



2001

Step Four

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

The first time I read this step, I saw 'make an inventory of all the bad things you've done'. That's not what the step says. That's how I interpreted it. Why did I hear it that way?

I believe the word "moral" made it a negative inventory. Every time the word moral or morals was used when I was a young person, it seemed to have something to do with negative morals. It seems moral was only used when it was degrading/negative gossip. I believe the word moral is also connected to stern lectures about my morals and the morally "right" way to live or behave.

At this time, I am privileged to be a participant in an on line step study group. I will be experiencing the steps once again in a deep and intimate group while enjoying yet another level of revelation about myself. I'm beginning to realize, when we get to step four, I will want to really examine the impact the word moral has had on my life.

Moral doesn't have to have a negative meaning. I don't have to look for all the times my morals were not up to another's standards. I don't have to look at just the times my morals didn't fit the standards of society. As I experience step four, it is important that I look at all the good that is within me. It is important that I remember every experience is meant to be an important part of my journey. If I touch others in a positive way while walking that journey, then that will be a benefit to them and me. However, the important part is to remember that the journey is mine.

This step could read---Make an inventory of my life. Then, for me, the word moral would mean that I must be true to myself as I reveal my inventory to myself. I must be morally open and honest with myself. My inventory will reveal the low points in my life. My inventory needs to also reveal the moments in my life when I was pleased with actions I took, important issues I proclaimed or people I supported though simple behaviors like listening or hugging.

Yes, my fourth step stirs up some negative flash backs for me. I pray that I have learned to love myself enough to reveal some positive flashbacks also.

11a

Step Five

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

It sounds simple, yet I found this to be a very difficult step. The first time I completed my fourth step, it was very long. At that time, I interpreted step four as ordering me to list every sin [what I felt was a sin] that I had every done. I had pages and pages and still more pages.

Although it was difficult to write all that down, it was nothing compared to sharing all of that with another person. At that time, I was driving over one hour to meetings.

Consequently, the person I chose to complete my fifth step with, live over one hour away. It was the longest drive I have ever taken. I can earnestly say that the most difficult action that I have taken since beginning my recovery was making that one-hour drive.

Yet, I'm still amazed at the divine order in which these steps were written. One, I admitted powerlessness, Two, I came to believe I could be restored [no doubt I was insane], Three, I learned to turn it over [even whatever the steps were going to reveal to me about me], four, I looked at all that I ever was to that point [of course, then still looking at just the negative]. As I think about it, I realize the intensity of the load I was carrying during that drive that evening. But, the steps are in such divine. The first four prepared me for the place I was now coming to.

I did share my first fifth step that evening, negative as it all was. I floated back home. Saying it out loud was such a wonderful cleansing of my soul and my mind.

As I looked at step five that first time, I wondered why do we have to do this? God already knows. I already know. Why was God and myself included in the admission process. Today, I understand why. God knew yet I needed to say it so it wasn't our secret. I knew, but I had never said so it out loud. By saying it out loud, I broke the silence of my secrets between God, others and me. I love the way the steps continue to carry me through my process.

11a

Step Six

"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

All step six really says is to become ready, entirely ready. This step doesn't say, now that you've completed step five, you must order God to remove all defects. I can spend some time becoming ready.

I can pray. I can meditate. I can continue attending my support group. I can continue listening and experiencing step growth in others. As I continue to allow the steps and healthy recovering people into and surrounding me in my life, I will be opening the way for me to become ready for God to do his work.

Step six is easy. I don't have to make it happen. I simply have to stay open to readiness so God can remove that which I no longer need.

11a

I wish for you...

Comfort on difficult days,
Smiles when sadness intrudes,
Rainbows to follow the clouds,
Laughter to kiss your lips,
Sunsets to warm your heart,
Gentle hugs when spirits sag,
Friendships to brighten your being,
Beauty for your eyes to see,
Confidence for when you doubt,
Faith so that you can believe,
Courage to know yourself,
Patience to accept the truth,
And love to complete your life.

God Bless you!
I asked the Lord to bless you
As I prayed for you today
To guide you and protect you
As you go along your way....

His love is always with you
His promises are true.

You know He will see us through
So when the road you're traveling on
Seems difficult at best,
Be sure to turn over your worries.

And God will do the rest.

“Tradition Seven, “Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

Recent donations to the NSO/COSA

**Tucson, AZ [Sunday Group]-\$20.00
Pasadena, CA [Personal]-\$1.80
Northville, MI [Personal]-\$35.00
Buffalo, NY [Group]-\$208.00
Albany, NY [Group]-\$10.00
Virginia Beach, VA [Friday Friends Grp]-\$15.00**

Sharing from California

This group sends a quarterly donation [always with a note]. I did request permission to share excerpts from those notes. Permission was granted, and then I couldn't locate the notes. I'm sure you have heard the saying, “now that I have it all together, I don't know where I put it”. I think that saying was made for me.

To California, I apologize for the delay in sharing your notes.

From California; “We are happy that our contributions reflect the size of our group and have also allowed us to pay our bills and make a quarterly donation. I personally had never had twelve-step experience so I have been fortunate to have people come into the group, new to COSA, but with recovery in other programs. Our group learns from each other as we go along. I don't recommend having a sex addict in your life, but it has opened doors for me to grow and discover myself in ways I probably never would have. It has brought incredibly wonderful people into my life. Thank you again for all of your support...Please consider our area for a future retreat or conference.”

Editor's note: This group is in or near Costa Mesa. Let's remember to consider them when scheduling a conference. They are an active and willing group.

SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

• Telephone volunteers:

The COSA National Phone line is in need of 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 phone 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 writings. 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).

Service work has been the best growth enhancement for my program. I encourage you to use the tool of service work to enhance your recovery. If you are interested in enhancing your program Write P.O.BOX 14537, Minneapolis, MN 55414 to volunteer for one of the services described or let us know if there is another area you would like to share your talents in.

Words of Encouragement

Dear friends in COSA.

I want to share how grateful I am for the COSA program and for all that it has given me – a life that is fulfilling and joyful and relatively in balance [smile].

Back in November our local COSA groups had a weekend women's retreat that was just *amazing* and I wanted to tell you all a little about it. Here in Southern California our meetings used to be pretty small—usually about five or seven women [sometimes just two or three of us!]. Within the last couple of years our numbers have grown. Our retreat reflected this growing strength and support—we had seventeen women there that weekend!

This was only the second retreat our local group has had, and I think most everyone would agree that it was really wonderful. We played and laughed...we did some prayer and meditation and some recovery reading...we took a long walk and had a lovely Saturday evening dinner together... we did some writing, and we shared a lot. I can't really put into words just how *powerful* it was, but the love among us seemed to radiate!

I felt really nurtured...[to allow myself to be nurtured is truly progress for me]. I learned a lot about my self, and shared about some of my fears and insecurities. I let my women friends see and experience who I really am [also progress for me]. I did some letting go. I learned a lot from the courage of some of the brand-new newcomers who were willing to be there, to trust and to open up. I also appreciated the progress and risk-taking of the other courageous women who have been coming to COSA for a little longer.... I think without exception, we gained strength, faith and courage that weekend.

It was hard in some ways to go our separate ways and re-enter our every day lives after such a weekend of safety, support and openness.... One of the ways we finished up our weekend was to make a list of recovery "tools" or solutions that we could use on a daily basis to help ourselves grow and heal. I thought I would share with you what some of us wrote.

With love and warm regards,
Betsy

Upcoming Retreats:

Indianapolis, Indiana

Topic

"Even A Good Soul Gets The blues Now & Then
12 Step Affirmations & Good Vibrations

May 5, 2001, 8 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

For more information Contact Bill S.

317-783-6264 or fax 317-783-0064

or e-mail BuddiesX2@aol.com

2001 Eugene, Oregon SAA/COSA Costal Retreat

Topic

"As a Result Of These Steps"

October 12th – 14th, 2001

In Beautiful

Lincoln City, Oregon

Read all about after effects of retreats

COSA's First Regional Intergroup

The Cascadia Area COSA Intergroup (CACI) consists of COSA groups and individual members from California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho. The CACI was formed in July of 2000 with four stated goals:

- Networking
- Developing new literature
- Supporting new groups and newcomers
- Sharing experiences of carrying the message

We meet officially two to three times per year at retreats. At our last meeting in October the members elected a chairperson (Tracy M. of Eugene, OR) and a secretary (Dee P. of Portland, OR) and defined the duties of each position. We also voted to have each individual group elect group representatives who would vote for their meetings in future elections or other intergroup decisions. We also established an absentee ballot system for those unable to travel to meetings.

The CACI has now approved a tri-fold pamphlet of frequently asked question called *For the COSA Newcomer*. CACI member groups hand these out to newcomers or include them in newcomer's packets. The pamphlet includes answers to such questions as, "Is there a religious affiliation to COSA?" and, "What is a sponsor and why do I need one?" Our next literature project is to edit and approve a handout that was created at the 1999 Puget Sound Retreat called *What is Recovery*. This handout offers healthy alternatives to the behaviors outlined in the COSA handout *What is Codependency* that comes in the newcomer's packets.

The CACI produces a monthly online newsletter in which intergroup news is reported and individual groups/areas check in. The newsletter keeps us connected to each other and gives us a forum to share our experiences of applying the 12 Traditions, fellowship ideas, great meeting topics or to pose questions and ask for feedback from other groups. It's also a useful tool for getting the word out about retreats and speaker meetings.

We recently spread the word that a very newly formed COSA meeting in British Columbia was looking for long-distance sponsors. So far, two of our members have volunteered to sponsor the B.C. members. (By the way, more sponsors are still needed!)

All COSA's in our area are welcome to join the CACI. Members are automatically added to our emailing list and will receive contact information for the other members. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Cascadia Area COSA Intergroup send an email to CascadiaAreaCOSAIntergroup@yahoo.com. If you do not have access to the Internet, call the CACI Chairperson at 541.338.4457 and leave a detailed message with your name, phone number and address.

Tracy M.
CACI Chairperson

Recovery Tools Thoughts and suggestions for "living in the solution"

.....Exercising, Reading daily *Language of Letting Go*[Melody Beattie], Talking with friends or someone from the group, Spending time with my hobbies, Praying of course.....

.....Say the Serenity Prayer daily, usually several times a day, Pray for God's will on a daily basis, Talk to my sponsor often, almost every day, Journal, Meditate, Read some kind of recovery literature daily[I always carry something with me!], Work the Twelve Steps, Go to meetings-usually 4 or 5 per week, Make gratitude lists, Exercise, Talk to my Higher Power every day.....

.....I wonder if God minds me identifying him as a tool? I don't think so. I talk with God every morning and whenever His Spirit moves me. The beauty He has created in the trees, flowers, and the deep blue sea is my connection to Him. Before I began my recovery journey I didn't believe I had a right to ask God for His help. I didn't feel worthy of His time. That has changed now and I have apologized to Him for not putting more value on the gift of life He gave me. With God's help I am learning how to take good care of me, God's child.....

.....Daily morning pages: Every morning right after I wake up I write three pages of stream of consciousness writing[taken from *The Artist's Way* book by Julie Cameron]. Prayer, talking to God, "conscious contact" on a regular, constant basis taking steps 1-3, Saying the third step prayer-this is part of my daily prayer regimen, Daily contact with program friends-calls, lunch, coffee, email, Meetings-3-4 every week, Take phone calls from program friends and others, Therapy-3 times per month, Focus on embracing my feelings by stopping and listening, Working the steps[reading, writing, sharing on, talking about] "thy will be done" [again & again] my mantra, Listen to program tapes, Read program material, Write["hate"] letters and read them to my sponsor or close program friend-I do this to get in touch with and release my anger and resentments, Daily writing of affirmations, five times each, Tell the truth no matter what, Take service positions at meeting and in Intergroup, Read daily meditation books.

Let Me Go, Set Me Free

Let me go that I may fly in Spacious Beauty of the Skies.
I need to soar where Freedom rests, develop my strength for the Journeys Quest.
To return with wholeness that of my own, In spirit I will have grown.
In flight I will find, Gods love and promises once defined.

Looking at what I have covered, feeling free above that I hover.
Set me free that I may heal, through Gods promise to allow me to feel.
Unable to do this caged up inside, being looked upon with watching eyes.
The song I sing can not be heard trapped inside longing rebirth.

How green the trees, how tall they stand their branches long their roots in land.
In fragrance of the flowers at bloom, fragile are the pedals as life consumes.

I shall return from this spiritual space where you will join me and take your place.
Your hand in mine together we will soar, through gods promised Gracious doors.

But for now set me free that my spirit shall grow as the strength of the tree.
My love is fragrant as the flower scent, sending you Gods promise forever spent.

I will take in comfort as I rest in your love, soaring safely only just above.
But for now I take my flight. To travel in Gods given light.
I hold you close so I can see how your strength set me free.

Kris A

September 11, 2000

26 Reasons Why I Don't Date Guys that Look at Porn

1. Because the porn ends up affecting EVERYTHING
2. Because wearing anything sexy stops being fun and ends up feeling creepy
3. Because the beauty of trees is never objectified and the beauty of women needs to be revered at least as much as trees
4. Because fixated. hypnotized snake eyes overtake your partner in the most inconvenient places and times
5. Because my partner is often not here. he is over there
6. Because lust always took over and real connection became something to pacify me once in awhile
7. Because I become not special to him at many levels and that mirror is hard to take on a daily basis. i.e. he couldn't remember that cute little mole I have on my left shoulder, the shape of my elfin ears, and my little and delicate hands weren't held in wonder as parts particular to me
8. Because after his viewing of the millionth picture, I felt regarded as the 513th concubine
9. Because porn is about low self-esteem, his and mine
10. Because porn is about fear of intimacy
11. Because his secrets ended up becoming my secrets, i.e. "I bet you didn't know my partner is a porn freak."
12. Because when I told him my feelings, I was told I didn't know my feelings or my feelings were incorrect
13. Because using porn is about a deep lack of respect for self and for women
14. Because I was asked to do things I didn't want to do and didn't feel comfortable about doing
15. Because when I said I didn't want to do certain sexual acts, my partner still wanted those acts and his actions and reactions let me know of his dissatisfaction
16. Because I began to feel shame
17. Because his touch increasingly made my skin crawl, my stomach ache, or a tension inside me rise – I felt guarded and couldn't just relax in his arms
18. Because I began to take on his habit of seeing everything through sexually-charged filters
19. Because gratitude can't be maintained
20. Because he wouldn't talk to me openly about it. so our communication became limited
21. Because I began to develop a deep sadness and lethargy
22. Because I began to believe I would never be enough
23. Because life becomes more and more dark and dank
24. Because the porn became more important than anything else. including me
25. Because an altered state of mind is an altered state of mind is an altered state of mind and it doesn't matter what "substance" is used
26. Because when I lived with the porn addict. I lived with active addiction and all of the ramifications

THE COSA-NSO HOME PAGE ON THE

BALANCE

INTERNET IS THERE FOR YOU

CHECK IT OUT AT www.shore.net/~cosa

HERE IS THE CURRENT TABLE OF CONTENTS:

WHAT IS COSA?

HOW DO I KNOW IF COSA IS FOR ME?

GROUP CONTACT INFORMATION

MORE ABOUT COSA

THE TWELVE STEPS OF COSA

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF COSA

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COSA RECOVERY TOOLS

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THE BALANCE, COSA'S NEWSLETTER

CONFERENCES, RETREATS, WORKSHOPS

NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

COSA MEMBERS STORY

ON LINE RESOURCES

"NSO OF COSA WEBSERVANT"

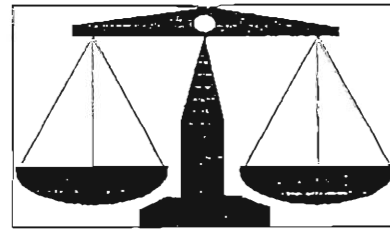
ON LINE SUPPORT GROUP:

cosa@shore.net

NATIONAL COSA PHONE LINE

763-537-6904

NOTE--THE AREA CODE CHANGE FROM 612 TO 763



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I want to take this space to extend a huge THANK YOU to Tracy for filling the many Back Ordered Tape Orders. All of you should have received your tapes by the time you receive this issue.

If you believe you still have tapes ordered that you have not received, please bring it to my attention by writing to the Minnesota Post Office Box.

Again, we of NSO send our regrets for this long delay. We did and still do appreciate your orders and your support.

Ila