

Sojourner's Meeting Script

(Please hand out: *The CoDA Welcome*; *The 12 Steps*; *The 12 Traditions*; the weekly reading (see page 6); *The Daily Meditation Book* (the little red book), *The Affirmations*, *The Promises & Coin/Newcomer Packets*)

1. Good evening and welcome to the Sojourner's meeting of CoDependents

Anonymous. My name is _____, and I'll be your chair for tonight.

2. In order that we may maintain our focus on what everyone has to share, we ask that you please refrain from the use of electronic devices and food consumption for the duration of the meeting. Also, please note this is an adults-only meeting but teenagers are welcome. Thank you for respecting these boundaries.

3. Let's start the meeting with a moment of silence; followed by the Serenity Prayer:

(Brief moment of silence, then begin by saying "God...")

"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.

4. Co-Dependents Anonymous is a fellowship whose common problem is an inability to maintain functional relationships. We share with one another in the hopes of solving our common problem and helping others to recover. The only requirement for membership is a desire for healthy and fulfilling relationships with others and ourselves.

CoDA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

We use the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions as adapted from Alcoholics Anonymous for our purposes as the principles of our program and guides to living healthy lives.

The parallel between the disease of addiction and the disease of codependency is clear. An addiction, whether to a mind-altering chemical or to a relationship, ultimately affects every area of the addict's life in a progressively disastrous way. We seek recovery from codependency by practicing the Twelve Steps of CoDA.

5. Will someone please read the CoDA Welcome?

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 codependency.

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*.

6. So that we can get to know each other better, it is the custom of this meeting that we introduce ourselves by first name only. Going around the room beginning on my left, we will now have general introductions.

(After completion of the introductions, the Leader then says ...)

Again, my name is _____. Welcome everyone.

We would like to extend a special welcome to newcomers. If this is your first CoDA meeting, please identify yourself so that you may receive a newcomer's coin, packet & a hug, handshake or fist bump. Are there any newcomers?

(Ask for their names & pass out newcomer chips, newcomer packets & hugs or handshakes – clap after every newcomer is welcomed.)

Are there any people attending their second or third meeting? (Ask for their names)

Please feel free to ask any questions you may have after the meeting. Also, please check out our literature table in the lobby after the meeting, some of which is free. For further additional information, we invite you to check out our website at www.coda-pdx.org.

In this meeting, we celebrate lengths of CoDA recovery. Does anyone have 30 days? 60 days? 90 days? 6 months? 9 months? 1 year? Multiples of years?

(Pass out relevant chips and hugs and clap after each)

Let's hear it for one day at a time!

(Clap)

If you have received a coin, and would like to, please pass it to the left so that it can be touched with love.

7. Will someone please read the Twelve Steps?

The Twelve Steps

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 co-dependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

8. Will someone please read the Twelve Traditions?

The Twelve Traditions

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 non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. CoDA, as such, ought never to 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 to 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.

9. Will someone please read:

On the 1st meeting of the month: “Enabling”

On the 2nd meeting of the month: “The Traits of a Codependent”

On the 3rd meeting of the month: “The 15 Characteristic Behaviors of Co-Dependents”

On the 4th meeting of the month: “The Qualities of a Codependent”

On the 5th meeting of the month: Chairperson may choose

WEEK 1- ENABLING

Enabling is defined as reacting to a person in such a way as to shield them from experiencing the full impact of the harmful consequences of their behavior. Enabling behavior differs from helping in that it permits or allows the person to be irresponsible. These behaviors include:

- Protection from the natural consequences of behavior.
- Keeping secrets about behavior from others in order to keep the peace.
- Making excuses for the behavior. (School, friends, legal authorities, work, family members)
- Bailing out of trouble. (Debts, fixing tickets, paying lawyers, providing jobs)
- Blaming others for the dependent person’s behavior. (Friends, teachers, employers, family, self)
- Seeing the problem as the result of something else. (Shyness, adolescence, loneliness)
- Avoiding the chemically dependent person in order to keep the peace. (Out of sight, out of mind)
- Giving money that is undeserved or unearned.
- Attempting to control. (Planning activities, choosing friends, getting jobs)
- Making threats that have no follow-through or consistency.
- Taking care of the chemically dependent person. (Doing what they should be doing for themselves)

WEEK 2 - TRAITS OF A CODEPENDENT

Healthy emotional behavior taken to extremes becomes unhealthy and dysfunctional. Codependency is the delusional addiction of trying to alter interior feelings by influencing people, things, or events. Control, or the lack of it, is central to every aspect of life. I exhibit codependent behaviors when...

- My good feelings about who I am stem from receiving approval and being liked by you.
- Your struggle affects my serenity. My mental attention focuses on solving your problems or relieving your pain, which in turn bolsters my self-esteem.
- My mental attention is focused on pleasing and protecting you.
- My mental attention is focused on manipulating you to do it my way.
- My time is spent sharing your interests and hobbies while my own are put aside.
- Your clothing, personal appearance, and behavior are dictated by my desires as I feel you are a reflection of me.
- I am not aware of what I want or how I feel. I am aware of what you want or how you feel. If I don't know, I'll assume.
- The dreams I have for the future are linked to you.
- My fear of your anger or rejection determines what I do or say.
- I use giving as a way of feeling safe in our relationship.
- My social circle diminishes as I involve myself with you.
- Putting aside my values to connect with you, I value your opinion and way of doing things more than my own.
- The quality of my life is in direct relation to the quality of yours.

WEEK 3 - THE 15 CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIORS OF CODEPENDENTS

<p>1. Typically, you come from a dysfunctional home where your emotional needs were not met.</p>	<p>8. Your self-esteem may be critically low and deep inside you may not believe you deserve to be happy. Rather, you may believe you must earn the right to enjoy life.</p>
<p>2. Having received little real nurturing yourself, you may try to fill this unmet need vicariously by becoming a caregiver, especially to people who appear in some way needy.</p>	<p>9. You may have a desperate need to control your partner and your relationships, having experienced little security in childhood. You mask your efforts to control people and situations as being helpful.</p>
<p>3. Because you were never able to change your parent(s) into the warm loving caretaker(s) you longed for, you may respond deeply to the familiar type of emotionally unavailable person whom you can again try to change through your love.</p>	<p>10. In a relationship, you may be much more in touch with your dream of how it could be, rather than the reality of your situation.</p>
<p>4. Terrified of abandonment, you may do anything to keep a relationship from dissolving.</p>	<p>11. You may be addicted to relationships and emotional pain.</p>
<p>5. Almost nothing may be too much trouble, take too much time, or be too expensive if it will “help” the person you are involved with.</p>	<p>12. You may be predisposed emotionally and often biochemically to becoming addicted to drugs, alcohol, and certain foods, particularly sugary ones.</p>
<p>6. Accustomed to lack of love in personal relationships, you may be willing to wait, hope, and try harder to please.</p>	<p>13. By being drawn to people with problems that need fixing or by being enmeshed in situations that are chaotic, uncertain, and emotionally painful, you may avoid focusing on your responsibility for yourself.</p>
<p>7. You may be willing to take far more than 50% of the responsibility, guilt, or blame in any relationship.</p>	<p>14. You may have a tendency toward episodes of depression, which you try to put off with the excitement of an unstable relationship.</p>
	<p>15. You may not be attracted to partners who are kind, stable, reliable, and interested in you. You find such “nice” people boring.</p>

WEEK 4 – THE QUALITIES OF A CODEPENDENT

Many of the traits and behaviors associated with codependency are not in themselves bad. In fact, they are often valued in our culture and spiritual traditions. Only when they are taken to extremes do they become unhealthy or dysfunctional.

- A high level of organizational ability.
- Competence at a wide variety of tasks and the ability to learn additional ones quickly.
- Stability and resistance to panic.
- Skilled at diplomacy and emotional manipulation.
- Resilience with a high tolerance to pain.
- High energy with good resistance to fatigue.
- Good administrative skills.
- The ability to defer gratification indefinitely.
- Crisis intervention skills.
- A strong sense of morality and right and wrong.
- Loyalty and willingness to put the needs of others before one's own.
- A capacity to never ask, "What's in it for me?"
- The ability to do an enormous amount of work for minimal payoff.
- A high level of nurturing and caretaking skills.
- A tendency toward over-achievement, leading to the ability to work consistently at 120% of capacity.
- Gives low priority to emotional needs and feelings.
- Has low self-esteem with a very dependent personality. It's unlikely that a person with high self-esteem would put up with a fraction of what a codependent does.

10. It is our tradition to ask a member celebrating a CoDA birthday to chair the meeting.

(Check the calendar and announce who is chairing next. If there is no one listed, read the following:)

We have no one signed up to lead next week's meeting. May we please have a volunteer?

(Write it in the calendar.)

If you wish to, please feel free to add your CoDA birthday to the calendar.

Also on the clipboard is a Phone List which can be used as a valuable tool in recovery. This is not a "membership" list nor is it used for tracking attendance. Placing your name on this list is purely voluntary and signifies that you are willing to have other members contact you to discuss CoDA or to share or offer support and information. Please consider attending six meetings before adding your name to the list. In the spirit of anonymity, please do not share this list with those who are not members of this group.

(Pass the clipboard containing the phone list and calendar.)

11. We will now observe the Seventh Tradition. Our Seventh Tradition states that we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. This money is used to pay rent; obtain literature, and support local and regional CoDA groups. We ask that you give as you can. The suggested contribution is \$2. Newcomers or people attending their first, second or third meeting are not expected to contribute. I will now pass the basket.

(Pass the metal basket)

12. Would all those willing to be a sponsor please raise their hands?

13. There is another format of sponsorship known as co-sponsorship. In this method, you and another CoDA member sponsor each other. You can meet regularly to share what you are learning about the steps 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. Would all those interested in co-sponsorship please raise their hands? If you are interested in co-sponsorship, please mark the appropriate column on the phone list.

14. May we now hear from the Literature person?

15. May we now hear from the Group Service Representative?

16. Are there any CoDA-related announcements?

(Await announcements and then read...)

This meeting ends at 8:30 pm. On the second Tuesday of each month, we invite you to attend our business meeting, which begins at 8:40. We gather after the meeting for fellowship in this room and at McMenamín's on the corner of Murray & Allen to continue our growth in recovery. All are welcome! Please join us. May I have two volunteers to help break down the meeting and clean up? Thank you.

17. I will now read the CoDA Guidelines for Sharing.

As we pursue our recovery, it's important for each of us to speak as we are able. Many of us find speaking among others, especially strangers, a very difficult task.

We encourage people to begin slowly and carefully. It is the intention of every CoDA member and group not to ridicule or embarrass anyone. We meet to help others and ourselves by sharing our experience, strength, and hope. Share from your own experience what you have learned from recovery.

The sharing of our experiences is best done with "I" statements. "Crosstalk" and "feedback" are discouraged.

Crosstalk can be giving unsolicited feedback, advice giving, answering, and making "you" and "we" statements. It may also include minimizing another person's feeling or experiences, physical contact or touch or calling another person present by name.

In our meetings, we speak about our own experience, and we listen without comment to what others share. We work toward taking responsibility in our own lives, rather than giving advice to others. Crosstalk guidelines help keep our meeting a safe place.

Please limit your share to 5 minutes. When the time has run out, you will hear a signal that your time has expired. Thank you in advance for respecting this boundary.

Would someone be willing to be our timer?

18. Would someone please read from the CoDA Daily Meditation Book for today's date?

19. The chairperson/leader shares first.

(The leader's share is NOT timed.)

20. The meeting is now open for individual sharing. NOTE: On the third Tuesday of each month, the chair reads the Step corresponding to the month after their share.

Start the closing section at 8:20 p.m.

21. Closing Section

As we bring this meeting to a close, we would like to remind you that CoDA is an anonymous program. We ask that you respect the anonymity and confidentiality of each person here.

We ask that what you see here, what is said here,
When you leave here, let it stay here.
ALL: Here! Here!

22. Will someone please read The Affirmations?

The CoDA Affirmations

- 1. I feel comfortable and involved with people and authority figures.**
- 2. I have a strong identity and give myself approval.**
- 3. I accept and use personal criticism in a positive way.**
- 4. I am becoming free from searching to fulfill my need to be abandoned.**
- 5. As I face my own victim role, I am attracted by strengths and understand weaknesses in my love and work relationships.**
- 6. I am getting well through loving and focusing on myself.**
- 7. It feels great to stand up for myself.**
- 8. I enjoy serenity and peace.**
- 9. I am attracted to people who love and take care of themselves.**
- 10. I am free to feel and express all of my feelings.**
- 11. I have a healthy sense of self-esteem.**
- 12. I am freed from fear in my relationships as I trust and rely on my higher power.**
- 13. Through the CoDA group, I examine and let go of codependent behaviors I learned while living in my dysfunctional family of origin.**

23. Will someone please read the Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous?

(As *The Promises* are being read, please place copies of the *CoDA Closing Prayer* around the room so that everyone can see/read it.)

Twelve Promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous

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 these 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 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 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.

24. Will all those who care to please join hands and recite the CoDA Closing Prayer?

(We all read...)

We thank you Higher Power

For all 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 'cause you're
worth it!"***