

NEWSLETTER

March 2008

EACH MONTH THE CODA NEWSLETTER WILL FOCUS ON DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE STEPS AND TRADITIONS WORKBOOK.



Steps and Traditions

STEP THREE:

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.

Step Three offers us the opportunity to make a decision and have faith in a power greater than ourselves. ...

The primary purpose of this Step is to begin living our lives in a new way. Finally, we have a tool that works and provides us the freedom and acceptance we were incapable of finding through self-will alone. This Step suggests a willingness to live in this decision. We surrender ourselves to a Higher Power of our own understanding; when we do this, we can begin new, more satisfying relationships with ourselves and others. ...

Some of us believed that making a decision to "turn our will and lives over to the care of God" meant that we needed to give up ourselves: what we thought, wanted and felt. Indeed, for many years, we often did lose our sense of self and autonomy. Our fear of this may cause great resistance. Many of us find comfort in those who have walked before us, when we see and hear how this Step transformed them into the people they were meant to be.

Feeling a sense of urgency, feeling that we have to do something different, or feeling resentment, can all be signals that we need to let go and work Step Three. Positive affirmations support us in learning new behavior; using these affirmations to replace 'old tapes' in our head can open us to a Higher Power's will.

A FEW QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU WORK STEP THREE:

1. What does "made a decision" mean to me?
2. Am I ready to let go and let God have a hand in managing my life?
3. If I cannot trust myself, how can I trust a Higher Power? How do I practice trusting?

TRADITION THREE:

The only requirement for membership in CoDA is a desire for healthy and loving relationships.

The program of Codependents Anonymous is open to anyone with a desire for healthy and loving relationships. Because it is so broad definition, Tradition Three allows each of us to belong. It helps us to stay out of our judgments about who should and should not attend meetings. ...

Codependency can be a subtle disease. To have healthy and loving relationships, we must decide that this is truly what we want. Keeping this desire in minds helps us to replace our desire to protect ourselves at all times, and at all costs. ...

As we do our service work, we can remember healthy = functional = boundaries. Again, we can keep Tradition Three, and our new ideas about healthy relationships, in our hearts and minds. If we are struggling with someone or something, we remember that we are working on being healthy. ...

A FEW QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU WORK TRADITION THREE:

1. What is a healthy and loving relationship?
2. What might this Tradition allow me to do that I don't currently do?
3. Which 'needs' of mine may be stronger than my desire for healthy and loving relationships?

The Twelve Steps & Traditions Workbooks are available at your local group meeting place.

Promise Three

I know a new freedom.



Avoiding people and circumstances

Some of us may fear other so much that we avoid any degree of closeness or intimacy. We work hard to prevent placing ourselves in a vulnerable position. We become skilled at hiding our fears, especially when things seem out of control. We may remain silent even when we experience injustice or abuse. We may fall into martyr roles or act helpless to avoid confrontation or accountability. We may place ourselves in a subservient position and judge ourselves harshly. We may believe we're not acceptable enough to live a life with relationships, purpose or happiness.

Our codependence worsens; our fear and shame overwhelm us. We control and avoid others even more. But these behaviors are temporary fixes; our fears always return and our shame is ever present.

Many of us seek false gods. We numb our feelings with alcohol, drugs, food, sex or work; these often turn into chronic addictions and compound our problems. None of them provide us freedom or peace.

Regardless of whether we position ourselves as "better than" or "less than," as a controller or avoider, we behave in self-centered ways. Equality is lost.

Page 15, *Codependents Anonymous*

What is Codependence?

Many of us struggle with the questions: What is codependence? Am I codependent? We want precise definitions and diagnostic criteria before we decide. Codependents Anonymous, as stated in the Eighth Tradition, is a non-professional Fellowship. We offer no definitions or diagnostic criteria for codependence. What we do offer from our experience are characteristic attitudes and behaviors that describe what our codependent histories have been like. We believe that recovery begins with an honest self-diagnosis. We come to believe that recovery begins with an honest self-diagnosis. We come to accept our inability to maintain healthy and nurturing relationships with ourselves and others. We begin to recognize that the cause lies in long-standing destructive patterns of living.

These patterns and characteristics are offered as a tool to aid in self-evaluation. They may be particularly helpful to newcomers.

Denial Patterns

Codependents:

- have difficulty identifying feelings,
- minimize, alter or deny their feelings,
- perceive themselves as being completely unselfish, dedicated to the well-being of others.

Low Self-Esteem Patterns

Codependents:

- have difficulty making decisions,
- judge their thought, words and actions harshly, as never being good enough,
- are embarrassed to receive recognition, praise or gifts,
- are unable to ask others to meet their needs or wants,
- value other people's approval of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors over Self- approval.

Compliance Patterns

Codependents:

- compromise their values and integrity to avoid rejection and other people's Anger,
- are very sensitive to others' feelings and assume the same feelings,
- are extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long,
- place a higher value on others' opinions and feelings, and are too afraid to express differing viewpoints or feelings,
- accept sex as a substitute for love

Control Patterns

Codependents:

- believe most others are incapable of taking care of themselves
- attempt to convince others what they should think and feel,
- become resentful when others refuse their offers of help
- freely offer advice and guidance without being asked
- lavish gifts and favors on those they care about,
- use sex to gain approval and acceptance,
- have to be needed in order to have a relationship with others



CoDA RESOURCES:

Desert CoDA Info Line — 760.779.8878
www.desertcoda.org

CoDA National Office — 602.277.7991
www.codependents.org

So-Cal Regional Office — 323.340.3762

The Valleys Community — 818.379.3300
www.coda-tvcc.org

Orange County CoDA — 714.573.0174
www.occoda.org

San Diego County CoDA — 619.222.1244
www.sdcoda.org



Desert CoDA Community Group Business Meeting



Day: 3rd Saturday of the Month (**Next DCCG meeting: March 15, 2008**)
Time: 11:30am – 1:00pm
Place: Eisenhower Medical Ctr., 3rd Floor Conference Room
 39000 Bob Hope Dr. Rancho Mirage, CA 92270

Purpose: For DCCG Officers, Committee Heads, and CoDA Meeting Group Service Representatives to meet, exchange insights from their meetings, make contacts for Regional and CoDA Inc. and to make available information regarding CoDA. Everyone is welcome but **only DCCG Members have voting rights.**

DCCG Board Officers:

- Chairman: Steve S.
- Vice Chairman: *Vacant*
- Treasurer: Steve C.
- Secretary: David M.
- Regional Group Rep. (RGR): Katie

January 15, 2008 DCCG Business Meeting Minutes:

Due to lack of attendance, meeting minutes were not recorded.

Codependence and service work

In our codependence, many of us use service work and other CoDA activities as a way to gain our value, worth and identity. We satisfy our hunger for an identity, or to feel needed, by becoming overinvolved in our families, relatives, friends, careers and other activities – many times to the detriment of our own needs. We literally give until it hurts our wellbeing.

Some of us isolate or avoid being available to others, fearful of our abilities or the judgments of others. Some of us are working to replace our controlling behaviors with healthy ones. Balance and workaholicism are other issues with which many of us struggle. "How do we devote our time and talent in healthy ways?" we ask.

Our answer is simple. Our Twelfth Step suggests we practice these principles in all our affairs. It doesn't matter if our codependence focuses on fixing, controlling, avoiding or isolating. We can experience more personal recovery through service work by applying our recovery tools. Service work is a safe place to practice our recovery. It can become a mirror that reflects which areas of our personality may need refinement or change.

Each of us involved in service work in the CoDA Fellowship addresses our own recovery concerns at some point. It's a wonderful opportunity for growth. Service work allows us opportunities to practice setting boundaries, working with and accepting others, refraining from behaving in self-defeating ways, and developing healthy and loving relationships with other recovering codependents. It also helps us to become more sensitive to differences between caregiving and caretaking, responding and reacting, becoming a human being versus a human doing. ...

Pages 89-90, Codependents Anonymous

Listening

One skill that everyone develops by attending CoDA meetings is how to listen. There are several things about a CoDA meeting that foster good listening skills. The most important of these is the "no crosstalk" rule. This rule is very important in establishing and maintaining safety for sharing in CoDA meetings. Also, it impresses the importance of listening in order to give everyone at the meeting an opportunity to share without fear of criticism.

Another benefit of "no crosstalk" is that it requires that each person be silent for the meeting, to just be present and listen without being called upon to respond. This experience is different from listening during a conversation or a workshop. Not having to formulate a verbal response or form a logical conclusion frees the mind for deep thinking. When something triggers a thought, the mind is free to pursue it internally.

Listening in this setting may stimulate such a flurry of memories that it is difficult to "track" what someone else is saying. A small part of the speaker's story may trigger some very important part of your own, newly-remembered, never-told story. This process is very bene-

ficial to recovery because it focuses attention on detailed memories of your own personal history.

In order to accept this process as normal and beneficial, you may have to overcome some shame about "self-talk," your inability to track what others are saying, or your inability to listen properly. Therapeutic literature treats these obstacles to recovery, so you may to develop a healthy disrespect for authority. Believing that the "authorities" are wrong, misguided, or misinformed will allow you to refuse to accept these shaming messages.

Listening to other people as they share their recovery stories is beneficial in another sense. If you hear part of your story coming from another person, it may quickly dispel the feelings of terminal uniqueness. Identification with another person's story creates a way to feel similar. When this becomes a familiar feeling, trust is developed. Sharing can then occur on a deeper level.

Many newcomers already have excellent listening skills, since many dysfunctional parenting patterns require them. These include empathetic listening; sympathetic listening; anticipation and avoidance of verbal punishment; interpretation of special vocabularies, inflections, or emotional cues; or outright "mind reading". Within bounds, these are good skills to have, even in healthy relationships. ...

Pages 24-25, Newcomers Handbook

The following passage is submitted by members of CoDA's fellowship. The names are fictional. Any similarity to actual persons is purely coincidental.

CODA SOLEIL

We were talking about boundaries the other day. Boundaries come in many forms from financial to relationship. Growing up, boundaries seemed to be either over wound or non existent. In Raylean's, Belle's and my case, communication was mixed. We would hear "just say no to drugs" at school and "pass the joint" at home. Many of us come to CODA to re-learn boundaries. Boundaries allow us the opportunity to afford self care. So as our circle tightened, Maya decided to let go of friends that could use an On and On meeting, or two. Heartfelt brought up the subject of healthy relationships and the faith and pain of letting go. In true Codependent form, I felt her pain as I'm going through something similar. We all decided there are no victims, only choices, and we choose to recognize unhealthy behaviors, set healthy boundaries, and nip bad situations before they get out of control. To celebrate our hope, we decided to go dancing at a place that has great music, is safe and fun.

To be continued...



Where can I find a meeting ?

MEETING INFORMATION UPDATED FEBRUARY 2008

MONDAY

Palm Desert, CA
6:00am – 7:00am
• Women’s Meeting •
Open/Step Study
Hope Lutheran Church
Main Office Building
*Look for a meeting sign
past the Main chapel.
Walk east from en-
trance on Portola*
Contact: Katie M
760.773.5345

Palm Desert, CA
5:45pm – 6:15pm
• Newcomer Meeting •
Open/Share/Discussion
Intro to CoDA Q & A
St. Margaret’s Church
Hwy 74 at Haystack
Contact: Linda S.
760.347.3483

Palm Desert, CA
6:30pm – 7:30pm
• Open Meeting •
Steps & Traditions
Into Action CoDA
St. Margaret’s Church
Hwy 74 at Haystack
Contact: Eva W
760.772.0348

TUESDAY

Palm Desert, CA
6:00am – 7:00am
• Men’s Meeting •
Open/Share/Discussion
Baker’s Square
7307 Hwy 111
Contact: Tim
760.831.7481

Indio, CA
7:30pm – 9:00pm
• Open Meeting •
Book/Share/Discussion
Candlelight
ABC Club
44374 Palm Street
Contact:
760.342.6616

*If I take a step
back and look at
this day as if I
were watching a
movie, I am sure
to find at least one
moment where I
can enjoy some
comic relief.*

WEDNESDAY

Palm Desert, CA
6:00pm – 7:00pm
• Open Meeting •
Steps and Traditions
Promises and Patterns
CoDA Letting Go
Christ of the Desert
Church
SW Corner of Fred
Waring & San Pablo

Palm Springs, CA
7:00pm – 8:00pm
• GLBT Meeting •
Book/Discussion/Topic
Rainbow CoDA
Desert Pride Center
Upstairs at the Sun Ctr.
611 S. Palm Canyon
Suite 201
Contact:
760.327.2313

*If you understand,
things are just as
they are; if you do
not understand,
things are just as
they are.*

THURSDAY

Palm Desert, CA
6:00am – 7:00am
• Men’s Meeting •
Open/Book Study
Baker’s Square
73075 Hwy 111
Contact: Don
760.702.4486

Palm Desert, CA
10:30am – 12:00pm
• Open Meeting •
Book/Share/Discussion
Christ of the Desert Church
SW Corner of Fred
Waring and San Pablo
Contact: Judy
760.346.1903

Rancho Mirage, CA
6:30pm – 7:45pm
• Women’s Meeting •
Steps/Traditions/Discuss-
ion with Newsletter
CoDA Solais
41750 Rancho Las
Palmas Dr. Bldg. F,
Contact: Katherine
760.534.4040

SATURDAY

Rancho Mirage, CA
10:00am – 11:30am
• Open Meeting •
Share/Discussion
Eisenhower Medical Ctr.
3rd Floor Conference Room
39000 Bob Hope Dr.
*Directions at Main Entrance
Front Desk*
Contact: Nan J
760.776.5673

SUNDAY

Joshua Tree, CA
6:00pm – 7:30pm
• Closed Meeting •
Big Book/Step Study/
Traditions/Promises/
Discussion
Hi-Desert Continuing
Care Center
6722 Whitefeather
Road
Contact: Judy M
760.365.2944
* * * * *

7th Tradition Information:
Suggested percentages calculated **after Meeting Expenses** are deducted and “**Prudent Reserve**” is established. *Treasurers are suggested to take a group conscience to consider this.*

60% Local Community Group Contributions:
Desert CoDA Community
PO Box 10132, Palm Desert, CA 92255
30% CoDA Regional Contributions:
So-CAL CoDA Community
PO Box 175, Orange, CA 92856
10% CoDA, Inc. Contributions:
CoDA Inc.
PO Box 33577, Phoenix, AZ 85067

This Newsletter and separate Meeting List are available to print out at our website: www.desertcoda.org

Any corrections or updates to meeting information please send an email to: dccnewsletter@aol.com or call our info line: 760.779.8878

How do I find a sponsor?

The CoDA pamphlet, “Sponsorship in CoDA,” lists three suggestions for finding a sponsor when there are a few “old-timers” within our fellowship.

New CoDA groups usually have members with long histories in other Twelve Step programs, both as members and as sponsors. While they may not have experience with CoDA’s application of the steps, they do understand what it means to work the Steps in daily life. Such a person may be a candidate to sponsor you. There is form of sponsorship arising out this kind of situation called “co-sponsorship.” If you choose this method, you and another CoDA member sponsor each other. You can meet regularly to share what you are learning about the Steps and from others and from reading CoDA literature. As you discuss various aspects of the program, you may become aware that each of you has some answers within. Some CoDA members have started sponsorship groups which meet weekly or bi-weekly. This group consists of people who make

a commitment to work the Twelve Steps together. Discussion is focused on applying the Steps to specific issues that are related to recovery from codependence.

Pages 98-99, Codependents Anonymous

Sexual Boundaries

Healthy and safe sexual boundaries are recommended from the very beginning in CoDA. It is not wise to begin new sexual or love relationships when first attending CoDA. Anesthetizing the pain of failed codependent relationships by immediately beginning a new relationship is a part of the disease. Staying out of new sexual relationships is a good stop-gap to end the dysfunctional behavior long enough to figure out what is going on inside.

Consider doing much of your in-depth sharing and socializing with members of the same gender. This is difficult for many newcomers who feel more comfortable in groups of the opposite sex, or even alone with one person of the opposite sex.

Codependence is a behavior partly learned from a parent (or other adult) who needed emotional support from a child. This

inappropriate involvement of a child in an adult’s emotional issues teaches children everything they don’t need to know about the opposite sex, and neglects to teach appropriate same-sex behavior.

Whatever your codependent experience has been, you will find other CoDA members of your same sex who have very similar experiences to share. ...

Pages 35-36, Newcomers Handbook

12-STEP PROGRAM CONTACTS:

- 760.568.4004 Alcoholics Anonymous**
- 888.512.0061 Al-Anon - National**
- 760.614.9554 Al-Anon - Local**
- 800.662.4357 Cocaine Hotline**
- 800.736.9805 Families Anonymous**
- 888.424.3577 Gamblers Anonymous**
- 800.766.6779 Marijuana Anonymous**
- 800.642.0666 Narcotics Anonymous**
- 877.879.6422 Nicotine Anonymous**
- 760.771.8001 Overeaters Anonymous**
- 800.477.8191 Sex Addicts Anonymous**