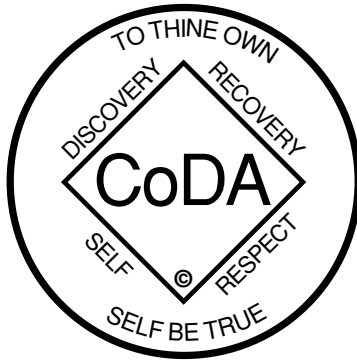


Peeling the Onion

Co-Dependents Anonymous

Peeling the Onion:

Characteristics of Codependents Revisited



**Codependents Look at
Love, Sex, and Relationship
Addiction and Avoidance**



Peeling The Onion is CoDA Service Conference endorsed literature

Copyright © 2019

All rights reserved

This publication may not be reproduced or photocopied without
written permission of Co-Dependents Anonymous Inc.

For more information about CoDA:

www.coda.org

info@coda.org

Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc.,

P.O. Box 33577

Phoenix, AZ 85067-3577, USA

Phone: +1 602 277 7691

Toll free: 888-444-2359

Spanish toll free: 888-444-2379

For additional copies of this booklet and other CoDA literature

www.corepublications.org

info@corepublications.org

CoRe Publications Inc.,

Phone: +1 805 297 8114

Contents

Introduction	3
Peeling The Onion	5
Relationship Addiction	6
Fear of not being enough	6
Fear of our feelings	7
Fear of being alone	8
Relationship Avoidance	9
Love Anorexia	9
Sexual Anorexia	10
Relationship Anorexia	10
Fear of intimacy	11
Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence	12
Denial Patterns	12
Low Self-Esteem Patterns	13
Compliance Patterns	15
Control Patterns	17
Avoidance Patterns	20
Stages of Recovery	22
We reach out for help when we need it	23
We speak up for ourselves	23
We see others and ourselves realistically	23
We stop using others	24
We set boundaries that insure our well-being	24
We use the tools of recovery	24
We work the Steps	25
We rely on a Higher Power	25
Codependent Relationships vs. Authentic Relationships	26
Recovery Stories	28
Boundaries, Boundaries, Boundaries	28
I Keep Coming Back	29
The Key	31
From Fantasy to Reality	32
Relapse and Recovery	33
Learning To Stay Present	34
Rescue Me	35
It Works When I Work It	37
The Twelve Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous	39
The Twelve Traditions of Co-Dependents Anonymous	40

Introduction

In order to gain a deeper understanding of our codependency, we look inward, continuing the emotional work of “peeling the onion.” The onion represents the pain of our childhoods and the realization of how this has adversely impacted the very fiber of our lives. Our goal is to gently arrive at a new level of understanding of the pain we still carry, but have not yet been “recovered” enough to approach until now.

We begin by redefining our codependency. At an emotional level, we need to overcome the childhood trauma that drove our authentic selves into hiding in order to survive. To comprehend what it means to have been a totally helpless infant dependent upon emotionally inappropriate or unavailable parents, we consider the relationships with our primary caregivers. We come to realize that we were groomed to meet their needs. Some of us took on the shame of our caregivers including myriad feelings of disgust toward our bodies and bodily functions. We experienced control and objectification through language, innuendo, enmeshment, and/or abandonment.

“Peeling the layers” is necessary due to the intensity and depth of this betrayal. By opening our hearts, we begin the process, this time moving from self-contempt to compassion for ourselves. The process requires us to be willing to let go of all the ways we used to cope. Instead, we use and value the tools we have learned in CoDA recovery; [i.e., *The Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence*, the Twelve Steps, a sponsor, a home group, and our Higher Power.] In recovery, we learn to detach from the past and develop awareness of new options for our lives.

The Patterns and Characteristics of Codependence was developed as a CoDA tool to aid in self-evaluation. Identifying denial, self-esteem, compliance, control, and avoidance patterns encourages members to discover and explore codependence. As we attend meetings and interact with other CoDA members, we become open to doing recovery work. The pain we feel is greater than our fear of change. We learn to do the “recovery waltz”—Steps One, Two, and Three—over and over again in response to many of life’s problems. We breathe a sigh of relief as we give to God those things over which we have no control. As we work our Fourth and Fifth Steps, we tenaciously peel away that tough outer layer of the onion—the protective layer of denial. With the help of our Higher Power, we survive. Hope blossoms.