



# BALANCE



2001 Jan-Feb

## Step 1

"We admitted we were powerless over compulsive sexual behavior - that our lives had become unmanageable."

Admitting I am powerless. That is the first step. For me, admitting I was powerless was easy. My life was so out of control as I continued to try so very hard to control everything. I never thought of myself as controlling other people. I just thought I was trying to control the outcome. I wanted to make everyone happy. I wanted every situation with my family, my community, my friends and even people I didn't know well to have a happy ending. When I heard that I was powerless, my first thought was, *maybe everything isn't my fault*. When I sat there in that first meeting, there were so many events that didn't have pleasant outcomes. I had always experienced all those negatives as my fault. I felt a wonderful sense of freedom and relief when I saw the promise that I was powerless.

After I was in the program a few months, I came to realize the difficult part of powerless was not having control over other people. It was easy to let go of the responsibility of the outcome of all events and circumstances. However, admitting powerlessness over people was difficult. The first truth I had to face is that I did think I had power over people. Before recovery I believed I only wanted power over outcomes. I never saw it as controlling people.

For me, this disease is so cunning, baffling and powerful. I use so many ways to dress up my behavior and make it sound nice. Facing the powerlessness over people especially my husband and children was a much more difficult process.

My disease doesn't zero in on just the sexual behavior of myself or others. My disease never sleeps. Most of the time, I have clean behavior with my children. I support them, but really believe I do not attempt to control them. I still have moments of struggle with my husband. Now it is not his sexual addiction that I feel a need to control. At this time I have let go of that. Actually the sexual addiction feels easy to let go of compared to my need to want to control his healing program from his present illness which is diagnosed as ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease.

As my journey continues and God places new and interesting challenges in my path, I am forever in awe of the many areas of my life in which I did and still do have a need for every one of the steps. I especially need step one. I must remember that I am powerless over everyone and every outcome. I continue to be grateful for this program and the steps.

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## Step 2

"Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

One short sentence with so much packed into it. *Came to believe--I have come to believe* in all the steps. My belief in step one was especially supported by the three words, *came to believe*. Each time I have a situation whereby I have a desire to control, I find it impossible to let go of that control until *I came to believe*.

Step two has helped me come to believe that my control issues can be put to better use by letting go and simply supporting my family, friends and others. Step two gives me the belief to allow the insane behaviors that I practiced in the past be used in positive ways through letting go and having a belief that powerless is okay and sanity is possible. Step two makes no exceptions about sanity. This step doesn't say, restored me if by chance I was insane. This step says restored me to sanity.

I must remember my behaviors when I was insane. Remembering the insanity will encourage me to continue enjoying the benefits of a healthy program. It will remind me of the pain, the exhaustion, the stress & shallowness of who I was.

I am grateful that my program offers me the support and promise of a Power that is greater than me, a Power that will assure me the sanity I have received when I allow the step to carry me.

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## Step 3

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

Step 3 simply asks me to make a decision. It never said I had to take action this very minute. I just had to make a decision. I then could savor that decision until I was ready to turn it over to God's care.

I really like the word "care" in this step. This step never tells me I have to let go. It doesn't say I have to wander in darkness and fear. It tells me to give that darkness and fear over to God's care. He will take care of me. I can relax and just allow my program to carry me through.

Each day as I journal, I ask myself if I'm feeling peaceful about my journey. The days when I am not at peace, I ask myself what is different. When I ask that question, I find that I am taking responsibility for someone else's situation (usually a negative situation). That's when I'm not turning all situations over to God's care. When I take the time to journal, I get my focus back on me and find it possible to allow my program to bring peace back into my life.

Trust the steps. Trust the process.

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## **Congratulations!!!!**

We admire your effort. We all know it is difficult and scary to start a new meeting. Yet, we also know it is the best form of honoring step 12. Starting a meeting is a wonderful way to share our experience, strength and hope with others who are still suffering.

As your NSO we are here to support you. Please contact us with your needs and suggestions. Always remember you are not alone. You have a National Organization keeping you in their thoughts and prayers.

THANK YOU for practicing step 12. THANK YOU for your part in passing recovery on to others.

NEW MEETINGS TO ANNOUNCE –  
TUCSON, ARIZONA  
SAN JUAN, P.R.

## **RETREATS**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!!  
UPCOMING "TIME OUT" RECOVERY**

Spring Retreat

Healthy Sexuality

Clarkston, Michigan

March 30, 31 & April 1, 2001

Write to: P.O. Box 502, Mt. Morris, MI  
48458 for more information.

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2001 Eugene, Oregon SAA/COSA Coastal  
Retreat

"As a Result of These Steps"

October 9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 in beautiful

Lincoln City, Oregon

Details to follow

## Retreats Continued

"Even A Good Soul Gets The Blues Now  
and Then"

12 step affirmations & Good Vibrations,  
Christ United Methodist Church,  
Indianapolis, Indiana.

May 5, 2001, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

For further information, you may contact  
Bill S., Workshop Chairman, by phone at  
(317) 783-6264, fax at (317) 783-0064 or e-  
mail at [BuddiesX2@aol.com](mailto:BuddiesX2@aol.com)

## **PHONE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED**

There is an excellent networking of  
COSA members who take turns calling  
into the Minnesota phone line, obtaining  
the messages and returning the calls. It is  
important to note that being a phone  
person doesn't mean you have to receive  
phone calls at all hours of the night. The  
phone volunteers retrieve the messages  
and return the calls at a time that is  
convenient and private for them. No need  
to feel stress about receiving a call while  
putting the children to bed or  
entertaining guests.

Recently two phone volunteers  
have decided they needed to resign from  
their commitment. Bonnie Sue does an  
EXCELLENT job of maintaining  
information for all the phone people. At  
this moment, she needs YOU to consider  
being a phone volunteer. Write to: P.O.  
Box 14537, Minneapolis, MN 55414,  
ATTN: Bonnie Sue.

**THANK YOU!!!!**

## Service Opportunities (from the web)

### \* Telephone Volunteers

The COSA National Phone Line is in need of two new volunteers. These people obtain messages left by newcomers and return their calls, telling them about meetings and offering other information. Money is available to reimburse long-distance calls.

#### Requirements:

\*COSA suggests that NPL volunteers have one year of attending COSA meetings and are currently working a COSA program.

### \*Long-Distance Sponsors

Many newcomers are in areas where there are no meetings. Sponsors are desperately needed to provide support by e-mail, phone, or letter-writing.

Many of these newcomers only need to talk a few times, although some are looking for longer-term support. If you are ready to benefit from sponsoring someone, please take the risk and give it a try.

#### Requirements:

\*Membership in the COSA fellowship, whether as a loner or a meeting attendee

\*Willingness to be available to your sponsee's.

Are you thinking these positions can't help too much? Read on:

Here is a note that came from a person who received about five minutes of a volunteer's time. So little time meant so much to a person in pain, waiting for one of us to reach out and share...."You have no idea how much you made my day. Not only this e-mail, but my packet from NSO came yesterday. I can't tell you how much better I feel. I actually slept w/ it under my pillow last night! There is hope and there is recovery and there is a new life. And I am not alone.

Many thanks for all your 12 step efforts. It means more than I can ever say!"

From another person seeking support...Thank you so much for the quick response. I appreciate all you do for us in recovery. This program has given me back my sanity.

## ON THE ESSENSE OF TIME

It was a hell-like hole I was in. There was not one shred of hope left. I cried. I cried some more. I cried until my tear ducts went on strike and wouldn't produce any more tears. I remember the darkness. There was not one pinhole of light. It was cold in this place too. I remember piling the blankets and afghans on, but I still shuddered and shook in spite of them. The only sounds I heard were the echoes of my own wailing and the occasional blowing of my nose. The sides of this pit were slimy and slippery. I didn't have the strength to crawl of this dank pit and, at the time, I was certain there was no way out of this place. I was convinced I would die there. And it did indeed feel like I was dying.

A year or so before this week-end in April of 1997, after my keen detective skills had uncovered yet another indiscretion committed by my husband, a friend of mine....a psycho-therapist....had suggested that my partner might be a sex addict. My own systems of denial were an effective suit of armor. Addiction??? No way!!!! These behaviors were merely the manifestation of improper potty training or a cold and heartless mother. Never mind the fact that the same behaviors kept rearing their ugly heads over and over and over again. I didn't like how the truth looked, so I didn't want to see the truth. Plus, there was this add-on to the addiction theory that implicated me, of all people, as playing a part in this drama. I would have none of this.

Problem was that none of the other theories and "cures" were working. The therapists were competent. The couple's therapy was effective in uncovering the dynamics of our relationship and our mutual inability to communicate openly and effectively. We worked on establishing intimacy in our marriage, which, by the way, failed miserably.

But the behaviors were still very much alive and my instincts were telling me that another major indiscretion was in the works. I was waiting for the other shoe to drop. Someone was screaming at me that my marriage was over.

I was alone on this particular weekend. My husband was out-of-town. My drive to control and change the lives of others had driven my best friend out of my life. I had no one to talk to. The silence was deafening. I could feel myself sliding deeper and deeper into the pit. Although I had no clue where I was or what I was doing, I had hit bottom and I was very much in touch with just how Powerless I was. At this point in time, I hated being Powerless.

I somehow mustered enough strength to do two things. I got on the internet and located an email support group for friends and family of sex addicts. And I made a telephone call to an organization called COSA and obtained the telephone number of the COSA group nearest to me. Then I subscribed to the email support group and I left a message for the contact person of that COSA group near me. In less than 24 hours, I was connected via email to fifty other individuals whose stories were very similar to mine. What a relief to know I wasn't alone!

I write these words in hopes that those of you out there who are contact people for your COSA groups or are links within COSA's chain of communication will go back to the day you first reached out. Do you remember how alone you felt? Do you remember the hopelessness? Admittedly, my interactions with newcomers from all over the world who tell me it took a week to get a call back or even worse that no one has called them back have motivated me to share. I am keenly aware that we all have our own programs to be concerned with. Many of us have demanding careers and families that require our attention. I know that even working a strong program, I have days when I am in a black funk and service work is not even near the top of my list of things to do. But I feel a strong sense of responsibility to these newcomers because I do remember that weekend in April of 1997 and I am grateful to the newcomers for keeping me in touch with those feelings...painful though they may be. If it had not been for the timely response of the administrator of that email group, I am not sure I would be writing these words I hope will motivate you. Making that connection was akin to someone throwing a ladder down into that pit so that I could begin my ascent to the surface. Because, you see...the COSA group nearest to me never did return my call.

It is my goal and that of our Email Assistant, Jolene M, to respond to inquiries within 24 hours. In all honesty, I don't make goal all the time, but I do my best to respond to the newcomers in a timely fashion. I cannot, in good conscience, allow their pleas for help to languish in my email box. I challenge you to set and meet a similar goal. These newcomers have dug deep and mustered the strength to reach out for the first time. Throw them a life preserver. Turn on the search beacon. Take their hand. Show them the way. They are the future of COSA.

--Diana B.