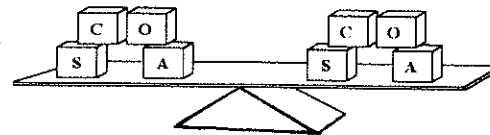


Waking Up !



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STEP TWELVE

STEP TWELVE: *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps we carry this message to others and practice these principles in all areas of our lives."*

Do I have to have a spiritual awakening first? Can't I carry the message to others while I'm learning about myself? As near as I can tell that's where the 13th step joke comes in. Trying to carry the message to others before I "get it" myself.

One of the best presentations of a "spiritual awakening" I've ever witnessed is in a movie called *Joe Versus The Volcano*. If any of you have seen it you might know the scene I mean. Joe who's been told he's dying, experiences the rise of the full moon at a time when he is physically exhausted and dehydrated. The moon rise is so HUGELY impressive that he wills his tortured body to stand and he marvels at the sight. He then murmurs "God, who's name I do not know, thank you for my life. I'd forgotten how... beautiful..., then he collapses. What a moment! At his weakest, lowest point - he is literally pulled from himself to see beauty and wonder and he senses power greater than himself. He gives thanks for his life and for beauty. I love that scene, it has great spiritual power for me.

But SPIRITUAL AWAKENING sounds so big!! Don't angels have to sing and birds fly and

fireworks go off and the world turn rosy? I guess for some people that happens, it was not like that for me.

My spiritual awakening came during a meeting as I digested a golden nugget that someone shared. Like Joe, I'd forgotten how... beautiful..., it was a moment of awakening that changed the direction I took in my recovery and my life. It was a simple moment.

I believe a spiritual awakening doesn't have to be a certain moment in time that I remember. The exact moment is not exalted by remembering or lessened by not remembering. It can be a gradual *movement* to spirituality. It can be a feeling I've come to know about myself. Awakening spiritually is a unique experience for everyone.

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BALANCE

"Balance" is a Monthly Newsletter.

To Subscribe send \$12.00 for 12 issues to:

BALANCE
NSO-COSA
9337-B KATY FRWY # 142
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77024

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IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE ...

that New Year's Eve is a perfect time to reflect on my past year's recovery process. I pause and express gratitude and thanks for the gifts my process has brought me. I ask my Higher Power for guidance and direction during the coming year. I also make a recommitment to myself to continue along my recovery path, wherever it may lead.

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STEP TWELVE

[continued from page 1]

The 12th step isn't just about me. The second part says carrying the message to others. To me this is a critical part of my recovery. If there were no "others" then soon there would be no meetings. With no meetings and people to share with I would not be able to maintain my recovery. I can't do it alone. I maintain my recovery through contact with others.

For me there is an irony here. All of my life I suffered from codependency. Always doing for others and putting others first. I came into recovery and started learning that to best take care of others I **MUST** take care of **ME**. Now, here in black and white are instructions for me to start doing for others! I've had to think about this for a while. What I've come up with is about choice. Before, I never thought about choice, I thought about obligations and pleasing others.

I'm reminded of where I was without COSA; lost, alone, bewildered. Today, I might be dead or significantly more diminished in my capacity to live. When I remember this, my immediate response is to give of myself to help someone else find what I have found. I "carry the message" so I can stay living. There are many ways to do this. The one I employ the most refers to the 3rd part of the 12th Step "practice these principles in all of my life". If I don't "practice" the steps and live my recovery there is no way I can model for anyone else. If people sense something different about my behavior or attitude they might want to know what made the difference. I have to live it first. Service is the next tool for me. The exciting thing for me about service is I don't have to be "finished" with my recovery to start participating in service work. Service work is the help and support given to maintain our COSA network and service organization. Writing, printing and mailing this newsletter; answering phones; volunteering to help out with retreats, conventions, intergroup, fliers; all are service work and all are important parts keeping COSA active and alive. I was lucky early in my recovery, someone told me service work was crucial to my recovery and I *listened*.

Recovery through COSA is my life. Spirituality, carrying the message and practicing the principles maintain me each day and show me the way home when I get lost.

IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE ...

For several years, on New Year's Eve, I joined others in recovery for a reflection experience. At these meetings the host would first offer her/his personal experiences and reflections. Then she/he would offer a topic for all of us to reflect upon. We would break up into smaller generic 12 Step groups and share our feelings, progress, reflections and hopes on the topic within the safety of a meeting setting. This would be followed by a creative activity. Once we used pictures from old magazines to make two collages - one to represent our prior year and one to represent our hopes for the coming year.

Another time we listed on a 3 x 5 card, character defects we were willing to let go. On a second card, we listed character traits we were still searching for. Each card was then elaborately gift wrapped (some members had contributed odds and ends of paper, ribbon, and stickers). We placed them in two piles - one to throw away (defects) and one to give (either to ourselves or to another).

The most memorable year was the time we were greeted by a pile of 100 bricks. Each of us selected the one brick that "spoke to us". We used permanent magic marker to write on them. On the bottom side we wrote our addictions, "wrongs", and character defects. On the top we wrote our name, and the gifts we had received from the program. Along the four narrow sides we wrote the people, places and things that were the mortar or glue of our recovery: sponsors, 12 step groups, Higher Power, service work, serenity prayer, exercise, dance, music, meditation, therapists, telephone work, chips, friends, proper sleep/rest, laughter, "safe place", tears, etc.

My brick is used as a simple bookend most of the time, but on New Year's Eve, I take it from the shelf and reflect on changes that have taken place throughout the year. I ask myself, "What changes need to be made to update my brick for the coming year? New mortar? New gifts? New defects? Remove old ones?". As I end my reflection I imagine yet another *golden* brick laid in my yellow brick road to recovery. Happy New Recovery Year.

Convention News

“ATTENDING COSTS TOO MUCH!!”

OK. This is a hard one for me. I have a lot of trouble talking about money. But I have learned a few things over the years.

- 1.) When I'm overcome with “I can'ts” I am unable to take action.
- 2.) It's ok to find out what's available. I don't have to take action on it - just find out.

Let's see - what are the expenses? Airline ticket, hotel room, registration fee, money for eating at the convention, and spending money. My airline ticket is pretty much set - I can do a lot of calling and checking and get the best fare. My hotel room - the cheapest way is to have 4 people in a room. The price is the same for up to 4 people. That way my room bill is cut by 50%, 66% or even 75%! Registration - this fee is cheapest if I register early. Also, if I volunteer to give some of my time as a worker at the convention my fee will be paid with scholarship money.

Well, let's see - airline, hotel, registration even with all the cost saving measures I still come up short. Why don't I volunteer to be a delegate for my group? If I do (and they approve to send me as their delegate) I can ask for financial support to get to the convention. This isn't easy for me - and it carries an obligation of service at the convention. It does benefit my group and is an appropriate way for my group to apply it's donations. It's something to think about.

NEXT MONTH: “WHAT IS A DELEGATE?”, “HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE IN THE BUSINESS MEETINGS AND HAVE MY FEELINGS TOO?”

Thinking of the Holidays

I have always been blinded by the glitter and gold of things, the “right” words said, and the “should do’s”. The holiday season is ripe and bountiful in these and sets a trap for me every year.

This year I am trying something new; I am trying not to be snared as often. I'm trying to redefine my meaning of the importance of the holidays. I am tired of the huge disappointments, the unrealistic expectations, and the demands I place on others and myself. I am thinking that perhaps it doesn't have to be like that, like years past. Rather, beauty, joy, comfort and love can be my companions this holiday season.

I can begin by listing on paper the things I am truly grateful for. I have my health, my husband, my family, my home, my food, my friends, my hope, my country, my education, and my frequent belief in a higher power and the strength it gives me.

Wow! Looking at this list of gifts, I can think of even more to be grateful for! In fact, this list is hard evidence that abundance, not lack accompanies me this season.

[continued on page 4]

MEDITATION FOR TIME

The pace of life during the holiday season becomes rushed for me. I have a way of denying events and instead of preparing in delighted anticipation, I prefer to let it come crashing down on me like a wave. Sometimes it can crash like more like a big brick wall.

When I was little, I lived near the ocean. I loved playing with the waves. I liked to use the energy of the waves to push me, carry me and roll over me. So, the bigger the waves the better the play. When a storm was coming, the waves would become huge, what fun!

But sometimes a wave would crash over me and take me under water for what felt like forever. I would finally come up with hair in my face, gulping saltwater and gasping for air. I was breathless.

In present time, when I feel my breath taken away during the rush of holiday activity, I need to breathe. Some things may go undone, I need to breathe. Someone's feelings may get hurt, I need to breathe. I may feel inadequate, I need to breathe. I may feel tired and exhausted, I need to breathe.

There may not be enough time (whatever that is) and *there is always time to breathe.*

Lisa Mc.

Pen Pals + Service Work = Me ☺☺

Pen Pals are Needed

The communications committee is 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,

Ma D. and Dana J.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO "NSO-COSA" NOTING THAT IT IS FOR A SUBSCRIPTION FOR "BALANCE".



SEND EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE AND SUBMISSIONS TO:

BALANCE EDITORIAL
9337-B KATY FRWY #142
HOUSTON, TX 77024

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.



The address for the E-mail Forum for Friends and Family Members of People Addicted to Sex is: **willing@netpath.net** for those interested in inquiring or becoming a part of the support group.

This list is closed for the group's safety. It is for people in COSA, S-Anon, Co-SLAA or those with no meeting they can attend.
Ruth B.

**TO ORDER LITERATURE:
Write: COSA LITERATURE
9337 B KATY FRWY #142
HOUSTON, TX 77024**


- 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
- 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


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Thinking of the Holidays
[continued from page 3]

This year I will try to do less for others and more for myself and try not to have shame about it. Because when I get out of balance from doing too much, I feel deprived and become susceptible to my old addiction patterns.

Therefore, I will honor myself and my spirituality. During this busy time I will give myself 15 minutes in the morning and 15 minutes in the evening. It is a tall order for me but all involved will appreciate it. Another "take care of me" change is limiting the number of activities December through January, I need a night for me every week.

I'm going to lighten up and let life roll more slowly across my shoulders. I want to see during this special time that human beings really do try to love each other the best way they know how.

Happy and lighter Holidays Folks!
Michele Y.

4TH ANNUAL COSA/NSO CONVENTION
Houston, Texas May 23-26, 1997

The Courage to Be Deep in the Heart



Come meet together Deep in the Heart of Houston, Texas for four days of workshops, speakers, business and especially meeting new and old friends who "understand as perhaps few others can". COSA is a 12-step fellowship of men and women dedicated to recovery from codependency with sex addicts.

Please fill out a separate registration form for each person and send an individual check for each person.

Included in the registration cost is full admission to the convention and its activities for those days indicated on the plan. The only meals included are Saturday dinner, Sunday lunch, and Monday brunch. Your hotel reservations are separate!

Make check payable to and mail form and check to:

**1997 Convention
 Attention: Registration Committee
 P. O. Box 541162
 Houston, TX 77254-1162**

.....
COSA CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

COSA REGISTRATION ONLY!

Please print legibly.

SAA is holding their Annual Convention-Living in the Light '97- at the same time and location. For SAA registration information, call 713/869-4902.

Participant Name: _____

Name to Appear on Badge: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

<u>PLAN</u>	<u>POSTMARKED BY:</u>			<u>AT THE DOOR</u>	
	<u>3/31</u>	<u>4/30</u>			
4-Day (Fri,Sat,Sun,Mon)	\$ 80	\$ 90		\$ 100	
3-Day (Fri,Sat,Sun)*	\$ 65	\$ 75		\$ 85	*Also for Sat, Sun 2-day rate
2-Day (Sun,Mon)	\$ 55	\$ 65		\$ 75	
1-Day (Sat)	\$ 48	\$ 58		\$ 68	
1-Day (Sun)	\$ 40	\$ 50		\$ 60	

NOTE: Your hotel reservations need to be made separately.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON BACK !

Hotel Information:

Our convention will be held at the JW Marriott Hotel at 5151 Westheimer. To make reservations, call 1/800/228-9290 or 713/961-1500 or FAX 713/961-5045. To receive the discounted room rate, be sure to mention "The Courage to Be...Deep in the Heart" or "Living in the Light" names. The rates are:

(Good only through May 5, 1997 - Limited # of rooms available at this rate.)

- Single/Double/Triple/Quad \$ 63.00 per room per night
- Suite \$ 600.00 per room per night

This hotel is located in the Galleria (shopping) area on the west side of Houston.

Airline Information:

Continental Airlines is the official airline of both conventions. A discount fare is available when you make reservations through Continental. Call 1-800-468-7022 and mention our special fare code ZHT6 (Living in the Light) Reference #NCV5XL.

Tentative Agenda:

Friday, May 23:

COSA Business Meeting - Open to All

This is your chance to make a difference! Everyone participates in discussion regarding literature, policy and how NSO works. Election of future officers and formation of committees is also determined here. We need your participation!

Evening Welcome and Kickoff

* Indicates Joint Activity with SAA

Saturday, May 24:

- Workshops
- Banquet & Speakers*

Sunday, May 25:

- Workshops
- Lunch & Speakers*
- Workshops

Monday, May 26:

- Brunch & Speakers*
- Closing

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

_____ I request vegetarian.

_____ I request scholarship information.

_____ I am attending as a meeting representative.

_____ I am willing to volunteer, if needed, at the convention.

_____ I am enclosing a donation of \$_____ for scholarships, which will help reduce the fees of others less able to pay.

Do you want to receive additional information on future conventions? _____ Yes _____ No