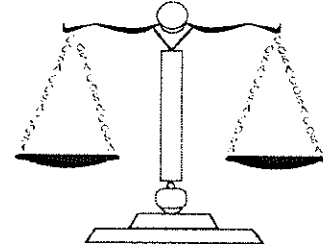


## Silence No More - Telling My Truth



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### STEP FIVE

STEP FIVE: *"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."*

Step Five, for me, requires showing up after the completion of my Step Four inventory. It would be easy to close the notebook after writing all of that Fourth Step inventory and attempt to call it finished.

The steps are perfectly designed to keep me from falling back into my trap of silence and shame. After putting all of my Fourth Step "stuff" on paper, I now need to share it with someone else, God and myself.

Saying it out loud to another person, helps me "hear" my writing in another way. Saying it out loud helps me give myself something I never gave myself before - **validation**.

The healing process really began for me the night I did my first fifth step. I had chosen a very special, caring, and loving person to share my fifth step with, but I can remember driving to that meeting feeling like I was driving into a war zone. Nothing made sense about why I felt so frightened. I now realize it was my childhood programming that frightened me so. I was planning a meeting in which I would be breaking the *silence*. I would be sharing my secrets. My family didn't do that. My family still doesn't do that.

After sharing my fifth step, I drove home wondering why I had put myself through such suffering and fear. I felt so much

freedom, such a sense of release. My body felt loose and relaxed. There was clarity in my thinking. My fifth step gave me the tools to move on in my program. The release gave me the ability to open up to the preparation needed for my amends process to begin.

I have since shared many fifth steps. Each time there is some tenseness, some fear. Always, upon completion, I feel freedom and growth. Step Five has set me free. Try it. I've grown from the experience.

Ila D.

### Did you know ?

COSA has a national phone line that is answered by volunteers from different areas across the United States. This phone line has been in existence for many years and was originally installed and handled by Minnesota COSA's. Responsibility for the phone line was transferred to the COSA National Service Organization after the 1994 COSA convention in Phoenix. [cont'd on page 4]

### CORRECTION !!!

The address for the Internet Support Group is **willing@netpath.net** for those interested in inquiring or becoming a part of the support group. The address was given incorrectly in the April issue of *BALANCE*.

### BALANCE

*"Balance" is a Monthly Newsletter.*

To Subscribe send \$12.00 for 12 issues to:

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HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:  
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### JUST ANOTHER NIGHT

MY NAME IS BRENDA Z. I AM A CO-SEX ADDICT. THE FOLLOWING IS A STORY WHERE ALL THE NAMES EXCEPT MINE HAVE BEEN CHANGED TO PROTECT ANONYMITY.

Back in January, Janey became addicted to Cybersex. Her husband was out of town. Janey was on holiday. So Janey spent days and nights on-line. She once called me to chat while playing Cybersex games. I did not find it fun or amusing.

Janey met Dave on-line. They decided to meet in person. Janey had a "perfect" weekend. Dave, however, came down with a bad case of "the guilts". Dave's wife found out and he HAD to end it.

It did not end. Dave called again. This time they would meet in his hometown, Chicago. Janey bought her plane ticket, Dave would pay for the room. I played a part, her alibi -- the lie to Janey's husband that she was spending the weekend with me.

Her first night in Chicago, Janey called me. She said Dave had come down with "the guilts" again and had left. Janey took the next flight out.

"You must have felt like a whore", I said later. Janey nodded. She told of how "afterwards" Dave counted the cash to pay for the room and tossed it on the pillow. He even grumbled about having to pay for the room at all, he was sure SHE made more money than he did...

I REMEMBER TOO FEELING LIKE A WHORE -- THIS LAST WEEK -- WITH HANK. I FELT HE WANTED TO LEAVE. BE AWAY FROM HERE AND FROM ME. HIS OWN CASE OF "THE GUILTS"? I FELT HE DIDN'T WANT TO BE SEXUAL WITH ME. I DID NOT HEED MY OWN INSTINCTS. I CRIED AFTERWARDS. I FELT BAD, LIKE A **BAD GIRL**. LIKE I WAS BAD -- JUST LIKE LONG, LONG AGO.

So Janey sits with her pain AND I SIT WITH MINE. Janey writes poetry. I EAT AND PLAY MUSIC AND WORK. Janey and her husband are in counseling. I DO AND DON'T WANT TO WALK AWAY FROM HANK.

SOMETIMES, I FEEL LIKE AN INSIGNIFICANT PIECE OF DIRT. I'VE LOST MYSELF MANY TIMES WITH MEN. EACH TIME, I'VE CLAWED MY WAY BACK. BEING INVOLVED WITH A MARRIED MAN IS NEGATING. BEING REJECTED BY A MARRIED MAN IS WORSE -- I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO BE THE WHORE OF A MARRIED MAN.

WITH EVERY TRUTH OF THE REAL ME THAT I LET

PEOPLE SEE. I STEP CLOSER TO THE LIGHT. LITTLE BY LITTLE I CARE LESS AND LESS WHAT HE THINKS OF ME.

MY NAME IS BRENDA Z. I AM A CO-SEX ADDICT. I AM A HUMAN WITH MANY FLAWS. I AM ALSO TALENTED, SMART AND FUN. I AM A GOOD FRIEND AND SOMETIMES I AM NOT. I AM A WOMAN ON A JOURNEY, LEARNING.

Brenda Z.



### Retreat Experience

Twenty-three of us just experienced a wonderful weekend together in a retreat. Our retreat focused on one topic for the weekend. The topic was "Fear".

Friday evening we gathered at 7 p.m. and shared a potluck dinner. Later that evening we shared our anticipation of the retreat and began naming our fears. Saturday morning we settled in for more work at facing our fears. As the fears were named, we could then determine some idea of the origin of those fears. Saturday evening and Sunday morning we took steps toward closure on the fears in our lives. We left the retreat feeling less fearful. We also left feeling closer to each other.

The retreats seem to get better and better. We show up, we share, we care and we love each other. We all leave with a higher level of caring and love.

Our Higher Power guided us to the topic for our next retreat. By Saturday evening, it was already quite evident that our Higher Power planned the next topic to be "Anger". When I start facing my fears, anger can come out.

If you haven't tried a retreat in your area, you may want to consider one. I find it is a wonderful place to process without interruption. My daily life does have a way of interrupting my recovery process.

Ila D.



### WE NEED YOU !!!

(Convention Reporters Needed)

PLEASE WRITE AND LET US KNOW YOUR EXPERIENCES AT THE CONVENTION IN MINNEAPOLIS. IT WOULD BE GREAT TO HAVE LOTS OF MAIL TO SHARE WITH COSA'S WHO DID NOT ATTEND.



### AFFIRMATION:

I PICK UP MY PEN AND WRITE, PERFECTION IS NOT THE GOAL, WRITING IS THE GOAL.



## Freedom to Fly

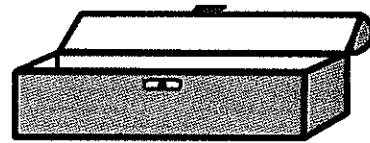
### 3RD ANNUAL COSA CONVENTION 1996

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."

Registration is available at the convention. 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!!



#### On meditation....

*At the very beginning of my recovery I had the privilege to be in a six week inpatient setting for codependency. When "they" demanded I sit and read a meditation book every morning for 30 minutes I was outraged. I needed that time to watch "TV" news, shower, and shampoo my hair or phone my addict. Nine years later - NOTHING gets in my way to prevent me from meditating each and every morning. The focal point of my morning responsibilities is 30 minutes or so I take for myself. It's a 30 minute period that cannot and will not be omitted. I may have to miss a shower, have a quick on-the-run breakfast, be late for a meeting or an activity but any consequence of being late is minimal compared to the consequences I experience when I don't stop to meditate.*

*When I do not meditate my whole day is off balance. I make poor choices, live in crisis or fear, and am disorganized and forgetful. When I find myself in any one of these patterns I have to stop whatever I'm doing. Then I find a quiet place and meditate - with or without the sacred meditation book.*

*I may seek refuge at*

- a picnic table at a rest stop if I'm traveling by car.
- a chair in the nook of a hotel lobby, office building, or airport.
- a bench in a park or atrium.

*I know my serenity "spots" need:*

- Green - as in trees or potted plants.
- Water - as in ocean, fountain, or stream.
- Quiet - as in free from traffic or other people and noises.

*Sometimes I have to settle for only one of these in a crisis. Wherever I go frequently - like work, doctors' offices, visits to relatives (even COSA conventions), I scope out the territory for such a place before the crisis hits and remember from visit to visit.*

*My hometown is full of freeways and congestion - it is also full of small pocket parks, buildings with water walls, cemeteries, walking paths, galleries and museums. I've found a safe place in every area of town that I travel.*

*My anchor meditation book is the one given to me in the treatment program. As I read each days entry, I reflect on where I was nine years ago, five years ago or one year ago on that date. Each year it's like reading a new writing because of the changes in me. I have added new books and usually read 3 each morning. Again at night, I reread them to see if I get the same or a new message from the same words. Often I am surprised by how well the little book fits and sends the message I need to hear that day.*

*I urge you to give daily meditation a real try - several months - and see what a difference it can make in your life.*

**Affirmation: I find my own Places of Serenity**

*Jan W.*

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

- 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    add postage...\$2.00
- Orders totaling \$9.01 to \$30.00    add postage...\$3.00
- Orders over \$30.00    add postage...\$5.50

\*\*\*\*\*  
**National CoSA Phone Line**  
**Phone 612/537-6904**  
 \*\*\*\*\*

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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.



**DID YOU KNOW?** [Cont'd from page 1]

The volunteers for the National Phone Line answer about 15 - 30 calls a week, answering questions concerning COSA contacts, meeting locations, information about COSA, and they provide a listening ear for those in need of someone to just listen. Right now there are about eight volunteers who split up calls according to the day of the week or month.

The phone line volunteers rely on information provided by groups who register with COSA. Regrettably some of the information is old which means that newcomers receive information about meetings that might no longer exist or the contact people no longer participate.

There is very little information about some areas of the country. These areas include **California, New York, Florida, and Louisiana**. If you know of meetings in these states or are willing to be a contact person please call the COSA phone line (612-537-6904) and leave a message and your phone number. A volunteer will contact you.

As a part of COSA service work, please consider volunteering to answer the national phone line. (Volunteer by calling Robyn @ 713-480-1340.) The more volunteers we have the more we can do for those still searching.  
**ROBYN M.**