

Balance

Newsletter of the National Service Organization of COSA



Volume 2, issue 2

September—October 2005

HOW MUCH DOES A CUP OF WATER WEIGH?

Answer: It depends on how long we hold it!!! A few months ago while doing physical therapy, I read the above question in the therapy room. I couldn't stop thinking about it. When I arrived home I knew I needed to journal about that thought. How much does my glass of water weigh? My glass of water doesn't weigh much if I don't hold it too long. However if that glass of water is just six ounces and I am forced to hold it all day without setting it down, my arm will throb, my hand will hurt and my fingers will cramp. I wonder what else I am holding too long. My little grudges seem so insignificant. My resentments...I can just ignore them. My problems that I don't take the time to pray and meditate upon, but decide to ignore. They all seem small...six ounces or less....yet....if I don't confront them, discuss them, talk about them to my sponsor, at my meeting, journal about them, pray about them and then release them, I wonder how much they increase in weight. When I hang on to that six ounce glass of resentment, worry, anger, fear or any other negative feeling and refuse to let it go, my glass will become too heavy. It will make my arm and hand hurt. It will make my entire body sick. Today, I pledge to remember my glass of water. I will think about the stresses I carry today. I will make a commitment to deal with them so I can set my glass down. I will free up my physical, spiritual and emotional self so I can let go of the pain. Yes, even six ounces of denial is more than I can carry. I will then focus on my physical recovery. I will focus on my spiritual life. I will focus on my emotional healing. I will because my hands will be freed of that glass of water/denial. How much does your glass weigh today? ~Ila

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Historically Speaking....Our plan continues...

I am still on my "Clutter Crusade" however I haven't discovered more newsletters. Does anyone out there in COSA Recovery Land know when the first issue came out?

Louisville, KY....you were a part of that first issue. We'd like to hear from you if you can add information to our history.

As we mentioned in the last issue, we can no longer justify the debit we are creating with our newsletter, yet we believe the newsletter is an important communication tool. This article is sim-

ply our reminder that the newsletter price will be raised to \$24.00. Please remember to talk to your group and send in your submission for your newsletter to continue.

There will no longer be free issues to the groups. All issues will be on subscription basis only.

My thought for the day...."I seldom regret talking too little, but very often regret talking too much. I will listen more and feel my healing as I listen."
Ila

7th Traditions—Groups					
Costa Mesa, CA	100.00	Apple Valley, MN	50.00	7th Traditions~ Individual Friendwood, TX 10.55 Edina, MN 50.00	
Eau Claire, WI	30.00	Minnetonka, MN	60.00		
Dessert Flowers		East Bay, CA	113.00		
Dallas, TX	30.00	East Bay CoSA Monday Night Women			
Houston, TX	44.00	Baton Rouge, LA	50.00		
Sunday PM		Tuesday Night Getting It Together Group			
St. Paul, MN	50.00	Lakewood, WA	25.00		
Thurs. 5:45 Gratitude		Indianapolis, IN	24.30		
San Antonio, TX	33.00	Wed Night Methodist			
Precious COSA's Tues.					

Contact the National Service Organization of COSA

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REMEMBERING SHARON P.



September 07, 2005 5:10 PM From Joey Z., our NSO Vice-Chair;

I just received word from my friend Carol Ann that Sharon P from Slidell passed away on August 30th. Sharon P was on the Masks Off Convention Committee. Early this year, she found out she was going to need extensive surgery on her spine and the first thing she asked the doctor was whether or not she would be able to fulfill her responsibility to the Convention. That was just the kind of person she was. She was in an electric wheelchair during the convention, but that did not stop her from working the registration table.

She was a member of COSA's online message list, where she performed service as a meeting chair and secretary; her username was "rosemilly." She worked her program and all of us grew from her shares. She had a huge heart. She will be missed.

This is from Paul P., Sharon's husband.

Joey, I spoke to Carol Ann for a long time on the phone yesterday and was able to share with her more details about Sharon's passing. She actually died on Monday August 29th as hurricane Katrina was passing over New Orleans. She had been in one hospital or another since June 12th and had been fighting an antibiotic resistant bacterial infection in her lungs most of the time. She gradually became weaker & weaker and the infection flared up again and she went into multi organ failure and passed away quietly and gently while I held her in my arms.

Thank you for informing the COSA organization about Sharon's passing. I know there are so many people who appreciated Sharon for who she was, a very caring and non-judgmental person who always wanted to help others with their problems. No one will miss her more than me.

This is from Carol Ann R.

I joined COSA in April of 2004 - the same month my partner's grandfather was diagnosed with lung cancer. We traveled back and forth from Houston to Slidell, LA almost every weekend to care for both of his grandparents. I had met Sharon P., a COSA from Slidell, for only a few seconds at the 2004 Convention in May, so when I called her a week later I was prepared for her to be apprehensive of me. Far from hesitating, she gladly invited me to meet with her at her house whenever I was in town. My time with her made those trips somehow lighter and more bearable.

I was struck time and again by her candor and her humor. For instance, I sent her an invitation to a housewarming party in Houston. She told her husband that she wanted to go, but he said he would probably be too busy - so she decided go by herself. She said it was remarkable how fast his schedule cleared up after that!

Actually, we talked very little about the addicts in our lives. Instead we talked about loved ones we had lost to cancer, healing from our fears, our changing views of ourselves in recovery, God, and our families. I will miss her very much, but I am grateful she is no longer in pain. She demonstrated by the way she lived - and even as she passed away - that "All Is Well."

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

In Step Eight, willingness came to me in a blanket of forgiveness. In the process of my eighth Step, my impatience would tell me, "OK come on, let's go make some amends already!" Now having been blessed by willingness, I miss the quiet reflection of that step. Another struggle I have with this step is that my insecurity and perfectionism come up. Oh, what, again? Am I surprised??? My pride says, I can just make a living amends to everyone, that's good enough. My fear says, how can I guarantee that I'll never hurt anyone again? I need to discuss these excuses with my sponsor and my home group. I find that actually making amends takes consistent effort and focus. It's not about repentance so much any more; now it's about change.

I find that I don't always know what making the amends will look like. I talked a little about this before, in a more general way that helped me find real willingness. Now I look at the words, and ask, "How can I amend my behavior? How can I mend my ways? How can I mend the harm done? How can I make it up? What is my part in restoring mutual respect and accountability? What specific actions or attitudes need my follow-through? I surrender once again to my need for support. I don't forget to include amends to myself. I risk trust in the process. I feel the fear and excitement and discipline of cleaning up my side of the

street. I stay close to my supports as my integrity matures.

STEP TEN: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

By now, I have shed piles of old feelings and attitudes, faced my anger, cried buckets of old grief, seen the bottom of my fears. I released a ton of shame, I found a way out. I traded in my armoring for more functional internal boundaries. I learned to contain myself and to let it out safely. This is another Step I balked at. I remembered how it had soothed my fear in Step Nine, but my excuses will still try anything at times.

My co-addictive thinking told me I didn't have to do this step, because when I was well, I'd be perfect. It said, when I was well, I'd be able to live in a fantasy world again and it wouldn't harm me. I told my disease to move down to the end of the table and shut up! And we laughed about it in my home group.

Now that I'm not so hard on myself, sometimes I laugh when I make a mistake!

My recovery tells me, Life is for Learning!

~~Written by a COSA member who
chooses to remain anonymous~~

Literature for Consideration

Here are the next three of the extended readings on our Traditions that are up for consideration as approved literature this year. Please email all suggested changes to: COSAcopy@yahoo.com

TRADITION FOUR: Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or COSA as a whole.

In COSA each group can have its own identity. Implicit in this independence is the responsibility for the group to conduct itself so that it in no way injures COSA as a whole. This tradition parallels the freedom and responsibility we can acquire in our own lives through COSA. We learn to govern ourselves and not be controlled or confined by outside forces or other people, whether it is our obsession with sexual acting out or any other irrational or destructive condition or person. Working the program gives us freedom, especially moral independence and self-reliance: To gain freedom means to be released from bondage and oppression. Through a change in our attitude we can throw off our subservience, our unnecessary guilt and worries, our dependencies.

Yet, if we attempt to be totally self-sufficient and self-contained, we can become so separate we no longer learn and develop through contact with others. If we don't reach out, particularly to our COSA friends, we lose the nurturing and the healing love of the group and deprive ourselves of the opportunity to give to others. Isolation is not the answer.

Just as groups can wither and die if they lose touch with the fundamentals of COSA, the steps and traditions, we diminish ourselves if we don't keep close to something other than ourselves-our sponsor, our group, our Higher Power. Cutting ourselves off from the greater whole impoverishes us.

Through practicing this tradition we can find the proper balance -both in the program and in our lives- between freedom and responsibility.

TRADITION FIVE: Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to those who still suffer. We do this by practicing the Twelve Steps ourselves.

We've all heard of the jack-of-all-trades and master of none. Tradition Five saves us from his plight.

By clearly defining our single purpose, we know we are to direct our efforts to the families of addicts. This channeling of our energies is a limitation in one sense. We are told not to take on and try to cure all the problems of the world, whether they are drug abuse, physical abuse, overeating, financial problems, religious concerns, or whatever. COSA is not a smorgasbord of self-help.

We have a program in COSA that addresses itself to one problem: Sexual Addiction, specifically as the families and friends of addicts are affected. We have a common bond that ties us to each other and to the group-our relationship to a sex addict; we have suffered in common. Since COSA ideas are based on philosophy and teach individuals to help themselves with the help of their Higher Power, they can also be applied to other areas in our lives. But in COSA our focus remains clearly delineated. That limitation is our strength. Our efforts will not be diluted or deflected. This limitation is the basis of our unity.

Tradition Five also advises us how to carry out this purpose. We don't need to get involved with therapies, dogma, scientific theories, psychological approaches. We can very simply and directly practice the Twelve Steps, try to understand ourselves, and give comfort to other families and friends of sex addicts.

By appreciating the bounds of our program and working intensively within them, we can hope to accomplish some good and keep our own lives manageable.

TRADITION SIX: A COSA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the COSA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Tradition Six speaks of a spiritual aim. Before COSA, few of us were aware that this could be the central point of our life. When we were in the throes of trying to cope with the problem of sexual addiction, many of us were desperate for money or, if we did have it, we were busily accumulating material things we thought could make us happy. We also acted out roles as we thought they should be played, without recognizing our genuine needs and feelings.

COSA helped us to evaluate what was important in our lives. It gave us the goal of serenity and the aim to help others who have been troubled by the problem of addiction in their families. We can lose that peace and joy if we should again become overly concerned with problems of money, property, or prestige.

Each COSA group was also founded to help members find this serenity. If the group's treasury grows too big, if meeting hall problems loom too large, if one member or a clique becomes overbearing, the spiritual aim is lost. When the group becomes entangled or identified with any outside enterprise, no matter how worthy, the central goal of the program -to help families of sex addicts through the COSA program- becomes distorted.

In our groups, as in our private lives, if we focus on our spiritual improvement -that is, on intangible, desirable qualities- we will find balance.

Email comments to: COSAcopy@yahoo.com

DRAFT COPY FOR FELLOWSHIP-WIDE 90-DAY REVIEW