Emerging from the Nightmare

A Journey

2019 Keynote Address

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I Am the Dream and
I Must Come True

2019 Face Everything and Recover Retreat
My Core Issues (empowers the *nightmare*)

- An **Issue** is any conflict, concern or potential problem whether conscious or un-conscious, that is unresolved and needs action or change.

- A **Core Issue** is one that comes up *repeatedly*.

- There are about **15 Core Issues** that *underlie* codependence, addictions and other dysfunction. They come up in relationships.

- CoDA also lists “Patterns and Characteristics”, our higher-level gross “how they show up” behaviors in CoDA BB pp 4-8

- Each Pattern or Characteristic may have **several Core Issues** that make it up.
Where Core Issues Come From

“What We Were Like”

“The Pain of our childhoods and the realization of how this has adversely impacted the very fiber of our lives.”

—Peeling the Onion p. 3

✓ Three key causes: **Repeated Abuse, Neglect** and/or Abandonment PLUS a lack of appropriate support

✓ Physical, Emotional, Sexual, Religious, Financial...*and more*
More about *What Happened* from CoDA

“**Childhood Trauma that Drove Our Authentic Selves into Hiding in Order to Survive**”

We were...

✓ “dependent on emotionally inappropriate or unavailable parents”
✓ “groomed to meet their needs”
✓ “took on the shame of our caregivers”
✓ “took on feelings of disgust toward our bodies”
✓ “experienced control and objectification through language, innuendo, enmeshment and/or abandonment”
✓ Stopped *living* life and began *surviving* life

—*Peeling the Onion*

*Codependents Anonymous*
The Truth About Recovery Work

The hard, primary work in Recovery...

“...is necessary due to the intensity and depth of this Betrayal”

In Our Recovery Work We...

“...look inward, continuing the Emotional Work of Peeling the Onion”

—Peeling the Onion, Introduction
Codependents Anonymous
Identifying My Core Issues Using CoDA’s Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Denial</th>
<th>Difficulty Trusting Self &amp; Others</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ungrieved Hurts, Losses &amp; Traumas</td>
<td>Shame/Low Self-Esteem</td>
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<td>High-Tolerance for Inappropriate behavior</td>
<td>Over-Responsibility for Others</td>
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<td>Fear of Abandonment ++(reprisal, shame)</td>
<td>All-or-None Thinking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Difficulty Identifying &amp; Meeting My Needs</td>
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<td>Difficulty Handling Feelings</td>
<td>Dependence</td>
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<td>Difficulty Being Real</td>
<td>Difficulty Giving/Receiving Love or Praise</td>
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These are the most fundamental elements that make up the codependent “Patterns and Characteristics”
These are the problems that I use CoDA’s Tools on in order to recover
Basic Truths About My Nightmare

I was...

Not Wanted by My Family
Abused, Neglected and Abandoned by Family and Others

I developed Complex-PTSD from my experiences from age 4 to 19
Forced to Live on the Street as a Kid and as an Adult
Under the Thrall of the Worst-Parent, Threatening god
Developed My Own Addictions to Feel Better
Came to the Point of Ending My Life

Had a Very Rocky Time When I Arrived in Recovery: Including in CoDA

I Have Had To Allow My Pain to Overcome My Fears in Recovery
“It takes a village to raise a child”
— Youruba & Igbo Proverb (west Africa)

It takes an Abusive, Neglecting or Abandoning family to put a child’s Self into hiding
— CoDA’s Maxim

“It takes a village of CoDA members to salvage that child”
— Donald’s Corollary on CoDA’s Maxim

“It takes a lot of damn hard work to salvage that child”
— Donald’s Experience with Donald’s Corollary

“That child is worth every damn minute of salvage work!”
— Donald’s Conclusion
So...

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Who has the damn directions?

...Lucky for us, CoDA Offers a Way...
My Story

What I Was Like (the problems)
What Happened (the solution)
What I Am Like Now (the results as they unfold)

—The 12 Step method of learning and telling our story

Denial, Difficulty Trusting Others | Ungrieved Hurts, Losses, Traumas |
Shame/Low Self-Esteem | High Tolerance for Inappropriate Behaviors |
Over-Responsibility for Others | Fear of Abandonment | All-Or-None Thinking |
Difficulty Identifying and Meeting My Needs | Difficulty Handling Conflict |
Difficulty Handling Feelings | Dependence | Difficulty Being Real |
Difficulty Giving/Receiving Love or Praise
IDENTIFYING and WORKING THROUGH MY CORE ISSUES

Synopsis:

• I dug deeper into the rote literature, read the stories, listened to stories & CoDA CDs in order to learn about my Core Issues. Steps 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 & 9 help me identify some, but not all Core Issues. Journaling is indispensable, as it is the conversation I am having with myself and it puts my inchoate thoughts on paper as clear, complete items to work on.

• As I learned the 3-part formula for sharing our stories in 12 Step (What we were like, What Happened, What we are like now) my Core Issues became clearer as did the effects of working on them using CoDA’s many tools for recovery. Helped me gradually dissipate my emotional pain.

• Sponsorship in 12 Step has the benefit of bringing up Core Issues. The point is that they come up so that I can use CoDA’s tools for recovery to work on them in the moment.

• Service work in 12 Step has the benefit of bringing up Core Issues. The purpose is that they come up so that I can use CoDA’s tools for recovery to work on them in the moment.

• I learned that recovery does not come from answering questions in a book: it requires experience and practice again and again: 15% learning and 85% experiential work.
IDENTIFYING and WORKING THROUGH MY CORE ISSUES

Synopsis (continued):

• As I shared more intensely and *completely*, my sense of Denial was replaced with Acceptance that I came out of a completely and irretrievably dysfunctional family, religion and early life, and that the thinking that was set in motion in my early years snowballed to develop full-blown dysfunctional (codependent) thinking and behaving throughout my life.

• I began the necessary recovery task of *naming things accurately*:
  • My family, foster family, god & its followers are indeed abusers, neglecters, abandoners.
  • My Core Issues now had a name, definition, points of origin and a path through them.

• I was able to finally overcome the fear of remembering what happened to me and fear of allowing the feelings associated with those memories to finally come up and out.

• As I continued to focus on deeper learning, more sharing my actual feelings and difficulties, remained in service and sponsorship, my Core Issues began to change, heal and be replaced by healthier thinking and behaving that supports my well-being and Self.
IDENTIFYING and WORKING THROUGH MY CORE ISSUES

Synopsis (continued):

• The “Patterns and Characteristics”, the ‘gross behavior patterns’ began to become decoded or unraveled as I identified and addressed the many Core Issues that reside beneath each “pattern”.

• I gained understanding of my responses to the legitimate events and people who caused or heavily influenced the development of my Core Issues.

• I realized that I was in fact a victim, that I became a survivor and that there is a way to re-enter that pain of my past in order to remember, reexperience and work through the emotional load of pain and the cognitive (thinking) errors that resulted from them.

• In the process, by patience, persistence, time, the help of safe and supportive others and a higher power of my own choice, I begin to emerge from that life course of painful victimhood and codependence. I begin to emerge from my nightmare.
IDENTIFYING and WORKING THROUGH MY CORE ISSUES

Synopsis (continued):

I begin realizing...

- That I am responsible for my life and the progress of my recovery: no one else is.

- That my story is important, that it is real, true and holds the key to my recovery.

- That I have dignity, am completely worthy, am whole and, because of what I survived, I have useful wisdom and experience (instead of thinking I just had ‘a fucked up life’)

- That I need no longer be a survivor and that I can and do begin thriving in Life, which is what I was born to do but due to the proclivities of a capricious higher power (if, as some people assert, those events were part of some god’s “plan”), and highly dysfunctional people, I became a victim, was repeatedly harmed and was forced to become a survivor.

- I am loveable, loving and loved and have come to believe in my own capabilities each time I apply myself to the tools and bring them to bear in my life.
An abuser is an abuser. It does not matter if it is human, an institution or some abusive god.

12 Step Recovery has taught me not to associate with abusers. They’re the reason I had to come to recovery.
The Truth Today
(of me and my friends in CoDA)

“We are one equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak by time and fate but strong in will to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.”

—Alfred, Lord Tennyson
Not to Yield

With the help of this Program and the Fellowship of my friends that powers it...

- Today I know that I am **Powerless, NOT Helpless**
- Today I am Responsible for My Life and My Recovery (*Which are the same thing*)
- Today I need no longer yield to my abusers: *both humans and insane gods*
- Today I need no longer yield to my abuses, neglects and abandonment
- Today I need no longer be loyal to my suffering: *I am NO LONGER a victim*
- Today I need no longer survive life: *I can learn and practice thriving in life*
- Today I need no longer yield to shame: *I am no longer “less-than” others*
- Today I need no longer yield to family’s & religion’s messages of *worthlessness*
- Today I need no longer yield to harsh self-talk
- Today I need no longer yield to the need to work a perfect program: It’s *Progress*
- Today I need no longer believe that I cannot be loved or give love to others

So...**WHO AM I TODAY?**
I AM The Dream
And I AM Coming True!

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Get These Recovery Resources from CoDA

Books:
• Codependents Anonymous, The basic text or “Big Book” of Codependence Anonymous
• CoDA Twelve Step and Twelve Tradition Workbook
• NEWCOMERS HANDBOOK,
• TOOLS OF RECOVERY,
• Sponsorship: What’s in it for Me?,
• Peeling the Onion,
• Communication in Recovery,
• Making Choices,
• Twelve Steps Handbook,
• BUILDING CODA COMMUNITY: HEALTHY MEETINGS MATTER,
• Common Threads of Codependency,
• EXPERIENCES WITH CROSSTALK,
• Establishing Boundaries in Recovery,
• CARRYING THE MESSAGE: LIVING THE TWELFTH STEP.

Audio CDs:
• Personal Sharing on the Twelve Steps,
• Codependency and Shame,
• Newcomers and Sponsorship

Find Them At WWW.CODA.ORG

CoDA Convention CDs: VWTapes.com
Retreat Presentation CDs: WhiteSoundStudios.com

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