

If the Traditions can keep together a whole group of dysfunctional people who would otherwise “usually not mix,” keep them from killing one another and self-destructing; why can’t the Traditions keep a couple or a family group together and show them how can they best function? It makes sense that the Traditions can answer the question: How can our relationships with others best stay whole and so survive?”

The following is what was revealed to us through prayer and meditation and the study of CoDA literature in preparation for presenting a panel discussion on “The Traditions in Healthy and Loving Relationships” for Super Seminar Saturday.

As with all things in our program, please *take what you like and leave the rest*.

**TRADITION ONE: Our common welfare should come first:
Personal recovery depends upon CoDA unity.**

1. Our common welfare should come first: A healthy relationship depends upon unity.

Tradition One suggests putting aside our egos and agendas to support the common welfare of the relationship. Instead of being attached to our own opinions and seeing differences as “attacks” or threats, we let go of our need to control the outcome and make room for our Higher Power. We find that when we let go of our need to control, we also have more serenity within ourselves.

The possibility of true unity begins with each individual. If each partner is not okay individually, they can’t support unity within the relationship because they need too much from it. In addition, having a solid relationship with a Higher Power within each individual person is vital. If each partner is following the guidance and Will of God, as they understand God, they are more capable of participating in a healthy and loving relationship. Why? Because a working relationship with God provides faith and faith removes fear. Unity requires harmonious cooperation. Unity demands a willingness to listen to the ideas, feelings, and opinions of the other with an open mind. Unity means I get to speak my truth and allow my partner to do the same. Unity means sharing views and not insisting on promoting my way as the only way. Sometimes I want to control by urging my partner to do what I think is best for him or for us. And then I remember that I am not my partner’s Higher Power and I do not have all the answers for him or for us. Control does not support our common welfare or our unity. And each partner can’t just do their own thing without considering how their actions will affect the relationship. An attitude of acceptance is essential to creating unity.

Personal Example: My fiancé and I are coming together in our early 40’s and we are planning our wedding together. Agreeing upon our wedding date has been a compromise, one that we arrived at by considering our common welfare. I have wanted to be married for the past ten years. My partner and I have been together for two and a half years, and though I knew I was ready to marry him about a year and a half into our relationship, he was not yet ready. When he “finally” (from my perspective) proposed in March, we both agreed we

wanted to set a wedding date “soon.” As he was finishing a master’s degree program in June (while working full-time), I suggested July. He insisted he wanted to wait until August. Every time we tried to discuss it, I became irritated and impatient, feeling like I had been PATIENT LONG ENOUGH! I could not understand why he needed another month. At last he reminded me of something I already knew about him. After an extremely busy and demanding time, what he needs to do is unplug and do nothing – recharge his batteries for a while before he plans a trip or takes on a personal project (like getting married!). He impressed upon me how much he wanted to be able to enjoy and participate in our marriage ceremony and the time leading up to it and that in order to do so, he needed some “down time,” as a buffer between finishing school and getting married. That’s why August worked better for him – July was his buffer time. All at once I understood that it was more important in the long run to our relationship for both of us to be able to participate and enjoy the process than it was to get my way about the wedding date. And so we agreed to be married at the end of August.

Something that we frequently say to each other in the midst of disagreement (even when we are really irritated) is “I know that we can find a way to work this out together.” Saying or hearing this affirmation out loud helps to reaffirm our commitment to unity.

CHECKLIST FOR TRADITION ONE:

- Am I God-centered or self-centered?
- What am I willing to sacrifice for my relationship?
- What affect do my actions have on our relationship? On our family?
- Am I a giver or a taker in this relationship?
- Do I do unifying things? Am I quick to criticize? Slow to praise?
- Do I use silence as a refuge or punishment while expecting my partner to read my mind?
- Do I listen when my partner has something to say? Do I listen with an open mind?
- Do I admire and approve of my partner? *Does s/he know that?* Do I show and communicate that to her/him?
- Am I a healing, mending, integrating force in our marriage/relationship or am I divisive?
- Am I a peacemaker? Or, because of my own insecurity, is it critical to my ego that I be right?
- Can I distinguish between my needs and wants? (Wants/desires are the seeds of my discontent.)
- Do I practicing *wanting* what I *need* rather than pursuing mainly what I want?
- Can I be flexible?

Flexibility is demonstrated in nature. You will see trees bend in the wind. You will see that tree branches are flexible. To be rigid is to break. When we have life problems it is good for us to be flexible. Sometimes we need to flow with what is happening-to ‘go with the flow.’ If we resist, it becomes more painful. We need to be on the path of least resistance. Water flows down the mountain through the path of least resistance. Electricity flows through the path of least resistance. Power flows through the path of least resistance.

Yours in recovery,

Marti, Marilyn & Debbe