



Fact or Crap?

BY KAREN D.

Fact or Crap?

How much of what I *think* I know is a fact, and how much is crap?

- ▶ **Fact**: A truth known by *actual* experience or *personal* observation.
- ▶ **Crap**: A falsehood or an exaggeration.

Childhood Experiences



“The child-within is the sum of all our childhood experiences, memories, perceptions, beliefs, and emotions”. The child-within, or inner-child is that part of us that carries the innocence of life, curiosity of nature, and the spirit of who we are. (Page 105 Codependents Anonymous third edition). What our parents say to us as children (good or bad) becomes our inner voice as adults.

As babies, we don't have any history to draw on. As children, we don't have any information we can use to judge anything outside of our own environment.

For example- I was raised in a very quiet house, so if I am around loud people I make the judgement that they are *too* loud. I don't consider that they might have been raised in a house where the only time you were noticed was by out-shouting someone else. I don't have any facts about *their* history, so I use *my* history.

Shame Messages



- ▶ The shame messages we learned about ourselves are not true.

(Page 47 Codependents Anonymous third edition).

- ▶ Often, it's not what we are actually told, but a perception of what was said *and/or* who said it that we use as facts. In order to survive, we adopt a set of skills that help us feel safe, such as: Control, Low Self-Esteem, Avoidance, Denial, Compliance, or most likely a combination of the above.

Fact or Crap Worksheet

What I think I know about myself:	How did I come to know this?	Crap: falsehood or exaggeration	Fact: a truth known by actual experience or observation.
Example: I have to work hard at maintaining a relationship	Music, romance novels and movies taught me that suffering means I'm in love.	That's a falsehood: it's a myth that only unhealthy people think is real.	If I have to the work hard at upholding a relationship, I'm the only one in it.
Example: I'm not very smart	Growing up, everyone around me <i>seemed</i> smarter and got better grades.	That's an exaggeration. Just because I didn't get an 'A' doesn't mean I got an 'F'	The words 'smart' and 'stupid' are words I use to compare myself to others.

In your notebook, list some things you know about yourself, under the “What I think I know” column. Use the “How did I come to know this?” column to think about who or what gave you that idea. Remembering that we are born without any judgments of ourselves, how did you come to this conclusion? Use the “Crap” column to enter whether this is true or false; or if it’s an exaggeration or perception of an old idea. Use the “Fact” column to enter the truth. Set aside everything you think you know, and start over.

The Lazy Loop of Love

(Enmeshment 101)

- ▶ How many temporary relationships have you had? Too many to count? Why is this?
- ▶ If you are not a healthy person, your relationship is just temporary.
- ▶ The gift of working the CoDA steps is this: you will attract healthy people and be attracted to them as well.
- ▶ One of the first questions I'm usually asked as a sponsor is "Are you going to *make* me leave my boyfriend/husband/partner?" The short answer is no.
- ▶ The long answer is: *You* will change your perspective as the result of working the steps. This might incline you to leave your partner, and it might not. If you do split, it's the right thing for both of you.
- ▶ As the result of working the CoDA steps, the people around you will adjust to your new self, or they won't. If they can't or won't, just take a step back using "Levels of Friendship" (attached) to see where they really belong.

The Lazy Loop of Love

Holding on to an unhealthy relationship for any reason can keep us stuck in a “loop”.

Stage 1: Euphoria/Validation

Stage 2: Reality/Fear

Stage 3: Self Doubt/Excuses

Stage 4: Realization/Decision

Stage 1: Euphoria/Validation...

At some point during this loop, the relationship ends. Unhealthy people hang in there until it's completely dead, then find a new hostage and repeat the loop.

Don't be lazy- work the steps and break out of your loop!

Stage 1: Euphoria/Validation

This brand new (or renewed) relationship feels good- this is the one! This one is perfect. Red flags are excused or dismissed using Denial patterns. This is the only stage where I feel lovable and valued, *because I have made up the entire relationship*. I have decided who this person is, and it's going to be different this time.

Stage 2: Reality/Fear

Uh-oh. This feels familiar. Euphoria has worn off and I am uncomfortable. My attempts to 'fix' my partner into who I thought he/she was have failed, so I begin to change myself to conform to the person *I think* my partner wants.

Compliance shows up. I can be whomever you want me to be. I decide to ignore that small voice I keep hearing in my head. Avoidance comes in handy here.

Stage 3: Self-Doubt/Excuses

The doubt is back. How can I get back to Stage 1, where it seemed so perfect! What have I done wrong? Low Self-Esteem comes up with a plan: I start making excuses for their behavior, so I can convince myself everything is okay, I'm just over-reacting. It's not *that* bad. I've seen worse.

Stage 4: Realization/Decision

It's undeniable. This relationship is over. He/she or I leave. I examine the relationship at length to find out what I did wrong, so I can Control and make a plan for my next relationship.

Or:

I can stop being lazy and go to work on myself right here.

Or:

Stage 1: Euphoria/Validation

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None of these stages is healthy. Not one.

Ending the Loop

Once you recognize your loop, your next job is to work the steps (repeatedly as needed) and find out *why you allow this*. “They” are not the problem. You are. You can’t blame a clown for acting like a clown, but you *can* ask yourself why you keep going to the circus.

Imagine being loved the way you love..... Sounds good for about three seconds.

My biggest problem is my imagination. I have a committee (it’s more like a rodeo) that lives in my frontal lobe. When I’m alone and all by myself, I’m outnumbered.

How is your imagination making the situation you’re facing right or acceptable?

Use your worksheet, and try to be as honest with yourself as possible. Remember- You might have this person as a 6, and they might have you as a 3. Moreover, is the Stage 3 “common activity” just sex?

Levels of Friendship:

- ▶ #1 Superficial
- ▶ #2 Casual/Familiar
- ▶ #3 Companionship
- ▶ #4 Friendship
- ▶ #5 Intimate Loving Relationship
- ▶ #6 Committed Partnership

All relationships start in the #1 “Superficial” level.

Most relationships will remain here. This is not negative.

Each level is a unique relationship, and each level can be a healthy relationship.

It is never the goal to move people forward. Each person will drop into a category depending on their behaviors.




Be Yourself – Everyone Else is Taken

-Oscar Wilde

Authentic: Not false or copied.


CoDA's Welcome reveals behaviors we need to stop:

"We attempted to use others - our mates, friends, and even our children as our sole source of identity, value and well-being".



We have repeatedly sought out relationships to boost our egos, to confirm our identities, and to make us feel good about ourselves. In order to be authentic, we cannot use other people to define who we are and to fulfill us. By recognizing our true value, we can stop neglecting and mistreating ourselves. To be true to ourselves, we look inside to find our answers. We discover within ourselves a sense of security and self-worth, not bound by anyone else's opinion of us.

Somewhere along the line, we learned to doubt our perceptions, discount our feelings, and overlook our needs. Telling people what we thought or felt often resulted in our being ignored, laughed at, or punished. We looked to others to tell us what to think, what to feel, how to behave. In this way, other people supplied us information about who we were and who we should be.



We believed that if we could just “get it right,” things would be okay. When a person is authentic, it means they show how they genuinely feel, rather than putting on different faces around different people, or changing their personality based on a situation.

To be authentic you must first know yourself; imperfect as you are, and accept others; imperfect as they are. Authenticity is not the same thing as perfection. Compare yourself to yourself, not others.

Every person has valid thoughts and ideas, and is gifted and intelligent in different ways. People who lack self-esteem often try to act like people they perceive to be confident.

If someone leads with: “You should.....blah blah blah....” What they are really saying is: “You should be more like me.”



What have you set aside
in order to maintain a relationship?

What have you set aside in order to maintain a relationship?	What is this based on?	How do you rationalize this behavior?	What can you do differently?
<p>You don't need to work. I can support us while you:</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Good women support their men no matter what</p>	<p>If I support you, you'll love me. (and it will be hard for you to leave)</p>	<p>Watch for those red flags, and don't say yes when you want to say no.</p>
<p>I used sex as a substitute for love.</p>	<p>It's a lot easier to attract someone using sex.</p>	<p>If I can attract them with sex, the love part will come later.</p>	<p>Slow down. Make sure you actually like the person instead of making sure they like you.</p>

Here's a Challenge:

- ▶ Say yes for 90 days, even to things you would normally run from. How will you ever get to know who you are if you don't know your own likes and dislikes?
- ▶ Try something new. There are lists of activities in your local paper, and local internet sites. There's a place in Reno that teaches Glass-Blowing. My great thinking tells me I have no artistic ability so I should leave that class to people who do. Silly Girl! Classes are for people who don't know how to do it.
- ▶ It's okay if you have hobbies or interests that differ from those of your friends. Find things that interest you, and you'll meet people like you. Is there something you've always been interested in doing? Is there a legitimate reason why you haven't done this? Is that a Fact or is that Crap?

How Do You Introduce Yourself?

- ▶ Hi, I'm Karen, I'm_____. Do you justify your existence? (Hi I'm Karen, I'm a friend of... Hi I'm Karen, I work with...)
- ▶ I stopped explaining myself when I realized people only see things from their level of experience. If I introduce myself : "Hi, I'm Karen, I'm an alcoholic." That person will make a decision about me based on their personal experience with alcoholics. Their perception might not fit me at all.
- ▶ Stop introducing people to your "representative" (This is who I think you want me to be).

Co-Dependence Has Been Described as an 'Addiction to Fantasy'

- ▶ Starting today - right now, you don't have to pretend anymore. Give yourself permission to not like something everyone else seems to like. (They might be pretending too!).
- ▶ After you find the truth, tell the truth, especially to yourself.
- ▶ I used to say "I hate camping." That's not actually true. It is more truthful to say that when I went camping with my family as a child there were no distractions (like television) to keep me from being noticed, so it was very uncomfortable and scary.
- ▶ Once I tried camping with people I really like, I discovered that I enjoyed everything but the heat, which would be my superpower if I had to choose. I would be able to control the weather. Other than that - camping is very relaxing.

- ▶ So take what you already know as a hard truth and just question it. Is that true or not true. Decide for yourself, and you will find out who you really are.
- ▶ So what's it going to be?




It's Time to Stop Wishing for a Better Past



Straight Outta CoDA

Experiencing fear and shame as children: (CoDA third edition page 19)

“As children, our identity as well as our relationships with our higher Power, ourselves and others were damaged *each time* we were abused or neglected. We felt shame and naturally feared its reoccurrence, yet we allowed our sense of self and well-being to be shaped by those who abused and neglected us. As children, *we had no choice*. We learned survival skills in order to cope. We controlled or avoided potentially volatile circumstances. We cast away our childhood, tried to become little adults or rebelled. Many of us didn’t understand our actions because they were often instinctive. When we felt overwhelmed or stressed out, we relied on what we knew best to survive”.



If I could have left those skills behind me I would have, but these skills were all I knew- what else *could* I use? Those skills are what we now know as the “Patterns of Co-Dependence” (Control, Denial, Avoidance, Low Self-esteem, Compliance).

How am I going to alter the facts of my past-- by wishing?

Wishing



It is a useless waste time for me to keep wishing I had a different upbringing.

All the wishing I can do will not alter anything that has already happened. How many times have I said “I wish I could go back and do it all over again, knowing what I know now?”

I can't *make* my past change.

Acceptance



Accepting something doesn't mean it's acceptable. Acceptance does not equal "agreement" or "approval." But ultimately, what else is there *but* acceptance? After all:

I can't *make* my past change.

If I'm Not Practicing Acceptance, I'm Practicing a Co-Dependent Pattern

- ▶ An easy way to tell if I am not practicing acceptance is the word “MAKE.” If I try to “MAKE” a change to a person, place or thing, I’m using Codependent Patterns to manipulate the situation.
- ▶ Also, no one can MAKE me feel anything either, unless I agree with them. In order to have someone hurt me, I must first value their opinion. If I agree with their assessment of me, then it’s true, but I *always* get to decide this for myself.
- ▶ Once my “perpetrator” is finished with me, that’s when I take over. I can either automatically agree with them or I can decide for myself if what I’ve just heard is true or not true. (fact or crap?)

It's Time to Stop Wishing Worksheet




In your notebook, draw a table that has five columns:

- ▶ Column one: Remember an event that left a mark on you.
- ▶ Column two: How did you feel when it occurred?
- ▶ Column three: What did you take away from that event?
- ▶ Column four: Specifically, what pattern did you use to keep yourself safe?
- ▶ Column five: After dropping that pattern, (illusionary safeguard) - how would you handle this today?


It's Time To Stop Wishing Worksheet

#1 Here's what happened:	#2 I felt I was:	#3 What did I take away from this?	#4 Specifically-what pattern did I adopt?	#5 How would I react to the same exact situation today?
Bill pretended he liked me-the whole school knew it was a joke	Unlovable	I'm not good enough on my own merits- I'll have to try harder	Low Self- Esteem: "do not perceive themselves as lovable or worthwhile persons"	This would not happen today- I don't attract this type of person anymore.
Mom made me tell the truth about the bike, and I ruined Christmas	Stupid. Always wrong.	I didn't gauge her mood correctly. I'll have to try harder	Low Self- Esteem: "look to others to provide their sense of safety" (in an empty cupboard)	Mom - are you sure you want me to say this out loud?
Boss dressed me down for being late in front of the girl that's late everyday.	Less than. The boss clearly prefers the other girl to me.	Life is fair for everybody but me. I'll have to try harder.	Low Self- Esteem: "have difficulty admitting a mistake". (I was late- it doesn't matter what the other girl does).	You're right- I'm late. I apologize.



All those childhood hurts are in my past, and *MY PAST WILL NOT CHANGE*. Neither the events that happened nor my reactions to those events will ever change. They are etched in stone. None of those things are happening today, so the only time they hurt us is when we think about it.

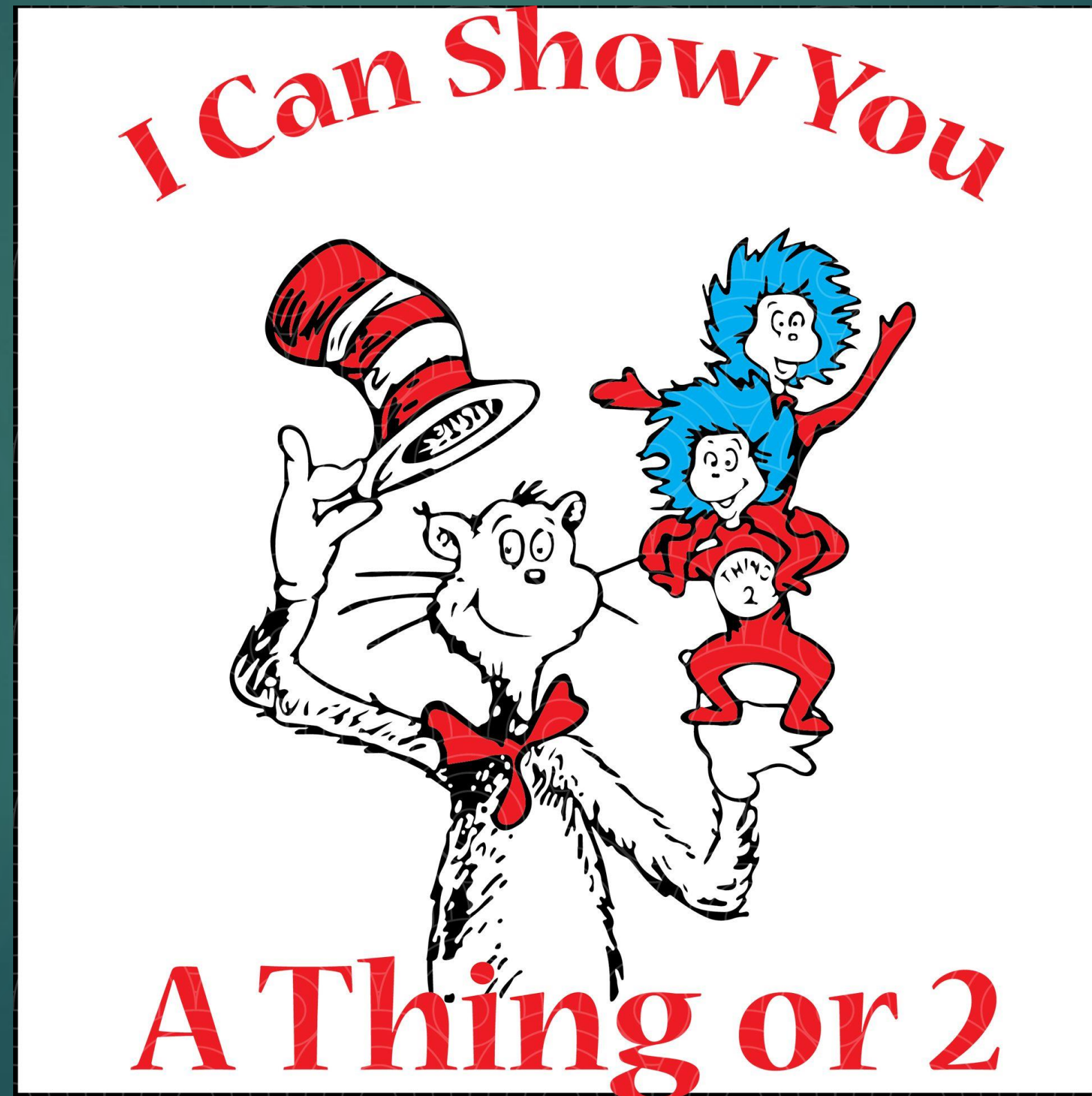
So how do I apply my recovery to my relationships? (page 124 CoDA third edition) “We know our past is just a set of facts that make up our story, and we can now use what we learned in the present to manage our daily lives, and to help other people”.



As soon as you can, try to appreciate that your past is over now, and you don't have to keep living it. The past had a purpose, and most people never get the gift of desperation. We get to live two separate lives in one lifetime!

There's no need for wishing anymore - *you are free!*

It's Never About The Thing



When you listen to yourself speak,
do you hear the exact nature of the
problem, or are you just hearing
about *The Thing*?

How can you tell the difference?

That's easy:
It's never about The Thing.




Your Default Pattern



If you have worked any of the 12 Step programs, you have taken an inventory of your history and how it relates to your present. You will know which codependent patterns you used to survive as a child.

Which of these was your default pattern?

- ▶ Denial- everything is fine here.
- ▶ Compliance- You're the adult, so you must be right.
- ▶ Avoidance- I won't get hurt if they don't notice me.
- ▶ Low Self-Esteem- I must be a really bad person- I deserve this.
- ▶ Control- I can make this feel normal or okay.



Day to day living will bring you opportunities to become an adult. When faced with a problem or dilemma in your adult life, ask yourself how it compares to a problem or dilemma from your child life.

Listen for a story you've already told. Does this current story remind you of an interaction with another person or situation from a previous story?

Here's My Thing: Karen's Huge Problem



“They hired a new guy at work to help me do my job over the summer. I don’t need any help doing my job. I’ve already been out-sourced once by this company, and now the head of finance is telling me to teach him *everything* I know about accounting. I’ll bet my sister’s department isn’t getting any additional ‘help’ this summer. I know what’s going on. They think I make too much money, so now they’re going to hire someone cheaper!”

(When unsettling feelings..., Page 105, Third edition Co-Dependents Anonymous)

What's YOUR Thing? Worksheet



In your notebook, write down your “thing.” What’s the problem?



The Solution

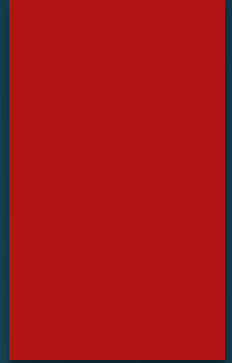
- 1) Determine the facts: subtract the things that are assumed.
- 2) Subtract any additions to the original grievance.
- 3) Take *The Thing* out of the story.



1. Determine the Facts

- ▶ There is a tendency to “fill in the blanks” with things we historically know. Such as:
 - “Thanksgiving has *always* been torture.” It doesn’t make “*This* Thanksgiving will be torture” a fact.
 - “She always gets mad at me when I _____” is not a basis for actual fact. (Any time you say ‘always or never’ you’re not stating a fact, you’re using historical information).
 - “My friend was there and she told me what she heard” ... is the least factual fact.
- ▶ When only the actual facts remain, you will see how little you really know about the situation, and you can go to work on what brought you to the conclusion you were being attacked.

(What is fear of shame..., Page 116, Third edition Co-Dependents Anonymous).



In your notebook, write down all of your assumptions, historical references, and second hand information about your thing:

Just the Facts

Using Karen's Huge Problem as our example, the only facts we have are:

- ▶ A new guy was hired, and
- ▶ Karen will be training him.

2. Subtract Any Additions to the Original Grievance

- ▶ Using Karen's Huge Problem as an example, "I have already been out-sourced once by this company" is an addition to the original grievance, and it's a connection to a previous situation.
- ▶ "I'll bet my sister isn't getting any additional help this summer..." is another addition, and it's a connection to a previous person.

In your notebook, write down all of your additions to the original grievance:

3. Take *The Thing* Out of The Story

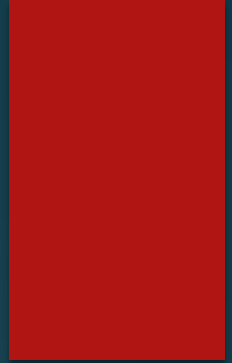
Take *The Thing* out of the story, and you'll be left with just the feelings and emotions surrounding the event. (What does our childhood have to do with our lives today?)

Page 102, Third edition Co-Dependents Anonymous.

By writing down the exact nature of the problem, and you might end up with something like this:

- ▶ I had a co-dependent slip today at work. I didn't have enough facts to make any judgments, so my imagination took over. I was scared when my child life insecurities showed up, and I got mad and threw an internal tantrum.

(What is a codependent slip? Page 114, Third edition Co-Dependents Anonymous).



In your notebook, take *The Thing* out of the story, and write down the Exact Nature of the problem:

Karen's Not So Huge Problem

- ▶ As it turned out, I had assumed a lot. The 'new guy' turned out to be a very likeable fourth year college student who was majoring in finance. He worked with me through the summer, learning the inner workings of accounting to enhance his college studies.
- ▶ I used the gift of fear and the tools of recovery on this situation. I wrote a Fourth Step about it and did a Fifth Step with my sponsor. As a direct result of that, I wholeheartedly trained him and taught him everything I know including helpful shortcuts.
- ▶ When he finished his summer work, he wrote a wonderful letter to me and Human Resources thanking me for being so helpful and patient with him.
- ▶ This is one of the gifts of the program. I don't have to be angry unless I want to be.

New Healthy Behavior

- ▶ Work on not assuming things by asking for clarification instead of filling in the blanks with your personal history.
- ▶ Work on recognizing the difference between child life behavior and adult life behavior. Hint: your adult deals with the facts, your child deals with history.

(How do I apply recovery to my relationships? Page 122, Third edition Co-Dependents Anonymous).

The “Exact Nature” of This Workshop



- ▶ The one thing I hope you take with you today is that your inner voice or “inner child” is the archivist of all the historical references you use.
- ▶ If you are drawing on your historical past to solve a current problem, it’s the child and not the adult that’s doing the work.
- ▶ That is *always* going to be true.