

BALANCE

ISSUE #7

JULY 1994

STEP SEVEN

"Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings."

Step Seven requires that we ask for help. This Step means reaching beyond ourselves, to a power greater than ourselves. Many of us have been too proud to ask for the help we've needed. Some of us may not have known how to ask or what to ask for. Now we have someone trustworthy, someone who will listen and love us unconditionally when we ask for help and admit our shortcomings.

Before asking, we have prepared ourselves. We have become willing to let go of our character defects. Many recovering people get stuck here. Old baggage, familiar patterns of relating and unresolved issues prove to be roadblocks for moving on in our recovery.

Step Seven leaves no question about who does the changing. We ask. God answers. For once, we don't have to "do it ourselves." We simply ask, let go and wait on the miracles of recovery. They will materialize if we wait, say the Promises. COSA is not a self-help program, where we change ourselves for the better. Rather, it is a program whereby we become changed through working each Step as best we can and relying on our Higher Power for the rest. It really can be that simple!



YOUR

COSA

NEWSLETTER

SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.

I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.

Grant me the strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.

AMEN

Big Book (A.A.)

**PATIENCE
IS THE
ABILITY
TO KEEP
YOUR MOTOR
IDLING WHEN
YOU FEEL
LIKE
STRIPPING
YOUR GEARS**

THE GRASS MAY LOOK GREENER ON
THE OTHER SIDE, BUT IT STILL HAS TO BE
MOWED.....

More Step Seven views:

"Humbly" means obey, not become humiliated.

Until recovery, I believed the word humbly meant degrade myself, make myself less than. I was wrong again. Humbly simply means obey. To humble myself is to listen, to wait, to learn. I need to respect and obey my process, my program, my recovery.

I also know I am not being humble when I judge, criticize or try to control others. At the same time, I now realize that I have the right to take care of myself by staying away from places that trigger me into critical thinking or judgmental actions toward myself or others. It is okay to be good to myself. It does not make me a selfish person. I don't have to mis-use the word *Humbly*. It does mean obey my process. It does not mean suffer humility.

from A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

WORKBOOK... The closure for step 7...

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..."like the way _____ ignores me, especially when I want praise".....

The courage to change the things I can..."especially my own character defects and feelings toward myself for never having enough approval from people I admire".....

and the wisdom to know the difference..."between the lasting satisfaction of reparenting myself with approval and the temporary satisfaction of depending on _____ for it".....

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..."like the way my childhood was" the courage to change the things I can..."especially my own victimized feelings about my childhood"... and the wisdom to know the difference..."between staying in a victim role and continually turning those years over to God.".....

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change..."like my parents' incompatibility with each other.....

the courage to change the things I can..."especially my feelings of abandonment, anger, isolation".... and the wisdom to know the difference..."between my parents' love being unavailable to me and Gods love which is always with me."

1st Annual National Convention

I would like to thank the Phoenix area SAA and COSA groups for showing me a fellowship and community that filled me with envy and hope.

Up until this conference, my husband (sex addict) and myself (codependent) had very distinct and separate recovery agendas. We longed to feel like a couple, but we didn't feel any intimacy. We did, however, feel like healthy individuals, which was very new and powerful.

The couples workshop, led by Sheri T. and Phil T. of Phoenix is symbolic of a turning point for us. At the onset of this workshop, I had to say, "Hi, I'm Gail, half of this recovering couple." I felt so uncomfortable saying that because I didn't feel like part of a recovering couple at all. Just going through the motions brought me to tears.

During the actual sharing exercise, we were very moved while listening to the other couples in our group. For us, the dam broke loose that Saturday afternoon. With our two chairs facing each other, we allowed ourselves to grieve over our loss of connection. We shared the tears and the pain together.

It is very difficult to express in words the gratitude I feel that I was able to be part of this experience. It was hard to leave the safety of that wonderful group of 300 men and women.

It was the first time I felt that gender was irrelevant. I was not a woman feeling uncomfortable to be a woman, and I felt no fear of men. I was just me; an individual with lots of emotions, knowing I had found a safe place to express my feelings.

Thank you Phoenix for sharing your gifts. You have touched me deeply.

Gail K. Torrance, Ca.

LETTING GO

Many of us who are co-addicted (that is addicted to the addiction expressing itself in another person), have coped by enabling and/or withholding.

We could enable with food, alcohol, drugs and/or sex. We could withhold food, alcohol, drugs and/or sex. Sometimes we wanted to help and sometimes we wanted to hurt the addict of our focus.

Now, after what may have been years of enabling and withholding, who was hurt?

In my pattern of co-addiction the one most hurt by my behaviors was me. My challenge today is to let go of the resistance to give - Let go of my resistance to give to ME.

AFFIRMATION: I ENJOY GIVING TO ME

co-authored by: Lisa Mc. & Robyn M.

Hug Coupon

HE WHO IS WAITING FOR

SOMETHING TO

TURN UP MIGHT START WITH HIS OWN

SHIRT SLEEVES.....

Hugs are fat-free, sugar-free and require no batteries.

Hugs reduce blood pressure, body temperature and heart rate and help relieve pain and depression.

Redeem this coupon at your nearest participating human being.

Returns cheerfully accepted.

Copy this coupon and circulate to co-workers, friends and family.

DECISIONS CAN TAKE

YOU OUT OF GOD'S WILL

BUT NEVER OUT OF HIS REACH.

Lessons of childhood should be taken to heart

I now have the opportunity to help shape a man.

The day after Thanksgiving, following a smooth pregnancy and a harrowing labor, my wife, Kelly, gave birth to an 8½-pound baby boy. Because of the tense delivery, there was no sweeter sound than Evan's first healthy cry. We cheered and hugged him when it came.

But that could be the last time anyone praises him for his tears. He's a boy, after all, and the world will soon teach him that burying his emotions is part of the price of becoming a man.

From the first admonitions that "boys don't cry" to the movie images of thick-skinned cowboys, my son will be taught that to reveal what he truly feels is a dangerous and provocative act. He will learn to swallow hard, puff out his chest, and stuff away his pain or fear or joy.

Then he'll go on with his life. But it will be a lesser life. A person who does not know how he feels is only half-alive. He can think, argue, debate, fence and fight, but he cannot infuse his actions with the passion of soul. He cannot call upon an inner voice for guidance and compassion. He cannot really trust himself.

I conclude this not from observing others, but myself. Somewhere and everywhere in the blur of childhood, I learned that to show my emotions was to show weakness. By the time I was old enough to be called a man, I had become expert at hiding what I felt, even from myself. I could not identify most of my feelings, describe them or express them.

This training did not serve me well in young adulthood. Confused

SUBMISSION BY Jackie,
from Pearls of Time

about my inner life, I found emotional relief primarily through anger. I made decisions about work, family and friendships that were based on the expectations of others. And when women asked me how I felt about them, I had to answer honestly. "I don't know."

Since becoming aware of this, I've spent years trying to unlearn what I should never have learned in the first place, to let go of the male self-stereotypes of provider, protector and stoic.

I don't wish this fate upon my son. But how does a parent counter a culture's powerful teachings? How does he help his son keep his emotions alive and accessible? How does he give the boy the tools for intimacy and interdependence?

I suppose the place to start is encouraging him in what he already seems to know: that it is his right to cry, laugh, scream, howl, and swing his arms like a windmill out of control. As his father, I must see these expressions not only as signals of his needs, but as signs of his emotional strength as well.

When he gets a little older, I can help him put words to his emotions. Just as I might ask him to name a color on a page or a tree in the forest, I can ask him to say what he's feeling. Is he hurt or scared, mad or sad, joyful or grateful? And what's the difference between these?

As he grows into manhood, however, he will learn most by watching men, especially me. Only when I question the expectations of manhood will my son have the courage to do so too. Only when I freely express my emotions will he find it acceptable to express his.

I only hope that I glean enough wisdom from him now, during this time of uninhibited innocence, to offer it back to him in the struggle-filled years ahead.

RECOVERY

*Out of the darkness into the light,
Changing old bad habits into right*

*Learning to "Let go and let God";
Over my heart and soul He must tread.*

*Changes in attitudes that cause strife;
Onward towards a healthier life.*

*Anger and grief cycle around and around;
Lifting us up and then down.*

*A rollercoaster is a good word;
coming to grips with the absurd.*

*Denial kept me safe and secure;
It still tries to get me, I feel it's lure.*

*Now I know that I am a codependent,
Myself I have abused;
Denial must be buried and never again be used.*

*New recovery tools are available to
me each week; calling COBA friends,
Doing stepwork;
And with God's help making amends.*

*Looking towards God's face
I'm sure I'll finish my life's race!!*

Linda J. - June 1994

Flint, Mi.

A PERSON'S TRUE CHARACTER IS REVEALED

BY WHAT HE DOES WHEN NO ONE IS WATCHING..

TO ORDER LITERATURE:

Write: MINNESOTA COSA

P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55414

PH: 612 537 6904

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

Orders totaling \$.20 to \$2.00

postage due....\$.75

Orders totaling \$2.01 to \$9.00

postage due...\$2.00

Orders totaling \$9.01 to \$30.00

postage due...\$3.00

Orders over \$30.00

postage due...\$5.50

Present items available from the above address:

COSA brochure.....\$.20 each

How To Start A Group...\$2.00

Starting A New Grp. Audio Tape.....#3.50

COSA Stories Vol. I.....\$3.50

COSA Stories Vol. II.....\$3.50

COSA Medallions.....\$3.00 each

(6 mo. thru 1 -10 years)

COSA Welcome brochure...\$.20

COSA Laminated cards with Serenity Prayer,
12 & 12...\$1.00

Send contributions to support your NSO-COSA :

NSO-COSA

9337-B KATY FREEWAY #142

HOUSTON TX 77024

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change.
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time,
enjoying one moment at a time;
accepting hardship as a pathway to peace;
taking, as Jesus did,
this sinful world as it is,
not as I would have it,
trusting that You will make all things right
if I surrender to your will;
so that I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with You forever in the next.

AMEN

Reinhold Niebuhr

To subscribe to your COSA newsletter
"Balance", send \$12.00 for a one year
subscription to:

BALANCE

NSO-COSA

9337-B KATY FREEWAY #142

HOUSTON TX 77024

**NOTE: THIS IS AN ADDRESS CHANGE
FOR SUBSCRIBING FOR YOUR
NEWSLETTER. MAKE CHECKS
PAYABLE TO NSO-COSA NOTING
THAT IT IS FOR A SUBSCRIPTION FOR
"BALANCE".**

**REMEMBER: It is your newsletter!!!!
"BALANCE" is need of more stories and
other submissions to continue its planned
publication schedule. SEND EDITORIAL
CORRESPONDENCE AND SUBMISSIONS
TO: BALANCE**

P O BOX 502

MT MORRIS MI 48458

Many of you were in attendance at the
recent COSA conference in Phoenix,
Arizona.

Please take a few minutes to submit
an article sharing your experience with
others who were unable to attend.

Your submission and sharing will be
appreciated. THANKS

Your Balance Committee