

# Balance

Newsletter of the National Service Organization of COSA

September-October 2002

Step Nine  
Step Ten – A Way of Life  
2003 COSA National Convention  
Heard at a Meeting  
"Get a Life" in COSA  
Remember  
Twelve Promises of COSA  
and more ...

## Step Nine

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

With the guidance of our Higher Power and sponsor, we also make direct amends to others when appropriate. This may include a letter written to them, a verbal communication, meeting face to face or however you determine an appropriate amends.

Making amends to ourselves means changing the ways we treat ourselves and developing new practices in our daily lives. Here are some suggestions for self amends:

- \* Attending meetings and other nurturing support groups
- \* Exercising and healthful practices
- \* Practising daily prayer and meditation
- \* Choosing only kind, healthy and respectful people with whom to be in a relationship
- \* Following your dreams and passions

— from the COSA Resource Guide

## Step Ten – A Way of Life

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

The 10th Step is one of those tools that I use daily ... actually nightly. Whenever I am ready to fall asleep, I take a moment to review my day. What am I grateful for? What was left incomplete? Where might I need to make amends?

As a COSA and a Food Addict, I learned early in my recovery the necessity of taking inventory regularly. Throwing up my food or over-eating was not an option, and my sponsor at that time said "Resentments can grow into our 'acting out' so a daily inventory must be done! When you need to make amends, make them immediately!" Today, I appreciate that 'Taking Personal Inventory' also means acknowledging my accomplishments, reflecting on my recovery and connecting with myself and my Higher Power to stay centered and prayful in my behavior. Sometimes 'promptly admitting it' means realizing I've been too hard on myself and nurturing care is in order.

I imagine myself doing this step for a long, long, time.

— Sally B.

## WELCOME NEW GROUPS

Miami, FL  
 Tampa, FL  
 Louisville, KY (Tuesday)  
 Virginia Beach, VA (Wed pm Hope)  
 Hampton, VA  
 Clifton Heights, PA  
 Appleton, WI

## Letters

*I woke up this morning to the most wonderful gift I have ever received. I had a response to my request for support.*

*When I reached out, I really expected nothing back. I was so filled with hopelessness. That response from you gave me so much hope.*

*There is no way to express my gratefulness that you are all out there caring about me.*

*I have made the phone call. I will be going to my first support group this week. I'm scared, but I know I need to go.*

*I just wanted to thank you for doing all the work you must be doing to make a support meeting possible for people like me.*

*There was a newsletter in the packet I received. You can print this letter in your newsletter because I want everyone to know that you all saved my life. I really believe you did. Everyday, I have wanted to die. Today, I don't want to. I want to live. I want my life to get better.*

— J.T.

## How to Contact Us (NSO COSA)

NSO COSA  
 P.O.Box 14537  
 Minneapolis, MN 55414

1-763-537-6904

info@cosa-recovery.org  
<http://www.cosa-recovery.org>

## 2003 COSA National Convention

Plans are already well underway for COSA's next national gathering, to be held Memorial Day weekend in Portland, Oregon. Plan to join us May 23rd-26th for an awesome time of sharing and fellowship. Meet COSAs from all over the country; see old friends and make some new ones. You can look forward to meetings, speakers, workshops and some silly fun!

Do you have experience, strength and hope to share with your COSA brothers and sisters? We are in need of workshop presenters for the convention. Contact Simone at sammymac@earthlink.net or 503-525-9566. Get involved! Service work makes your recovery powerful.

Looking forward to seeing you in 2003!

— Your convention planning committee



## Tradition Seven

*"Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting declining outside contributions"*

Tucson, AZ. Sunday Grp-\$100.00  
 COSA of Tucson,AZ-\$10.50  
 Brookfield, CT.-Group-\$10.00  
 Ann Arbor, MI Group-\$50.00  
 Birch Run, MI.-Individual-\$40.00  
 Apple Valley, MN-Group-\$20.00  
 Minneapolis, MN.-Group-\$20.00  
 St Paul, MN.Thurs 5:45 Grp-\$30.00  
 Philadelphia, PA-Individual-\$14.60  
 Dallas, TX Group-\$42.50  
 Whitehouse, TX-Group-\$10.00  
 Virginia Beach, VA-Friday Friends-\$20.00  
 Costa Mesa, CA..Group...\$19.40  
 Tampa, FL, Group...\$50.00  
 Northville, MI...individual....\$400.00  
 Portland, OR...Cosa Courage....\$40.00  
 Houston, TX...Tues. Noon....\$25.00

## 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.

*Just say, "Oh."*

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.

Integrity with myself generates trust of others.

How I come to understand God is not nearly as important as knowing that God understands me.

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

— Tracy M.

## Poem

*Like a wound allowed to go too long unattended.*

*The poison toxins building under the seemingly still surface.*

*Threatening to invade and destroy the whole being.*

*That is what it is like keeping this devastating secret inside.*

*No one you feel you can talk to without ridicule.*

*No one that will just let you give a voice to your feelings.*

*The pain grows and becomes more and more intense.*

*No longer localized, it is invading your entire being.*

*The shame only intensifies it.*

*Now becoming reclusive....*

*Afraid you may say something that will let out this secret.*

*The one you so closely have guarded behind your shame.*

*And one day, you find that special place,  
Where you can give a voice to your feelings,  
A voice to your pain.*

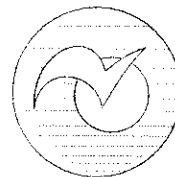
*There are others like you that will listen,  
And also have a need to give a voice to feelings of their own.*

*A place where no one gives advice or is critical of your choices.*

*A place you can work on healing from the inside out.*

*I have found that place and it is COSA.*

— Judi K. 7/10/02



## "Get a Life" in COSA

I came to COSA just a half-step up from bottom. In 1987, I put myself into an Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency in-patient treatment center. (I was the only Co-Dependent there but they accepted me into treatment.) I didn't know what else to do. I had become MASSIVELY suicidal and this was inconsistent with my spiritual belief that suicide is the worst thing that a soul can do.

*"... somehow I was guilty for everything and responsible for everything ..."*

Nevertheless, I knew I could not go on the way I was — something had to change. I had to have some answers — I could no longer bear the hopelessness and emotional pain I felt. After three weeks, I was still too fragile to face my husband, my job, and the outside world. It was a mutual agreement for me to extend my stay one more week.

About two years previous to this, I had enrolled in a class on Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency in conjunction with my Junior High Teaching position. During the class I realized that my youngest son (23 yrs old at that time) is an alcoholic. I somehow knew that confronting and yelling would not help — I needed more information. So I took all the offered classes on the subject. At that point, when I felt I was ready to talk to him about it, I gently confronted him. He became verbally abusive to me for the first time in his adult life, and I fell apart. My late stage co-dependency, (in it's belief that I had to do something to fix, to rescue, and make everything OK because somehow I was guilty for everything and responsible for everything) hit the cement wall of immovable addiction. The next day I made arrangements to be admitted to Sundown M Ranch at Selah, Washington. I couldn't stop weeping and the very sick, codependent part of me wanted to die. ⇒

About 3 months out of the treatment center I discovered my husband is a sex addict. I had previously been introduced to "Out of the Shadows" when someone close to me had to deal with sex addiction in a family member. But I didn't put it all together about the addiction closer home. (Do they call it denial?) After the treatment center, I was in co-dependent group therapy, and prescribed Al-Anon meetings, so I had a support system. But when I was rudely awakened to the fact of my husband's sexual addiction, I was DEVASTATED!! But because of the guilt and shame I felt about the whole issue, I could not talk to anyone about the sex stuff.

I wisely chose to seek an individual counselor. I continued with therapy, group therapy and Al-Anon. My counselor moved, so there was no longer support for the "real deal" stuff, but I kept up with al-anon. I tried to get info about sexual addiction recovery groups to no avail — everyone I called in Minnesota, California and Washington State seemed to be the wrong number or an angry wife who had no information for me. I knew I needed help about the "real deal" stuff. I waited three months to see yet another counselor. He confronted me with the truth about sex addiction, but I was too fragile to handle his blunt style so I didn't go back to him. THE GOOD PART!!!! He told me about COSA which was meeting every Saturday night in his office building.

IT WAS A LIFELINE!!!!!! Every day I felt as if I couldn't wait for Saturday to come and I could go to my COSA meeting and bleed off some of this "pressure-cooker-like" painful sex stuff that was killing me.

That was about 12 years ago and I have rarely missed a meeting since. I know in my heart, that without COSA, I would have died by now. COSA has extended my life and because of COSA, I now know what it's like to "Get a Life"!!

— JoAn D.

## Remember

She walks in light, she is butterfly moon  
 She is the wind in the storm  
 She is the current of a wave on the sea  
 A fabric that can never be torn

She is the beauty of a Montana sky  
 She is the clouds and the rain  
 She is the substance in the light of the sun  
 The sweetness of a sparrow's refrain

Everything about her  
 Like a dream that I forgot  
 Everything about her  
 Everything that I am not

Her heart wide open, she walks into the night  
 Courage conquering fear  
 She speaks her wisdom with conviction and  
 love  
 Her truth is always present and clear

Everything about her  
 Shows me what I want for me  
 Everything about her  
 Everything I long to be

Everything about her  
 Slowly I begin to see

Everything about her  
 Could it be that she is me?

Dance at the fire of fear's encampment. Release doubt to the winds of change. Listen to your body—it will reveal your ancient wisdom. Rest in the knowing you are One with All. Follow your own path. Reap the full benefit of Now before you ask for change. Your needs are your own possession. Sink your toes deep into sacred ground and become one with the Earth Mother. Do not fear the Truth that lies within. Laughter is your weapon against shame and doubt.

You are Light.  
 Remember, Remember, Remember.

I am awakening, my Soul is alive  
 Ego consumed in the flame  
 I am the picture of a satisfied mind  
 She and I are One in the same

Everything about her  
 Believing now that I can  
 Everything about her  
 Everything that I am

— Tracy M.

## Prayer

Prayer is the one essential biggest gift that I have received from Recovery. My prayer life is how I start, end and make it through each day. Even when things are pretty crummy in my personal relationships, I can feel God's presence guiding and moving me along. And it feels so wonderful to be able to pray anywhere, not just in a place of worship but also in the outdoors, in the car, in the mall, in the courtroom, in the hospital, in a very noisy place, in a very quiet place. God can hear us wherever we are. In spite of my pain and grief, I feel joy in knowing that God is at my side and front and back and inside and outside of me, and I pray the same for you.

— Paula R.

## The Balance Needs YOU

Please, sit down now and write something. It doesn't have to be long. It doesn't have to be perfect or even dazzling. Think of the last insight you had and write about it. Or remember the last time you felt really good about your sharing in a meeting, write it down and share it with the rest of us. Write about what you've gotten out of service work. Or what you learned from your first sponsor. Just do it. Now. Then email it to me (I can read just about anything). Or draw something. It would be wonderful to have some small sketches. Or a cartoon! Perhaps you already HAVE something to share. Go for it!

— Burnet O. ([burneto@earthlink.net](mailto:burneto@earthlink.net))

## **Twelve Promises of COSA**

We know from our own commitment to recover and our experience in using these tools, that our lives will be transformed. We will begin to experience these promises and see these miracles come true.

*Having had a Spiritual awakening as a result of working our COSA 12 step program,*

*We will know a new freedom, and we will experience joyful living.*

*We will fully embrace our past and see how wisdom and maturity grew out of our pain and addictive behavior.*

*We will know peace, serenity and a genuine connection to ourselves and others.*

*We will share our experience to make a difference in the lives of others.*

*Our lives will be purposeful, and we will grow in self-esteem and self appreciation.*

*We will gain a healthy interest in our own lives and give to others from a place of fullness within.*

*Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change.*

*We will welcome prosperity in all areas of our lives.*

*We will grow to trust ourselves and learn how to choose trustworthy people.*

*A healthy sense of fear will guide us in unsafe situations, and our self-confidence will grow.*

*We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.*

*We will suddenly realize that our Higher Power is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*

*COSA gratefully acknowledges Alcoholics Anonymous for the AA Promises, upon which our COSA Promises were created.*

### **COSA Promises**

These promises were taken from the **COSA Resource Guide**, which was provisionally accepted at our Annual Meeting this year in San Francisco. COSA as an organization has not previously had officially adopted Promises, although many of our meetings have borrowed the beautiful Promises from the **AA Big Book** (pages 83-84).

Even though I participated in many of the meetings which were held to write the **COSA Resource Guide**, I missed the sessions in which these COSA Promises were devised. When I asked someone what I had missed

and heard that a new set of Promises had been written, I am embarrassed to say that I freaked out, "No! No! We can't touch the Promises! I love the Promises!"

However, once I read these COSA Promises, I realized how wrong my first reaction had been. Now I love our COSA Promises even more than the familiar AA Promises. They are positive, and they relate more closely to my COSA recovery experience. I saw that my first reaction had been one of fear and mistrust — my old disease rearing it's ugly head — rather than a more recovered reaction of openness to wonderful new surprises.

—Burnet O.