

# BALANCE



## Step Seven ~

"Humbly ask God to remove all these defects of character."

The steps are in perfect order. In step six, we became ready. Now we ask to have our shortcomings removed. The step adds the word humbly. We humbly asked God to remove our defects. That means for most of us that we have to let go of our "before recovery" behavior of doing it ourselves. We can remember that we are human. We can remember that it's okay to make mistakes. We can remember that we don't have to appear perfect to be loved. We can humbly

asked for the removal of those things we no longer want to be a part of our new, healthier lifestyle.

Becoming humble is one of the strongest acts we can take in our recovery. Because of the support of the steps, step seven will be easier to complete. In fact with the steps, it feels like we have an assistant guiding us through. Experience step seven and experience another level of freedom. ~lla

## Step Eight ~

"Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."

We experience a new level of freedom in step seven when we asked for our defects to be removed. Again, as I see it, the steps are in divine order. We move on to step eight to experience still another level of freedom as we begin our list of people we have harmed. For me, that meant including all those people who had lived rent free in my head for so many years. They lived there because of my shame, fear, guilt, resentment, sadness, whatever it was that kept me locked in my discomfort. Now was my time to place them on my list. Again, I am not being asked to contact the

person now. I am just being asked to make a list. Because I have seriously worked the first seven steps, I am ready to make my list. Again, working the steps gives me the support I need to complete yet another part of my program of self healing.

Give yourself the gift of freedom. Give yourself the gift of clear thinking by wiping out the cobwebs that live in your head. Cobwebs that are tangled into all the feelings of shame, fear, guilt, resentment, sadness and any other feelings that occupy your head space. ~lla

## COSA gathering July 30-August 1

Mark your calendar. Attend the COSA gathering July 30, 31 and August 1st., 1999. Friday will be utilized taking care of business. You will hear reports from several committees such as Communications, Literature, By-laws, Future conventions, along with Treasurers Report, and reports of the past years' activities. Your presence and input are needed. You can have a voice in the future of COSA, your support group. Then, of course, the rest of the week end will be a time for you to honor yourself. You can experi-

ence personal growth and healing insights. Check out the registration form enclosed in this newsletter. Fill it out today and plan to attend.

If it is entirely impossible for you to attend, please take a moment to share your reasons for not attending along with any ideas for improving the gatherings or simply ideas you may have for strengthening COSA recovery. Send your comments to the Houston address. You will find it on the back page of your newsletter.

*TIME...I have only just a minute, only sixty seconds in it, forced upon me, can't refuse it, didn't seek it, didn't choose it, but it's up to me to use it. I must suffer if I lose it, give account if I abuse it. Just a tiny little minute - but eternity is in it!!*

## I Remember You

I remember you,  
Completely on edge,  
Ready and waiting,  
End of the world ahead.

I remember you,  
Scared to the bone,  
Obsessed and shaking,  
Certain to be left alone.

I remember you,  
Feelings to your tips,  
Lit up and frazzled,  
Please help to change this.

I remember you,  
Strong-willed, a fighter,  
Working and praying,  
Life needs to be brighter.

I remember you,  
Wanting to grow,  
Seeking and finding,  
the woman I now know  
~ M.Y.~

## My Guardian Angel

My Momma told me  
When I was young  
Don't worry at night  
my little one.  
Your guardian angel  
is always near  
To keep you safe  
and still your fear.  
The bumps in the night  
that make you fret  
are only the things  
not understood as yet.  
The things that scare you  
in the night  
will go away with  
the mornings light.  
Until the light of  
a new day has come  
An angel will protect  
you my little one.  
~ Michelle ~

### ***Things I have learned ...***

*...I have learned that...happiness often comes from not getting more, but in wanting less.*

## Balance needs your contributions ...

More articles are needed. Please remember to submit an article to the newsletter. Share a recovery story, a few notes from your journal, your experience while attending a retreat or a conference. This is your newsletter. Your experience, strength and hope are needed. What you have to share will be an encouragement to someone who needs to hear what you have to share. If each person who receives this newsletter would submit one article a year, we would be able to print a monthly newsletter and still not have room for all of the articles.

# "One Breath At A Time"

By Ila D.

*As your editor I have been hesitant to include the following book reviews. Yet I have included other book reviews that I have received from others. I know where my hesitancy comes from. It is simply because it feels like I am promoting myself. As I reflect, I do realize the sharing of my story has been helpful to many. If there are others who can be helped by my sharing, I will be grateful.*

Ila's book, "One Breath At A Time," came at a time when I felt so isolated and alone. This book came to me in a time when I felt so very alone, ashamed of my life and myself, and too fearful to seek help. I often felt like I wanted to run away and hide. Here I was; a professional woman with children and a very painful secret.

The sexual addict in my life consumed my every waking moment. I had no friends to turn to, therapists instructed me to "leave my husband-start a new life"-as there was no hope for him.

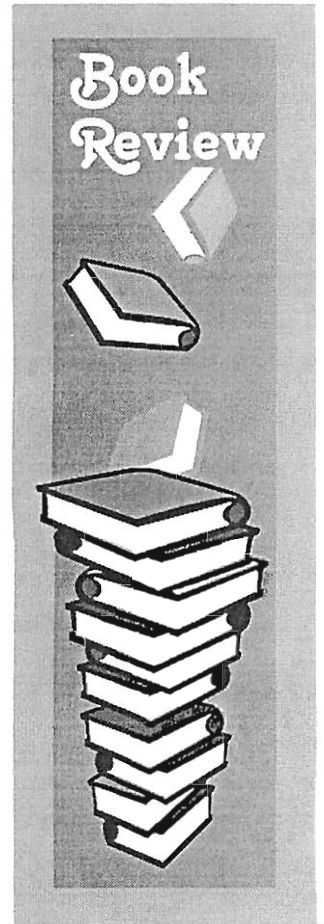
I was sure that I was the only person in the world with this problem. I feared being discovered and humiliated.

'One Breath At A Time' showed me that I was indeed not alone. It allowed me to see that even a "respectable", community-minded woman could be affected by sexual addiction. I was shocked that Ila could be brave enough to put her name on and in the book. When I began reading, I was certain that her life could not have been as horrible as mine. What I found was a strange comfort in knowing that someone else had been through this addiction and was not only surviving but flourishing! I found such incredible wisdom and first person examples of how to reclaim my sanity. I was close to collapse when I started reading. The book was painful and close to home, yet it gave me the strength to pursue a healthier way of living life. It

gave me the courage to reach out to the support network of COSA. One Breath At A Time came to me at a time when I was not sure if I could endure another breath! This book is one of those 'teachers' placed on my path that opened my eyes and heart to the 12 steps.

~Karen D.

In re-reading your inspirational book, "One Breath At A Time". I see how you teach us readers lessons that you also may be re-learning now, one breath at a time...(A definite "must-read" for any COSA who has had to heal from trauma. A poignant tale, with an earthy tone, and a touch of humor, but with lots of wisdom. My favorite passage deals with the warning you give about the dangers of two needy people marrying each other. For this is the stuff that unhealthy marriages are made of....). ~KC



*I must comment on my re-learning. Since my husband's illness, I feel like I am experiencing a re-learning stage. As I place his nutrients in his mouth, hold his glass as he drinks, open doors, chauffeur, and bathe him, I sense a real loss of myself. I find his illness can rob me of what I want to be doing, just as the addiction robbed me of who I was. I strive daily to keep my focus, yet maintain a lifestyle for us.*

*As for placing my name on the book, I wrote the book for my children. I chose to represent truth and openness to them. I have no secrets from them today. My full name on the book is my statement to them that I will no longer keep secrets. I hope it sets an example to them on the damage and dangers of secrets.*

*I recently became strong enough to share the book with my siblings. I can't begin to tell you the healing that has happened among us. I have even received an amends from one of the abusers mentioned in my book. A niece contacted me and thanked me. She said she now understands her mother. I am pleased that she was able to resolve situations with herself through family revelations in the book.*

*I must stay open without secrets. I can only do that by being honest with everyone. I know the program offers anonymity for those who still need to protect themselves as they heal. In my situation, that wasn't an option for me to utilize and enjoy. If you are interested in the book, Write to P.O. Box 502, Mt. Morris, Mi. 48458 or e mail to noldila@aol.com.*

*Remember, this book nor any other book mentioned in this newsletter falls under COSA approved literature. Your literature committee works long and hard to prepare and present literature for you. It will be some time before we can all experience only COSA approved literature. Continue to support your NSO/COSA board so that COSA can continue to serve and expand.*

~Ila