

TRADITION SEVEN: Every CoDA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

7. Each partner ought to strive to be mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, sexually and spiritually fully self-supporting in our relationship.

This means that each partner must be responsible for themselves. We must fully concede that our troubles are of our own making. If we cannot understand and accept that notion, then we are clearly saying that our troubles are caused by other people, places, or things. If that is so, then for us to get better, we must get people, places, or things to change. But we've already conceded that we are powerless over people, places, or things (Step One). So that line of thinking is a dead end. It is futile to think we will find anything in being a victim other than depression and a grinding, oppressive sense of defeat.

There is also the issue of control here. Neither partner should do anything to limit the options of the other to avoid being hurt or frightened. Examples: "You must behave so that I don't worry or become embarrassed. You must do (or not do) something so that I don't become afraid."

Why is it important in a relationship that both members are independent mentally, emotionally, physically, socially, sexually and spiritually? In this regard, it is easy for the member of the relationship bringing in the finances, or the greater amount of finances, to control through the purse strings. The non-earning or lesser-earning partner may feel that they are losing their identity because of this. The earning partner may begin to feel that their only purpose is to be a paycheck in the relationship. This can also be said in regard to the amount of education, the emotional dependence, the physical strength/fitness, personal popularity, sexual drives and/or spirituality that each partner brings to the relationship. Control in any of these areas can become the ropes that bind the other partner in the relationship. Resentments, fear, and other problems spring from these controlling attitudes and actions.

Being self-supporting is impossible if one of the partners becomes the Higher Power for the other. The same is true when one partner is overly dependent on the other for their emotional well-being in the relationship. Our self-worth comes from within and from God, not from having to have someone in our life in order to feel okay about ourselves. We are here to enhance each others lives – not *be* each others lives!

Personal Example:

The Seventh Tradition reminds me that I should not be doing for my partner what he can do for himself. I need to get out of the way of others learning to be self-supporting. For example, if I do all the household chores and grocery shopping (his share and mine) because I think he's too busy, I get in the way of my partner doing his part, and often become resentful in the process.

CHECKLIST FOR TRADITION SEVEN:

- Do I try to be the boss in our relationship? Do I attempt to assume control of my partner and our relationship?
- Do my needs for control or a feeling of safety/security limit my partner's options?
- Do I accept responsibility for myself? Can I admit to my innermost self that my problems are all of my own making?
- Do I believe that one or the other partner should be in charge based on their gender? Experience? Education? Job? Or anything?
- Do I try to manage and control through the purse strings? Sexual relations? Silent treatment? Rage/Anger? Emotional care-taking? Physical intimidation? Religion?
- Am I managed and controlled by the purse strings? Sexual relations? Silent treatment? Rage/Anger? Emotional care-taking? Physical intimidation? Religion?
- Do I think that because something is good for me personally that it is also good for my partner?
- Do I deceive myself by thinking how unselfish and giving I am when in reality I am giving only when I can do it on my own terms?
- Can/Do I remember that giving is a position of control and that receiving is a position of powerlessness? Am I able to give as well as receive in my relationship?
- Do I take responsibility for my own physical needs (health, medical, dental, diet, exercise, sleep hygiene, etc.)?
- Am I 10th Step regular (daily inventory; immediate amends)?
- Am I 11th Step regular (prayer & meditation morning and evening)?
- Am I 12th Step regular (being of service and practicing these principles in *all* my affairs)?
- Can I point to at least one thing, right now, that determines the degree of healthy dependence?