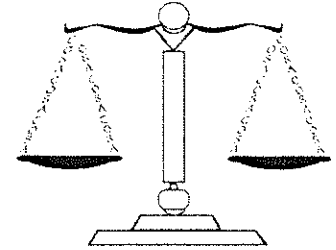


Turning It Over Is A Powerful Act Of Trust



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BALANCE

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STEP THREE

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

When I first read this step, I thought it meant letting go and frantically trying to make it on my own. That was scary. Then I heard another group-person share on the word "care". That is when I first saw the word "care" in Step Three. When I experience this step, I don't have to let go and do it alone. I surrender into God's care.

Until I really experience Step Three, nothing else can happen in my recovery. The first two steps prepared me for this step. First, I had to come to believe that I was powerless. I had to feel the powerlessness of my codependent behavior. As a codependent out of recovery, I felt powerful. It took reading, meetings, sharing and praying to really feel my powerlessness.

Next, I needed to feel my relationship with God (my Higher Power). I use the word feel, because for me before recovery there was no feeling level. Everything I did had to make "head" sense. I was a good codependent. I could explain my reason for doing everything. I must emphasize the word doing. I was a human doing, not a human being. Human doings don't feel feelings. Human doings use their head

knowledge for calculating how very good they are by their works and accomplishments. I was definitely a human doing.

In preparing this, I reviewed my notes from past step work. In 1994 I wrote, "There is still something about being useful, liked, accepted, valuable. I'm not sure I have value yet, unless I'm useful. Sometimes I wonder about the support group work I do. I really believe I do service work because I want to, but yet, I'm still not sure if people would like me if I just attended and did not contribute." Today, 1996, I believe I am much healthier in that area. I do feel loved, nurtured and worthwhile even when I am taking care of only me.

I share the above paragraph because I believe it is important that I listen to my head conversations. I can check my own growth in the program. It does help me to maintain the hope in the program when I can see my growth.

[continued on page 4]

HOW IT WORKS ...



Freedom to Fly

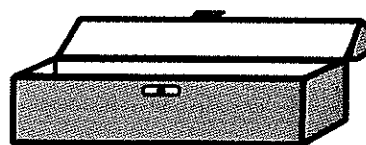
3RD ANNUAL COSA CONVENTION 1996

The 3RD ANNUAL COSA CONVENTION will be held May 24th - 27th 1996. Join us in beautiful downtown Minneapolis at the Regal Hotel for four days of workshops, speakers, business and especially meeting new and old friends who "understand as perhaps few others can."

This month's issue of "BALANCE" includes a mail-in form for those who would like to register. Discounted registration fees are still available through April 1st. COSA members are the convention's best resource and we can receive much strength from each other.

NEED SOME NEW INSPIRATION?

Look in our toolbox for more tools!!



THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Last week I was in a position to observe an interaction between two people - one of whom was in authority over the other. What I witnessed was disturbing to me and I have been thinking about it over the weekend. The incident had to do with privacy boundaries and the authority figure abusing the boundaries. Whenever something like this happens, first of all, it surprises me and second, it scares me because I instantly know it is wrong and I feel afraid to speak or take action.

The surprise comes up since I now surround myself with recovery people and have become accustomed to boundaries being respected. On occasion when a boundary is broken, I can find support to confront and stand up for boundaries. I feel safe.

The fear comes up when, as in the above described incident, I am not surrounded by recovery people, in fact I am surrounded by people who support each other in crashing boundaries and invalidating each others needs. I feel afraid because it feels as if I am the only person in the room who has noticed what is happening and therefore I am alone and wrong.

Recovery is a wonderful thing, it has given me the ability to make choices and to take care of myself in a lot of different ways. I remained silent last week as a way to cope with my fear. Today I would do something different because I have had a chance to think it over. This is not perfect but, it is a new way for me.

Robyn M.

Exercise for Thinking Things Through...

When I am faced with a situation in which I feel surprised and scared and it is a new situation for me, my habit is to remain silent. I have given myself permission to do this because I have learned a new habit to go along with it. Shaming myself for not knowing instantly how to handle a situation that is new to me is no longer acceptable.

What I can do is learn from the problem. I use my brain to reconstruct the problem over and over, (I don't obsess about it I am just thinking) I can do this thinking while I'm driving, before I go to sleep - anytime I have a few minutes. I think of recovery ways to handle it. When I have come up with the best solution I can think of, I start practicing it. The purpose of this exercise is to be ready for the next time.

It would be nice to think that no one would ever be humiliated in front of me again but I am "in reality" enough to know that it will. The practicing is key in my ability to handle the problem the next time it comes up. If I practice I am not so scared by the group of people I am confronting, if I practice I am not so surprised because I have been expecting this and am prepared.

Robyn M.

Affirmation:

I Take Time to Think Through and Practice New Choices.

