



WORKING CoDA's STEPS FOUR & FIVE - USING THE 40 QUESTIONS

STEP FOUR:

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

STEP FIVE:

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

LEARNING TO LOVE THE SELF

There are many ways to work Steps Four and Five in CoDA. We lovingly offer this as another tool. We hope it will be a gentle yet effective approach to discovering what may be standing in the way of having healthy and loving relationships. The next set of questions will guide you through sections of *Co-Dependents Anonymous*, also known as the CoDA Blue Book [Third Edition] for background information and insights helpful to thoroughly work Step Four. As you share your written answers with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group, you will also be completing Step Five.

It is suggested you create a Self-Care Kit. Insert uplifting loving messages to yourself and learn to love yourself unconditionally. It is also suggested you create a Recovery Toolbox. Add valuable recovery tools such as respectful detachment, setting healthy boundaries, & practicing healthy communication skills.

As you courageously go forward, you will start to recognize seven major areas of healing needed for your CoDA recovery. So, from now on, every life lesson you encounter might be asking you to grow in these areas:

- setting healthy boundaries
- using healthy communication skills
- loving yourself unconditionally
- grief work - experiencing original pain
- re-parenting your inner child
- integrating your disowned parts
- developing your positive self worth

Don't get bogged down with the details of these topics right now. Just be aware of these seven critical areas. As you work the rest of the CoDA Twelve Steps, you will see yourself healing in all these areas. Be patient. Be diligent.

Begin the daily habit of working Steps One, Two, and Three when you awake, and also practice the maintenance Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve just before you go to bed, to the best of your ability. (Suggestion: Say the CoDA Third Step Prayer daily and review your day using the "Recovery Patterns of Codependence" on www.coda.org.)

Also keep track of your recovery progress on your Daily CoDA Program Journal. What recovery areas need more of your attention?



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<i>My Daily CoDA Program Journal</i>		<i>Month of: _____</i>											
		Prayer & Meditation	Attend Meetings	Twelve Step Work	Program Calls	Read CoDA Books & Literature	Awareness of my Feelings & Needs	Journal Writing	Setting Healthy Boundaries	Self-Care: Fun, Play & Relaxation	Family of Origin Work	CoDA Service Work	Self-Talk with Gentleness & Humor
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1. Read Step Four on pages 41-49 and Step Five on pages 49-52 in *Co-Dependents Anonymous*. Get the big picture of these CoDA Steps.

What attitudes are you striving to have while you do your inventory? How can you use Steps One, Two, and Three to do Step Four? This inventory process is one of the most loving things you can do for yourself. You are about to embark on THE GREAT ADVENTURE of Discovering The Lost Parts Of YourSELF! Write in detail about a past adventure that you genuinely enjoyed.

2. Read the section on pages 117-118, "What is meant by bottom-line behaviors?" What eight triggers are listed in this section? Which are your codependent triggers? How are they detrimental to your emotional sobriety? Write about these in your journal. Discuss.

3. Do you have a "Recovery Toolbox?"



Let's fill it with tools to help you cope, tools to shift your thinking and reactions thus preventing you from acting out bottom-line behaviors in the future. As you become more accountable for your behaviors and actively work to change them, your fear and shame subside. What recovery tools have you collected so far?

Some examples are:

- HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired)
- Power of Five (your own network of at least five people who support you in recovery and to

whom you can call on a regular basis)

- "Let Go & Let God" (turning things over to your Higher Power)
- Positive Affirmations

What other recovery tools would you like to put in it? Discuss.

4.  Your courage to complete Step Four doesn't come from the absence of fear but your willingness to walk through it. Ponder and discuss the recovery saying: "F-E-A-R stands for Face Everything And Recover." Put this affirmation in your Recovery Toolbox.

5. On pages 41-42, re-read the two paragraphs starting with "Moral inventory of ourselves ... " Are you willing to look at your past behaviors without being critical of yourself? or harsh? or abusive? Is it okay for the uncomfortable feelings you have been avoiding for so long to come up to the surface now to be healed? What is your Step Four focus? What is your direction? Discuss why this inventory must be only of yourself.

Discuss these dysfunctional roles in codependence: rescuer, offender, and victim

- ❖ Re-read the section on pages 117-118 in the *Co-Dependents Anonymous* blue book. Also read page 123. One of our codependent bottom-line behaviors is "trying to rescue others." Think about being a rescuer. What are the imagined benefits of rescuing? What does a rescuer believe to be true? What does a rescuer get out of rescuing?

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What do they assume? How do they speak? How do they act? Can the rescuer ever end up as the victim? How is this chaos “a maze of our own creation?” Discuss.

- ❖ Read pages 60-61, “We’re not helpless victims or offenders anymore.” Next read pages 30-31, “Where did I learn to express these behaviors which are often communicated in the extremes from silence to violence?” Also read the section on page 113, “If we encounter a perpetrator or major offender who does not respect our boundaries, then it might be necessary to create a ‘wall’ between us and that person for our personal safety.” Offenders can become resentful when others decline their help. They can also get resentful when others reject their advice. Offenders do not respect others’ boundaries. Think what it is like to be an offender. What does an offender get out of criticizing or attacking the victim? What does an offender believe? What attitude does an offender have? What do they say? How do they speak? How do they act? How can an offender become the same as a victim? Discuss.
- ❖ Read page 49, “Today, we’re not victims. We can’t blame people, places or things for our problems or codependent behaviors anymore.” Next, read the section on pages 122-123, “What’s the difference between blame and accountability?” “As long as we blame other people, we’re powerless to do anything constructive toward recovery.” “We

stop longing for others to make us happy and look to ourselves and our God.” What does a victim get out of being a victim? What does a victim believe to be true? What does a victim sound like? What do they say? How do they act? How is a martyr the same as a victim? How can a victim become the same as an offender? Discuss.

Read the sections on pages 115-116. How can you step back and detach with love when you are feeling the insanity of codependence?

6.  Read the two sections on pages 118-119, “What is a shame spiral?” and “What is fear of shame?” What seven action steps do you need to take to counteract a shame spiral? Write about these steps in your journal. Put these in your Recovery Toolbox.

Read the three paragraphs on page 49 beginning with “When we look...” Many of us learned shame messages about ourselves from our childhood. We believed lies. We confused “making a mistake” with “being a mistake.” These messages are categorically untrue. How will practicing accountability and responsibility minimize your codependency and feelings of shame? Write about this in your journal.

7. Read the section on pages 104-106, “What does childhood have to do with our lives today?” We are searching for clarity. As we take a long hard look at ourselves, deeply buried feelings may begin to surface, bringing about the awareness that in the past we have acted as victim or victimizer due to our



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childhood experiences. Write in your journal the feelings and insights that come up for you. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, Step study group, or nonjudgmental friends from your meetings.

8. Read and study the three paragraphs on page 42 beginning with "Until now, " Meditate on the words "Spiritual Journey." In your meditation, vibrantly visualize yourself in a gentle deep cleansing process. Write in your journal (or draw a picture) what came up for you.

As you begin this journey on the road to recovery, your purpose is to discover the deeply rooted source of your own codependent characteristics. To do this, you must be patient, loving, and forgiving of yourself. Which of those three traits would you like to be strengthened in you? How would you like to go about that?

9. In your journal describe recent experiences of trusting the care of your loving Higher Power. Who else in your life do you know that has demonstrated gentleness and care in their relationships with themselves and others? Would you be willing to use their examples of gentle and loving attributes as role models for your own recovery? Share your insights about this with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

10. On pages 107-108, read the section "What is the child within?" Are you willing to embrace and accept this part of you that is often unpredictable? Do you want to get back in touch with

experiencing the innocence of life, curiosity of nature, and the spirit of who you truly are?

To keep a balance between both the Parent and the Child within you, read the section on pages 108-110, "What is meant by parenting ourselves?" What is the main intention as we re-parent ourselves? What is self-talk? What is inner dialogue? What issues does your inner child still have that needs healing? Discuss.

♡ Write a letter from your inner child to your loving inner parent asking to get your needs met. Discuss with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group. Put it in your Self-Care Kit.

(Example: To My Loving Inner Parent, I feel your calm, loving presence inside me. Please guide me to be more kind, gentle, and accepting of myself. Remind me that I do have value and worth. Encourage me to really listen to what I tell myself about me, to challenge my critical inner voice, and consciously care for my precious child within. Support me to find courage to stay in touch with my feelings and discover my authentic needs. Assist me to be patient as I work through my emotions. As I heal, I will take better care of myself with consistency and serenity. However, when I am fearful or indifferent, please challenge me to try. Inspire me to give myself a kindness break when I judge myself too harshly. Please motivate me find balance on the teeter-totter of my reality, knowing that I AM good enough. As I learn to love myself unconditionally, help me remember PROGRESS ... NOT PERFECTION. With appreciation,



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sincerity, and gratitude, [Signed: Your Name])

11. Re-read pages 42-45 beginning with "Step Four may appear overwhelming ..." It states that Step Four is a form of emotional surgery requiring gentleness and care. We are learning to separate and appreciate our innate goodness from our unhealthy thoughts and behaviors. Visualize yourself going through emotional surgery, always treating yourself with gentleness and care. Write about what came up for you during your visualization. Starting today, put aside all self-condemnation.

12. Re-read pages 42-45. Read the list of codependent behaviors on page 44 out loud to yourself, slowly, thinking about how each might or might not have been in your life. Write in your journal what came up for you. What memories surfaced? There are always two sides to every situation. We have all reacted or responded to mistreatment by others and so it's easy to rationalize or justify some of our codependent behaviors. How does this only serve to maintain and continue your codependency? Are you willing to look at your part in the dance?

Stepping Stone on the Path: Boundaries 
"The most important point to remember in establishing boundaries is we need to listen to and fully consider our own feelings first – not other people's." Discuss. As recovering codependents, we need to continually reassess our boundaries and reset them as necessary. Read the CoDA pamphlets "Establishing Boundaries in Recovery" and "Communication and Recovery." Look on coda.org for download. Discuss with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, Step study group, or others at your meeting.

13. Read the section "What are boundaries?" on pages 110-114. Also obtain a copy (or download from coda.org) the CoDA pamphlet "Establishing Boundaries in Recovery." Read and thoroughly discuss each paragraph.

 Effectively creating, communicating, and maintaining your own healthy boundaries is essential for your recovery from codependency. Put these seven boundary categories in your Recovery Toolbox: Physical, Emotional, Intellectual, Spiritual, Sexual, Time, and Money.

Why is it your responsibility to set and maintain boundaries? Next time you watch yourself getting angry, confused, or uncomfortable, ask yourself "Where do I need to set a better boundary?" Share your insights with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

14. Discuss the concept of external boundaries. Think of your physical body as you exist in time and space. What is a personal comfort zone? Think about your physical boundaries at home, work, traveling, and recreation, etc. Include the dimensions of healthy exercise, nutrition, plus having healthy time and financial boundaries. What physical boundaries are you comfortable with? What physical boundaries are you uncomfortable with? In what ways would you like to take better care of yourself in these areas? Share your insights with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.



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Boundaries can also be in relationship subcategories based on safety and trust. Examples: acquaintances are people we barely know or have little contact with, companions are people with whom we share common activities, friends are people who have earned some of our trust, close friends are people we can trust with our heart, an intimate partner is safe and has earned trust to be in our inner circle, our higher self deserves our personal trust & respect, and our Higher Power deserves ultimate trust with life itself. (Note: It is not always appropriate to have "family" as a trust category due to the fact that some family members are not trustworthy. And so, a family member may belong in any of the trust categories. It may be appropriate for a family member to be in the trusted "close friend" category. Conversely, a family member may need to earn back trust and therefore belongs in the "not-so-trusted acquaintance" category.)

Review the last two paragraphs on page 111 finishing up on page 112. Write about your sexual relationship history. Was it selfish or not? Was there any sexual abuse or boundary violations? What are healthy sexual boundaries? Discuss. Share your insights with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group if you feel comfortable. (Extra Credit: On page 103 read the section "What is 'Thirteenth Stepping?")



Stepping Stone on the Path:

It is imperative to develop healthy communication boundaries in all our personal interactions. All of us suffer from this "dis-ease of perception" to some degree. We all have stuff. When we change our inner talk and outer talk from "you"

statements to "I" statements, we say "I noticed...", "I feel...", and "I need..." This is an effective skill which brings clarity, dispels enmeshment, and sets boundaries so we can more easily identify what is our stuff and what is another person's stuff.

15. Read pages 112-113. Discuss the concept of internal boundaries. What is self-containment? What is emotional safety? How can you ensure that your self-worth is not diminished by another person's words or behavior? It is healthier to not internalize others' words, messages, or actions until you can determine if any of it is hurtful or not. What other people think or say about you is none of your business. If it is loving, you can bring it into your heart. If not, let it drop. With your Higher Power's help, you can discover your intrinsic self-worth. What visualizations can you use to protect yourself?



Memorize these five internal boundaries and put them in your Recovery Toolbox:

- I know where I stop, and you begin.
- I know what is my business and what is none of my business.
- I know the difference between my emotions and others' emotions.
- I recognize what is and what is not my responsibility.
- I am aware of what is and what is not comfortable or safe for me.

What comes up for you when you hear these internal boundaries? How do you feel? Visualize yourself saying these boundaries out loud to other people. Also visualize stating these boundaries silently to yourself when you are fearful or communicating with an unsafe

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person. Write your insights in your journal.

16. Read the bottom paragraph on page 112 beginning with "We use internal boundaries in various ways..." What is a healthy amount of personal and/or financial information to share with an intimate partner? a close friend? family members? children? colleagues? or new and/or social acquaintances? Write your insights and new awareness in your journal.

17. Read and study pages 113-114. Discuss this idea: "We allow others to have their own thoughts, feelings, opinions, behaviors, beliefs, and spirituality." Are you willing to be responsible for your own emotional, mental, and spiritual boundaries? What comes up for you? Discuss having respect for others' boundaries.

18. Discuss the saying, "'NO!' is a complete sentence."

19. Practice communicating a healthy boundary aloud in a gentle yet firm way which is safe for you and respectful of them.

20. Ponder the statement on page 113, "... if someone hasn't dealt with their own lack of boundaries, they probably will not recognize boundaries in others." Discuss.

21. What is the difference between a "boundary" and a "wall?" When is a wall avoidance and a detriment to your ability to have healthy relationships? When is a wall necessary and appropriate? Discuss. Share your insights about

boundaries with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

22. Are you willing to take very good care for yourself, create emotional safety, and know inner peace? Write a list of twenty-one loving goals for yourself. (Name three ways in each boundary category you would like to take better care of yourself.)

- physically
- emotionally
- intellectually
- spiritually
- sexually
- financially
- management of your time

♥ Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group. Put this list of loving goals in your Self-Care Kit or God Box as mentioned in the "30 Questions." Ask your Higher Power for help achieving these. Do your part then "Let Go & Let God."

23. With practice, setting healthy boundaries comes more easily and helps free us from our self-defeating patterns of codependency. Today, while looking into your own eyes in a mirror, with confidence and self-care, practice setting at least three healthy boundaries (promises to yourself) stating out loud:

- I love myself, therefore...
- I love myself, therefore...
- I love myself, therefore...

What was that like for you? How did that feel? Discuss with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

Stepping Stone on the Path: ♥



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Discuss the principle of “balance.” In a thorough inventory, we are encouraged to list both our assets and our liabilities. Name five attributes that you like about yourself. Keep this POSITIVE list in your Self-Care Kit. Keep adding to this list from time to time.

24. Study the list of codependent behaviors on page 44. Describe what each behavior could look like within physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, and sexual boundaries.

Let's take lying for example:

- lying physically might be hiding my actions from others.
- lying emotionally may be telling myself or others “I'm FINE,” when I'm not.
- lying intellectually may be expressing a lie overtly or covertly to manipulate the flow of information or avoiding a confrontation.
- lying spiritually may be believing “I'm not enough” or believing “I'm a mistake.”
- lying sexually may be saying “yes” when I really want to say “no.”

Now explore your own meanings to all the words on this list. Did you think of any additional unhealthy behaviors? Jealousy? Bullying?

This can be a spoken or written exercise. Take your time. Share your feelings and insights about this exercise with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

25. Read the three sections on pages 114-116. “What is enmeshment?” “What is detachment?” and “What is the difference between detachment and avoidance?” What insights came up for

you? How do healthy boundaries apply to these topics? Discuss.

26. Obtain and read the CoDA pamphlet “Communication and Recovery.” Read and thoroughly discuss each paragraph with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

Using clear concise and honest communication, asking for clarity, and practicing healthy communication skills are all part of a solid foundation for your recovery program. How does blaming, criticizing, and/or making demands undermine healthy and loving communication? Are you willing to negotiate authentically in your relationships with others? Discuss. Write about this in your journal.

Discuss the saying “clarity is loving and mixed messages are abusive.” Has anyone ever given you a vague or mixed message? Conversely have you ever given yourself a mixed message and not been clear with yourself? How did that feel? What was the outcome? How would clarity have worked better in that situation? Write about this in your journal.

Have you ever experienced unhealthy communication containing:

- silence or violence?
- blaming or not taking responsibility?
- criticizing?
- demands or threats?

How do these cause communication to suffer?

Discuss the benefits of using compassionate communication.



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- making observations instead of judging,
- expressing feelings knowing they are caused by your needs
- making requests to get your needs met instead of making demands
- negotiating win / win (or no deal) strategies



Stepping Stone on the Path:

So far we have discussed 1) reparenting your inner child, 2) healthy boundaries, 3) healthy communication skills. As we go forward, we will begin to see that 4) loving ourselves unconditionally, 5) grief work, 6) developing positive self-worth, and 7) integrating our disowned parts are also needed for the deeper healing of your codependent patterns. Put these topics in your Recovery Toolbox.

27. Loving Ourselves Unconditionally and The Grieving Process: Discuss the affirmation "The pain that I might feel by remembering cannot be any worse than the pain I feel by knowing and not remembering." In the safety of recovery we become willing to heal by compassionately acknowledging our original painful experiences and setting intentions for healthy experiences in our future; to let the iced up, frozen feelings from our past melt away so that eventually only love and peace remains within us. This may be a sporadic or ongoing process. However, it is only possible to do this deeply if you truly love yourself unconditionally.

Discuss the principle of unconditional love. Write about this in your journal. Are you willing to love yourself unconditionally?



Stepping Stone on the Path:

The grieving process can manifest as denial, bargaining, anger, sadness or depression, and finally acceptance. Put this process in your Recovery Toolbox.

28. When we accept our true feelings about the past and grieve the loss of what did and did not happen, it loses its power over us. We learn to accept our past just as it occurred. To "accept" does not mean we have to like it. When we accept what took place and see how we responded, we gain clarity. Sometimes grieving the "death of a dream" is more painful than grieving what actually happened. Are you willing to grieve?

29. Read the section on pages 124-125, "How do I apply my recovery to my relationships?" All healthy relationships require your consistent time, patience, attention, and nurturing.

Discuss how you can:

- effectively set healthy boundaries
- communicate with others safely and respectfully
- responsibly share feelings, wants, and needs in relationships

Share your insights and plans with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

30. Read the last three paragraphs of Step Four on page 49 beginning with "When we look..." Focus on the last paragraph. What is the definition of the word "humility?" It is a guiding spiritual principle of our recovery.

How is humility:



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- The opposite of judging or criticizing?
- The opposite of better than or less than roles?
- The opposite of rightness or wrongness attitudes?
- The opposite of blame or shame?
- The opposite of control or manipulation or making demands?

How does humility relate to equality? Write about this in your journal. Discuss.

Stepping Stone on the Path:

There are many methods to complete Step Four. There is no right or wrong way. We suggest using the matrix as described in questions Q31 and Q32 to examine your relationships, both present and past. [Also see example on pages 46-47 in Co-Dependents Anonymous, Third Edition] You can do this! You are worth it! Take a deep breath. Take baby steps. Rely on your Higher Power to lead you on this sometimes difficult inward journey.

31. Making the list: Take blank paper and make five columns across the top of each page:

- Name/Relationship
- My Codependent Patterns (pages 4-7)
- My Actions & Behaviors (refer to the list on page 44)
- My Underlying Feelings (for example: sad, angry, frightened, shame, guilty, defiant, arrogant, fear of not being good enough, etc.)
- Consequences To The Relationship

Make Page #1 for your Higher Power and Page #2 for Self. Also make pages for your partner/mate, ex-partners, children, friends, family members, co-workers, and people with whom you participate in your various activities.

How many people are on your list? Leave lots of space for writing. Also, is there any other person (present or past) with whom you would feel uncomfortable if they came into the room? Add them to your list also. Just create the empty matrix right now. There will be plenty of time to fill in the other columns and rows.

32. Taking the inventory: You can do this! Take it slow and easy. We are going to take one pattern at a time. [Suggestion: Begin each session with a prayer inviting your Higher Power to look at this with you. Remember your relationship history with this person. Ask yourself questions about your behaviors with each person on your list. Some of us set a timer and spend 10-15 minutes at a time, no more than three times a day. Others use their own momentum. So if you feel like continuing, don't shut it off. Choose your own way.]

33. CONTROL PATTERNS:

(Suggestion: read this question thoroughly before starting; decide which patterns apply to you)

- Have you ever believed this person was incapable of taking care of themselves?
- Have you ever attempted to convince this person what to think, do, or feel?
- Have you ever thought you knew better how this person should be living their life than they did?
- Have you ever freely offered advice and direction to this person without being asked?

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- Have you ever become resentful when this person declined your help or rejected your advice or requests?
- Have you ever lavished gifts and favors on this person? Did you want to influence them? manipulate them? or rescue them from having their negative feelings and/or experiencing negative consequences?
- Have you ever used flirting or your appearance to seek sexual attention to gain this person's approval and acceptance?
- Have you ever had the desire to feel needed in order to have a relationship with this person?
- Have you ever demanded that your needs be met by this person?
- Have you ever used charm and charisma to convince this person of your capacity to be caring and compassionate?
- Have you ever used criticism, blame, or shame to exploit this person emotionally?
- Have you ever refused to cooperate, compromise, or negotiate with this person?
- Have you ever adopted an attitude of indifference, helplessness, authority, or rage to manipulate outcomes with this person?
- Have you ever used recovery jargon in an attempt to control the behavior of this person?
- Have you ever pretended to agree with this person to get what you wanted?

Read the sections on pages 120-122 "What are physical and aggressive forms of abuse and control?" and "What are non-physical and passive forms of

abuse and control?" Discuss how Control Patterns are abusive.

Re-read the section on pages 122-123 "What is the difference between blame and accountability?" What does taking responsibility feel like? How do responsible people talk? How do they act? What do they believe to be true? When we stop longing for others to make us happy, we can look to ourselves and to our Higher Power. Write about this in your journal. Share your insights with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, Step study group, and at a CoDA meeting.

Asking yourself the following questions may also be helpful:

- Do you have any resentments toward this person? What are they? What vulnerable feelings are buried under your resentments?
- Have you ever taken this person's inventory? Have you ever judged this person as not being good enough? Have you ever offered them advice and guidance without being asked? Have you ever told them what is wrong with them? Have you ever felt frustration when they refused your offers to help? Have you ever felt anger or frustration when they saw the situation differently than you?
- Have you ever communicated with this person in the extremes from silence to violence?
- Have you had money problems with this person? What are healthy money habits? Have you considered



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that unhealthy money issues can affect a relationship? Have you ever given a gift to this person and then had resentment later? Have you done favors for this person and then gotten a resentment when they were not grateful enough or they didn't reciprocate?

- Have you struggled with being right or being wrong with this person? Do you have a deep need to be right or perfect? Are you right and therefore they are wrong? Are they right and therefore you are wrong? Were you taught that "being right" meant you were safe, valuable, powerful, and in control? It may feel frightening to imagine letting go of having to be right, but this is an old behavior based on your codependent survival skills and it no longer serves you well. Discuss these ideas.
- Worry or obsession is another behavior you may have used to survive life. Do you have worries or obsessions? What do you think about during the day? If you could figure out everything that could possibly go wrong, then can you be prepared for everything? How does that work out? Can you see that worry is also a form of control?
- How is arrogance a form of control? What is the difference between being humble and being arrogant? What is the difference between humility and humiliation? How can honest humility help you open the door to accepting and loving yourself just as you are?

Continue with each person on your list. Keep completing the columns to the right on each sheet. If you need help, ask your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group for more clarity.

Stepping Stone on the Path:

Balance is the key to working the Fourth Step. We are encouraged to list our assets and our liabilities. Name five more attributes that you really like about yourself. Add them to your POSITIVE list in your Self Care Kit. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

34. AVOIDANCE PATTERNS:

- Have you ever acted in ways that invited this person to reject, shame, or express anger toward you?
- Have you ever judged what this person thought, said, or did harshly?
- Have you ever avoided emotional, physical, or sexual intimacy as a way to maintain distance from this person?
- Have you ever allowed addictions to people, places, and things to distract you from achieving intimacy in this relationship?
- Have you ever used indirect or evasive communication to avoid conflict or confrontation with this person?
- Have you ever diminished your capacity to have a healthy relationship with this person by declining to use the tools of recovery?
- Have you ever suppressed your feelings or needs to avoid feeling vulnerable with this person?
- Have you ever pulled this person toward you, but when they got close, pushed them away?



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- Have you ever refused to give up your self-will to avoid surrendering to a power greater than yourself?
- Have you ever believed displays of emotion were a sign of weakness?
- Have you ever withheld expressions of appreciation to this person?

Continue with each person on your list. Keep completing the columns to the right on each sheet. If you need help, ask your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group for more clarity.

Stepping Stone on the Path: 

Name five more attributes that you really like about yourself. Add them to your POSITIVE list in your Self-Care Kit. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

35. DENIAL PATTERNS:

- Have you ever had difficulty identifying what you were feeling about this person?
- Have you ever minimized, altered, or denied how you truly felt about this person?
- Have you ever perceived yourself as completely unselfish and dedicated to the well-being of this person?
- Have you ever lacked empathy for the feelings and needs of this person?
- Have you ever labeled this person with your negative traits?
- Have you ever thought you could take care of yourself without any help from this person?
- Have you ever masked your pain from this person in various ways such as anger, humor, or isolation?
- Have you ever expressed negativity or aggression toward this person in indirect and passive ways?

- Have you ever not recognized the unavailability of this person to whom you were attracted?

When we catch ourselves blaming others, and accusing others, or repeating painful patterns, we can recognize these attitudes or behaviors as “red flags.” We can perceive them as gifts to help us recognize that we may be in denial of disowned feelings or dealing with unresolved issues.

Read the first paragraph on page 48. What is meant when it says, putting “... another person’s face on this individual, not allowing us to see their true selves?” Are you willing to discover how you have unknowingly created similar or unhealthy and abusive patterns within your adult relationships? Are you willing to become accountable for these behaviors even though you learned them from your childhood?

Read the section on pages 119-120, “What is projection?” How is projection a denial pattern? Why is recognizing, understanding and healing your disowned parts vital to your recovery?

Have you ever heard these sayings?

- “The Boney-Finger Disease”
- “Projection makes Perception”
- “If you spot it, you got it”

Discuss these concepts. How do they apply to codependency? Describe how these sayings relate to the deep inner healing work of integrating your disowned parts.



WORKING CoDA's STEPS FOUR & FIVE - USING THE 40 QUESTIONS

Continue with each person on your list. Keep completing the columns to the right on each sheet. If you need help, ask your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group for more clarity.

Stepping Stone on the Path:

Name five more attributes that you really like about yourself. Add them to the POSITIVE list in your Self-Care Kit. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

36. LOW SELF ESTEEM PATTERNS:

- Have you ever had difficulty with making decisions? with procrastination? with perfectionism?
- Have you ever judged what you thought, said, or done harshly as never good enough?
- Have you ever been embarrassed to receive recognition, praise, or gifts?
- Have you ever valued this person's approval of your thinking, feelings, and behavior over your own?
- Have you ever perceived yourself as not being a lovable or a worthwhile person?
- Have you ever sought recognition and praise from this person to overcome feeling less than?
- Have you ever had difficulty admitting a mistake?
- Have you ever needed to appear to be right in the eyes of this person and may have even lied to look good?
- Have you ever been unable to identify or ask for what you needed and wanted?
- Have you ever perceived yourself as superior to this person?
- Have you ever looked to this person to provide your sense of safety?

- Have you ever had difficulty getting started, meeting deadlines, and completing projects?
- Have you ever had trouble setting healthy priorities and boundaries?

You now have a Higher Power who loves you for who you are. How can ongoing use of positive self-talk and positive affirmations help heal your low self esteem patterns?

Are you aware of your own feelings? Are you learning to listen to your intuition? You can learn to honor yourself, inside and out, without shame or criticism. Are you willing to appreciate your individuality and let go of judgments and comparisons? Are you willing to seek out others who can accept you as you are?

Many of us grow immensely from performing CoDA service work. Are you willing to participate in CoDA meetings and conferences to share your experience, strength and hope?

How does setting loving goals for yourself and working toward them bring greater positive self worth? As your self-esteem flourishes, you will gradually be released from the fear of what others think or feel. You can develop serenity and inner peace. You can start having fun.

Continue with each person on your list. Keep completing the columns to the right on each sheet. If you need help, ask your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group for more clarity.

Stepping Stone on the Path:



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Name five more attributes that you really like about yourself. Add them to the POSITIVE list in your Self-Care Kit. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

37. COMPLIANCE PATTERNS:

- Have you ever been extremely loyal, remaining in harmful situations too long?
- Have you ever compromised your own values and integrity to avoid rejection or anger from this person?
- Have you ever put aside your own interests in order to do what this person wanted?
- Have you ever been hyper vigilant regarding the feelings of this person and taken on those feelings?
- Have you ever been afraid to express your beliefs, opinions, and feelings when they differed from those of this person?
- Have you ever accepted sex and/or sexual attention when you really wanted love?
- Have you ever made decisions without regard to the consequences?
- Have you ever given up your truth to gain the approval of this person or to avoid change?

Continue with each person on your list. Keep completing the columns to the right on each sheet. If you need help, ask your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group for more clarity.

Stepping Stone on the Path:

Name five more attributes that you really like about yourself. Add them to your POSITIVE list in your Self-Care Kit. Share with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group.

38. A Balanced Perspective Inventory: Read three paragraphs on pages 48-49 beginning with "To thoroughly explore and understand" We must also explore our strengths, assets, and positive behaviors. On blank paper make new grids with five columns. On these new lists, add the people who did not experience your codependent behaviors. Identify your positive, healthy, appropriate, and loving behaviors in your relationship with each person. (Suggestion: Start by using the list of your positive attributes you have been compiling. Also refer to the "Recovery Patterns of Codependence" on www.coda.org.)

39. As you come to the end of your Step Four and Step Five work, read the sections on pages 116-117 "Am I ever recovered from codependence?" and "What is a codependent slip?" Write your insights in your journal. Have you seen any of the codependent patterns repeating over and over as common threads in your relationships?

Read the last sentence in the last paragraph of Step Four on page 49 beginning with "From this place of humility, we've become ready to complete Step Five." Have you gained humility and a healthier relationship with yourself through this inventory process? Discuss being "right-sized."

Re-read Step Five on pages 49-52. Discuss the principle of accountability. Also re-read the last three paragraphs on page 52 in Step Five. "... we realize that only through God's grace have we come this far." Discuss.



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Have you noticed that while sharing your answers to these questions with your CoDA sponsor, co-sponsor, or Step study group, you have simultaneously completed Step Five?

In addition, you may wish to formally complete a traditional Fifth Step. By doing so, many codependents

experience deeper acceptance, humility, and compassion for themselves. Is there someone with whom you can feel safe sharing your secrets and who can be objective, loving, caring, and compassionate with you?

40. ARE YOU READY TO BEGIN WORKING STEP SIX?

Congratulations!

You have come an incredible distance on your path of recovery!

Celebrate!!



Step Four Prayer

In this moment, I am willing to see myself as I truly am: a growing, unfolding spiritual being resting in the hands of a loving God.

I can separate who I am from what I've done knowing that the real me is emerging — loving, joyful, and whole.

Step Five Prayer

In this moment, I will acknowledge myself for doing what was most difficult for me.

I will rest in the accepting presence of my Higher Power. I know I have deepened my commitment to the journey of recovery by opening my self, and my heart, to a fellow human being.