rings than I would like
But up I go, day after day, to find my happiness on this tree

Eventually I find my way to a group of women
We support each other in our journeys
We climb past our traumas
We battle through our tears
And we learn more each day

We are not alone
We are not our traumas
We are not our past
We are individual leaves on the same tree
The tree of discovery

And if and when we fall, we scream.
But as we hit the pillow of leaves that has fallen before us
We realize the journey down can be as rich in emotion as the climb towards the top
So make the journey
Be in the midst of the noise
And still be calm in your heart
That is peace.

Cat 9/11/2023



Photo: Jim H.

“Enmeshment / Detach With Love”

Elle, codependent (codie)

I am grateful that my service position led to this share and for the fellow who told me about these weekly emails—the timing of it all. Higher Power, thank you.

From Co-dependents Anonymous (p.114) "Enmeshment occurs in relationships between people who have not developed their own clear identities and/or boundaries. Each person's sense of wholeness and self-worth is intertwined with those of the other person. It is as if there were only one identity, and it is difficult for either to function fully without the other."

(Phone rings)

Daddy: "Hey Telly, where is your other half?" *(He never could pronounce my name correctly. Aww, so cute. That is my mama)*

Other relatives "Where is your mom? Put your mother on the phone? *(No 'Hi Elle, or How are you doing?')*

This is how I am introduced by relatives "This is HER daughter" *(I feel it is okay as a child but not as the main or only piece of information as an adult.)*

Conversations with non-relatives "How is your mother?" *(That is right. Ask me about the most important person in my life. It is rude not to.)*

Career/goals "What do you want to do when you grow up?" I reply "I want to make enough money so my mom doesn't have to work anymore". Followed by a pause for me to say my interest/goals. *(I didn't know, but I knew that I wanted to take care of my mom.)*

My mom wasn't only my other half. My mom was my everything. Being teased and bullied as a kid growing up and as an adult, I learned it wasn't safe outside. For some time, it was her and I in the home. I didn't have an identity outside of my mother in my family. I checked with my mom to see how I felt about things or what to do. I think a parent-child relationship is naturally codependent, but at some point, the relationship blooms into a parent-adult-child relationship. But not with my mom and me. A healthy respect for a parent went too far. In my pre-teens/teens, when she noticed I was not building friendships or expanding the village, she tried to shoo me away to grow.

Nope, I was good right there.

I stayed "stuck on her hip" even at family gatherings. I was so mad at my mom for being with her boyfriends, all 3 of them. I reacted like a brat and in passive-aggressive ways. I did not get a chance to vet them. I did not know about them until they were in the house, and now they were staying over.

It was only later in life, through the program, did I realize that my only safe space was unsafe with strangers around. I would not entertain someone my mom didn't like. I stayed in an unhealthy relationship with my first boyfriend because my mom said to ... until I found someone else. Little did she know how difficult that would be since I'm codependent. I bring myself with me wherever I go. I was this person's mother, counselor, provider, best friend, and job hunter. I lied for him and did things I didn't want to do. I was so resentful and didn't know at the core level why?

People to this day are surprised I moved out of state or in their words, "left your mom. I know how close y'all are." I remember the following conversation like it was yesterday. I had a job offer out of state. My mom and I traveled there to check it out. We couldn't find any signs this was a poor decision—all good vibes. On the last night of our visit, while bawling, she asked me if I would stay home if she asked. I quickly said yes without a second thought. Afterward, my response did not feel good, but I knew that was the right thing to do. This experience was before entering CoDA but thank God she did not ask.

Another program led me to Co-Dependents Anonymous (CoDA), where I am learning to detach with love. I first check with my Higher Power (HP) for decisions, not her. Shortly after moving, I harassed her to move down here to improve her quality of life but realized it was her decision, so I stopped. She comes to me for money advice or permission, and I respond with what do you think? I put myself first as well. Recently, my mom was aggravating my health issues, so I cut her stay short. My last romantic relationship did not involve her input. I'm improving, not cured. I have my own identity now. It is okay if she disagrees with my choices; I must sit in those disapproval feelings with lots of affirmations. I am reaching out to family to foster relationships. Discussions about my mom are more in a healthy place. My relationships are healthier with self-care, such as boundaries, feeling the feelings, and turning things over to my HP. I'm glad my mom and I are still close, but in a healthier way.

As for my first boyfriend, he is still my best friend, but that is it. I won't fill out another application for, lie for, or loan this person another dime. All of these are hard boundaries. CoDA helped me realize maybe I am preventing this person from growing and learning lessons. When he asked me to apply for a position that included lying, as I have done in the past, I said no. The topic came up repeatedly, but my response did not change. I was done. He kept saying something changed. I said yep, I'm growing and in CoDA to form healthy relationships. He does not ask me anymore for that type of help. Woot, Woot! That felt authentic and serene.

I am so grateful for working the Steps and Traditions for CoDA imperfectly one day at a time. It has permitted me to put myself first, make mistakes, adjust, and continue my life journey one day at a time—all thanks to my HP and fellows who identify.

Thanks for reading my share. I am Elle, Codie.

P.S. Last week, an experience reminded me of a very symbolic situation of my co-dependency with my mom. It's a funny and annoying situation that I consistently receive mail intended for my mom since I moved. I get it with solicitors. Then, in addition, I started receiving mass employee work texts for her on my cell. It still happens even after she inquired and was told it was fixed.

Last week, after the third iteration of my mom expressing concern about not receiving her bank card, something told me to check the card I received. Ta-da problem solved. The bank sent her card to me. I said yep, this epitomizes our codependent enmeshment history rather well. Solicitors, her employer, and her bank merged our identities.

Elle 8/6/2023



Photo: Alison J.

“Who's Watching My Feet?”

Who's watching my feet? Ever since I ran track in the short distance hurdles, I never realized how this was going to be symbolic of my life's journey. Even in my roller coaster ride through the rooms of recovery especially Co-Dependence Anonymous. Back then I watched everyone else's feet, not my own, as I ran as fast as I could jumping those hurdles trying to prove myself, with no one in the stands watching my track meets. Since I came into recovery for addiction and alcoholism, my first sponsor would tell me, "Watch people's feet, not their words!" I've been doing this, but in a codependent way for the past 22 years and didn't realize it until recently. I awoke in the middle of the night to a god-awful sound only to find it was me!! Me crying from the depth of my soul, the core of my being asking, "But who's watching my feet?"

I have 2 previously failed marriages and here I am with a third when this one was supposed "to be the one!" My best friend, the person who understood me the most, had the same warped sense of humor, would say what I was about to say, so much so we called ourselves "siamesers" and his mom called us "two peas in a pot!" (She never did figure out it was "two peas in a POD!") To watch my best friend - a kind, fun, silly, life-loving, spiritually grounded, recovery-oriented, love people & recovery - become so dark and hateful right in front of me has been another deeply painful experience I've gone through. Along with other life events this past year, this type of abandonment has shattered me. I feel so broken.

After I awoke from my own crying a few nights ago, I realized this was one of those moments where I just needed to let my insides match my outsides and not just "suck it up." My heart doctor told me "Unshed tears make organs weep" and I believe him today. So, I cried so hard my face was swollen for 2 days.

Following that cleansing cry I spent time journaling and here is the main part of my entries...

"I've been listening to empty promises for 2 years watching his feet, but he NEVER SAW MINE! In fact, he stuck the dagger in my gut and twisted it! As if blaming my feet for his life experiences and only able to see darkness and seething his hatred for all things. What about all this time he has bled me dry? I was again running as fast as I could, jumping hurdles to hold my hurt in, rise above, stand by my man, keep fighting, he'll come around, don't cry, stay focused on the goal, do step work in dual programs, lead step studies, be of service to others, get out of myself...all the while again trying to prove myself, my worthiness. What about my hurt here? What about my empty cup? What about being blamed for their shortcomings, the verbal abuse, and the constant negativity I lived with these past years? Where does it go now? It's still here, in me - hurt, resentment, brokenness, shame, guilt, low self-worth, no self-esteem, feeling unworthy, not good enough and never deserving of better. WHO IS WATCHING MY FEET? WHO IS HONORING MY FEET?"

Well, GOD IS! I am! I continue to work the Steps and dig into my recovery and thank God for my support people who hold me up, check on me frequently and know me and my heart! I don't want to just "watch people's feet" I want to watch my feet! Through CoDA and working diligently

in my recovery, I am working toward not having to run as fast as I can jumping everyone else's hurdles just to prove my worthiness. I am hoping to learn to stop running after the people who are unwilling or unable to be present and/or emotionally available.

Who's watching my feet? ME! GOD! My support people, sponsors, loved ones, friends...the people who know me and my heart and show up for me EVERYDAY! Now I get to just keep watching my feet and allow those who want to watch and honor my feet to come into my life in God's timing!

Thy will, not mine be done! Amen!

Kristina B. 10/25/2023



Photo: Debbie R.

Closing Readings

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.

Some Affirmations

With practice, comes clarity.
I am learning, growing and changing in ways I couldn't have imagined.
My identity is no longer dependent on someone else's perceptions.

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.

Twelve Promises

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.



Photo: Jim H.

Resources:

Find a Meeting - <https://coda.org/find-a-meeting/>

Subscribe to Email lists - <https://www.codependents.org/sub.htm>

CoDA's Events Calendar - <https://coda.org/calendar/>

YouTube - <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0oWXZDpoVdKbyJOYDh1zTQ/playlists>

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

Request for Content

This publication thrives when fellow CoDAs share their recovery. This is a great place to express your creativity through prose (200-2000 words), poetry and artistic images, as long as it follows CoDA's Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and the Co-NNections Editorial Policy. See <https://coda.org/service-info/connections-service-info-page/> for more information.