



BALANCE



January 2002

Step 1 in COSA

Though I had had prior experience working Step One in 3 other twelve-step programs, nothing prepared me for the crushing and monumental reality of a first step in COSA. My reaction to discovery of my now ex-husband's sexual addiction, and the agony of having awareness of a more stark reality of my childhood and my family of origin forced upon me was almost more than I was able to bear. These realizations brought me to a consciousness of powerlessness that I was hard pressed to accept. And the unmanageability was all too painfully obvious - mine and is. It's a good thing I had help from people with the kind of experience I knew I was going to need in order to recreate my life. What I have discovered in the seven years since then is that the fuel for other addiction and co addiction started with the wounds of sexual co addiction from my family of origin. At the very heart of those addictions is the rebellion and fear that ruled my life until I found the COSA program in 1994. AA's Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions states that there is only one step we must work with 100% completion and accuracy, and that is Step One. For me, the working of this step opened up a new world of possibilities and served to begin the process of breaking the cycle of co-sexual addiction for the next generation and all those who may find themselves inspired by my story.

Peace, Jen D-A, Colorado

*Don't waste your time on a man/woman, who isn't willing
to waste their time on you.*

Dear Friends:

It is the midst of the holiday season that I write to you, today. This year I was able to help out at the holiday party in my second grader's classroom. I am impressed that there were little children in that one small class who celebrates Chinese New Year, Hanukah, Christmas, Diwali, and Ramadan. Each child got up to present their tradition and the craft we could do related to it. What a treat that was for me in this sometimes overwhelmingly sad season. There are so many labels we humans attach to each other: Muslim, Taliban, American, sex-addict, co-sex-addict for example. At our essence we all need the same things: food, shelter, sleep, and unconditional love. To me it is the last of these that recovery...and this season, at it's best...is about. We know there is a power greater than ourselves and that we are loved by that power. May you carry that with you today: That you are safe and loved.

Yours In Recovery,

Ann

*Just because someone doesn't love you the way you want
them to, doesn't mean they don't love you with all they
have.*

I love hearing about new groups starting! Way to carry the message! I do get a little concerned about "therapists" speaking at what is supposed to be a Twelve-Step meeting. Our Sixth and Eighth Traditions clearly state that a group ought not affiliate with/endorse outside enterprises and that we should remain non-professional. I know that many members have found help through therapy, and there isn't necessarily anything wrong with it, but a Twelve Step meeting is about recovering people sharing their own experience about the Twelve Steps. It's not a place to pitch psychotherapy. We had a therapist-speaker actually handing out her business cards at a workshop once. I know the groups who put together the event meant well, but they didn't know their Traditions. (Today, these same groups read the Traditions at every meeting!) Anyway, I don't expect newcomers to know the importance of the Twelve Traditions, but maybe someone can gently pass on the experience of our predecessors.

From your editor: The person who wrote this wants to hear from other groups. Please send your views and feelings about your group. I have heard some say how healing it was for them to attend a COSA meeting, the place that really addressed their needs. Let us hear from you, topics could be, "How my group functions", "Feeling at home with my COSA group", "The wonder of recovering with a face-to-face group". Those are just a few ideas, you go from there. Send your article to COSA BIZ or mail it to the MN. P.O.BOX. See back page for complete address.

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

Tucson, AZ. - Freedom to Fly - \$100.00  
Tucson, AZ. - Group - \$30.50  
Costa Mesa, CA.- Break Away Grp.- \$21.98  
Costa Mesa, CA.- Break Away Grp.- \$100.00  
Des Moines, IA. - Thurs. Night Grp-\$50.00  
Portage, IN.- Individual - \$12.00  
Louisville, KY, - Friday Grp. - \$125.00  
Callaway, MD. - Individual - \$25.00  
Northville, MI - Individuals - \$40.00  
Northville, MI - Individuals - \$40.00  
Apple Valley, MN. - Wed. Grp. - \$20.00  
Bloomington, MN - Individual - \$25.00  
Minnetonka, MN. - Group - \$10.00      Minnetonka, MN. - Group - \$10.00  
New Prague, MN. - Individual - \$10.00  
St. Paul, MN. - Mon. East St. Paul/Woodbury Grp. - \$15.00  
St Paul, MN, Thurs. Grp - \$20.00  
Portland, OR. - Group - \$16.87  
Dallas, TX. - Group - \$35.50  
Dallas, TX. - Individual - \$46.50  
Houston, TX. - Sunday Night Grp. - \$40.00  
Virginia Beach, VA. Friday Friends - \$20.00  
Custer, WA. - Individual - \$22.80  
Seattle, WA. - Wed. Night Grp. - \$50.00

A huge **THANK YOU** to each of you for your support. As we each donate and step forward with support, the entire organization strengthens and moves forward. You have been helpful in stopping the cycle of codependency.

**A true friend is someone who reaches for your hand and touches your heart.**

Below you will find one persons interpretation of a page from your Newcomer Packet. How do their insights, compare with yours?

#### CODEPENDENCY: LOVING TOO MUCH?

As a person in recovery for the past four years, I have been asked several times about codependency in relationships. One of the most difficult aspects of codependency with the sex addict is admitting our powerlessness over the addict. This continual attempt to effect or control the sex addict renders our lives unmanageable.

Codependency has a serious side effect on the individual as the addiction upon the addict. It is important not to minimize the totality and seriousness of the disease of codependency.

Behaviors that are familiar to the codependent are recognizable and detrimental to both the addict and the codependent themselves. There are several ways in which the codependent enables the addict and progresses in her/his own illness. These include lying about, explaining away, or covering up, the sex addict's behavior.

Delusionary thinking of the codependent increases by making half-hearted efforts to stop the sex abuse, believing promises, "it won't happen again," or by ignoring others reports of the sex addict acting out.

Some clues in recognizing one's codependency might be the constant thinking about the sex addict, looking for clues on where the sex addict has been and for how long, or checking in private journals or with friends of the sexual addict for clues. This is what I call "detective behaviors" or having the "private eye".

Because of the difficulty in admitting our powerlessness over the sex addict, continued attempts to influence the sex addict to quit the acting out escalates. The duration and frequency of these attempts to change or control the sex addict increases the unmanageability in our lives.

Our self-esteem as codependents continually becomes worse. We believe if we just looked differently, or were more intelligent or attractive, we could change the sex addict. We do things to ourselves that are abusive and degrading.

Thus, the unmanageability affects our physical, mental and emotional well-being. We see the influence of our unmanageability in our family and social relationships. Work, school and financial matters are also strained through our addiction to the addict. Through our codependency, we experience loss of memory, insane behaviors, or destructive acts against ourselves or others near us. At times accidents or other dangerous situations produced by our preoccupation with the sex addict, occur.

Our own sense of boundaries, morals or ethics erode as our codependency advances in its own debilitating stages.

Finally, in the progression of our own illness, codependency, our spiritual being, and the essence of who we are, is lost.

We are supported through groups such as COSA to find our personal love, which is, in my opinion, an outgrowth of a spiritual foundation. We are like a slow-growing plant requiring the proper soil, climate and water to stay alive. It takes many years in order to grow to our fullest development.

In order to flourish healthy love we must be rooted in common interests, values and goals. Since we can never change our values to please or control another person, it is virtually impossible for love to grow when we are codependent with someone. If a relationship of love is to grow to its fullest potential, it requires a climate of self-intimacy.

Those who tent to our own garden must be committed in creating and renewing that climate frequently, even when we would rather avoid the effort. Intimacy requires that we become vulnerable, that we drop our defenses and our need to look good, and allow ourselves to be known as we really are.

~~Tom L.

Maybe God wants us to meet a few wrong people before meeting the right one, so that when we finally meet the person, we will know how to be grateful.

"If God is love, I guess I can handle that"

I had a big problem with the "God" thing. I was not agnostic but antagonistic when it came to anything "spiritual." I defiantly insisted that everything could be explained and understood without resorting to unscientific beliefs. I had engaged in grand debates in high school about the existence of God and evolution vs. creation, and anytime someone mentioned God, religion, or anything that smacked of spirituality, my mind slammed shut. I didn't hear anything else that was said, as I was busy constructing arguments against it.

When I read the Twelve Steps and saw God mentioned in half of them, I didn't think this program would work for me. I shared in meetings that I was having trouble with the God stuff, and other members shared that they had had the same problem, but had found a way to make it work for them. A wise member with over ten years of sobriety approached me after one meeting and said, "Don't try to figure it all out. Just keep coming back."

By this time, I had been beaten into a state of reasonableness by my disease, and I had to accept the possibility that maybe I didn't know everything. I had always considered human intelligence (mine in particular) the highest power in the Universe. The idea that there were some things I was incapable of comprehending was a big blow to my ego, but once I got over that, I was able to learn.

People assured me that I could have my own conception of a Power greater than myself - which it didn't have to be the "God" that others had described to me in my youth. Various types had tried to convert me or "save" me, and having rejected their concept of religion, I thought I had rejected the God idea entirely. I had investigated numerous religions over the years and found that they each had something to offer, but I could never completely swallow any of them. I was very relieved to learn that I could develop my own definitions for spiritual terms.

I realized that I had been prejudiced and closed-minded when it came to spiritual matters. Other recovering addicts said that if I just kept an open mind and was willing to let the program work that it would. They told me to "Keep Coming Back," and the love and encouragement they gave me kept me coming back.

One day, after about two months of coming to meetings daily, I was sitting in a meeting, and I started thinking about the phrase "God Is Love." I kept repeating it silently to myself, and when I shared, I said, "If God is Love, I guess I can handle that." I started to cry. This broke the ice for me. Here was something simple and non-threatening. I saw that love was a Power greater than myself that love was what I needed to fill the emptiness inside me that I was trying to fill with various obsessions and behaviors. When I just opened up and let God's love in, I was filled. I knew everything was going to be okay.

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#### WELCOME NEW GROUPS

San Diego, CA                      Plymouth, MI.                      Elkton, SD.  
Houston, TX. [Sunday Night Group]  
Houston, TX. [Thursday Night Group]

May each of you experience the rewards of practicing the 12th step. As your National Service Organization, we are here to support you. Please contact us with your needs and suggestions.

I love you not because of who you are, but because of  
o I am when I am with you.

## **We're On The Move!!**

The COSA-NSO web site on the Internet is moving.  
Please update your links and e-mail address

Web site: [www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org) [replaces  
[www.shore.net/~cosa](http://www.shore.net/~cosa)]

E-mail: [Info@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:Info@cosa-recovery.org) [replaces  
[cosa@shore.net](mailto:cosa@shore.net)]

The old addresses will be discontinued at the end of  
January.

We need volunteers to help spread this message on-line.

The task is:

- find other web sites that have old information about  
COSA.

- write to their webmasters and ask them to update their  
sites.

- also ask them to use the correct snail-mail address and  
phone number for the NSO[since many sites have old  
information].

If you are willing to help, please contact Ruth at  
[willing@netpath.net](mailto:willing@netpath.net)

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Question? How do you present medallions?

The replies are as follows: We present medallions at the  
end of the regular weekly meeting. We simply stop  
fifteen minutes early and recognize the person and that  
persons noticeable recovering qualities. We each speak  
of those qualities as we pass the medallion around the  
room. When all have shared the medallion is handed to  
the person who earned it and that person has a chance to  
say a few words about their experience, strength &  
hope//////// Our group celebrates COSA birthdays. We  
go all out with medallions, small recovery gifts and a  
cake. //////////The group that I attend has a night out  
twice a year. They go to a local restaurant that has a  
little private area. There we have dinner together and  
then present medallions according to time in recovery for  
each person who has one coming. It is a special evening  
together////////I am a person in an area without a meeting.

I work my recovery with my sponsor. I keep track of  
my recovery and order my own medallion. The  
medallion helps me to feel a part of something more.  
When I began to doubt myself, my medallion in my  
purse is a gentle and supportive reminder that I am not  
alone.

To Contact COSA-NSO:  
Write: NSO-COSA,  
P O BOX 14537,  
MINNEAPOLIS, MN,  
55414

NATIONAL COSA  
PHONE LINE:  
763-537-6904  
&&&

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**  
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Clarkston, MI. Retreat  
4/19/02 thru 4/21/02  
Topic: "Control"  
Write: COSA Retreat  
P.O.BOX 502  
Mt. Morris MI 48458

National Convention  
May 4th-27th  
See attached  
flyer... more details in  
future issues!!!