



**coda-tulsa.org**  
**(Wednesday Group)**  
**Meeting Starter Packet of Co-Dependents Anonymous**

**Welcome** (Leader for the week reads as indicated by ">")

> Good evening and welcome to this meeting of CoDA: Co-Dependents Anonymous. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, a (recovering) codependent, and I am the Meeting Leader tonight. Please turn your cell phone OFF for the duration of this meeting.

After a moment of silence, please join me in 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.**

> **OPEN**

> Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship of people 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 Promises 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 Anonymous, we can each realize a new joy, acceptance and serenity in our lives.

> **Newcomer(s)?** Please turn to the last page (page 7) and we will take turns reading *The CoDA Welcome for Newcomers*, one paragraph at a time. Feel free to "PASS" if you wish not to read.

> Now, on page 2, let's take turns reading the Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence **one section** at a time.



## **Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence-**

### **Denial Patterns:**

Codependents often. . .

- have difficulty identifying what they are feeling.
- minimize, alter, or deny how they truly feel.
- perceive themselves as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of others.
- lack empathy for the feelings and needs of others.
- label others with their negative traits.
- can take care of themselves without any help from others.
- mask their pain in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation.
- express negativity or aggression in indirect and passive ways.
- do not recognize the unavailability of those people to whom they are attracted.

### **Low Self-Esteem Patterns:**

Codependents often. . .

- have difficulty making decisions.
- judge what they think, say, or do harshly, as never good enough.
- are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts.
- value others' approval of their thinking, feelings, and behavior over their own.
- do not perceive themselves as a lovable or worthwhile person.
- constantly seek recognition that they think they deserve.
- have difficulty admitting that they made a mistake.
- need to appear to be right in the eyes of others and will even lie to look good.
- are unable to ask others to meet their needs or desires.
- perceive themselves as superior to others.
- look to others to provide their sense of safety.
- have difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects.
- have trouble setting healthy priorities.

### **Compliance Patterns:**

Codependents often. . .

- are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long.
- compromise their own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger.
- put aside their own interests in order to do what others want.
- are hyper-vigilant regarding the feelings of others and take on those feelings.
- are afraid to express their beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differ from those of others.
- accept sexual attention when they want love.
- make decisions without regard to the consequences.
- give up their truth to gain the approval of others or to avoid change.



## **Control Patterns:**

Codependents often. . .

- believe most people are incapable of taking care of themselves.
- attempt to convince others what to think, do, or feel.
- they freely offer advice and direction to others without being asked.
- become resentful when others decline their help or reject their advice.
- lavish gifts and favors on those they want to influence.
- use sexual attention to gain approval and acceptance.
- have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others.
- demand that their needs be met by others.
- use charm and charisma to convince others of their capacity to be caring and compassionate.
- use blame and shame to emotionally exploit others.
- refuse to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate.
- adopt an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes.
- use terms of recovery in an attempt to control the behavior of others.
- pretend to agree with others to get what they want.

## **Avoidance Patterns:**

Codependents often. . .

- act in ways that invite others to reject, shame, or express anger toward them.
- judge harshly what others think, say, or do.
- avoid emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a means of maintaining distance.
- allow their addictions to people, places, and things to distract them from achieving intimacy in relationships.
- use indirect and evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation.
- diminish their capacity to have healthy relationships by declining to use all the tools of recovery.
- suppress their feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable.
- pull people toward them, but when they get close, they push them away.
- refuse to give up their self-will to avoid surrendering to a power that is greater than themselves.
- believe displays of emotion are a sign of weakness.
- withhold expressions of appreciation.

(next page)



> The **Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous** are the guidelines for our individual recovery. Now we'll take turns reading the steps one at a time. Feel free to PASS if you wish.

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 Co-Dependents Anonymous:**

Tonight's featured Tradition is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Meeting Leader will read the featured Tradition to the group.)

> As per the 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition, Co-Dependents Anonymous is a self-supporting program and our operations are funded solely by donations. All contributions are appreciated.

(7<sup>th</sup> Tradition: Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.)

## Sharing Guidelines

### > A few things to remember about sharing:

Each person should feel free to read and share, but not compelled to.

When you begin to share, start with your first name.

Time is limited. Keep each sharing to within **3-5 minutes** or less, being mindful of your time.

Try to keep what you share in “first person” with references to “I, me and mine” instead of “you, us and ours”.

No crosstalk\*. There should be no conversations, advice giving, comments or questions across the circle of this meeting. Save those until after the meeting has concluded. When sharing, please refrain from referring to anyone present by name.

When you are finished sharing, you may simply thank the group.

And remember our meetings are held in confidence and are based in trust in each other. What you see here, what you hear here, when you leave here, let it stay here.

> Who will volunteer to read the entry in “The Language of Letting Go” for today,       (date)       ?

> This meeting is focused primarily on studying the 12 steps. We use Melody Beattie’s “Codependents Guide to the 12 Steps” as our guide\*.

> The 7-8pm meeting is focused on applying the 12 Steps and tools of the program in our everyday lives. Newcomers and others may ask questions or ask for feedback in the form of experience, strength and hope.

> ANNOUNCEMENTS (if any)

> (First of the month) We celebrate CoDA milestones at the first of every month. Are there any CoDA milestones to celebrate tonight? 1 month... 2.. 3.. 6.. 9.. or any yearly? (if any)

> We’re currently on Step (#, read the Step). As we go around the room reading tonight’s designated pages, each person is invited to read **one or two paragraphs\***, but not compelled to. After you have read, you’re welcome to share your thoughts and feelings or you can simply “pass”. Who would like to read first?

> (Optional, at 6:55 PM) We have time left for a short share before we close. Is there anyone who has not had an opportunity to share and would like to?

\* **NOTE:** Please refer to our “Crosstalk Guidelines” for more information.

\* **NOTE:** The use of Melody Beattie’s literature is not an endorsement by Co-Dependents Anonymous.

\* **NOTE:** Why only one or two paragraphs? We follow the “Activities” at the end of each chapter for those currently working the 12 Steps. **Please avoid reading more**, unless asked to by the leader, to stay in sync. You can download and print worksheets from: <http://coda-tulsa.org/>

## **Closing:**

> And now just before we conclude this CoDA meeting let's read the Twelve Promises of Codependents Anonymous. Feel free to pass if you wish.

> 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 others and myself. 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 that 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.

> Co-Dependents Anonymous is a program free to all who wish to attend and its cornerstone is trust in one another. We believe that by helping and supporting each other with the help of a power greater than ourselves, we can find more meaningful, loving and peaceful lives.

After a moment of silence, those who wish to are encouraged to join me in the Serenity Prayer.

**God, (slight pause)  
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.**

***Thank you for being here! Keep coming back!***



## **CoDA Welcome for Newcomers**

(Each person reads one paragraph)

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.

Codependence is a deeply rooted compulsive behavior that 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 that 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. Our sharing 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.

> **Service Animal Announcement** (If a Service Animal is present): While in the presence of a service animal, please respect the following boundaries – pretend the animal is not here, do not pet the animal, and please only address the Handler. Thank you.

***(back to bottom of page #1)***