



**SUGGESTED METHOD
FOR WORKING
THE TWELVE STEPS
OF CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS
WITH A SPONSOR**

In CoDA, there are many suggested ways to find a Sponsor and work the Twelve Steps. We lovingly offer this as another tool to aid our Northern California CoDA Region & local CoDA communities in accomplishing our primary purpose to help the codependent who still suffers. This method suggests a simple strategy for both the Sponsor and the Sponsee to set healthy boundaries, have clarity of goals, and get their needs met for support and flexibility. As a CoDA member commits to working the program using this method, the 30 questions and Daily Journal Checklist will move them gently through the first three steps using the CoDA Blue Book as the reference. This is a work in progress and may be revised from time to time. (Last Revision: January 22, 2011)

Keep Coming Back! It works if you work it.

So, work it, 'CAUSE YOU'RE WORTH IT!

The Process:

- The Sponsee needs to have a copy of the CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS Blue Book (Second Edition) and a spiral notebook or three-ring binder with blank paper for writing the 30 questions & their daily journal writing.
- The Sponsee places a call to the Sponsor, as agreed upon, at the same time each day.
- The call is to last no more than 15 minutes.
- The Sponsee reads the question they received from the Sponsor the day before. Then the Sponsee reads their written answer to the Sponsor.
- After positive encouragement from the Sponsor, the Sponsee is given the next question to write down.
- After giving the Sponsee the next question, the Sponsor asks the Sponsee to read the question back. The Sponsor will correct the Sponsee when any words are changed, added to, or dropped from the question.
- This process is repeated for each of the next 30 questions.
- We suggest that men sponsor men and women sponsor women, unless there is a same-sex issue, to alleviate the possibility of a romantic relationship developing with a sponsor.

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- The Sponsee also keeps track of working their CoDA program on the “My Daily CoDA Program Journal” checklist sheet. (see attached page 4). It is suggested that the Sponsee review it monthly with their Sponsor and start a new page at the first of each month.

Need A Sponsor? Need The Questions? Contact the Outreach Chairperson on Our Website or Write to Us at the Address Below.

Commitment By Both Sponsor And Sponsee:

- Make a plan for when we do the questions.
- Have a plan for working a question if Sponsor is not available.
- Agree that the Sponsee can end the 30-question process at any time.
- Agree that the Sponsor can stop being a Sponsor at any time by verbal or written notification.
- Accept that the Sponsor doesn't sponsor family members.
- Agree that anonymity and confidentiality is practiced throughout the 30-questions work by both Sponsor & Sponsee.
- Develop the "Power of Five" to network with other CoDA members in recovery.

Benefits Of The Process To Sponsee:

- Keeps Sponsee focused.
- Introduces the Sponsee to the first three steps of recovery and gets Sponsee ready for the fourth step.
- Teaches the Sponsee that recovery takes time and commitment every day, not just the one hour a week at his/her meeting.
- Teaches the Sponsee to use the tools of recovery such as the CoDA Blue Book, Twelve Steps & Traditions.
- Demonstrates using healthy interaction and continuous commitment to the process.
- Starts the process of opening up the Sponsee's ears to hearing what is said by others by being able to test: "This is what I thought I heard you say. Is this correct?"
- Gives Sponsee a format for being a Sponsor.
- Gives Sponsee thirty questions to use with his/her Sponsees.
- At the end of the thirty questions, the Sponsee is ready to help another CoDA member through the 30 questions with the understanding that if they don't give away to another person what they just got, they will lose it. *"YOU'VE GOT TO GIVE IT AWAY TO KEEP IT!"*

Yes! I want to get a sponsor & work the Twelve Steps!

What are Sponsors?

Sponsors are people within the CoDA program who help guide us through the Twelve Step recovery process. These people are recovering codependents whose personal recovery is their first priority. They continue to learn how to live happy and fulfilling lives and are willing to share their experience, strength and hope with us. They've usually walked the road of recovery longer than we have. They're who we call for help when we're confused or overwhelmed. They can also be friends who work the program with us.

Sponsors are able to remain objective and detached from feeling responsible for our happiness and recovery. They also refrain from behaving in abusive, critical, or controlling ways that can result in fixing, rescuing, acting as a therapist, sexual manipulation, or personal gain. Sponsors are role models for recovery, sources of loving support, and respectful of our anonymity and individual pace in working the program.

Sponsor's Goals:

- To share with newcomers how I work my twelve step program.
- To share what I was like then and what I am like now.
- To share as a Twelve Step Guide, not as a friend or Higher Power.
- To share in “I” statements but live in “we” actions.
- To share tools I have added to my tool box and how I use these tools today.
- To practice healthy boundaries and be respectful of the Sponsee's reality.


Sponsee's Goals:

- Accept that the Sponsor has high expectations of them as Sponsees. Some of the Sponsor's expectations are:
 - ✓ Sponsee will be open to new ideas.
 - ✓ Sponsee will share their new tools with others.
 - ✓ Sponsee will do the work.
 - ✓ Sponsee will call every day at agreed upon time.
 - ✓ Sponsee will share only for 15 minutes each day.
 - ✓ Sponsee will practice “H O W” – Honesty, Open-mindedness, & Willingness.
 - ✓ Sponsee will leave the “Well But” and “Only If” excuses behind.
 - ✓ Sponsee will be respectful of their and the Sponsor's time and space.
 - ✓ Sponsee will work no more than 30 minutes a day on the answer.
 - ✓ Sponsee will allow the healing process to go as deeply as possible in the time allowed.
 - ✓ Sponsee will trust the process knowing that if more healing work needs to be done on any particular issue, it will come up again.
- Remember: “Progress, Not Perfection”
- If we have agreement at this point, set a time for Sponsee's first call to Sponsor to receive the first question.

The Benefit Of Sponsorship For Both The Sponsor And Sponsee:

- If we continue our step work with others and keep going back to meetings for help and support, we keep finding the tools and knowledge to become the best each of us can be.
- At the same time, we learn we are not alone in our recovery journey, nor are we unusual in any way.

Remember: Progress, Not Perfection!

<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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THE THIRTY QUESTIONS FOR CoDA STEPS 1, 2 & 3

(NOTE TO SPONSOR: PLEASE GIVE THESE QUESTIONS TO THE SPONSEE ONE AT A TIME WHEN THEY CALL AND ASK FOR THE NEXT QUESTION)

1. What is the first time you can remember codependent related events happening in your life? Have you lost any time, money, or energy due to unhealthy relationships? Write a brief history of your codependency. Discuss what help you have sought for this problem and your attempts to do this on your own.
2. Read Step One on pages 26-31 in the CoDA Blue Book. Discuss and reflect upon the effect that codependency has had on you over the years. Answer the 15 questions on pages 28-29. Do you see that you have been involved in codependent relationships? Do you truly see that you are a codependent? Are you willing to change?
3. Read Chapter One, pages 1-7. Recovery starts with an honest self-evaluation. Reflect upon the following questions: What is codependence? Which codependent patterns & characteristics describe yourself? What devastating losses have brought you to CoDA? Discuss.
4. Review Chapter One, pages 1-7. Reflect on how codependent patterns have helped you in the past as survival mechanisms. However, survival is not living fully. In CoDA we are learning to live life. How has codependency diminished your life? Why is it important to not push someone in recovery until they are ready?
5. What is the importance of using the telephone in CoDA? What is the importance of anonymity? How are both intertwined? Have you ever tried calling others in CoDA and imagined your telephone weighed a “thousand pounds?” Discuss the principle of developing “the Power of Five” vs. becoming dependent upon only one or two other people in recovery.
6. Read Chapter One, pages 7-11. With the help of a loving Higher Power, the program of CoDA, and those who join us on this journey, each of us can experience the hope of recovery. What are the promises of Co-Dependents Anonymous? Why is codependence hard to recognize? Why is it important to replace denial & control with acceptance? What experience are you seeking in CoDA recovery?
7. Read Chapter Two, pages 13-15. Answer the five questions on page 13. Reflect what is meant when it says, “When we attempt to codependently control or manipulate others we turn ourselves into a Higher Power to maintain our sense of safety and well-being. When we codependently avoid others, as well as adapt or change our behaviors for others, we give them, instead of our Higher Power, this control and strength.” Discuss.
8. Review Chapter Two, pages 13-15. Answer these questions:
 - what is our “Spiritual Dilemma?”
 - what attitudes are reflected when we use control “to any degree?”
 - what attitudes and feelings are reflected when we use avoiding behaviors?

- how does the position of “better than” or “less than” play a role in our self-centered ways?
 - what does it mean, “Equality is Lost?”
9. Read Chapter Two, pages 16-18. What drives your need to control and avoid others? Did you ever experience abuse or neglect while you were growing up? Did that affect your self-image? Describe.
 - B. How can feelings be resolved? How can you emotionally detach from those on whom you compulsively rely?
 - C. Does God create bad people? Is there a place for forgiveness in recovery?
 - D. Read the section on page 99 “Do I Have to Believe in God to Recover?”
 10. Read the sections “What is a Shame Spiral?” and “What Is Fear of Shame” pages 116-117. Discuss “fear of shame.” What behaviors do you commonly display when you are afraid of someone hearing about your mistakes? Notice a mistake that you made today. How do you feel about it? Reflect on this saying, “I MADE A MISTAKE, BUT I’M NOT A MISTAKE.” Discuss.
 14. Read Step Two, pages 31-35. Are you willing to entertain the possibility that there is a power that can do for you what you could not do for yourself? Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting different results. Continuing to act in a self-destructive manner is insane, but nothing changes until you turn away from your addictions and from the people with whom you’re obsessed. Discuss and reflect upon the concept of insanity as it applies to you in CoDA.
 11. Read both sections on pages 118-120. “What Are Physical And Aggressive Forms Of Abuse And Control?” & “What Are Non-Physical And Passive Forms Of Abuse And Control?” Which ones have you experienced? Write your insights in your journal. Discuss.
 15. Re-read Step Two, page 33. Make a list of attributes of a Higher Power with whom you would like to have a relationship. What do you really want from your God?
 12. A. Read the section “What Is The Difference Between Being Codependent And Being Thoughtful?” on page 120. Write your insights in your journal.
 16. Re-read Step Two, pages 34-35. Write what is meant when it says “We begin placing this relationship first.” Discuss the statement “your Higher Power does not accomplish your recovery work for you; you must do your share.” What is your part? What needs to be done to develop and strengthen your relationship with your Higher Power?
 - B. Read the section on pages 108-112 “What are Boundaries?” Discuss.
 17. Re-read Chapter Two, pages 20-22. Discuss perfectionism and why it is an illusion. To keep perspective, why is it important to prioritize your relationships? What relationship needs to come first? What relationship comes second? What
 13. A. Read Chapter Two, pages 18-22. Discuss building your own concept of a Higher Power. Where have you put your misplaced faith in the past? Discuss surrender and letting go of your controlling and avoidance behaviors.

relationships come third? Discuss the anticipated miracles of recovery.

18. A. Read Chapter Three introduction, “A Suggested Program of Recovery” on pages 23-26. What does the program of Co-Dependents Anonymous consist of? Why will a half-hearted attempt to work the Steps leave you feeling self-defeated? Discuss “Your journey thru the Steps may be the most difficult work you ever attempt.”
 - B. Do you see working the Steps as an overwhelming task? What are the rewards of recovery? Are you willing to work the Steps daily as a part of your personal recovery?
19. A. Re-read Step Two, pages 31-35. Discuss and reflect upon your childhood exposure to any religious concepts. On one side of a two-column balance sheet list your negative feelings and on the other side your positive feelings as they relate to early religious experience. What conclusion do you reach when you reflect on the balance sheet?
 - B. Read the section on page 100 “Why Doesn't CoDA refer to God as He or She?” Discuss in your journal.
20. Read Step Three, pages 35-39. Create another balance sheet. On one side, list all the reasons that you can believe in God. On the other side, list all your reasons for disbelief.
21. Re-read Step Three, pages 35-39. Why not give God a chance where you have failed? What do you have to lose but your misery? Discuss why this program is not a “flash in the pan.” Are you willing to ask God for help more than once?
22. Read the section, “How do I learn to trust?” on page 121. Did you learn early not to trust? Have you been overly trusting? What is appropriate trust? Why is it important to learn to be able to trust ourselves and our Higher Power first?
23. Discuss the idea of calling a “HALT” when your life gets unmanageable. Do not allow yourself to get too h-hungry, a-angry, l-lonely, or t-tired.
24. A. Get a box or container that is precious to you. Put it in a special place and dedicate it as your “God Box.”
 - B. Read the section “What is the Purpose of Prayer and Meditation?” on page 100. Discuss in your journal.
25. Read the section “Do I have to forgive those who hurt me?” on page 121. Discuss why “blaming” anyone is actually hurtful to yourself? However, forgiving too early can be a quick fix. Therefore, what steps need to be done first before forgiveness can give you a lasting release from blaming? What are the benefits of forgiveness?
26. Re-read Step Three, pages 35-39. Are you willing to decide to trust God to care for all you consider precious and important? Are you willing to rely on your Higher Power to provide you with peace, happiness, and well-being? What energy will now be available when others are no longer responsible for your happiness & well-being? Are you frightened to allow God to take care of you AND the other people in your life? What are the crossroads where you are standing?

27. Re-read Step Three, page 37. Create a special place and time to sincerely complete this step. When you are ready, this prayer may be helpful: “God, I give to You all that I am and all that I will be for Your healing and direction. Make new this day as I release all my worries and fears to you knowing that You are by my side. Please help me to open myself to Your love, to allow Your love to heal my wounds, and allow Your love to flow through me and from me to those around me. May Your will be done this day and always. Amen.” Make a sincere commitment to your Higher Power to turn your will and ALL your life over to God’s care. (May be completed with your Sponsor or by yourself. Deep intention is the key to this step.)
28. Re-read Step Three, on pages 37-39 starting at the second paragraph “We remember...” Every morning when you awake, renew your decision to turn your will and your life over to the care of God as you understand God. Make a commitment to actively strengthen your relationship with your God. It is your MOST IMPORTANT relationship. Trust in your Higher Power’s help. Ask God for help and guidance. Do your part. Strive for a life of balance. Look for strength and serenity as you grow in trust of God’s continuing presence and care. Discuss these ideas.
29. Discuss the saying, “Let Go, and Let God!” Is there any person, place, or situation with which you are upset or obsessing today? Each time you are uncomfortable and recognize a lack of peace inside, remember to work Step One, Step Two, and Step Three. Decide to turn the situation over to the care of your loving Higher Power. Say to yourself, “I am powerless over this person....” Write about the situation. What are you feeling? What are you needing? What is their part? What is your part? Prayerfully surrender the outcome to your Higher Power and put it all in your God Box.
30. A. Reflect on your own personal surrender. Discuss and share at meetings your experience, strength, and hope from doing the Steps & working the program this far. Celebrate that you have come this far! Are you willing to commit to another 30 questions to begin Step Four?
- B. From now on, while you keep progressing with Step Four, everyday, practice the “maintenance steps” of CoDA Recovery. When you awake in the morning, consciously work Step One, Step Two, and Step Three. Furthermore, before you retire for the evening, practice Step Ten, Step Eleven, and Step Twelve to the best of your ability. (Suggestion: you may wish to “take personal inventory” by comparing your behaviors each day to the Recovery Patterns of Codependence on www.coda.org)





Announcement **Request for Feedback**

To: All CoDA Sponsors

From: NorCal CoDA Regional Committee

Thank you for your interest in using the "30 Questions Sponsorship Tool" to sponsor other CoDA members. Sponsorship in CoDA is an honor and surely a challenge from our Higher Power to grow in our own recovery! There are many ways to sponsor others in our program and each sponsor/sponsee must decide what will work best for them. This is lovingly offered as another tool.

It is our hope that this sponsorship tool will be used at grassroots level and proven to be effective for "CoDA as a Whole." Therefore, as of October 2010, we began offering this sponsorship tool on our website to support our CoDA Region, plus any other CoDA members who are interested.

History: The "30 Questions Sponsorship Tool" for Steps One, Two & Three was originally developed in 2009 coming out of the NorCal CoDA Winter Mini-Conference Sponsorship Roundtable Workshop. Four CoDA members were asked to share their experience, strength, and hope for about 10 minutes pertaining to their strategies for sponsoring others through the 12 Steps. Each sponsor had encountered a number of successes and challenges while trying their own methods of sponsoring others. However, during the workshop, four distinct strategies came to light. The first used the CoDA Blue Book as the main literature study reference, the second used a "Daily Journal Checklist Tool" to encourage the sponsee to work a balanced program using all the program tools, the third met with her sponsee one-on-one for about an hour once a week, and the fourth used a list of 30 Questions with his sponsees which had been passed around and effectively used with another recovery program to help them begin working the steps.

During the next few months following the conference, the sponsors collaborated to rewrite the questions so they pointed to our own CoDA Blue Big Book and incorporated their other successful sponsoring strategies into one tool. This new "30 Question Sponsorship Tool" is the result of their work.

In June 2009, these questions were introduced on a trial basis at CoDA meeting level in Sacramento, California. It became apparent immediately that this strategy was extremely valuable in providing a gentle structure and healthy boundaries for developing a sponsor/sponsee relationship. It also encouraged new CoDA members to take "baby steps" so any feelings of hopelessness and overwhelm could be minimized as they moved along their path of recovery. Each sponsee worked the program of CoDA in their own way and at their own pace.

In July 2009 the material was reviewed by the CoDA World Fellowship Literature Committee Chairperson and from her suggestions the initial revisions were made. In September 2009, the

Greater Sacramento Area CoDA Community offered the "30 Question Sponsorship Tool" on their website for their meetings at intergroup level.

Between 2009 and 2010 many other CoDA members found these materials on the internet and requested the use of this tool for their meetings also. There were requests from all over the United States including Spokane Washington, Provo Utah, Vermont, and Texas.

The initial feedback we received was that this tool was positively changing the atmosphere of their meetings. Instead of newcomers attending once a week and then somberly leaving the meeting to go fend for themselves in the week ahead, CoDA members were starting to call each other and listen to each other. They would share what had come up for them as they processed these questions. As a result, they grew closer and began to develop the healthy and loving relationships they had always wanted.

During the CSC in July 2010, it was suggested that this be developed into a possible literature piece by the CoDA Literature Committee to be presented for review to "CoDA as a whole". So, if all goes smoothly, we can foresee this sponsorship tool being introduced at the CoDA World Fellowship Service Conference in 2012 to be voted on by group conscience.

In order to present a track record of success, we need your help. Therefore, we are requesting feedback from all CoDA members who are actually using this sponsorship tool.

- Has it been effective for you? For your sponsee? Please describe your experiences.
- Do you have any suggestions to improve it in any way?
- The NorCal CoDA Outreach Committee wants to develop an ongoing list of sponsors who would be willing to sponsor other CoDA members using this tool. Would you be willing to sign up? If so, please provide your contact information.

If you can assist us in any way, we will sincerely appreciate it.

Please email: Keir, Outreach Chair - rhythmaware@yahoo.com

or Debbie W. Sponsor Coordinator - redhatattitude@gmail.com

or write to:

**NorCal CoDA, Outreach Sponsorship Feedback
PMB #230, 1800 21st Street,
Sacramento, CA 95811-6812**

Thank you in advance for your service to our CoDA Fellowship.

All the best to you and your sponsee!

Twelve Tips for Sponsors

1. You are powerless over your sponsee and your sponsee's life is unmanageable by you. Neither of you would be in CoDA if you didn't have problems with codependency.
2. You aren't in charge; your sponsee's Higher Power is. Believe that a power greater than either one of you can restore your sponsee to sanity.
3. Make a decision at the beginning of your relationship with your sponsee to turn the sponsee's will and life over to the care of a power greater than either one of you.
4. Be honest with yourself about your relationship with your sponsee. This is a great opportunity to observe your own behavior in a relationship.
5. Admit to your Higher Power, yourself, and your own sponsor when you don't know what to do.
6. Be ready to change things that aren't working: your schedule, the literature you work with, the response you give when your sponsee keeps bringing up the same problems.
7. Before meeting with your sponsee, you might find it helpful to say a prayer such as this: "Higher Power, use me to say whatever it is you want my sponsee to hear today."
8. It is all right to make mistakes. You are not in charge of your sponsee's recovery; your sponsee's Higher Power is.
9. If you feel you have given a bad direction or suggestion, let the sponsee know.
10. It is all right if the relationship doesn't last. You may realize after a while that you are not able to work with a particular sponsee for whatever reason.
11. Seek through prayer and meditation to understand your Higher Power's will for you in your role as sponsor. Pray for the power to carry out that role.
12. Remember that you are carrying the message of recovery, nothing else. Take satisfaction from any sponsee who comes to understand and believe in the CoDA program of recovery.

(c) 2005 CoDA Bay Area Community Service Group, San Francisco, CA