



BALANCE



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

The turning over step.....sounds easy.....VERY DIFFICULT!!! No one ever promised me that this program was easy. The first time I read the steps, I realized my program was going to be about me, not him or them. It would have been easy if I could have run his program or their program for them. This program is about me. This step is about me. I am the only one I can change. Today, I like that promise in this program. When I first walked into 12 step recovery, I was a bit disappointed about that idea that I only had me to deal with. I really believed changing him and them would cure me.

Turning my will over to the care of God has been the kindest action I have ever done for myself. Of course, I still don't seem to have the ability to practice that kindness on a daily basis. More often than not, I take my will back from the care of God. When I take my will back.....I abuse myself.

When I turn over to the care of God, surrender, I become stronger. When I take back my will from God, I become weak, unfocused, confused, tense and, I'm sure, many more feelings. Again, making myself weak, worried, confused, unfocused, or tense are all abusive behaviors. Each time I lose focus, become tense, feel unsettled, I can turn to step three and name the moment I took my will back from God.

Today, I will continue to stay focused on step three. I will make a decision to turn my will and my life over to God's care as I understand God. I will remember the promise of power and serenity that will come to me when I practice step three.

lla

Step Four: *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."*

I have learned so much about myself by experiencing step four. For me, this step is never over. I like the idea that this step is never over. I like the anticipation of all the gifts that are still unopened. I look forward to learning more about myself. Each time I learn more, it is truly a gift for me.

There are often tears with my gifts. Often I compare it to peeling off another layer of an onion. I peel off a layer, then I have to stop and grieve what I found. I have to lay the onion aside until my eyes are ready to go on. Sometimes I have to set my recovery aside until my feelings are ready to go on. I don't want to set it aside too long. As with the onion that will become dry and useless if left in the open air too long, I believe my recovery will lose potential if left unused for too long. When the grieving has lessened, I pick up my onion and peel another layer.

Some say it is difficult for them to compare layering an onion and opening new gifts. For me, it is an anticipated part of my process. I ALWAYS grow when I learn more about myself through my fourth step work. I will continue to stay open to my layers and my gifts.

lla

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

Sharing my step four with someone else was essential to my recovery. As I learn more about myself, it is important that I continue to share step four with others.

Sharing openly and honestly at my weekly support group meetings has also been an important healing aspect in my recovery. In many ways, my weekly meetings feel like mini step fives. Sometimes, when I sit down with the person I chose to share a step four with, I realize that much of what I am sharing as a whole has already been shared in fragments during my support group meetings. For me, the weekly sharing is the pathway that reveals the whole of my step five work.

Step five is important to me, because my family of origin lived in silence. No feelings were discussed. To me, it felt like feelings were bad. Even good feelings weren't shared. Because of this family silence, revealing my secrets in step five has seemed even more important in learning my own truth.

For me, step five has guided me and assisted me in releasing pain, fear, shame, sadness, and my dreaded family silence.

Today, I strive to remember that it is okay to share who I really am. Silence is not to be respected. I will trust my instincts on who, where and what to share and then I will share my truths.

Things are worse, but I feel better

"Things are getting worse but I feel a lot better." I am tired of putting channel locks on all of the TV's,

changing passwords on the computer and snooping around for semen on bedclothes, bathroom mirrors and assorted other places. I don't talk to my 'best' friend much anymore, she said the whole thing about sexual addiction was too much for her to handle. My family never asks how things are-it's too much for them also. Things are getting worse but I do feel much better. I have new friends that want to hear the details of my shame. They want to hear

what I am doing to maintain my sanity. They have been there themselves. They know the depths of despair and are willing to walk into it and through it with me.

I am giving up on the search for porn magazines and movies hidden away in our house, nasty Websites, and dirty TV channels; not because I have lost energy: but because I have gained energy and interest for the things I like! The things I want to do. The things I need to learn. I have gained esteem as well as learned to pay attention to the people in my life, not the porn stars and hookers in his

life!

He went off with friends this weekend, not the recovery kind but the old kind of friends. I went off with friends too: my children. We had a great time. We went hiking, celebrated a birthday, found beautiful rocks and ate gummy bears.

I am not thinking of all of the things to check when he arrives home this time. I am thinking of all the books that I want to read. I am thinking of all of the people I want to talk to and love and thank for helping me find my peace of mind.

K

How can we commit to a relationship ?

There was a question in the last issue of the newsletter which read ." How can we commit to a relationship with our SA spouses, when we know they have a disease which makes them candidates for relapses at any time?

Some responses.....dotted lines indicate ending of first response, beginning of next:

"I am guaranteed no guarantees in my life. The person I made a commitment with could be very different than I had believed. That person could also be the victim of a serious medical disorder or a serious physical accident. As my recovery continues, I realize there are no guarantees. I wish I could obtain a guarantee that I wouldn't have any more relapses in my recovery from codependency. I haven't been able to locate a guarantee like that either.".....

"I work my program on a daily basis. My goal is to continue in this committed relationship. I realize the seriousness of the disease of addiction. I also realize the seriousness of my disease of codependency. Most days, I believe, if I stay focused on my disease, I will have a better possibility of our relationship lasting".....

"I feel lucky that we have at last identified our disease, not only the disease of sexual addiction but also my disease of codependency. I don't know what will happen to my vows. I want to honor them. I can only honor my vows by honoring myself. I can only work my program. If my addict works a program, life and our vows will be nice. If my addict doesn't chose recovery, I will have to determine if I want to honor my vows or honor myself.".....

"My life has never promised any guarantees. My prayer has been that my spouse continue recovering. More important than that is that I continue my recovery. We are together. I am with an addict. If I am with an addict, that means I have issues to deal with. I will focus on my disease. I will take one day at a time"

"The best thing for me when I begin to have questions like this is to stay close to a good 12 step recovery workbook and also read daily meditations. With these two tools, I will be guided in what to do next. I love my meeting. It saddens me that everyone doesn't have a support group available to them. However, I know I can still recover without my group. I can still take care of myself in an area without meetings. Even with meetings, that is just my one or two hour meeting place. I spend many hours with my workbooks and my meditation books. I too want to honor my vows. Because of my constant work with the steps, I believe I will know if there should come a time when it is not good for me to honor those vows".....

"I have no guarantees in my life. The best I can do for myself is stay true to me."



On-line Support

The address for the E-mail forum for Friends and Family members of people addicted to sex is:

Coanon-approval@MailingList.net

All letters are lower case except for the M & L. The M & L must be capital letters. Coanon is an E-mail support group. This list is closed for the group's safety. It is a 12-step group for people in COSA, S-Anon, Co-SLAA, or those with no meeting may attend.

Roster of registered COSA groups

Recently, the board has requested an update on the registration list. It is our attempt to locate all the groups in the United States and on a national level. Below is a list of all the meetings we currently know about. If you know of other meetings, please send a letter to NATIONAL COORDINATOR, P O BOX 14537, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414

Alabama

Birmingham
Montgomery

Arizona

Cottonwood
Mesa
Phoenix

Arkansas

Fayetteville
Maumelle

California

Fountain Valley
Fremont
Granite Bay
Los Angeles
San Diego
Santa Monica
Tulare

Colorado

Boulder
Colorado Springs
Montrose
Windsor

Connecticut

Brookfield
Westport
Willimantic

Florida

Casselberry
Jacksonville
Rockledge

Georgia

Marietta
Atlanta Service Grp

Idaho

Payette

Illinois

East Moline
Peoria

Indiana

Anderson
Indianapolis

Iowa

Des Moines

Kansas

Lenexa
Topeka

Kentucky

Louisville

Louisiana

Lafayette

Michigan

Ann Arbor
Bay City
Brighton
Ferndale
Flint

Grand Rapids

Kalamazoo

Redford

Rochester Hills

Saginaw

Minnesota

Minneapolis
St Paul

Apple Valley

Mnettonka

Robbinsdale

Mankato

Missouri

St Louis

Nebraska

Scottsbluff

Nevada

Las Vegas

New Jersey

Ridgewood

New York

Binghamton

Buffalo

Lockport

North Carolina

Greensboro

Raleigh

Ohio

Cincinnati

Daytona

Oregon

Ashland

Eugene

Portland

Texas

Corpus Christi

Dallas

Clear Lake

Fort Worth

Houston

San Antonio

Sugar Land

Seabrook

Stephenville

Virginia

Hampton

Virginia Beach

Washington

Olympia

Spokane

Warden

West Virginia

Morgantown

Wisconsin

Appleton

Eau Claire

Oregon

Stevens Point

Wyoming

Sheridan

Canada

Alberta

Calgary

British Columbia

Kelowna

Manitoba

Winnipeg

Greece

Athens

cities. We do have more than one meeting in some of the larger cities. The people doing phone service work, the person answering e mail requests and the person handling our homepage, do have a more detailed list. We are simply attempting to be sure your area is listed. If it is not, please contact the above address.

Some people have been very angry when I contacted them and they had requested removal of their name or group several years ago. I apologize for any inconvenience our registration oversight has caused you and your area. It is our earnest attempt to rectify that very soon. Please be patient and PLEASE respond if we have omitted your area.

Thanks again for your pa-

This list is simply a list of the tience, *ila*

Another opportunity for service work

Sponsors are needed for long distance sponsoring. We have a large volume of people, people in pain, waiting for a sponsor in areas where no meetings are available. This service work will reward you in ways you never dreamed possible. I sponsor several people long distance. The benefits I have received far out number the little I have given back. You can determine the type of contact you prefer to make. Some sponsors work by letter writing. Others keep in contact through e mail. Others set specific times for the sponsee to call them for check in and progress updates. Please take the risk and sponsor one person. You won't believe the rewards!!!!

If you would like to try this form of service work please write:

COSA CONNECTION COORDINATOR

NSO-COSA

P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414

There's Stranger In My House

by Kris A. (12-4-99)

There is a Stranger, living in my House
That's evidence to see,
One, that has an open heart,
And carries, two personalities

Gentle but far apart
The one is never far away
There is a stranger living in my house,
That is evident to see.

This person I have come to know,
Ruthless in many extremes,
Hurting only them selves,
With roots as deep as trees

For when they are close at hand
The one appears serene
The other stays in disguise
For the other will not see.

There lives a stranger in my house,
The two shall never meet.
The one will take control
The other commits to peace.

There is a Stranger in my house,
Searching to belong
While in the journey, of this search,
Conversations become strong.

Confusion from deep inside
One separates the pain
From being drawn in from flight
The other struggles to reframe.

There is a stranger in the house
No longer longing to be alone
Softly crying out for help
The evidence becomes known.

The stranger in my house
Will turn and walk away,
From all that is left behind
Is fate of yesterday.

The stranger has left the house
Searching to belong,
I hope they find the peace
A place to call their own.

National Convention Update

Plans for the COSA National Convention this summer in Minnesota are shaping up. The conference theme, Nature's Simple Gifts: Back to the Basics, will be echoed in the location that has been selected. The conference will be held at Koinonia, a retreat center with hiking trails, a lake, and overnight and dining facilities. Overnight lodging and meals will be provided as part of the cost of participating in the convention. Koinonia is located just outside of Annandale, Minnesota, about an hour's drive west of Minneapolis/St Paul.

The convention committee is hard at work making plans for this year's convention. We are exploring options for shuttling people between the airport and the retreat center, for planning the program with a balance between free time and program time, and for options around length of stay and related costs. In short, our goal is to offer as much program and transportation flexibility as we can so that the convention is accessible to everyone. We expect to begin the registration process in March after the options around length of stay, cost, and transportation have been clarified. Meanwhile, mark your calendars for July 21 through 24, with July 21 designated for the National Board meeting.

COSA Literature Order Form

6/99

Today's Date: _____

Ship To: Name _____ Evening Phone _____

Street/Apt. City, State & Zip _____

COSA--A Program of Recovery, *brochure* \$0.20 X _____ = \$ _____

COSA Welcome--A Newcomer's Packet 3.00 X _____ = \$ _____

How to Start a New Group, *packet* 2.00 X _____ = \$ _____

COSA Recovery Tools, *new item!* .20 X _____ = \$ _____

COSA Stories, Volume I 3.50 X _____ = \$ _____

COSA Stories, Volume II 3.50 X _____ = \$ _____

COSA Medallions (6 MO, 1-20 YR, un-numbered) 3.00 X _____ = \$ _____

Tri-Fold Wallet Card (Serenity Prayer, 12 Steps, 12 Traditions) .20 X _____ = \$ _____

Audio Cassette Tapes (see list on reverse side) 6.00 X _____ = \$ _____

Postage and Materials Fee

\$0.20 to \$1.99 order = \$0.75

\$2.00 to \$19.99 order = \$3.20

\$20.00 to \$30.00 order = \$4.20

\$30.01 order & over = \$5.50

Please include additional postage
as necessary for large orders
and/or mailing outside of the U.S.

LITERATURE SUBTOTAL = \$ _____

POSTAGE = \$ _____

TOTAL LITERATURE ORDER = \$ _____

BALANCE COSA newsletter / one year subscription for \$12.00 X _____ = \$ _____

DONATION: Group _____ Individual _____ = \$ _____

Send order with check or money-order
payable in U.S. dollars to:

COSA National Service Organization


P O BOX 14537

MINNEAPOLIS MN 55414

TOTAL ENCLOSED = \$ _____

Orders may take six to eight weeks for delivery.
(Remember, we are an all-volunteer organization!)

COSA NSO Approved Literature is written by the members of COSA groups across the U.S. Participation is vital to the development of new literature. All committed COSA members who have at least one year in the program are invited to contribute. Please contact the NSO to find out how you can help!



**The COSA-NSO home page on
the Internet is there for you**

Check it out at www.shore.net/~cosa
Here is the current Table Of Contents:

What is COSA?
Contact Information
How do I know if COSA is for me?
More about COSA
The Twelve Steps of COSA
The Twelve Traditions of COSA
The Gifts
COSA Recovery Tools (a new piece of literature!)
COSA Literature List
Conferences, Retreats, Workshops, etc.
COSA Registration Form
(so we can send newcomers your way)
E-mail Support Group
Links for Sex Addiction and Codependency.
Let us know what you think, it's your website!

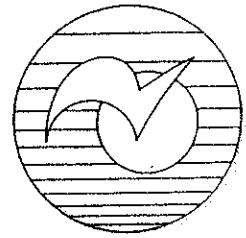
cosa@shore.net
"NSO of COSA Webservant"

National COSA Phone Line
612-537-6904

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**Because I'm
Human I can:**

- Kiss someone
- Tickle
- Feel happy
- Let the wind play
with my hair
- Sing a song
- Wait for the sun