

Co-Dependents Anonymous

Sponsorship Program

Working Step 4 in CoDA

Version 1.1 - June 2018

CoDA Sydney Intergroup Endorsed – “Work in Progress”

CoDA Australasia

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<http://www.codependentsanonymous.org.au/>

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This Step 4 Workbook was developed as part of the Sydney sponsorship programme.

It has been submitted for endorsement by the CoDA National Conference.

As it is very much a first version and a "work in progress", CoDA needs your comments and feedback about how useful or otherwise you have found it in helping you work your Step 4. Your suggestions for changes or additions are welcomed.

Sponsors are also invited to comment about whether your sponsees have elected to use this workbook or not and how useful you thought it was for them.

Please send all feedback to:

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THANK YOU!

Please note: The following is part of a sponsorship programme that has been developed by CoDA Sydney Intergroup. It has not been endorsed by CoDA World Service.

WORKING STEP FOUR IN CO-DEPENDENTS ANONYMOUS

Completing a personal inventory promises four benefits:

1. *Learning honesty*
2. *Eliminating the power the past has over us*
3. *Learning humility*
4. *Laying groundwork for further Steps*

Hazelden Step 4. 1992. P 4

In CoDA self-abuse can be one of our chief defects and at first glance Step Four can look like another opportunity to beat up on ourselves. However Step Four, is not about making ourselves or anyone else wrong. In Step One we learned how self-abuse had made our lives unmanageable. In Step Two we came to believe that faith in a Higher Power could restore us to sanity. In Step Three, as we turned our wills and our lives over to the care of a loving Higher Power, we began to be more caring, nurturing and supportive of ourselves. We had come to understand that this was Higher Power's will for us.

Most of us had spent the better part of our lives preoccupied with other people. We had scrutinized, criticized, and analysed others and ourselves, sometimes obsessively. But this was not a searching and fearless moral inventory of anyone. It was self-will and self-abuse.

Step Four pamphlet. Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc.

As co-dependents many of us had seen ourselves as entirely dedicated to the wellbeing of others. Sometimes it was hard to see how we had wronged anyone; wasn't it always our intention to be caring and kind? At other times it was hard to see our part in others' mistreatment of us, after all weren't we just innocent victims?

Some of us found it helpful to look at the effects our co-dependent thinking and behaviours had had on us and our relationships. We remembered that it's not only actions that can hurt; negative thinking is also harmful: to ourselves and to others. Some of us put martyrdom at the top of our list. We reminded ourselves that being a victim isn't a virtue; it's a defect that we want to have removed. We came to understand that beating up on ourselves is unloving behaviour and that allowing others to abuse us in any way is not an act of love. We realized that we can't self-harm without harming others, often those closest to us, and we learned that only once we love ourselves can we really begin to love others.

SEARCHING AND FEARLESS

Moral inventory of ourselves - The first part of this Step defined the attitude we adopted as we worked it- one that was searching and fearless. The second part of Step Four gave us our focus and direction. This inventory would be only of ourselves, and it would pertain to our personal behaviour in as many life experiences as we could recall. The word "moral" had many synonyms. Among them were words like honest, straightforward, fair, and open. The message in Step Four was clear. This inventory of ourselves was to be honest and straightforward, not critical or abusive.

Step Four pamphlet. Co-Dependents Anonymous, Inc

It has been suggested that for co-dependents finding our assets can require a lot of *searching*, while facing our defects requires us to be fearless.

Often as co-dependents we fear being the best of who we truly are. Our shame and confusion keep us in hiding. As we search out our assets we bring attention to them and give them energy. By simply listing them, our assets can start to take on a life of their own. As the best of who we are comes out of hiding we can gain strength to face our defects. For this reason we do our assets list first.

We remember that sometimes our co-dependent behaviours have become like pets. We may be quite fond of many of them even strongly attached to some. They've been with us for a long time and may have served us well at some stage in our lives. As we do our inventory we remember to include even those behaviours we are attached to. The more we are attached to them the more likely, we are to remain in denial about them. Doing our inventory fearlessly means including those defects that we are afraid to part with

GETTING STARTED.

Collective Twelve Step wisdom is that you must write your inventory down, that if it took less than 15 minutes then it probably wasn't searching enough and if it takes more than 4-6 weeks then you maybe procrastinating. Apart from that there are no rules and there is no right or wrong way to do it. This open ended approach can be intimidating for some who would prefer a little more structure. What follows are simple easy to follow guidelines for working Step Four.

The questionnaires are designed to assist with six of the most common co-dependent defects: fear, low self-esteem, anger, resentment, victim and immaturity. As we do the questionnaires the behaviours of others will sometimes emerge. This is not surprising. Few of us are entirely free of these characteristics. The important thing now is to do our inventory, reviewing only our role in the relationships and events in our lives.

A suggested inventory is to answer all questions with a simple yes, 'no, sometimes, ' depends etc. Then select some that you strongly identify with and write in depth about how these defects have operated in your life, remembering always that in the final analysis, how you do your inventory is entirely up to you.

CoDA INVENTORY OF ASSETS

The inventory process is one of the most loving things we can do for ourselves. Step Four is not an invitation to be overly critical, or to hurt ourselves. This is the Step where we begin to see our part in our own lives. An inventory is about truth, including our positive attributes as well as our self-defeating behaviours that have trapped us in our co-dependency. We also look at our positive qualities: our values, assets and talents. As co-dependents, not perceiving the good in ourselves and our lives is often at the core of our disease. We strive to work Step Four in an attitude of self-love and acceptance, letting go of old patterns of not loving and not accepting ourselves.

Co-Dependents Anonymous, Steps and Traditions Workbook P 9

For many of us self-abuse has been at the core of our disease. We made our abusers our Higher Power. We took on the abuser's shame, blame, hostility and put downs often unconsciously. We became hostile to ourselves; we put ourselves down. There were "tapes in our heads" telling us we were less-than and worthless. Doing a searching moral inventory of ourselves includes seeking out our assets - our good points. For, many of us it is the hardest part of the inventory for it involves silencing the inner critic, reprogramming the "tapes" with positive affirmations, and slowly, with Higher Power's help, learning to love ourselves.

CoDA INVENTORY OF FEAR

We remember that our courage to complete this Step doesn't come from the absence of fear but our willingness to walk through it. We work toward understanding our strengths and weaknesses, our internal assets and liabilities; who we are and what we've become as a result of our Codependence. We look for understanding, not fuel to fire self-condemnation.

Co-Dependents Anonymous Big Book. P.41.

Am I anxious about the future? How much of my time do I spend worrying?

Am I afraid of people? Do I isolate myself from friends or society?

Am I afraid to reach out to new people?

Have I held back from others, waiting for them to come to me?

Do I repeatedly get into relationships with the kind of people who mentally or physically abuse me?

Am I afraid to end existing relationships which are destructive or inappropriate for me?

Have I delayed seeking new jobs or careers, held back by worry and fear? Do I procrastinate out of fear?

Am I afraid of what others will think?

Am I afraid of responsibility?

Do I fear commitment?

Am I afraid of being noticed?

Am I so afraid of change that I remain in situations that are not good for me?

Am I afraid to express myself, to tell others how I feel?

Am I so afraid of conflict that I accept abuse rather than risk asserting myself?

When has fear held me back from taking other actions I should have pursued?

Did I ever let another person get blamed or punished for something I did?

Do I interfere in the lives of others because I know best, or to ease my pain, or for any other pay-off?

Do I assume people won't like me or want to be around me?

CoDA INVENTORY OF SHAME PATTERNS

Many co-dependents identify shame as a large part of their unmanageability. Often our misguided attempts to be free of shame enhanced this defect instead of removing it. It can be helpful to remember that shame is the flip side of pride. Both stem from lack of self-acceptance. The alternative to both is humility - healthy self-acceptance. This inventory is intended to be worked as part of the Fourth Step to help identify defects: associated with self-acceptance issues:

Physical

Am I overly concerned with my appearance: face, hair, body size, skin colour, age?

Am I ashamed of how I look?

Do I assume others won't like, me because of the way I look?

Do I judge others on how they look?

Do I try to control how others see me?

Do I try to control the appearances of those close to me?

Intellectual

Am I critical of my intellectual capacity?

Do I criticize myself/others for being dumb, slow, boring, not with it?

Do I condemn myself/others for not living up to certain intellectual standards?

Do I always have to be right?

Would I rather be right than happy?

Do I habitually assume others are right and I must be wrong?

Is admitting I'm wrong a sign of weakness?

Do I believe can't or shouldn't make mistakes?

Do I over-react if others make a mistake?

If I make a mistake, do I assume I am a mistake?

Emotional

Am I touchy, easily hurt, quick to take offence, defensive?

Do I take things personally?

Do I assume other people's feelings (e.g anger) are because of me?

Do I feel resentful of people and situations?

Am I afraid to express how I feel?

Do I think my feelings are unimportant?

Am I emotionally needy and dependent?

Material

How much importance do I attach to possessions: income, house, car, clothes?

Am I ashamed of my financial circumstances?

Do I value material goods as a way to fulfil my needs or as something to enhance my self-worth?

Am I mean or tight fisted with my money or possessions?

Am I ostentatious, extravagant or careless with money?

What role does lack of self-acceptance play in my attitude to money and possessions?

Moral

- When do I judge my behaviour too harshly?
- When do I feel "not-good-enough?"
- When do I feel that I am morally superior?
- Am I intolerant of others?
- Do I set moral standards for others?
- Do I find myself saying "well at least I'm not..."?
- Do I put others down or gossip about their behaviour?

Sexual

- Do I feel inferior/superior because of my gender?
- Do I feel shame about my body, my sexuality?
- Do I accept put downs about myself as a woman/man?
- Do I put down others because of their gender?
- Have I used sex to get love?
- Have I used another's need for love to get sex?
- Have I used others sexually?
- Have I allowed others to use me sexually?

Social

- Do I avoid social situations?
- Do I have difficulty taking the initiative in social situations?
- Do I seek recognition and admiration?
- Do I need to be noticed?
- Do I compare myself to others?
- Am I ashamed of my social status?
- Am I ashamed of my family or background?
- Am I ashamed to be seen with certain people?
- Am I ashamed to be part of a certain group?
- Do I need a partner to feel acceptable?
- Do I seek a trophy partner?

Spiritual

- Do I make the religious beliefs/values of others right or wrong?
- Do I allow others to make my Higher Power wrong?
- Do I make others my Higher Power?
- Do I allow others to presume to be my Higher Power'?
- When have I played Higher Power to others?

Self-absorption

- Do I frequently seek assurance that I'm OK?
- Do I need others to like me before I can like myself?
- Do I manipulate others into bolstering my self-esteem?
- Am I numb to my needs?
- Does shame prevent me from asking, directly for my needs to be met?
- Do I manipulate to get my needs met?
- Do I feel inferior/superior to others?
- Do I take comfort from the martyr role?
- Do I consider the rights of others, including their right to have difficult experiences?

Self sufficiency

- Do I believe I must be capable of everything?
- Am I stingy with myself, not giving or sharing who I am?
- Am I reluctant to reach out to others?
- Am I unable to trust others?
- Am I unable to receive?
- Is my attitude closed and repellent out of fear of being discovered?
- Do I rebuff and avoid others?
- Do I allow no-one to get close?

CoDA STEP FOUR INVENTORY OF ANGER AND RESENTMENT

- Do I deny or repress anger?
- Do I express my anger in covert ways, e.g. sarcasm?
- Do I set boundaries around other people's anger?
- Do I react or "buy in to" other people's angry outbursts?
- Do I overreact, getting angry when no harm was intended?
- Do I assume if someone is angry that it's about me?
- Do I take my anger out on whoever is around, instead of clearing it up at its source?
- Have I abused others verbally or physically?
- Do I tolerate other's abuse of me?
- Am I holding a grudge against someone because of a past wrong done to me?
- Am I holding any grudges against members of my family?
- Do I hold grudges against myself?
- How difficult is it for me to forgive myself/others?
- Do I try to get even with people who hurt me?
- Do I make a point of never forgetting when someone hurts me?

CoDA STEP FOUR INVENTORY OF VICTIM BEHAVIOURS

- Do I obey the rules of others even when there is no legal or moral requirement?
- Do I habitually assume I am in the wrong?
- Do I assume that anyone louder, bigger, stronger or of a particular gender has authority over me?
- Am I passive?
- When have I victimized others?
- Have I ever victimized animals?
- As a child did I ever experience having my thoughts or feelings controlled?
- Do I allow others (individuals or institutions) to impose their beliefs on me?
- Do I give myself time to respond to questions or requests?
- Do I believe I must be at the service of others?
- Do I feel compelled to protect the feelings of others?
- Do I make others responsible for my feelings?
- Do others have to be a certain way before I can be happy?
- Am I a bully (physically, emotionally or mentally)?
- How did I behave as a child when my needs weren't met?
- Do I know how to get my needs met today?
- Do I try to get my needs met in self-defeating ways?
- Are my needs generally less important than everybody else's?
- Do I allow others to be my Higher Power?
- Do I think my unhappiness is someone's fault?
- Do I give time to myself for rest and recreation?
- Does "everything depend on me"?
- Does it "always happen to me"?
- Do I blame others for my problems?
- Do I blame myself for others' wrong behaviours?
- Do I judge myself harshly by others' standards?
- Am I emotionally and financially self-supporting?
- Do I manipulate others into rescuing me?
- As a child: was I trained into helplessness?
- Was I the family scapegoat?
- Was I expected to rescue the family?
- What are the payoffs in being a victim?
- Do I enjoy the romantic tragedy of being a victim?

CoDA STEP FOUR INVENTORY OF IMMATURE BEHAVIOURS

- Am I afraid of responsibility?
- Do I avoid responsibility?
- Does fear of making mistakes keep me stuck?
- Does fear paralyse me?
- Do I have difficulty keeping to a schedule?
- Am I often running late?
- Do I panic in difficult or demanding situations?
- Do I feel I need others to take care of me?
- Do I assume "grown-ups" will take care of "grown up business"?
- Do I hang back and let others do the work?
- Am I naïve or gullible? Am I easily taken in?
- Do I prey on the gullibility of others?
- Do I sulk or have tantrums when I don't get my way?
- Do I make unrealistic demands of my family, friends or co-workers?
- Do I make unrealistic demands of myself?
- Do I seek attention in inappropriate or self-defeating ways?
- Am I needy?
- Is my "inner child" joyful and spontaneous or is s/he dictating my life?
- Is a healthy adult running my life?
- Do I make assumptions about people?
- Do I feel safe asking to have my needs met?
- Do I live in fear of scrutiny and criticism from others?
- Do I neglect to feed and care for myself?
- Am I able to look after myself?
- Do I feel unable to cope with the demands of everyday life?
- Do I react rather than respond to situations?
- Do I give my power away?
- Am I perfectionistic?
- Can I tolerate ambiguity or do I see everything as black or white?
- Can I be moderate or do I swing between extremes?

Additional notes (added April 2005)

The CoDA Blue book offers another method of working Step 4.
The Step 4 literature from other 12 Step Fellowships may also be useful to you.
CoDA members have found the Step 4 booklet, published by Hazelden Foundations very valued
(available from Alcoholics Anonymous service offices)