

march 1994



Issue#3

BALANCE

THE COSA NEWSLETTER

MARCH...time for step three, turning it over, whatever "it" is. Turning it over to the care of God, a Higher Power. For many of us, just trying to believe or hope that someone cares. We come into the program feeling alone, different, suffering, shamefilled. Together, we learn to practice step three, experience step three. Together in step three we can say the following prayer and really mean it.. "Bless Them, Change Me".

Step Three: Made a decision.....a very important part of this step.

STEP THREE: *"Made a decision to turn our life and our will over to the care of God as we understood God."*

Having come to believe in a power greater than ourselves, we acted on that belief through turning it over. Again in Step Three we are called upon to let go and let God. This step requires that we place our trust in our Higher Power completely, laying aside our own thoughts about what might be best for us or what direction our life should take. Before we turn it over, however, we must make a decision to do that. Those first three words of Step Three are indeed important for codependents of sex addicts, for many times in our lives we may have had good intentions that we never carried through on for a variety of reasons. Some of us have extreme difficulty making decisions of any kind: where to eat tonight, what to wear to work, whom to invite to our party. But in Step Three, we are asked to make the decision to give up control of our very lives. The step makes it clear that our Higher Power cares for us in a way that we are unable to care for ourselves. Many who have worked Step Three in everyday situations and in times of life crises testify that God's complete care was more than evident when they truly let go.

*God grant me the laughter
To help me see the past with perspective.
Face the future with hope, and
Celebrate today without taking myself
too seriously!!*

MEDITATIONS ON MAKING A DECISION... (DECISION-MAKING I)

Learning the process of decision-making ideally begins in childhood. How many opportunities does a child in a dysfunctional family have to learn decision-making? What price is paid when a child's decision does not match their unhealthy parent?

For many of us the price was the subjection to verbal abuse, emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse and/or withholding of basic needs. When I think about this, I begin to understand why making decisions is difficult for me today. The deep-seated fear of negative results binds me in immobility.

Today, I will practice what has been difficult for me in the past. I do not have to take giant steps, small ones are just right.

AFFIRMATION: I EMPOWER MYSELF AS I PRACTICE MAKING DECISIONS.

Co-authored by Lisa M. & Robyn M.

The following is a piece of literature that was developed by a COSA group during their open meeting. That group found it helpful and is sharing it with you:

LIST OF COSA TRAITS, COMPILED BY MONDAY NIGHT 5:30 ST. PAUL GROUP-JAN/92

Categorized (roughly) in the following ways"

- Beliefs and Attitudes
- Common History
- Manifested behaviors-Tendency toward polarized (extreme) behavior
- Manifested behaviors-other common behaviors and ongoing issues
- Positive traits and strengths

Some COMMON BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES that bring us to COSA

- *We okay (or judge?) people based on gender
- *We believe our feelings could drive us crazy or out of control
- *We believe we have power over people with our sexuality
- *We objectify ourselves sexually and believe others do too
- *We have a limited sense of self-tend to get sense of self from physical appearance or other external-not inner self
- *We believe we are unlovable and fundamentally defective and look to others to fix us or confirm that belief
- *We often expect the worst-and are convinced that we deserve it and are responsible for it
- *We have a limited sense of spiritual connection and trust

COMMON HISTORY

Inappropriate touch and/or lack of nurturing touch or positive affirmation while growing up
History of abuse and/or neglect-emotionally and/or physically
History of triangulation-being daddy's girl and/or in competition with Mom and other women
Strong tendency to conform to sexual extremes in behavior and be ignorant of our own sexuality
Lack of physical and emotional boundaries
Shame-based family system
Family history of sexual repression and/or sexualizing everything

MANIFESTED BEHAVIORS-TENDENCY TOWARD POLARIZED BEHAVIORS OR EXTREMES

We desensitize ourselves to pain	OR	Are very fearful of & avoid pain
We feel crazy	OR	We feel self-righteousness/superior
We sexualize all relationships	OR	We deny any sexual feelings
Don't trust our own intuition or feelings	YET	We trust people who aren't trustworthy
Completely obsessed with physical appearance	OR	Try to hide or deny body or physical appearance
We do detective work to uncover acting out	YET	We ignore and deny warning signs
We have a great memory for details	YET	We engage in extreme denial
We try to hide our sexuality	OR	We flaunt it
We neglect our self-care	OR	We tend toward hypochondria
We stay too long in unhealthy or abusive relationships	OR	We are unable to make commitment to an intimate relationship
We feel shameful and avoid sexual relationships	OR	We seek the high of repeated sexual attraction

MANIFESTED BEHAVIORS-OTHER BEHAVIORS AND ONGOING ISSUES

High anxiety level

Prone to negative or distorted thinking

We think we can change someone and then feel fear when they start to change on their own

We invest a lot of energy trying to make everything look good on the outside and hiding what's inside

We are afraid of intimacy

We have a hard time setting and keeping sexual boundaries

We feel guilt and fear about saying no and/or giving in to others' sexual desires

We use compulsive behaviors to avoid feelings

We are obsessed with others/partners sexuality or ignore it

We confuse nurturing with sexual attention

We fear being abandoned

Have our mind on other things during sex

We have a tendency to take it personally when sexual needs between us & partner differ at the moment-we are uncomfortable with it

We put others' sexual needs first

We try to control with sex

We don't claim our own sexuality

We make comparisons with others sexually and otherwise

We are attracted to excitement to fill our unmet needs

We rely on sex/sexual feelings to feel good about ourselves

Sex is our primary yardstick for measuring the quality of our relationship

We have trouble talking honestly about sex/sexuality

We are isolated, lonely

We have a hard time asking for help

Limited spiritual life

Not in touch with or afraid of our bodies

We allow others, especially our partners, to define the nature of our relationships

POSITIVE TRAITS AND STRENGTHS

Buried inner strength

Sensitive to other people

Willing to change

Perceptive

Strong sense of humor

Open-minded

Caring and supportive

Drive to survive-spirited

Courageous

Loyal

Tenacious

Open to healing, whatever it takes

Creative

Thanks, El Paul Group

DECISION-MAKING II

The information I need to make decisions for myself is in me at this moment. To access this information, I can apply what I have learned in recovery. I can have my feelings, listen to my body, value my thoughts and trust my intuition. The support of those who are willing to validate me is also important in my effort to remember to stay tuned to my body and myself. It is always OK to take the time to "check-in" with myself, my support people and my higher power.

AFFIRMATION: I MAKE DECISIONS TRUSTING THAT I AM DESIGNED AND PROVIDED WITH EVERYTHING I NEED TO DO SO. Co-authored by Lisa Mc. & Robyn M.

NOTE THE ENCLOSURE FOR THE FIRST ANNUAL NSO COSTA
CONFERENCE WE WANT TO SEE YOU THERE

To order literature, write : MINNESOTA COSA

P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS MN 55414 Phone: 612 537 6904

Send orders noting quantity and cost of each requested item. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Please include postage and handling according to the following order totals:

orders totalling	.20	to	\$2.00	include:	\$.75
"	"	\$2.01	to	\$9.00	" \$2.00
"	"	\$9.01	to	\$30.00	" \$3.00
"	over	\$30.00			" \$5.50

Present items available from the above address:

COSA brochures....\$.20 each	COSA Welcome brochure....\$.20 each
How to start a group...\$2.00	Starting New Groups Audio Tape...\$5.00
COSA Stories Vol. I.-----\$3.50 each	COSA Stories Vol II.-----\$3.50
COSA Medallions..\$3.00 each (6 mo., years 1 -10, also blanks)	
Laminated COSA cards with Serenity Prayer, 12 & 12, COSA logo..\$1.00 each	

Send
editorial
correspon-
dence and
submissions
to
PO Box 14654,
Louisville, KY
40214.

My Preamble

Self preservation to me is preserving my won abilities to stay within my own goals & expectations allowing the freedom of choice.

Being able to set my own pace, living in my own perspective of hope in one issue at a time.

Hope is a tool of my mental well being, clinging to my own recovery, allowing others around me to share their hope with me, to accept their encouragement as well as give mine.

I need not abandon my child within but to walk with her; nurture her understanding; embrace her pain; and rejoice in her laughter.

I'm able to pull out resources today, standing firm within my own boundaries, to complete my goals, to start new ones.

My expectations are not of others but of my own recovery.

.....by Kris A.

✓ **YES. I want to subscribe!**

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE, ZIP _____

Enclose check for \$12 and mail to:

**Ila Davis, PO Box 502,
Mt. Morris, MI, 48458.**

Send contributions to support your NSO-COSA to: NSO-COSA

**9337-B KATY FREEWAY #142
HOUSTON TX 77024**

To learn more about the formation of NSO, refer to your VOL 2#4 issue of "Balance".

NSO/COSA SUPPORT
RE'CD FROM THE

FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- *ST PAUL MN-MONDAY 5:30 P.M
- *HOUSTON SAT. 10 A.M
- *KALAMAZOO COSA
- *INDIANAPOLIS COSA
- *MINN COSA
- *TWIN CITIES COSA
- *HOUSTON-FRIDAY-NOON
- *INDIVIDUAL-NORA
- *NASHVILLE-TN-COSA
- *HOUSTON-FRIDAY NIGHT-COSA
- *PLYMOUTH, MN-COSA
- *FARGO-COSA
- *DALLAS-COSA
- *SAGINAW, MI-COSA
- *FLINT, MI-COSA
- *HOUSTON-TUES-NOON
- *MANKATO MN
- *HOUSTON, SUNDAY EVE.
- *LOUISVILLE FAMILY GRP-MON
- *LOUISVILLE WED NIGHT COSA
- *COLORADO COSA
- *ILLINOIS COSA
- *ROCHESTER MN
- *HOUSTON TUES NIGHT
- *HOUSTON-WED-NOON
- *CLEAR LAKE-SAT A.M.

The Communications Committee is asking for volunteers to correspond with people who are in an area where no meetings are available. Those who volunteer would be given names of people that we have been unable to link with a support group. As a volunteer, you would correspond with them, giving them a chance to share and grow until support does become available in their area.

If you are interested write:

Communications Committee

P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414

DECISION-MAKING IIII

I am learning new ways to make decisions and empower myself. I am recovering my connection with my feelings and my body. This recovered connection offers me much information which I can use in decision-making.

I am also recovering my innate connection with people, life and my higher connection. With support I am empowered to trust my own intuition or "gut-feelings". What a wonderful tool to use in my decisions and in my recovery. AFFIRMATION: AS I MAKE DECISIONS USING MY RECOVERY TOOLS, I BECOME CONNECTED WITH MYSELF, OTHERS AND LIFE.

co-authored by Lisa Mc. & Robyn M.

Tentative Agenda

FRIDAY, MAY 27

Registration is the first order of a day filled with Delegate Meetings, A General Session, A Meditative Interlude* and a host of recreational activities. Lunch is on your own in the hotel or in Metro Center, a nearby Mega Shopping Center. Dinner is a Pot-luck, hosted by the Metro Phoenix COSA and SAA Intergroups in the hospitality suite. After-dinner activities include a speaker Meeting for non-delegates followed by Story Time.

SATURDAY, MAY 28

Open Registration will coincide with a Daily Meditation* and a Newcomer Orientation. Workshops, Regional Caucuses, the General Session, Recreation Time, a Buffet Lunch, the Banquet, Speakers, Dancing, Movies, and a Midnight Candlelight Meeting fill-out the Agenda for the day... WHEW!

SUNDAY, MAY 29

Morning Meditation* will start the day, followed by more recreation time. Multiple workshops will be conducted throughout the day concluding with dinner (on your own.) In the evening you can enjoy a skit, "The Shame Of It All," followed by process groups to debrief the presentation. Other activities include an Ice Cream Social, a Talent Show and the traditional Candlelight Meeting.

MONDAY, MAY 30

We will begin with our Morning Meditation* and move to the "Quest for Serenity... Reclaiming Our True Selves" re-entry workshop followed by a Brunch with speakers. A Closing Ceremony will end this incredible weekend.

**Bring your favorite Meditation Book.*

Out of the Ashes



Into the Light!

SAA will hold their 7th Annual Convention concurrently with the COSA Convention. Many of the general activities including meals, General Sessions, Meditations, etc will be joint activities. For more information on the SAA Convention, call Mike O'D. at 602/863-3006.

Delta Airlines is offering discounted fares to Phoenix for the Convention. For information and to make reservations, call Delta at 1-800-241-6760, and ask for File Number XV0390. Delta's office is open between 7:30 AM and 11:00 PM - Monday through Friday; and between 8:30 AM and 11:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday. Happy Trails to you.

SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION

Scholarship assistance will be given on a first come- first served basis with preference given to group delegates. The Scholarships are available to help cover the costs of the conference fee only, not for hotel or transportation costs.

- ☐ I need financial assistance to attend this convention.
- ☐ I have asked my local group for assistance.
- ☐ My local group will be able to help me with \$ _____
- ☐ My unmet needs are \$ _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received _____ Registration _____

Check # _____ Scholarship Donation _____

Amt of Check _____ Scholarship Amount _____

Deposit # _____ Awarded _____