C O S A

BALANCE

NEWSLETTER

No. 15 MARCH 1996

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 ...



LISTEN

WHEN I ASK YOU TO LISTEN TO ME AND YOU START GIVING ADVICE, YOU HAVE NOT DONE WHAT I ASKED.

WHEN I ASK YOU TO LISTEN TO ME AND YOU BEGIN TO TELL ME WHY I SHOULDN'T FEEL THAT WAY, YOU ARE TRAMPLING ON MY FEELINGS.

WHEN I ASK YOU TO LISTEN TO ME AND YOU FEEL THAT YOU HAVE TO DO SOMETHING TO SOLVE MY PROBLEM -YOU HAVE FAILED ME, STRANGE AS THAT MAY SEEM.

LISTEN! ALL I ASKED WAS THAT YOU LISTEN;
NOT TALK OR DO -- JUST HEAR ME.
ADVICE IS CHEAP: 36 CENTS WILL GET YOU
BOTH DEAR ABBY AND
BILLY GRAHAM IN THE SAME NEWSPAPER.
AND I CAN DO FOR MYSELF; I'M NOT
HELPLESS. MAYBE DISCOURAGED AND
FALTERING, BUT NOT HELPLESS.

WHEN YOU DO SOMETHING FOR ME THAT I CAN AND NEED TO DO FOR MYSELF, YOU CONTRIBUTE TO MY FEAR AND WEAKNESS.
BUT WHEN YOU ACCEPT AS A SIMPLE FACT THAT I DO FEEL WHAT I FEEL, NO MATTER HOW IRRATIONAL, THEN I CAN QUIT TRYING TO CONVINCE YOU

UNDERSTANDING
WHAT'S BEHIND THIS IRRATIONAL FEELING.

AND CAN GET ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF

IRRATIONAL FEELINGS MAKE SENSE WHEN WE UNDERSTAND WHAT'S BEHIND THEM.

SO, PLEASE LISTEN AND JUST HEAR ME. AND IF YOU WANT TO TALK, WAIT A MINUTE FOR YOUR TURN, AND I'LL LISTEN TO YOU.

ANONYMOUS

The more I write the more I discover about myself. No matter what I write; fiction, recovery or poetry, if I look carefully at my writing I see parts of me.

I am developing courage along with my other writing skills because every time my writing is printed I am revealing who I am to myself and others. I cannot hide myself from the reader. Although the readers of my work may never know they saw me, I still take the risk.

The root of the word courageous is found in both French and Latin; in both languages the words mean heart. When I write from the heart, I risk giving away my secret inadequacies. When I write from the heart, I risk making myself vulnerable to the reader. When I write from the heart, I risk discovering myself. When I write it is an act of courage.

Affirmation: When I write from the heart it is an act of courage.

***TER TO THE EDITOR

2-26-96

BALANCE,

l just received my February BALANCE and am greatly disappointed. Five and three quarters pages out of six pages were promoting the COSA/SAA conference and one small article about Step 2.

I bought BALANCE to read about COSA recovery issues. I am sick and tired of being invaded with convention promotion.

This newsletter would benefit from some *balance*.

If this imbalance does not change by the time my subscription is up - I will not renew.

This letter points to a legitimate need for more articles from our readership. We publish articles meeting the "BALANCE" guidelines. Last month we received three articles about the Convention and one article about Step Work, We would love to publish more articles about COSA recovery. We request that our readership consider writing and sending COSA recovery articles to meet this need. Thank you. The Editors

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

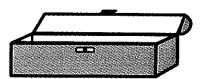
Last week I was in a position to observe an interaction between two people - one of whom was in authority over the other. What I witnessed was disturbing to me and I have been thinking about it over the weekend. The incident had to do with privacy boundaries and the authority figure abusing the boundaries. 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,

Pen Pals + Service Work = Me ⊕

Pen Pals are Needed

The communications committee is again asking for volunteers who wish to do service work by writing to someone who is in an area without meetings. If you are interested in being a long distance pen pal, please write to:

P.O. Box 502 Mt. Morris, Michigan 48458.

Please consider this service work. I remember how lonely I felt before I had group support. An occasional letter or card brings so much support and hope to those with no support network. Please announce this need for service work at your meetings.

Thank you,

Ila D. and Dana

TO ORDER LITERATURE: Write: COSA LITERATURE P O BOX 502 MT MORRIS, MI 48458

COSA Brochure	\$0.20
COSA Welcome Brochure.	\$0.20
How To Start A Group	.\$2.00
COSA Stories Vol. I	
COSA Stories Vol. II	

COSA Medallions......\$3.00 ea. (blank, 6 mos., 1-15 years) COSA Laminated cards w/ Serenity Prayer & steps....\$1.00

Starting A New Grp. Audio Tape......\$5.00 1995 Conference Audio Tapes.......\$6.00

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

Orders totaling \$.20 to \$2.00 add postage...\$.75
Orders totaling \$2.01 to \$9.00
Orders totaling \$9.01 to \$30.00
Orders over \$30.00
add postage...\$5.50

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Many people on the mailing list are in an area where no meetings are available. This newsletter is their only contact with recovering people. Share your story. Share your recovery. Share the tools that work for you. Share your gifts. THE "BALANCE" NEWSLETTER IS YOUR NEWSLETTER. SHARINGS FROM YOU CONTINUE THE PURPOSE OF THIS NEWSLETTER AS A COMMUNICATION LINK TO STRENGTHEN AND CONNECT COSA SUPPORT GROUPS AND ENCOURAGE THOSE WHO ARE STILL STRUGGLING ALONE.

Share with other readers about your new meetings, retreats, social activities, meeting experiences, life experiences.

ORDER YOUR T-SHIRT TODAY !!

Our T-shirts are blue with the conference logo on the front. You can order now and pick up your T-shirt at the conference registration table. Be sure to indicate your size preference (Large or X-Large) and mail a check for \$15 to:

Freedom to Fly Convention P.O. Box 14537 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414

See you in May!

STEP THREE

[cont'd from page 1]

I go back to Step Three often. Since I came to realize that God is with me everywhere, all the time, it has become easier to go back to Step Three and God whenever I need to. I go back when I have an amends to make and I need the surrender of Step Three to humble me. I go back when I don't want to let go of the sadness and grief. When my mother died, I found myself back at Step three, letting go, turning it over, surrendering. Most importantly, when I have neglected myself, I go back to Step Three. I surrender into God's care.

Ha D.