



# BALANCE



During our business meetings at the conference in Minnesota, members shared that the newsletter was arriving and being filed. It was not being read. We're hoping the following ideas will assist you in getting the most from the newsletter.

Several years ago, the group was searching for ways to keep in touch. We wanted a link, a means of communication. There were three or four of us busy at attempting to compile that first issue. We were also busy attempting to come up with a name that we felt was fitting for our newsletter. The name "Balance" seemed to keep coming back to us as our number one

choice. Even though it seemed like the name of choice, we pondered. Our first issue was close to completion when we opened our meditation book and there was the reading for that day. The title of that reading was "Balance". We knew we had our answer as to the name for our communication link. Now as we share each issue with you, we hope it will bring more balance into your life.

After many years of publishing, we are realizing that ideas need to be shared for using this tool.

Here are some ideas others have shared. We hope the ideas can be helpful to you and thus give you the option of using the newsletter as a helpful tool and a communication link for your group:

Shortly after the conception of "Balance", one group requested that the steps coordinate with the month so that they could be used as a part of

their step work during the meeting. Since the newsletter now comes out approximately six times a year or every other month, we feature three steps in each issue. That way the steps will overlap a bit to cover the next month so you will have topics until your next newsletter arrives. Many groups read one of those steps during the meeting and then use that step as their topic.

During announcement time in your meetings, we suggest that you announce any conferences, retreats or board announcements so that every-

in different areas keep the reading interesting and refreshing.

At each meeting, please remember to talk about the other pieces of literature available. Tools are important to our recovery.

It is also important to ask you literature person or secretary to purge the files and discard all order forms with the Texas address. That address is no longer good. Orders sent to that address can be delayed three months or longer.

And always remember if the news-

## Ways to use your newsletter

letter is to be a useful tool for you and your group we do need your article submissions and your financial support. COSA, "The

Balance" and all other tools of recovery belong to us as one group. There is no one person responsible for making COSA and the tools of recovery workable. WE MAKE IT WORK!! If we want this program here for our future, if we want it here for our children to turn to, we will need to do our part today.

We hope you enjoy and use this tool, Your Newsletter. "Ways to Use Your Newsletter" ~ila

one can be informed. Even if the conference or retreat isn't in your area, people from your group may have travel plans and desire to attend an event elsewhere. I have attended retreats, conferences or meetings in other areas and find it an enormous growth benefit in my recovery. Group members can then report back to their home meetings with the recovery they experienced while visiting somewhere else. The entire meeting can benefit.

Many groups read one of the other articles during announcement time. Sometimes an article becomes the meeting topic for that day. If you don't find anything of interest in the newsletter, please make it your goal to change the newsletter to something that fits your needs more by submitting articles about your experience, strength and hope. Encourage your group members to do the same. Articles from different people

~ila

### Things I've learned ...

- That to ignore the facts does not change the facts.
- When you plan to get even with someone you're only allowing that person to continue to abuse you.
- It is just as wrong to be rude to a child as it is an adult. In fact, it may be more unforgivable.
- Everyone wants to live on top of the mountain, but all the happiness and growth occurs while you're climbing it.

## Step 9:

*"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."*

As I stay aware, more will be revealed. In the past month, another incident with one of the very important people [one of my children] was revealed to me. I find myself involved with another amends process with that child, now a young adult, but still feeling lots of childhood pain.

I am grateful that I am healthy enough to stay open to each new revelation. Those in my group hear me say, "Why Me?", "I'm too

tired to face this issue too." "Denial was easier." I still mouth those words as I vent, release and prepare for yet another amends journey. I know, I really know and feel how grateful I am that my journey is continuing.

There are many layers to my onion. I know my healing is at that small core deep within me, just like that small core in the center of the onion. Just as I know that that core part of the onion is where the life

source is from which that onion was formed, I also see my core as being where my life source is. I see the layers it takes to peel away to the onion core. I have just as many layers to uncover to reveal my core.

Sometimes, when peeling an onion, my eyes fill with tears and I have to sit the onion aside awhile. I can't leave that onion for too long. It will dry out and even spoil if left too long.

My recovery is the same.

If the grief and pain overwhelm me, I can set it aside until my heart and eyes clear. I can't leave it too long. I too will become dry and toughened. The denial can spoil me into believing I don't have to focus back on the hard issues. Just like the onion, I can dry out, spoil and die to my recovery.

A break or rest from hard issues is okay. Staying away too long can be detrimental to me. ~ila

## Step 10:

*"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."*

This is the maintenance step. The difficult portion of this step is the first cleaning. Just as we find it difficult to clean our home, auto or lawn if left for years with no care, that first listing of 8 & 9 which gets us on to 10 is the most difficult task. After the initial cleaning,

maintenance is much more workable.

There will be old amends that were forgotten in that initial process, just as there are areas of our home, auto or lawn that we missed in that initial clean up. It still isn't the difficult task it was that first time around.

Step 10 also reminds me that I am human and I will continue to make mistakes. I don't have to be perfect. I just have to be willing to work step 10 by taking an inventory and promptly admitting my mistakes.

I appreciate all the steps, but I especially appreciate

this step. It gives me the freedom to experience life knowing my mistakes can be corrected.

As I practice this step, it also gives me the space of time to realize and appreciate all the healthy and good things I do each day.

~Ila

## Step 11:

*"Sought through prayers and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."*

I am now at the place in my recovery where I become fearful if I get too caught up in worldly things and don't take time for prayer and meditation each day [for me, that is in the morning].

When I take at least 30 minutes [I prefer 1 hour but

that isn't always a gift I receive] my day is just so much better.

There have been times when my whole day has been filled with unexpected complications and changes, yet my serenity and focus are maintained. As things happen and complications

occur, I find myself wondering how and why I am maintaining focus. Then I remember. I took the time.

I prayed and meditated.

My God will never ask me to handle more than I can. I simply have to remember to depend on Him for my care.

I truly believe returning to step 11 daily, sometimes many more times than once a day, will carry me through anything. ~Ila

*Things I've learned ...*

That either I control my attitude or it **will** control me.

# Future conventions and retreats

One outcome of the recent Annual Meeting is, there will not be a national COSA convention next year. The Board and Delegates discussed our options, and I think the plan we agreed on is workable and in keeping with the goal of spending our energy on Outreach (see NSO letter in this issue).

Instead, NSO will rent a meeting room at the hotel where the SAA national convention will be (in Louisiana next summer). SAA is choosing to have more sessions open to guests than last year, but attending COSA members need a place to gather and have meetings and any other activities that they decide on. I for one plan to go and make the most of that room. In the meantime, we plan to contact ISO of SAA and ask to be included in next year's planning, to see if the choice for the 2002 location can be made together to accommodate both groups' needs.

We plan to contact regions where yearly retreats are held and seek information that can be passed on to other COSA members. If your group or intergroup plans a retreat, please consider posting a notice in the Balance or on the NSO Website. By encouraging attendance at regional events, we hope to fill the need for a recovery weekend and foster more networking among groups.

Next year's Annual Meeting of the Board & Delegates will be approximately three days of business balanced with relaxation, possibly in connection with a regional event. Details still need to be determined. It is my hope to recruit Delegates by making personal contact and asking for participation. It's not too early to consider serving as a representative for your group!

~Ruth B. in NC • NSO Chair

## Upcoming retreats

**September 23-24 in Asheboro, NC:** There will be an overnight retreat for all who have a desire to stop their own compulsive sexual behavior, and their adult guests, on the theme "Passing it On; the Power of the Program." A strong COSA presence is hoped for (both attendees and speakers), and a COSA meeting will be held. The cost of \$35 includes three meals and lodging.

For more info, write to sareco99@shore.net or call 336-584-3878. This event is hosted by SAA of Greensboro.

For many of us, retreats have become an important even an essential part of our recovery. If you have never experienced a retreat by all means, do so soon. We see it as giant strides forward in our recovery process. Notice the upcoming retreats. If either of them work into your schedule, give yourself the gift of attending.

**Michigan—Fall Retreat—Topic: "Self Love & Healthy Sexuality", Friday, October 6 through Sunday October 8<sup>th</sup>.**

The retreat will be held at Colombiere Center, Clarkston, Mi. Cost for the weekend is \$100.00 per person, which includes sleeping room, linens, meeting rooms with meeting room services and five meals. If you wish to attend, a non-refundable deposit of \$30.00 per person must be submitted by July 1, 2000. If registration is not received by July 1, retreat cost is \$105.00.

Send deposits of \$30.00 to Ila Davis, P.O.Box 502, Mt Morris, MI 48458. Make checks payable to Ila Davis.

Approximately two weeks before the retreat you will receive a packet with information for the weekend, including a map to the retreat center.

# I don't have to! ... commit to a relationship

A response to an article in the March issue titled "How can we commit to a relationship?"

My answer is, I don't have to! I have lived with my loved one's addiction for too long! I do not see his problem as my problem and all the recovery that I have had has not improved his situation at all in fact as the article say, "it has gotten worse!" For my sanity and serenity my answer is to allow him to own and be responsible for his problem. It has been long overdue for me to leave-but I stayed for a variety of reasons, "he is an otherwise good

man, guilt, fear of economic insecurity, hope that he will change". You know the drill!

I do not consider myself his "codependent" and have decided to no longer give excuses as to why I do not leave. This is bound to upset some people and that is their right but for me today, I have filed for divorce and look forward to a life without always looking over my shoulder fearful I would discover some seedy picture or deed done. I do not need to live with him to recover-I can do my recovery on my own between me and GOD!  
~Susan

## All I really need to know about Life, I learned from Noah's Ark:

1. Don't miss the boat.
2. Don't forget we're all in the same boat.
3. Plan ahead-it wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
4. Stay fit-when you're 600 years old someone might ask you to do something really big.
5. Don't listen to critics, just get on with what has to be done.
6. For safety's sake travel in pairs.
7. Two heads are better than one.
8. Build your future on high ground.
9. Speed isn't always an advantage, after all, the snails were on the same ark with the cheetahs.
10. When you're stressed, float awhile.
11. Remember the ark was built by amateurs; The Titanic was built by professionals.
12. Remember that the woodpeckers inside are a larger threat than the storm outside.
13. No matter what the storm, when God is with you, there's a rainbow waiting.

As I read these, I was reminded of many old beliefs that I continue to strive to change. For instance #2, so often I still let my head conversations tell me I'm different. Other people are happy, perfect, normal. Of course my belief system is based on the fact that their outfit matches, their hair is perfect, they have a perfect set of manicured nails. When my negative head conversations take over who I am, it is always the externals that I base my beliefs on. When I get my focus back, I share more of my internal self. When I share who I am, almost always that other perfect person shares who they really are. When that happens, we find that we are the same. We have different circumstances, but yet so much the same

Then there is #5, that one always reminds me that when my addiction was raging my whole life focused on what other people thought. Today, my codependent healing motto is, "It's none of my business what you think of me." As I remember my motto, the critics don't effect me.

Continued on next page

# NSO 2000/2001 update

Dear COSA members,

It is a great privilege to serve you this year, alongside a wonderful team of fellow volunteers. I am very excited about the new people, plans, and outreach focus that will carry our National Service Organization (NSO) forward. Here are some highlights from the July business meetings in Minnesota:

Outreach to build the groups will be the primary focus for us this year.

We need to increase our grassroots strength so NSO can continue to reach newcomers effectively as well as receive new volunteers, energy and financial support from new and growing groups. The survival of our organization may be at stake. The Outreach priorities include: spread the COSA message through recovery-based newspapers, treatment centers, and other national and regional avenues; develop a program for established COSA groups to sponsor new groups; develop an outreach toolkit for groups to use in their communities; and, open a dialogue with other Co- and S- fellowships about cooperation possibilities. The Outreach Committee has some clear goals and lots of enthusiasm, but it needs more hands and ideas. If you want to play a part in the Outreach effort, let us know!

The Communications Committee is being restructured to spread the workload more evenly. The COSA Connections Coordinator (CCC) position has been split into 5 geographic regions with 5 volunteers, so that our CCC's can provide more individual attention. These volunteers help individuals where there are no meetings, matching them with other loners for starting new groups. To address the shortage of long-distance sponsors for individuals, each CCC will contact established groups in his or her region to pass out the loners' names. These 4 new positions have already been filled by people who stepped forward in July. We have also recruited a new phonenumber volunteer, an E-mail assistant, and an additional mailbox person.

NSO has experienced problems with filling literature orders, depositing checks, and handling related tasks in a timely manner. My part in these delays is, I did not get the Stories II booklet reprinted for several months, so orders couldn't be filled. I apologize to those of you who experienced delays. Our volunteers and employee have caught up with outstanding orders and checks, and we are currently revising some procedures so we can serve you better in the future. If you have any problems with an NSO donation, Literature order, or other information need,

please let us know. We need to be informed of such situations and we want to serve you better.

In other news: Look elsewhere in this issue for info about next year's convention. The Literature Committee is rebuilding after a year of inactivity, so its members are looking forward to a productive year developing new items and revising current material. Our employee continues to seek business addresses and contact information from groups that have not supplied complete data. The Bylaws Committee was disbanded for this year, so we can focus our energy on more immediate concerns.

My personal goals include supporting the NSO volunteers and holding them accountable for the work of NSO. I also plan to contact groups across the country, seeking your input and strengthening your connections to NSO.

I have the following specific requests for each of you: - Use the Balance in your groups. It goes out free to every group, and it is the NSO's primary means of communicating with the Fellowship. Also the articles are great as meeting topics! - If you have e-mail, please consider joining the COSA Business discussion list. It's a good way to be in touch with the fellowship and listen to what other groups have to say. If you want to be included, write to [cosa@shore.net](mailto:cosa@shore.net)

*In peace,  
Ruth B. in NC  
Chair, Board of Trustees, NSO of COSA*

---

## All I really need to know about Life

*Continued from previous page*

Number 10 reminds me that I don't have to do my recovery perfectly. As a practicing codependent, I really strived to "look" perfect. Life is sooo much easier now that I don't have to be perfect. I am reminded that life is not a dress rehearsal. I am not expected to do it perfectly.

With number 12, my woodpeckers came close to driving me crazy. I kept all the negatives in. I smiled and said I was 'fine'! My smile and 'fine' were the worst kind of storm for me to tolerate. The negatives inside were destroying me. The longer I'm in recovery, the more I say what I'm thinking. The woodpeckers seldom do damage anymore. Sometimes, by speaking my truth, I feel like I've created a storm. I know the storm won't cause as much violence for my life as long as I face my truths. When my words and thoughts stayed on the inside pecking away like woodpeckers, the storm on the outside almost destroyed me.

*Because I'm human, I can:* Smell a flower ... Hug someone ...  
Roll down a hill ... Go to sleep when I'm tired ... Hold hands ...  
Look out a window ... Believe in unicorns ... Climb a Tree ...

# UPCOMING RETREATS CONTINUED!!

2000 Eugene Retreat is coming to Oregon Coast soon!!

This year's retreat will be held in **Lincoln City** on the Oregon coast, **October 13-15**.

Visit our website at [www.it.happens.com/retreat](http://www.it.happens.com/retreat) or call 541-338-4457 or e mail at [tracy@mail.happens.com](mailto:tracy@mail.happens.com) for more information.

Pre-registration is greatly appreciated.

## The Serenity Prayer

*God*—Saying this word I am admitting the existence of a Consciousness or a Higher Power that is greater than me.

*Grant*—Saying this second word, I am admitting that this Consciousness or Higher Power is able to bestow and give to me and to others.

*Me*—I am asking something for myself. Holy books say that if I ask sincerely, it shall be given. It is not wrong to ask for improving myself. For with the improvement of my character, both I and people around me will be happier, and my relationships will have a better chance to improve.

*The Serenity*—I am asking for calmness, composure, and inner peace in my life, which will enable me to transcend my ego, to think straight, and to govern myself properly.

*To Accept*—I am resigning myself to conditions as they are right now. I am living in the now, the present moment.

*The Things*—I acknowledge my tragedy, death, suffering, illness and pain as part of my life, neither good or bad. I accept my humanness and fallibility, and my lot in life as it is. Until I have the courage to change any part of my life I don't like, I must accept it ungrudgingly.

*I Cannot Change*—I cannot prevent these events or conditions from happening to me or to others.

*Courage*—I am asking for a strength of my spirit to face the negative parts of my life conditions without flinching.


*To Change*—In facing these negatives honestly, I am asking to take an active part in changing myself and my life conditions.

*The Things I Can*—I am asking for help to make the right decisions. Everything is not the way I would like it to be in my life. I must continue to face reality and constantly work toward my continued growth and progress.

*And Wisdom*—I am asking for the ability to rise above my ego and form sound judgement about myself and my life. I then use my ability to ask for guidance from myself, others and my Higher Power.

*To Know*—I want to be able to understand truths clearly.

*The Difference*—I want to see things differently in my life so that I will be more aware of myself and of others. I need to sense a definite value in loving over being selfish.



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

Check it out at [www.shore.net/~cosa](http://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](mailto:cosa@shore.net)

"NSO of COSA Webservant"

---

## On-line Support



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

[cosa@shore.net](mailto:cosa@shore.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.

---

## National COSA Phone Line

**612-537-6904**



## BALANCE



To subscribe,  
send \$12.00 to:

**BALANCE**  
NSO-COSA  
P.O. Box 14537  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

Make checks payable to:  
"NSO-COSA"  
Please specify  
"For Balance Subscription"  
on your check

### ADDRESS CHANGE

Many of you are aware that NSO COSA changed our mailing address from Houston, TX to Minneapolis, MN. Many of the COSA forms and literature items still bear the old address. Please be aware:

The old Houston P.O. box has been closed - all mail sent to COSA at that address will be **RETURNED TO SENDER**. *Be sure you use the correct address:*



**NSO-COSA**  
P.O. Box 14537  
Minneapolis, MN 55414