

STEP THREE

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

As I sit this morning to write this piece I realize I can't think of the 3rd step. I have to look it up to remind myself. There's a voice in my head that says,

"You should know all that by now - How long is it going to take?"

Today I'm willing to take a deep breath and tell the voice, *"It's OK - I know you're scared - I will take care of you"*.

Isn't that interesting? Those are the very words I want to hear from my Higher Power.

If I turn over my will and my life I want to be reassured that I'll be taken care of! For me to make a decision to turn over my will and my life I want to feel secure. Like the voice in my head, it is very hard to feel secure when I don't trust, don't believe, and have no faith.

Today there are two parts of me, the recovery part and the still damaged part. The still damaged part is afraid to trust, is afraid to believe, and has faith in no one. The still damaged part thinks she should just go it alone. The recovery part trusts my Higher Power, believes my Higher Power and has faith that all is being taken care of. The recovery part utilizes the 3rd step more and more.

Today I can turn myself over to my Higher Power and TRUST that I will be taken care of. Today I BELIEVE in a Power greater than myself. Today, because of my recovery, I make a leap of FAITH.

Robyn M.

THE LEAK

THERE'S AN ARTIST WITHIN ME,
A POET, A POTTER, A PAINTER.
AND SHE DOES NOT EXPRESS
HERSELF FREELY.

THERE IS A CHASM THAT HAS
TO BE CROSSED TO REACH HER.
AND IT'S DEEP AND MYSTERIOUS
AND FRIGHTENING
AND WHEN I GO THROUGH THERE,
I EXPERIENCE STIRRINGS SO DEEP
I THINK I MIGHT DIE.

AND THE VOICE THAT WHISPERS
IN THAT DEEP, DARK SPACE
SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE TO FOLLOW.
YET IT BECKONS AND I FOLLOW
FOR I KNOW NO OTHER WAY.

TERESA O.

IT HAS BEEN MY EXPERIENCE...

March is a month of movement (or action) and play. March means kite flying and March 4th is the perfect day to "get out there and have a good day" (march forth - get it?)

As a child, I would make kites out of the Sunday comic pages, strips of wood, and string. Then I would add a tail made of colorful scraps of material and off I would go. I was never too successful at getting my kite off the ground, to catch the wind, and soar among the clouds. My dad and my brother would stand in one place and tug gently on their strings while their kites danced and swayed higher and higher.

My life was much like *their* kite flying; some man held the string and tugged, while I danced. Much like *my*

kite, I danced but did not soar due to the heaviness of my "tail". I was dragging along in negative emotions, other people's expectations of me, and the real and imagined responsibilities of life.

Probably, the first action I ever took for myself was entering COSA. I had been gently "pushed" into a program by a knowing friend and sent to a qualified therapist upon completion of the in-patient program. I walked expectantly and somewhat frightenedly into my first COSA meeting all by myself.

Hooray! I finally "fit in" somewhere!!

I did all the usual/normal recovery behaviors and activities and added some action activities of my own. I sought opportunities to get reconnected with my body, enrolling in classes such as authentic movement, yoga, ballroom dance and roller skating. I located special interest clubs and organizations and participated in Valksmarching (walking) and storytelling. A COSA friend and I met for a time to play piano duets, at a child's level of ability, but our enthusiasm made up for any talent deficits! Others in my Recovery groups have done such activities as hiking, canoeing, ballet, marathons, playing in community bands, folk dancing, pottery, painting, Chinese language lessons, voice lessons, and acting in amateur productions and movies. For me, the trick was to *face my fear of not being able to do something good enough and attempt it anyway.*

After 2-plus years in
[cont. on back]

recovery, one March I resumed a career I had been educated for in college. I resigned that position two years later, in March, because it no longer fit me or my needs. Later I entered a "recovery oriented" career through a volunteer position, a women's residential treatment program. It was extremely draining emotionally and the setting was quite dysfunctional. I determined it was in my best interest to leave the position; I gave final notice in March.

In both instances, it was a first for me to do what was right for me. I was no longer willing to push myself to meet the organization's needs first. All the their praise, pleading and promises of financial reward and/or advancement fell on my "deaf" ears.

I now own a store-bought, hot-pink kite requiring no tail and it soars to the highest heights. Each Spring the kite has a temporary home in the trunk of my car. At any moment I can stop the car to catch the breeze which sends my kite soaring. Sometimes this happens at the beach, a tiny city park, a schoolyard or an interstate rest stop. Men and others are no longer holding the strings to my kite or my life. I am capable of choosing my own actions, goals and future. Jan W.

The First Mid-Winter Conference for the COSA National Service Organization (NSO) Board of Trustees became a reality in February of 1997. Many members of the Board attended and experienced an intense weekend of work. Topics

included: by-laws, literature wording and approval, Balance Newsletter, guidelines and procedures for hosting future conferences/conventions, communications, funding, Internet homepage and much more. Much good work was accomplished.

Some needs we came to realized as we shared during the weekend are as follows:

- *a permanent office for COSA (with a hired staff person)*
- *more volunteers for the National Phone Line*

We have a homepage for the Internet ready to go, yet are hesitant to activate since we need many more volunteers for the phone line or a paid employee to answer phones at a permanent office. Since we are clear that we cannot afford an office employee at this time, we're asking for more volunteers for the phone line.

As a result of the work accomplished, within the next few weeks, the COSA groups *that are registered*, will receive a packet of proposals to be reviewed by their group. (If your group is not registered please call the COSA National phone line and ask for a registration form) A delegate can be selected to represent the group at the conference (in May) to vote on each proposal in the packet. For those groups who are unable to send a delegate, there will be an avenue of absentee voting available. Our wish would be that each or you could send a delegate for better representation of COSA as a whole.

We are also considering two conference/conventions a year. One that we host along with SAA, (still a healing

experience for many) and another conference/convention each year for COSA only. We realize there are many who prefer not meeting at the same place or time as SAA. We do hear your need and hope to meet that need in the future. One idea may be hosting of the COSA only conference/convention at the same time we have the mid-winter meeting. That would get our Board of Trustees together for business followed by a wonderful weekend of work shops, sharings and healings with many other COSA's.

Presently we have about \$5000.00 in our treasury. Our projected expenses for this year are \$8,000.00. To create a permanent office (with staff), our goal is \$25,000.00 per year and another \$10,000.00 per yearly budget expenses. COSA is an autonomous organization, we seek no outside donations, any monetary goals we have are fulfilled only by private member and group donations.

As for needs, we always need more VOLUNTEERS. If you are interested in service work of any kind, please write to the Texas address on this newsletter and let us know that you want to volunteer. Service work is a part of Step Twelve. We always receive more than we can ever expect to give.

I'm excited about the future of COSA/ I hope you will be a part of our growth and healing. My feelings are that the Mid-winter conference was a success and I'm hoping it becomes an annual event.

Thanks, Ila D.
Chair, COSA NSO