



BALANCE



September 2001

Step 9

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

Sometimes I wish this step didn't say 'except when to do so would injure them or others'. Sometimes I wish it just read Made direct amends wherever possible. I believe I have used the exception to scapegoat a situation that I didn't want to work through. When I really use this step to benefit me in my program, I find many ways to make amends without hurting or revealing horrible issues that would hurt others.

Recently I heard the statement, "Amends means Sorry In Action". I believe if I live my amends as sorry in action, those amends will benefit every one on my list. As I think about 'sorry in action', it means that I will take responsibility for my behavior. For me, part of taking responsibility is to make an honest effort to NOT repeat the behavior. When I don't repeat a behavior, I am making amends. That often includes people who would be on the exception list.

I know that sorry in action will work for me if I pray and LISTEN to my Higher Power. He will guide me in living this step in harmony with myself. When I first came into recovery, I really believed I had to list the horrible infraction, face the person or people, spill my truth face to face. Today, I don't see the need to take action with every amend the exact same way. I pray and LISTEN. When I listen, my Higher Power gives me direction. I receive the clear message that many of my amends require sorry in action. When I follow that direction, I find I am often practicing my amends process with everyone, even those who could be injured by a face to face, bare facts amends.

Ila

Step 10

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

Again, I apologize for being redundant, for me sorry in action is part of practicing step 10. I need to take an inventory often. Sometimes that is more than once a day. If I take the time to take an inventory, I see my part in my present situation. When I see my part, it softens me. I'm not so judgmental. I'm not so quick to attack. Before recovery, I constantly practiced 'foot in mouth'. If I would have had a concept of taking an inventory, it would have slowed me down long enough to protect others from my verbal attacks.

Step 10 is a wonderful step. Since this step is included, apparently I wasn't expected to get it right and never do it again. It assures me that I don't have to reach perfection. I will continue to make mistakes. I do have to be willing to practice sorry in action.

Step 10 also wants me to list the positives in my life. I must remember to acknowledge the good that I do. When I get into beating myself up with negative inventories, I stop and take a moment to inventory some positive action. I don't have to do great things that receive public acclaim or cost large amounts of money. Often my list looks something like this: Took a long walk with my dog today. Stopped long enough to enjoy a gorgeous sunset. Smiled and spoke to a stranger. Hugged a hurting friend a little longer than usual.

Step 10 gives me balance in my life if I practice it for all my healthy and unhealthy behaviors.

Ila

"Self-Focus"

I wrote this today in response to a newcomer who I've been communicating with by e-mail. I also received your request for Balance submissions today and thought it might do for that as well. Take what you like and delete the rest! :-)

We have slogans we use in COSA to remind us to take care of ourselves emotionally. "One Day At A Time", "Easy Does It", " and "Just For Today" are a few. It helps us to remember, when we are overwhelmed, that we only have to live this one day. It took me awhile, in the beginning, to take one day at a time. I had to take one hour, or even one minute at a time, to retain my emotional sanity. We can stop obsessing about what the next hour, or tomorrow, or the weekend will bring.

My first sponsor, when I called her complaining that my husband was probably somewhere with another woman and drunk to boot, told me that I was powerless over what he was doing or not doing. She reminded me that I had an 18-month-old son who I should "get down on the floor and play with." I did, and it took my mind off of where my husband was and what he was doing, at least for a little while. For that small amount of time, I had a little sanity. Little incidents like that, along with meetings, phone calls and prayer, compounded over time to show me that I had a choice about what my actions and reactions were going to be. I didn't have to stay totally obsessed with what the sex addict was doing. It was a great relief to finally know that.

Dianne D.

"Thought Worth Remembering"

Here is a little wisdom I actually learned from my sex addict husband and that has worked for me for 5 years -

'Never give more than you are willing to throw away'.

It works for me and I use it every day.

Sherril A.

"Service Work, A Recovery Tool"

Are you looking for a way to be of service to COSA and carry the message of recovery? The Literature Committee needs you! We are looking for COSA members with a little time to give and the willingness to share the experience, strength and hope they have gained in COSA. If you would like to contribute to COSA Literature by writing or editing existing texts, please contact one or both of the Literature Committee Co-Chairs: Lisa - edjacobsdesign@mindspring.com or Tracy - tracy@mail.happens.com or call Tracy at (541) 338-4457. (Please note: The Literature Committee currently communicates through email.)

Also, please check that you have the correct date and email address for the Lincoln City retreat sponsored by Eugene, OR COSA and SAA: October 12-14.
www.it.happens.com/retreat

Thank you so much!
Tracy

"Starting A New Group"

In reality, filling out that registration form, which put me in the loop to get a COSA group started, was a comment on my self-esteem. It was a huge step for me to entertain the thought that I was competent to start a group. It took a lot of encouragement and a tremendous amount of support from my sponsor and members of my recovery circle. After all, I had no 12 Step experience other than working my own program. I had attended a couple other meetings for partners of sex addicts and had a vague concept of how a meeting was suppose to be conducted. But the idea of sitting in a meeting room with even one other human being (...and what if they didn't have any 12 Step experience either!!) was frightening.

But I was at the point in my recovery that I knew I needed face-to-face contact. The email discussion group for friends and family of sex addicts which I belonged to and the email Step study I was participating in were giving me a solid foundation, but I

needed to interact with others like me...in person.

Step one was ordering COSA's "How to Start a Group" packet of information. I asked a couple COSA old timers to send me the formats their home groups used. I was fortunate to have the resources to get both a pager and a post office box, which were devoted to COSA of Brevard business. I also asked a very talented friend to design a web site for COSA of Brevard. I wanted to cover the bases by exposing this new group through all mediums of communication. I used the sample letter in the "How to Start a Group" materials and sent letters out to all local therapists who advertised that they specialized in addiction or co-addiction. My group does this once a year since sexual addiction and co-sex addiction are fairly new in the field of addictions, and professionals in this area are just beginning to recognize that there is a need for treatment. What has worked best for our group in getting the word out is a short blurb in one of the local newspapers. Once a week, they run a "Health Calendar" column where social service and 12 step organizations are invited to list their contact information. This service is provided free of charge and has brought in more newcomers than any other means. And very recently, our county started a "211" service. Anyone can dial 2-1-1 on their telephone and be connected with a service or counselor, which will refer the caller to social service agencies or support groups. The first day this service was in operation, one of the counselors paged me to get contact information for a lady who had called about support for herself. Our group hadn't even registered with the service yet. They found us!!!!!!

And if I had one gift to give those of you who are trying to get a group started, it would be patience. It took nearly a year and a half for COSA of Brevard to become a reality. My emotions ran the gamut during those first six months and then I just Let Go and took comfort in knowing that when it was supposed to happen.... it would happen. And it did and I am reminded of just how grateful I am for COSA and the support this organization has provided to me. It is my lifeline.

-Diana B.

"Journal Notes"

Monday 8-20-01

The other night I dreamed about cleaning wax out of my ears. What a strange thing to dream about. Higher Power, clean out my ears so I can hear what I'm supposed to hear.

Every morning before I sit down at the computer, I pray for my Higher Power to speak through me. I don't know what I'm going to write, to whom or why. So I just say, "Speak through me, Higher Power. Let Your words come through me."

I remember praying about that same prayer whenever I speak at groups. "Higher Power, talk through me. I don't know what people need to hear today. I don't know, but you do. So use me, let me be a channel for You. Let my words be Your words. Thank you."

Two weeks ago today my husband received the call that the company he worked for was closing and he should not come back to work the next morning. In the two little weeks since then, so much has happened. In fact, in one conversation, one hour, one minute, life changed dramatically. He lost his job. Dramatic changes, like an accident, a disclosure, or a death often come abruptly.

When life hands over these radical circumstances... is it a call to wake up? To change? To grow? It seems like you have two choices. Either change or die. You either navigate the storm or go under. I think about seeing the eagle last year when I was ready to stop searching for a new home. As it circled high above us, John said it meant to take a higher view of our situation.

When I take a higher view of my husband losing his job... higher than how are we going to pay the mortgage, will we lose our house... what if... what if... and look instead at the bigger picture, the higher view, I ask myself different questions.

Do you love and respect your spouse? Does he love and respect you? Are you satisfied with your parenting? Do you have meaningful relationships with your family and friends? Are you living in integrity? Within your means? Are your days filled with have-tos or want-tos? Are you practicing gratitude for the big and little things that fill your life? When you like your answers to these questions, your life is in order and you can take on any storm.

It always helps to have the support of other people. I am grateful to Audrey. About two weeks before the company folded, John and I were at church. Audrey handed out one-dollar bills to everyone at the beginning of her message. She talked about all the symbols on the "back" side of the bill and how our founding fathers were thoughtful and deliberate about what was to go on that bill because it would represent what we stood for as a country. She told us to take our dollars home and look at the green side every day. I hung my dollar on the bathroom mirror. Every time I looked at it, I read and reaffirmed... IN GOD WE TRUST.

I can't even guess how many times I've said those words in the last two weeks. Whenever I started down the "what if..." path, I would quietly say to myself, "In God we trust... In God I trust... In God we trust... In God I trust..." like a mantra. If you think something often enough, say something often enough, hear something often enough, you begin to believe it. So, Higher Power, go ahead and clean out my ears. I want to hear just how much I can trust you.

Barb C.

PHONE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED

VOLUNTEERS CALL IN ONCE A WEEK AND RETRIEVE MESSAGES...IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, WRITE NSO-COSA, P O BOX 14537, MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55414. REWARD YOUR RECOVERY THROUGH SERVICE WORK.

Heard at a Meeting

Here are some nuggets of truth and humor I've picked up over the years in COSA meetings . . .

Let Go or Be Dragged.

Expectation is Premeditated Resentment.

Just say, "Oh".

You can't set a boundary and take care of the other person's feelings at the same time.

When you take that first step, you'll either fly or land on solid ground.

The 12 Steps keep me from killing myself; the 12 Traditions keep me from killing you.

Resentment is like drinking poison and then waiting for the other person to die.

When nothing changes, nothing changes.

Not letting go of a character defect is a choice to suffer with it a little longer.

When I'm invested in the outcome, I am operating from fear; when I'm invested in the process, I am operating from love.

Serenity is not the absence of suffering; it is peace in the midst of the storm.

When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.

Pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses understanding.

My best thinking got me here. . . and sometimes my best feelings got me here.

The eye goes blind when it only wants to see "why".

When it hurts bad enough, you'll stop.

I give my best without reference to anyone else. I am the same person at all times.

Let the choices I make today be ones I can live with tomorrow.

Do you have words of wisdom or recovery enlightenment that you'd like to share with COSA's across the country? Send them to the Literature Committee and we'll compile them and print them in the Balance. You can reach me at: tracy@mail.happens.com.

Tracy M.

Literature Committee Co-Chair

"Seventh Tradition Donations"

Tradition Seven, "Every COSA group ought to be full self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Albany, New York Group..\$95.50
Price, Utah-Individual.....\$20.00

Serenity Grp, Hitchcock, TX..\$1.00
Lewiston, ID.-Individual.....\$1.60

Granite Bay, CA-Group.....\$75.00
Winston-Salem, NC.-
Individual.....\$10.00

Lexington, NC Individual.....\$20.00
Individuals from Apple Valley, MN
Grp...\$110.00

Divide, CO.-Individual.....\$10.00
Stamford, CT.-Individual.....\$25.00

Anchorage, AK.-Individual....\$25.00
Tucson, AZ.- Sunday
Group.....\$20.00

St. Paul, MN-Individual.....\$20.00 St.
Paul, MN.- Individual.....\$20.00

Eau Claire, WI.Desert Flowers-
Grp...\$30.00 Tucson, AZ-
Group.....\$10.00

Lockport, NY.-Individual.....\$20.00
Cincinnati, OH.-Individual.....\$50.00

Northville, MI-Individuals..\$115.00
Virginia Beach, VA.-Friday
Friends....\$15.00

Costa Mesa, CA.-Break-A-
Way...\$10.00 Birch Run, MI.-
Individual.....\$65.00

Colmesneil, TX.-Individual....\$20.00
Dallas, TX.-Group.....\$37.00

Greensboro, NC.- Group.....\$7.00
Individuals from Greensboro, NC.
Grp.....\$60.00

Chisago City, MN.-Individual....\$25.00
Brighton, MI.-Group.....\$50.00

Lennon, MI.-Individual.....\$10.00

THANK YOU!!!! We appreciate your generous donations. We appreciate your support.

We are committed to using the dollars as wisely as possible.

Budget & Finance Report**August 2001**

We want to make the most of our resources, so planning how to spend COSA's money is a big responsibility. At our Annual Meeting in May, the National Service Organization (NSO) needed to tighten its belt for the coming year. Last year we spent \$12,421, which was \$5,053 more than we took in. This year we plan to spend \$10,253. We hope that your response to the donations Appeal letter that you received in the last issue will allow us to do this much and even more; so far we have received \$ 280.00. Here is a condensed view of the budget for next year as agreed on in May, with changes that the Board of Trustees made during their August 19 teleconference meeting:

NSO BUDGET FOR 2001-2002 FISCAL YEAR**INCOME**

Literature sales	3,650	
"Balance" Subscriptions	600	
Donations	2,200	
Convention 2002	0	(changed to \$3803 on 8/19)
From Reserves	1,803	(changed to \$0 on 8/19)

("Reserves" is a new income source: we plan to deplete our bank account if necessary to cover basic services.)

TOTAL BUDGETED INCOME: \$8,253 (changed to \$10,253 on 8/19)

EXPENSES

Literature Reproduction/Fulfillment	=	1,519
- postage & handling (350) + printing (500) + medallions (300) + audio tapes (369)		
- last year we spent 1,097 for printing, so our budgeted expense is conservative		
- we are already over-budget for medallions		
Balance Expense (6 issues/year)		
- Editor stipend (600) + postage/printing (1,800) = 2,400		
- our expense is much higher than income because we mail a free copy to each group		
Convention 2002, hotel deposit	0	(changed to \$2,000 on 8/19)
2002 Annual Meeting, Delegate Packet printing/ mailing	200	
National Communications	=	510
- \$300 reimburses some of our hotline volunteers for their long-distance charges		
- \$150 covers our website and e-mail address on the Internet		
- \$60 covers the P.O. box fee plus postage to mail everything to our employee's home		
Part-time employee -- Payroll	2,700	
Employee expenses (Annual Meeting travel, office supplies)	500	
Bank & Corporation fees	24	
NSO Board teleconference meetings (3 meetings)	400	

TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES: \$8,253 (changed to \$10,253 on 8/19)

Some of the items we decided we can't afford this coming year include reimbursement for volunteer expenses on the Literature and Outreach committees; travel reimbursements for Board members to our annual meeting; a midwinter meeting for the Board; and bonding our Treasurer. NSO is required to have an Annual Meeting to conduct business, but in May we couldn't plan for a convention to be held with that meeting next year. We didn't budget for a hotel deposit to host a convention; therefore we couldn't predict any income from it either. We decided that if we are to have a convention, we will need special donations from COSA members to fund it.

On August 19, the Board agreed to host a convention in San Francisco in 2002, side-by-side with the SAA convention. The theory is that if NSO can bring in sufficient funds to cover the deposit, then we can keep the rest of the budget as-is, and if NSO makes enough of a profit, we won't need to deplete the bank account. To-date the NSO has received a pledge of \$500 to put toward a hotel deposit; more is needed.

The Treasurer is Kathy D (TX), the Bookkeeper is Ruth B (NC), and the other Finance Committee members are Ann R (TX) and Bill Y (KY). If you have questions or concerns, please contact Ruth at willing@netpath.net.

We're On The Move!

COSA-NSO home page on the Internet is there for you.
Our Website addresses have changed so please make a note of it.

Website: www.cosa-recovery.org [replaces www.shore.net/~cosa]

E-mail: info@cosa-recovery.org [replaces cosa@shore.net]

Why the switch? The company that provides us with internet service is changing names, and they gave conflicting reports about how long Shore.net would continue to be part of our address. They could have forced an address change on us. Therefore we decided to obtain our own name, separate from the service provider's name. This change honors our Traditions, and lets us keep from having to switch again in the future. It also makes the name easier to use[no ~ symbol].

As always, if you have comments about the contents of the website, please let us know!

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COSA en Espanol [COSA in Spanish]

A COSA volunteer is asking for your help in translating some COSA materials into Spanish. Do you know any COSA members who are fluent in Spanish? Please ask your group if anyone would to help translate. Or better yet, has your group translated anything?

We've had a few requests for Spanish materials in the past, and could potentially carry the message to many more people if they could see what our fellowship is all about.

This project will focus on the Steps, Traditions, and COSA's brochure. A very rough draft will soon be available; we need volunteers to review the translation and provide feedback so we can get it right.

The finished items will be posted on website so Spanish-speaking people can use them. The National Service Organization isn't prepared to print and sell such materials yet, but providing something in Spanish on the Internet would be a starting place.

Please have interested volunteers call, write or e-mail the NSO. Thanks!!

TO CONTACT COSA-NSO:

WRITE: NSO-COSA

P O BOX 14537, MINNEAPOLIS, MN. 55414

NATIONAL COSA PHONE LINE:

763-537-6904

WELCOME

We hope you can feel our welcome. New growth is the key to continuing the recovery process.

The most recent new groups are:

Mississippi River COSA,
MN
Sacramento, CA

Seattle, WA.

Serenity Grp, Hitchcock, TX.

Your are continuing the recovery process. Each time one of us takes a step forward, we pull the entire group forward. As your NSO, we are here to support you. Please contact us with your needs & suggestions.

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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.

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UPCOMING EVENTS MARK YOUR CALENDAR

2001 Eugene, Oregon COSA/ SAA RETREAT
"As a Result of These Steps"

October 12-14, 2001

For more info go to www.EugeneRetreat.com or call Eugene COSA at 541-302-8630

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SAA & COSA overnight Retreat

Asheboro, North Carolina

October 13-14[Saturday noon thru Sunday noon]

For more details write mkzarate@hotmail.com or

Call Melinda at 336-249-4907

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Fall Retreat, Clarkston, MI

October 12-14, 2001,[Feelings & Communications]

For more info: write P.O.BOX 502, Mt Morris, MI 48458