

TRADITION EIGHT: Co-Dependents Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

8. OUR MARRIAGE OR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER AN UNPROFESSIONAL, FREE, AND GIVING RELATIONSHIP - EACH TO THE OTHER. IN A HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP, WE DO NOT KEEP SCORE.

Our individual contributions to the relationship should be freely given and come from the heart. “Freely ye have received, freely give”. No one should keep score with regard to how much each partner does. All contributions should be valued.

Unless one of you is a professional carpenter, plumber, housekeeper, or laundress, etc., neither partner is an expert or professional in the relationship. Each partner must avoid taking a “professional” or know-it-all attitude. In the final analysis, personal opinions are just that – personal.

And when it comes to chores, you should try to share them. Most of the time, s/he who is most interested does. The one who is hungry, cooks. On the tasks that neither of you like to do, either rotate them or pay someone else to do them. As has previously been shared, neither partner is the boss in the relationship. There should be but one ultimate authority in the relationship—a loving Higher Power as expressed to our *informed* group conscience. Being in charge should not be all that important to either partner. If anything, just the opposite should be true. Does anybody in your household really want to be in charge?

Personal example:

In working my recovery program, I have learned to live life, not just survive life. Today I actually have a life that I love. Although CoDA and the 12 Steps have given me sanity and serenity, I suffer from acute clinical depression that is proven to run in my family.

After my sister committed suicide a few years ago, I was prescribed medication in order to function from day to day. Considering my history, I have remained on medication in addition to regularly seeing a doctor and therapist. Because of my codependence and wanting to be perfect this was really hard for me. I felt like a failure, I couldn’t “do this on my own”. After talking to my recovery friends and sponsor, I realized that sometimes we need to seek outside help.

My husband and I have gone to recovery meetings for couples in 12 Step recovery programs, as well as couples therapy counseling.

A few years ago I admitted my husband into an inpatient rehab facility for his addictions. I knew that I certainly was not qualified to help him. I was more than relieved and grateful to turn him over to the professional that were trained to give

him the help that he needed. The key for me in this and all my issues is for me to ask my trusted and loving Higher Power for guidance.

CHECKLIST FOR TRADITION EIGHT:

- Does this tradition accurately describe my behavior? If not what needs changing?
- Do I try to sound like an expert on things? If so, why do I need to do that? Is my security at risk? Is my fear triggered? Does my ego feel threatened?
- Do I believe that one or the other partner should be in charge based on their gender? Experience? Education? Job? Or anything?
- Do I make an effort to understand my partner's opinions, views, and feelings? Do I really listen to my partner and show respect for those opinions, views and feelings?
- Does my identity and feelings of self-worth depend upon my relationship with my partner?
- Who or what was my role model for a healthy relationship?
- Can I give for fun and for free – requiring nothing in return? Do I keep score in my relationship?
- Do I charge my partner a 'fee' for being in a relationship with me? If so, what is it? How expensive is my love and companionship?
- Do I take hostages in my relationships? Do I feel that my partner *belongs* to me?
- Do I really understand that I will reap what I sow – that what goes around comes around?

I thank God that life isn't fair and that this program isn't about justice but about mercy!

Yours in service,
Marti, Marilyn and Debbe

Next month Tradition Nine.