

Meeting in Print

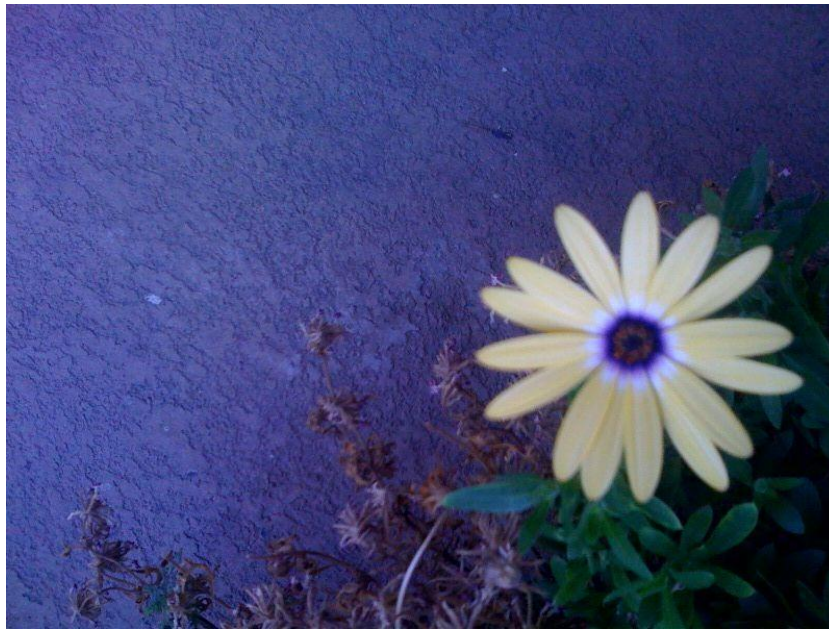
“Introduction”

September 2016

Greetings from your CoDA Co-NNections Committee

Welcome to the first edition of Meeting in Print, a new recovery and support publication. What you read here is CoDA-approved meeting literature, shares and artistic material from CoDA members and uplifting quotes.

We hope you find this Meeting in Print a valuable addition to your recovery. Please be in touch with comments, suggestions, and of course, contributions!



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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 family 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.

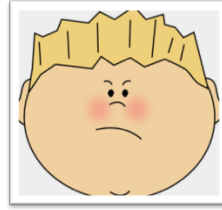
The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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. CoDependents Anonymous should remain forever non--professional, 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, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions; ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Shares



A Catholic Boys Story

Oh, a Catholic boy gets it bad. Beaten to a pulp and then bullied pale. That's how my father knew how to make a real man. His anger knew no bounds, although he was a good Christian and kept it deep within himself. He probably didn't even notice. Only his children, and maybe his wife, could feel that locked-up violence. It always lurked deviously behind me, watching my every word, sound and action for an opportunity to strike me down for imperfections that were really just life.

His first-born had cerebral palsy due to oxygen deficiency (someone forgot to bribe those communist doctors), then his second was a girl, and then came...

Andy! That's me. I bet he was happy at first, until he realized that I clearly couldn't take the beatings like a man and turned sensitive instead. As I grew up, I felt he always thought "Dear God, why did you send me such a wuss!?" Then he goes and gets bullied in school. That one too --- a hopeless cause! But at least my little girl is cute."

But I was lucky. I was raised to the sky, so high! Mommy told me I was a messenger, was the great Messiah - or an apostle reborn! And herself? Well she was the reincarnation of Holy Mary herself, lifting the entire world through her sacrifices. Tarot cards, pendulums and magic prophecies from her convincing psychic friends erased all of my chances of becoming myself. Who am I? If I'm not mommy's Messiah, then who am I? What do I want? A Messiah can't allow himself to want anything, right? I'm only here to serve. Mommy, how should I serve?

And the answer from my own, personal Holy Mary came swiftly: "Come, my precious child, let me share with you that your father has erection problems. Can you feel my pain in life? Can you please worship me so that I can feel OK? Now,

please read through these papers I wrote for the government. Please go fight your father in court because he owed you child support --- you can't let him trample you like that! Now, please silently accept that I slept with your father's little brother during our marriage and then moved away with him. Of course, you would come to! You never had any connection with your father, he never loved you.“ Yes, mommy, I understand. I'm not here for myself, I'm here for you. I'm not here to be loved, I'm here to make others feel good. I bet you're right. Daddy always showed me I was a wuss and a loser, he even beat it straight into my skin. If you both say so, it must be true. You gave me your gods, my future and my identity. What other gods do I have? What other future do I have? What identity do I have?

So I carried my guilt, shame and my fears of rejection like a social tattoo into all of my relationships. Always the underdog, but a privileged underdog indeed --- secretly better than everyone I met. An agent part of God's secret service, ready to take anything from the poor, lesser souls that crossed my path. You say so? Yes, you're right. You feel that? Then so should I. You think so? Yes, that must be the way. Unless I can prove that I'm right --- then I'll bang you with that righteous answer as if to show myself that I also exist.

Agreement, submission, hiding, fear, shame and guilt. Until an anger built up in me, almost strong enough to kill me. But no, I still couldn't be angry. What was happening? Why was I angry? Why couldn't I enjoy life? Why was I crying? What were these feelings? Why did my laughter contain anger, my enjoyment bitterness and why did relaxation mean tears? Why couldn't I bring myself to move forward with all the great blessings life had given me? Perhaps... I was somebody after all?

So I failed. I failed my mission, I failed my life and I failed my gods. I realized I would never be special and I wasn't the chosen one. Or maybe my soul was just too weak. So what had I been the martyr for? For what had I sacrificed my thoughts and feelings my whole life? I failed my identity and I drifted into the void of no direction and a passion for suicide. Friends? They can't help. Love is what brought me here in the first place. Mommy? No, a talk with you leaves me

sleeping for hours. Daddy? No, why would I talk to you? Instead, a circle greeting me by name in chorus, just like the AA meetings in Hollywood movies. Really? Me? Here? Whatever.

The sharing hooked me. Talking in front of 1000 people had never been a problem for me. Sales, marketing and starting my own projects had been my work and spiritual organizations and traditions had been my hobby! Happy-go-lucky but was it ever real. Now, just considering sharing something personal in a CoDA meeting in front of these 5-6 women made me sweat and my heart beat so hard I had to cover my stomach to hide the vibrations. Well, that's annoying! Damn --- challenge accepted. I came back. I shared some more. Wow! I feel... Happy? Brave? Real? What do I care what these people think? Why does it matter? I looked at the steps workbook and joined the group workshops doing the steps. I'm honest and nobody judges me. Nobody's explaining to me what I should feel. Nobody's taking offense. Really? So I came back.

I don't know what they think of me but I'm part of this group now. I feel I'm safe. Maybe it will change, maybe I'll move, maybe it's all temporary, but at least I know that I can find a group like this somewhere, or start my own, where I don't feel I have to lie and adjust my feelings, thoughts and needs to fit what I think others expect of me. Maybe I can be real in other parts of life too. For now I'm still a fake, I'm still an actor, I'm still bending over all the time and perhaps I'm still taking my silent, unconscious revenge on those poor, lesser souls I once vowed to serve. But at least I know what it's like to be real, and I'm learning to be me.

Slowly I realized that the anger was mine. The feelings of sadness were mine. The fear was mine and it was me who was hiding myself. It was all me. I no longer make a stranger of myself, at least to myself, and as I continue down this path I hope I'll also be able to make myself known also to others.

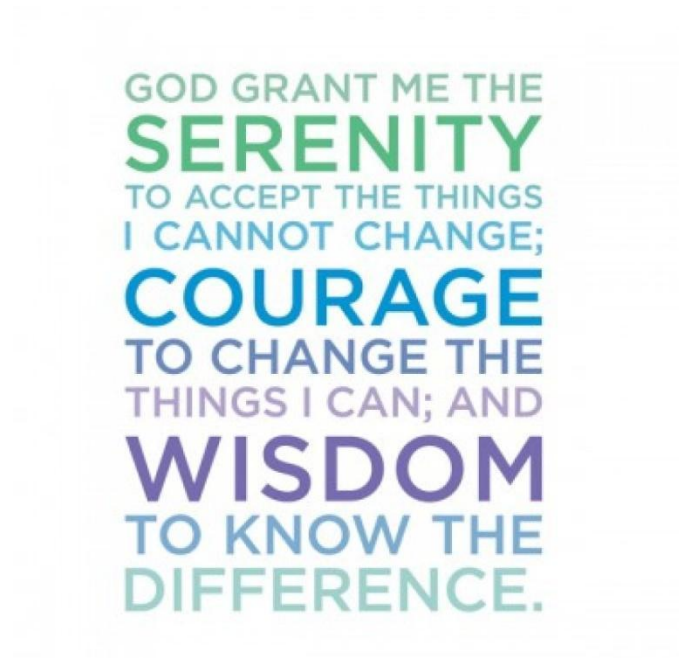
Maybe then I'll be a less lonely, a little happier, and most importantly of all: a little less mom's, sorry, I mean God's, hidden servant and then, perhaps, I'll become a little more human instead.

Andreas

Affirmation



The Serenity Prayer



Meeting Close

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

“Keep coming back, it works if you work it – so work it, you’re worth it!”