



Meeting in Print

September 2022 (Ed. 24)

"Time to Recover"

In This Issue:

1 [Opening Readings](#)

2 [Community Shares](#)

["3 years Ago..."](#)

["Maturing in
Recovery"](#)

["Haikus"](#)

["How my Darkest
Moment..."](#)

["Getting Through
Tough Times"](#)

["Living on the Dotted
Line"](#)

3 [Closing Readings](#)



-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 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. 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.

“3 Years Ago...If Someone Would Have Told Me”

3 years ago

If someone would have told me I was going to walk into a 12-step recovery meeting, I would have laughed in their face. That happened, I'm embarrassed to admit.

TODAY I now look forward to my Monday night CoDA meeting! Something magical happens every time I walk through those doors.

3 years ago

If someone would have told me I was going to share, be vulnerable, and cry in a room full of strangers, I would have bet money against it. I was way too private and way too proud for that to happen.

TODAY I am grateful for the tears I shed because it means I can feel again and heal. The best part is how safe and loved I feel expressing my true feelings to all of you " CoDA strangers." Today, there are more smiles than tears!

3 years ago

If someone would have told me that I would believe in and trust a Power greater than myself, I would have never believed them. I had vice grips around my life so tightly, and I wasn't going to entertain the idea of turning that over to anyone or anything. No way!

TODAY not only do I believe in a Higher Power, I KNOW there is one! Over the last 3 years, my HP and I have had some good cries and great laughs. My HP and I don't always agree, but it's been proven over and over that my HP is NEVER wrong. It's annoying, but the beauty is the abundance of true peace and acceptance that comes with that. It feels like true and unconditional love that I am so grateful for.

3 years ago

If someone would have told me I was going to get divorced, I would have panicked! No, if's, and's, or but's about it. I had made my bed, and I was determined to lie in it!

TODAY I am grateful that I no longer live in an unhealthy marriage. I now have time to rebuild loving and healthy relationships with friends and family that I ignored and neglected for many years. The love and friendships that surround me today are unimaginable. It's been fun to welcome back the version of myself that loves to open my home to entertain and host the loved ones in my life.

3 years ago

If someone would have told me that I would only get my daughter half the time, that truth would have taken me to my knees; it did!

TODAY my daughter is with me half the time, but she gets the very best version of a mom that she would never have known. The last three years have given me the hope and tools to have a healthy relationship with her and accept her for who she truly is. I am setting a new example, hopefully, one that will break the cycle, habits, and patterns that have been passed down in my family for generations. Nothing would bring me more happiness than knowing my daughter only welcomes healthy relationships into her life.

3 years ago

If someone would have told me that I would be dating again in my 40s, I would have locked myself in my bedroom and thrown away the key!

TODAY I am single and having a freaking blast. I am enjoying the dating process way more than I ever thought possible. I know that being comfortable in my own skin and accepting people for who they truly are is the key ingredient to healthy dating. I am now open to the possibility of love. I will say that again because I had convinced myself for many years that 'true love' was something I would never experience. So today, I give myself the gift of being open to the possibility of finding true love. However, in the meantime, I'm having SO MUCH fun exploring intimacy, connection, and sex in new and healthy ways. Thank goodness I unlocked that bedroom door because I had NO IDEA what I was missing.

3 years ago

If someone would have told me that I would lose the stability of a 20-year career, I would have freaked out. I did not believe I was smart enough or capable of getting a better job.

TODAY I have a new job, and in fact, I have had two new jobs in the past three years. I have more than doubled my income in those three years, and I am confident in my potential to make even more. Even better than the money is that I have recently figured out what my next career move will be. It's something I am so excited about; it won't even feel like work. The best part is I have no fear about pursuing my dreams. What a gift!

3 years ago

If someone would have said I would trust and love myself unconditionally, I would have thought that I was a gift I didn't deserve.

TODAY I give myself the gift of loving and accepting myself for who I am. Period.

I still can't believe it's been three years since walking through those CoDA doors for the first time. I had no idea what I was in for, but I knew I had to be willing to do whatever it took to make the changes in my life that were the best for me. I had never done that before, but I am sure proud of that girl three years ago who had the courage to do it!

Thank you for letting me share.

Shannan

CoDA Birthday May 6th, 2019



-Caryn T.

“Maturing in Recovery”

I grew up as the quiet kid, a super overachiever, great athlete and all-round people pleaser, straight-A student. Inside, I was afraid of everything, confused what was right and wrong, living in an alcoholic home with a social phobic dad who could go into screaming and yelling fits without much warning. I was popular in high school, but I wasn't sure why.

In my junior year of high school, I signed up to be an exchange student to Germany without much knowledge of the culture or expectations or support system I might have there. It turned out there was not a support system and as a quiet perfectionistic teenager, my guest families and the school did not pay much attention to me. I started skipping school and no one said anything. I hated it there but could not admit to my parents that I was miserable. I did not want to be a failure in other people's eyes. I did not know why I stayed except when I was miserable. I was so codependent; I did not want others to think I failed because I was an achiever. I came back home, very depressed, withdrawn, having a hard time even talking. My mom told me people don't want to hear the truth, they want to hear that I had a good time. Here I was suffering and mom is telling me to put on a good show.

One of the most devastating things that happened when I returned home was that most of my friends disappeared, which I took personally as a rejection of me. It is actually normal for friends to disperse in this time of life after high school. This imagined rejection hit me hard because in my mind, I had built it up as what kept me going in Germany, the remembered “friends.” Two girls did stick by my side for many years. Nancy and Leslie are still friends today.

One of my lowest points was at age 22 when I tried to commit suicide and almost succeeded. I ended up in the emergency, and then spent several weeks in a psychiatric unit at a local hospital.

What helped me was continued therapy, and learning about myself, and eventually I started my 12-step journey at the age of 29 years old when I found Adult Children of Alcoholics. After feeling better, I dropped out of these meetings until I was miserable again.

Over 7 years ago I started attending CoDA meetings. I met my sponsor at a weekend retreat 5.5 years ago. She spoke on sponsorship, and I knew that is what I wanted and needed. Here I am 5 years later finally finishing working the 12 Steps with the questions.

What I have now are recovery tools that I can use in my life. Primary tools are talking with my inner child and reparenting her, so she understands what is going on in life. Self-compassion and self-soothing are other tools that help me. Tonight, I saw two friends I haven't seen in 2 years. They left after only 2 hours and my inner child was not happy. I type out what is going on and I can tell the little girl that we are all in different places now and that everyone has different needs and wants. Then I will close my eyes with my hand on my heart or arm and just tell the little girl, “It's going to be okay. Momma is here for you. I'm here for you. It's all going to be okay.” I rub my right hand over my left upper arm and repeat some of these phrases. Other tools I use: Walking outside in nature, daily meditation, mindfulness, setting boundaries—focusing on the present moment.

I do go to phone meetings a few times each week at 6:30 am. It's nice to listen to a reading and do a quick 2-minute share.

I focus on helping others in CoDA and spreading the message of hope.

Katharine



-Jim H.

“Haikus”

find peace in pausing
breathing flows in, out, in, out
racing mind calms down

-Caryn T.

“How My Darkest Moment Turned Into My Day of Blessings”

I want to share my darkest moment and how Step 11, my sponsor, my pastor, the medical professionals, my prayers, my friends and family, the CoDA promises, but most of all my belief in my Higher Power that gave me the strength, faith and hope I needed and that I hope will help someone believe in themselves but also learn to love themselves and their God of their own understanding.

It was a typical Tuesday morning, or so I thought until it turned into a very atypical day. I don't remember much about the day itself other than the fact I had a brain bleed at the same time there was a shooting in a nearby Medical Clinic. It was a very scary and life-changing event but also very eye-opening and a blessing at the same time!

I feel blessed because if it weren't for my fiancé who kept his cool under stress, the E.R. doctor at a hospital in Maple Grove, MN, who immediately realized I was bleeding in my brain and had to get me to a different hospital in Robbinsdale, MN, right away and the many other medical professionals along my journey, I wouldn't be here today. What A Blessed Moment!

When I arrived at the hospital in Robbinsdale, they were waiting for me. I thank God every day for the angels who work so tirelessly to help people in significant danger - another blessed moment.

This experience made me realize life can be snatched away in a moment, how precious life is and it is up to me to take advantage of each and every day and every moment I have.

I was told by different medical professionals that 50% of the people die from a brain bleed (stroke). I had up to 70% chance of having some sort of disability if I did survive. Guess what folks -- God was with me that day and I regained all my faculties at 100%. It was a miracle, although at the time I didn't think so...but I learned that God did not think it was time for me to leave this earth because I have so much to do yet.

I was in the ICU for 3-1/2 days. During that time, I had a breathing tube coming out of my mouth and 3 tubes coming from my head. I was one hot mess and probably looked like Medusa! Of course, I was sleeping most of the time so I was unaware of anything that happened until I woke up.

Unfortunately while all this was going on, my "family of origin" on the first day I had the breathing tube (ventilator) in my mouth said that "they" should "pull the plug". Luckily, for me, my fiancé followed the doctor's instructions and disagreed with my "family of origin." Once my "family of

origin" was informed I was doing fine, they immediately assumed I would not have my mental capacity and the subject of a rest home was brought up.

It was a bitter pill to swallow to realize and accept that my "family of origin" was so eager to "pull the plug" so to speak, but in retrospect it was a blessing. Why? Because it made me face that none of us can choose our families. It is how I deal with mine that determines my success. Sometimes that is easier said than done.

Do I still love my family? Yes, but I love them with detachment. I no longer can abide or accept their toxicity. Was I scared? Absolutely! -- but my belief and trust in my Higher Power helps me accept and deal with an almost intolerable situation.

That was over a year and half ago. Today, I am doing great. If it weren't for CoDA, my pastor, the medical professionals, my friends and the many prayers that were said on my behalf, I wouldn't be here today..it was truly a Day of Blessings.

I have not spoken to my "family of origin" but it is my hope that with prayer and meditation that someday they may become part of my life. Do I forgive them? Yes. That day, I became closer to my Higher Power and learned what is and what is not important in life. I continue to nurture my relationship with my Higher Power and am learning to trust him more and more.

My wish for my fellows is that whenever they face life's struggles, challenges, obstacles, they remember Step 11, the Higher Power of their Understanding, the Promises, Traditions, slogans and affirmations. And remember that they are Precious and Free.

I hope my story encourages others to face their challenges head on and believe in their Higher Power. Remember, in a lifetime, friends may come and go, but only a few make an imprint on one's heart.

My Day of Blessings experience did that for me.

Linda C



-Caryn T.

“Getting Through Tough Times”

I tend to talk to myself throughout the day. Most of the time I’m deliberately trying to make decisions and I always seem to make the wrong ones. I can’t tell you how exhausting it is to look at myself in the mirror or even reflect on this behavior because I honestly don’t know where to start. I never feel confident about most things and I can’t even begin to imagine how hard it is for anyone else who is new to recovery. I started self reflecting on my behaviors because I wondered why everything turned to chaos. Every word I expressed turned into an argumentative debate and oftentimes I also realized many of us carried a defect.

I was always in so much pain, the smallest things like, my mother not saying “thank you” and never feeling like I did enough for her was one of the toughest times I believe I had. I couldn’t understand why I wanted so badly to be thanked. I was furious with her and every time we disagreed. My mother wasn’t perfect but at some point in her life she overlooked me. I hated being overlooked. I was used to everything going so badly for me in my life. I went to college and had to drop out because I had no babysitter. My mom had just decided to move when I had recently decided to further my education. That was painful for me, I thought “Nobody cares. Not even my mother.”

So when did I become so compliant? It could have been here or I could go further back, but I’d rather not. I had to always put aside my own interests to please others and I wanted my mother to be happy but I also needed support. She will never know this because I never expressed how I felt about it. I couldn’t trust or keep relationships with friends because I was a bit too chatty and oftentimes gave my opinion without even being asked.

I was young then, but I’m aware now that I’ve made many mistakes. There are many patterns I resonate with. Over time they have given me a sense of disbelief that I’d never be enough for anyone. I had also been through a lot. I was pregnant at 17; I almost aborted my child but mom convinced me not to. There was no worse pain than feeling alone. In my head I was always alone. I went through a phase once, thinking that if I’d avoid intimacy with my partner that he couldn’t hurt me anymore but then I realized it just made things worse. I wanted respect but I never got it. I was molested at the age of 7 and I was robbed of my voice and my dignity as a child. This also affected me.

CoDA has helped me to re-discover myself, I believe it was God that brought me here. This was my way out of coping with my pain. Freely expressing myself and resonating with other people's stories. I also realized that I am not alone. God is always with me. I have to build a stronger foundation for myself emotionally. I am trying to be less distracted and live more in God's presence and to recognize the people I love for who they are and that I cannot save everybody when I am a work in progress myself.

However, I was once watching this religious video and the pastor was talking about overcoming things. Are you an overcomer? At that moment I couldn't brush off how I was truly feeling. As much as I want to say that I'm okay, I am still battling with my mental health. I had been sleeping over at my mom's for three days around that time. I was again avoiding conflicts and didn't know how to bounce back without feeling like it was all my fault. I am always running from these situations. My whole life, my mother and I have been running. I was never at a stable school. My dad used to abuse my mom and we were always on the run. He's changed over the years which makes me confident a little bit that people do change and can change. Many people like myself can say "I have been around some pretty messed up situations and seen many terrible things." However, God always prevailed.

I ignored this infectious disease I had been facing for 12 years. I needed an antidote. The man I knew I was in-love with became a priority to me. When did I put Man above God? Could be that my father was barely ever present in my life. Only thing I thought I needed was a man's love. I fought this love as he was still in-love for his son's mother. Still to this day I think I am not worthy of love and wonder if he really loves me like he says he does. Although he was a great father and took the responsibility of raising my oldest daughter since she was 2 months old, I suffered mental and some physical abuse. I said to myself this will never get better but deep down I had hope that things would change. And they did, not in the way I thought things would change, but rather by God's grace. I left my apartment and took my kids once for a whole year. I tried to convince myself this time it was over for good and God will take him out of my life. I wanted him out. I completely shut down. I thought it wasn't fair to my children, they too had been affected by our behaviors and I was slowly becoming codependent on him. I was threatened and was afraid to lose everything. I neglected myself because I was too good-natured for him even though I am not perfect. Nothing that I ever said to him would get him to understand that I always meant well. I always kept trying. 12 years later, I got into another altercation with him and this time I was thinking "what now? How do I ask God to get me out of this one and will he help me this time?" One thing I know for sure is that God is always on time. As it turns out I got a call that told me to climb out. I always felt I was in a pit with this man and I'd go back every time. Toxic relationships do one thing, their act of liquifying quickly. The higher the stress the more fluid it becomes, like quicksand. The sinking gets worse with each movement. But this isn't real quicksand, so the thought of not getting out is just an illusion. I realized I couldn't change him or help him anymore and ignoring it wasn't healthy for any of us. By all means I had to do what was best for my children and me. I was not responsible for his saving.

I always felt responsible for the people I love and care about. I have always had a forgiving heart and still until this day. I can see how I have grown as a person. Since I was a little girl all I ever wanted to do was help. When I feel hopeless, I like to write, spend time with my kids, write short term and long term goals. This year I thought I'd be in the studio writing music because it's been a dream of mine since I was young. I was told to go in a different direction. I am working on my first biography and I am looking forward to publishing my journey, trials, & tribulations.

God is good, always. He is faithful, so when I feel like it is impossible to resolve something I am not ashamed to ask him because he will always reach out his right hand for me. Affirmations are great, I now listen to motivational speakers, & that's how I stay connected and of course with my fellow CoDA movement because to me this is more than just stories. I now believe I deserve my peace and happiness and I truly am worthy of all great things. I can crawl out of anything that doesn't nourish my soul, I just have to believe that I can because I am equipped enough and the only person I should fear is God.

Jaritza



“Living on the Dotted Line”

Living on the dotted line-
changing who I am inside
Just to fit in .
losing myself
almost dying
coming back
To be rejected by those
who I tried so hard
to fit in with.
They do not like
my new
empowered self
they liked my
subservient self
they liked me the way that I was
The doormat
the one that always says
it's OK
it doesn't matter.
But it does matter!
But -
now that I'm being whole
and happy with myself -
loving myself —
Alas!
Finally
seeing the wonderful connection
and beauty in the whole of life.
Yet,
they turn away from me now.
Now that my heart and soul
Need
and desire to play
They turn away from me now.
Now that
I'm real and authentic
they don't wish to stay.
When did it get so bad?
Face to face tea
Turning into technology.

When did the world get like this ?
when did it all become
about status and material wrath
Yes, I said wrath
and
Besting others
No matter of
Their past kindnesses
real, caring, nurturing, love.
They throw it all away for
things.
Then when I'm forced to walk away
They blame me for wrongdoings
For inflicting pain.
Not even realizing that for years
They have treated me just the same.

I pray that
people start looking inside the hearts of others -
As well as their own
each person is connected to all
No matter how big
Or how small.
that I do to my friends
my neighbors
my enemies
I'm only doing it to myself
to the whole web of life
it's not too late to take another look.
It's not too late yet- - -
To make it
Right.

Pamela W.

CoDA Resources:

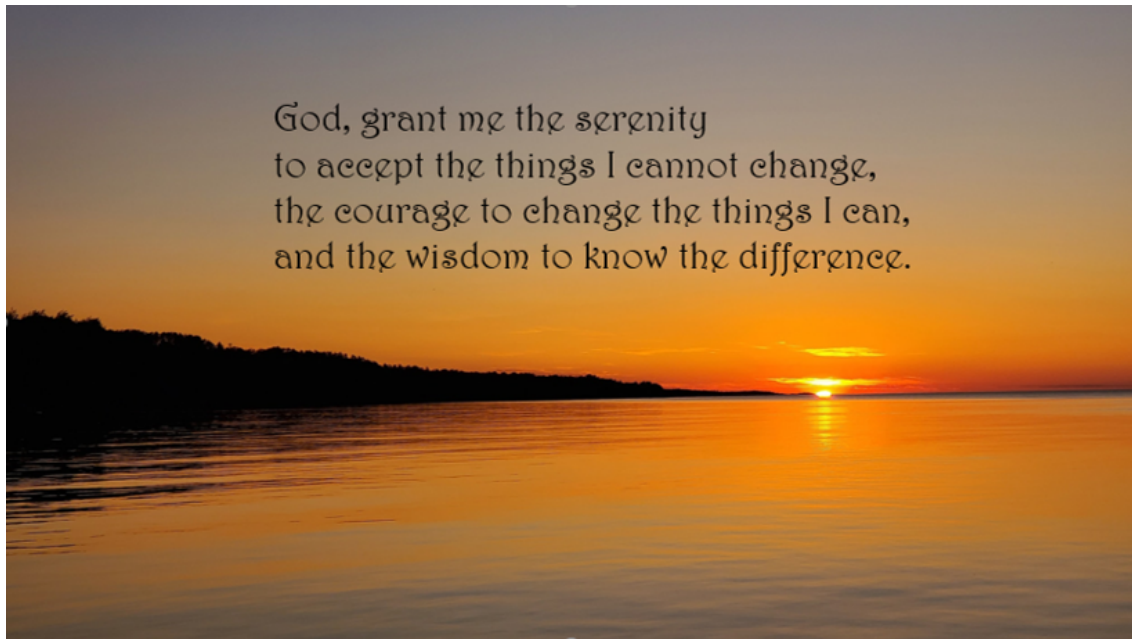
- Newcomers - <https://coda.org/outreach/supporting-members/supporting-newcomers/>
- Find a Meeting - <https://coda.org/find-a-meeting/>
- Subscribe to announcement lists - <https://www.codependents.org/sub.htm>
- Download literature - <https://coda.org/meeting-materials/service-materials/>

-
- 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.

Closing Readings

The Serenity Prayer



- Photo: Linda R.

Some Affirmations

“I am enough and I have enough.”

“This too shall pass; I am grateful for joyful times, I know that painful times won’t last forever.”

“Higher Power grants me serenity.”

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.



-Caryn T.

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.