



# BALANCE



February 2002

I attended a 12-step group for a whole year before starting the steps and I listened to those women in that group talk about all their insane behaviors and how they allowed the addicts to control their lives and reactions, and I remember thinking, almost every night that they were talking about me. But the important difference was that they weren't doing those insane behaviors anymore and I naively thought, if I just listened to them and kept going to meetings that eventually I would be healthier just like them. It didn't quite work that way. I did gain a much greater awareness of all the crazy things I was doing and how unhealthy me and my relationships were, but I didn't have a clue about how to change any of those behaviors. This caused my life to be even more chaotic because I had this awareness, but I didn't know how to change it. Then I started the twelve steps with a very enthusiastic partner. She wanted to get healthy so bad that she didn't even entertain excuses not to do step work. If I didn't do my work one week, she just ploughed on ahead without me. As I witnessed her strength and determination, not to mention the incredible growth, I was inspired to do this for myself. The step work, at times, was very tedious and didn't always make sense. The growth was so slow that I often got discouraged and felt like I had made no progress. But we kept trudging along sharing with each other every step of the way. I found it very helpful to share everything with someone because it tended to keep me more honest and humble.

I started to notice that my life wasn't constant chaos anymore, and once in a while I could turn situations around on my own. I started to see glimmers of hope in my life and that motivated me to try harder. I had to swallow my pride and pick up that dreaded phone and ask others for help. That was probably the hardest thing for me. I never felt worthy enough to waste someone else's time with my silly problems and I knew the old saying, that "It was my best thinking that got me here in the first place," so I knew I couldn't do it on my own.

The twelve steps taught me that I came from a dysfunctional family even though we appeared normal on the surface. I was never taught how to relate to people in a healthy way and it was almost forbidden to even think of my needs, much less be able to meet them. The twelve steps helped me to really believe that I was important and deserved to be treated in a loving, respectful way by everyone in my life. The steps also taught me, most importantly, to look at myself in every situation. I was an expert at telling everyone else what they were doing wrong and how they needed to change, but I never looked at myself or the possibility that I was the reason that my life was so insane. I let the addict make me crazy, I let my kids put me in a bad mood, I let other people take advantage of me, and I slowed my recovery by not taking responsibility for my feelings and actions.

I have learned how to figure out what my needs are and then find ways to meet them. I learned that the only person I can change is myself and what I do. Any time I find myself off track or feeling strange I just have to pray for God to show me what I am doing wrong and it works every time.

As I became a little healthier, the lessons I needed to learn seemed to come at the exact moment I needed to experience them, and the biggest obstacle in my path was feeling worthy of God's love and that message was driven home, during a recent spiritual retreat. I finally felt that unconditional love from God, and no one or nothing could have convinced me of that before I was ready to accept it. The twelve steps have really taught me to let go of control and allow God to guide my life. To trust that I will learn from the struggles and get graces from the times of peace and I am finally starting to see the fruit of my work coming through in all my relationships, especially with my husband. I am able to be open and honest with people and be true to myself by not doing anything I don't want to do. I have also wiped the slate clean with all those people I had harmed and feel totally cleansed and ready to start over. And now, if I make a mistake, which I do quite often, I can make an amends right away and get on with life.

It's so nice to be rid of all of the anger, resentment, mistrust, doubt and fear and to know that the obstacles life throws at me, don't have to knock me out of commission for very long. I am very grateful for Cosa, the twelve steps, and my sponsor for never giving up on me, but especially to God for showing me that I'm worth it!

Brenda

“Leaders are like eagles. They don’t flock. You find them one at a time.”

Many years ago I saw this saying in an attorney’s office. I have never forgotten it. It has carried me through some discouraging moments. It seems so often we have the fantasy that some large group[in our case, a COSA group] will bring forth volumes of volunteers, people to assist with service work, monetary donations. I have found myself disappointed when the results I anticipated from numbers didn’t happen. Then I remember the above saying. Did we find one person in that group who was willing to participate in some way? One eagle?

This saying has given me encouragement while working on State and National conferences and conventions. It has given me encouragement while participating in local retreats. One or two people from each group is the eagle stepping away from the flock.

I also think of the eagle when I attend National conferences/conventions. It is a wonderful and healing place to meet and receive experience, strength and hope from the eagles. Usually there are one or two of us from different groups throughout the country. Seldom do we meet an entire group at a national conference.

If you have never attended a National Conference, I really hope you will mark your calendar now for the San Francisco, CA conference/convention in May, 2002. It will be your opportunity to meet the eagles. You will experience first hand those people who have made a decision to

make the steps and recovery a way of life for them.

Someone asked me how I found so many people to call or write to whenever I need to talk. It’s easy to answer. I attended national, state and local events. I sought out those who went through their issues not around them. Those people who are strong enough to go through, not around are the eagles.

Again, sign up today. Send in your registration. You deserve that gift to yourself for your recovery, your growth, your right to a healthy life.

Ila  
~~~~~

#### “Tools”

We of COSA have a piece of literature entitled, “COSA Recovery Tools”. Take a moment to turn to the inside section and you will see that one of the tools is, COSA conferences & retreats— Opportunities to spend more time focused on the COSA program and issues.

The “Tools” brochures reminds us that one of our tools of recovery is the deeper level of sharing we receive at conferences and retreats. It reminds us that recovery does progress at a more solid level when we have the opportunity to focus on ourselves and our issues.

Take the time now to register for the Conference in San Francisco. Practice one of your tools of recovery.

The conferences & retreats have been a most important & vital part of my growth. I know it would have taken me years longer to learn as much as I now know about myself if I had not used this vital tool. I’m hoping to grow with you in San Francisco. Ila

## 2002 COSA National Convention

Plans are underway for this year's national convention, to be held in San Francisco at the gorgeous Hyatt Regency. The planning committee is hard at work scheduling events, workshops and fun fellowship. If you would like to be a part of this wonderful recovery opportunity please contact Tracy at [COSAConvention2002@yahoo.com](mailto:COSAConvention2002@yahoo.com) to volunteer. We need workshop presenters, folks to help with registration and hospitality and lots more.

**More than anything else, though, we need you to attend.** This year's convention is affordable and promises to be a time of powerful recovery. There's nothing like a convention to jump-start your recovery, shore up your foundation of support or expand your recovery family. You will walk away changed. Plan to join us and see for yourself.

From Your "COSA Recovery Tools" brochure: *"COSA conferences and retreats—opportunities to spend more time focused on the COSA program and issues."*

Utilize this tool today. Register for your NSO/COSA National Convention. Grow & Heal when you access this tool!!!

### Tradition Seven:

"Every COSA group ought to be bully self-supporting declining outside contributions."

Surprise, AZ. Individual-\$1.00  
Tucson, AZ. Group-\$40.00  
Granite Bay, CA. Group-\$150.00  
Cosa Of Brevard, FL-\$75.00  
Pensacola, FL Group-\$20.00  
Birch Run, MI. Individ.-\$101.05  
Burton, MI. Individ.-\$10.00  
Vassar, MI. Individ.-\$20.00  
Hemlock, MI.-Individ.-\$50.00  
Clio, MI., Individual-\$50.00  
Flint, MI., Individual-\$10.00  
Flint, MI. Group-\$40.00  
Saginaw, MI. Group-\$50.00  
Northville, MI. Individual-\$80.00  
Mpls., MN. Individual-\$20.00  
Minnetonka, MN. Grp.-\$20.00

MN. Groups-Thurs. St. Paul ,  
Mon., East St. Paul, Wed. Apple  
Valley-\$90.00  
St. Paul, MN. East Side Grp.-\$15.00  
St. Paul, MN. Individual-\$40.00  
Elon, NC.-Individ.-\$3.80  
Greensboro, NC. Triad Grp.-\$20.00  
Dallas, TX. Tues. eve. grp.-\$21.50  
Dallas, TX. Group-\$32.00.  
Colmesneil, TX., Individ.-\$365.00  
Houston, TX, Intergroup-\$50.00  
Virginia Beach, Fri. Friends-\$15.00  
Morgantown, WV. Individ.-\$10.00  
Desert Flowers, WI. Grp.-\$30.00  
Madison, WI Group-\$50.00

On behalf of Arnold D., I would like to thank each of you who donated in his memory. Arnold believed in 12 step recovery. He supported the COSA program with the same sincerity as the SAA program. \$295.00 of the above traditions were sent in his memory. His wish would definitely be that we use the funds to continue 12 step recovery.

## **"Codependent-With or Without a Sex Addict in my Life"**

January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2002, the sex addict who brought me face to face with my codependency, left my life through his death. Am I still a codependent? YES...Is step work & support group attendance still a necessary part of my journey? YES. I was amazed at the number of people[some support grp. people]who asked if I would be continuing my recovery now that my husband was gone. It would never enter my mind to leave recovery. Sex addiction brought me to this program. Sex addiction is not the reason I stayed in program. I stayed because my eyes were opened to my disease...codependency...codependency to everything, my sex addict husband, my children [dysfunctional because of my life style], my community, my family of origin, and my boss.

I believe I have progressed in so many positive ways in my program, however losing the sex addict did not heal me. It showed me another level of codependency. Now, I have only me to deal with. My decisions will be entirely my responsibility. Somehow, I still managed to lay some part of my decisions on him when he was here with me.

I will continue to enjoy the journey, to discover who I am. I mean who I really am. To experience that discovery, I will most certainly need the guidance of a solid step program and supportive groups.

Ila

---

---

To Contact COSA-NSO:

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

NATIONAL COSA PHONE LINE:

763-537-6904

---

---

As you have probably realized by now, much of our focus in this issue has been on your COSA Recovery Tools brochure.

Our first tool listed is Meetings—COSA members gathering in a program of recovery; also COSA step study group meetings; other Twelve Step group meetings may be useful to increase frequency. Members give and receive support, work the steps, and share experience, strength and hope in a safe environment.

We welcome our new groups. You are now practicing one of the tools. With every new group that forms, we all step forward in our bond of recovery.

WELCOME!!!

Destin FL

Syracuse, NY

~~~~~

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.

&&&

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

MARK YOUR

CALENDAR

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 24th-27th

See attached

flyer...more details in  
future issues!!!