



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA



Winter Issue




Jan ~ Feb 06

First Wobbly Step - 2003 (excerpts)

*We admitted we were powerless over compulsive sexual behavior—
that our lives had become unmanageable.*

*“We”
“admitted”
“we were”
“powerless”
“compulsive sexual behavior”
“that our lives”
“had become”
“unmanageable”*



*I am not alone
I can take an honest look
My past is my past
I couldn't say no
My other couldn't say no either
Others like me have lived this & survived
The past is not the future
I allowed the wounds to fester*

My beginning was with an open heart, yearning to learn, to be filled, and to be loved.

My spirit was looking for my purpose, my home, and my completeness.

My mind was innocent and bright; ready for anything.

I was untested and the future was full of hope and joy.

I entered a damaged world with caregivers crippled by wounds to their hearts and to their spirits.

Loving parents who themselves were not whole but burdened.

A sibling who felt abandoned and rebelled against her abrasions, her anguish.

Friends and lovers who suppressed and suffered their sorrow in silence, and I learned to be alone.

My heart became covered with fissures, impact cracks, pitted from unexpected pain.

I coped by closing my heart, losing my spirit, losing my hope, becoming a victim.

I hid behind compliance, become what others seem to want; there was no self.

I was aware of the depth of the damage but was unable to repair it.

- * When four, I learned: boys & girls are different, that's bad; don't touch, let others touch or show; don't ask, tell, or feel.
- * At six, don't be angry, ever. At eight, I can't do math, ever. At ten, I am awkward, forever. I hated myself and ran from me.
- * When twelve, I learned he *will* take what he wants. His sister says, "That's normal." Love is not romance but rough and scary.
- * Junior High trained me "don't dominate the conversation;" do anything to be accepted; Control means don't feel.
- * High School informed me he is gentle so it must be love. This week he loves me but not last

(Continued on page 2)

In this issue:

- Indianapolis to be site of 2006 COSA convention
- COSA members sending more loving thoughts to us all!
- 1st & 2nd Steps
- Spring Retreat in Michigan

In every Issue:

- 7th Traditions
- Literature Order form



Balance

Thank You

7th Traditions Groups

Mesa, AZ "Stepping into Recovery" 25.00
 Costa Mesa, CA Wed. Night Group 13.75
 San Francisco, CA Saturday COSA 100.00
 San Luis Obispo, CA 50.00
 South Bend, IN 25.00
 N. Mankato, MN 15.00
 St Cloud, MN 20.00
 Maryland Heights, MO 50.00
 Dallas, TX 33.00
 Houston, TX Area Intergroup 52.00
 Houston, TX Thurs Group 20.00
 San Antonio, TX Precious COSAs 18.00



7th Traditions Individual

Winona, MN 6.45
 Price, Utah 26.00

(First Wobbly Step, Continued from page 1)

week. Love is confusing.

- * In college I believed I was almost but not quite beautiful. If it is love, there *must* be sex. Love is when it's expedient.

Struggling with faulty illusions, I saw myself in many worlds and searched for my own world.

Marriage is a new beginning; but doesn't take away past scars;

Loving others but not myself does not heal my shattered heart.

Why am I alone when I am with my heart's love?

The hidden but sensed truth was unveiled.

I could not move, feel, think; I drowned in the tearing agony.

There was no trust, no love, no safety; I was cast adrift.

Shocking betrayal, lies, infidelity swallowed me whole.

He chose another, a neighbor, a stranger, or anyone would do.

He wanted to run and find peace with them.

He chose anyone to satiate his needs; his pain.

He lusted in mind, in flesh, in his soul, and could not stop.

Denial's crusty film fell from my eyes so blinded by self-deceit.

I disregarded the remnants of my heart.

I laughed at innuendo and encouraged it.

I dressed the part he wanted and performed with tools according to his fantasy.

The shattering was bloody and brought perverse relief.

The heart was no longer there; a cavern took its place.

Small slivers glinted wickedly in the moon-

(Continued on page 5)

By the Fellowship, for the Fellowship!



A shared vision of those who work on the production of the Balance is to have a folder overflowing with articles submitted from the membership, which can be used as topics for upcoming issues. For this to happen, we encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles that share upcoming events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers etc. Articles that give a voice to your story. We also would love to hear your ideas for what you would like to see in future articles. The Balance is a newsletter for the membership, by the membership. Please send your articles to:

COSACopy@yahoo.com

or by snail mail to the NSO-COSA PO Box listed on the envelope below.

Hope to hear from you soon...



Contact the NSO of COSA

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The NSO-COSA holds the copyright to the newsletter.

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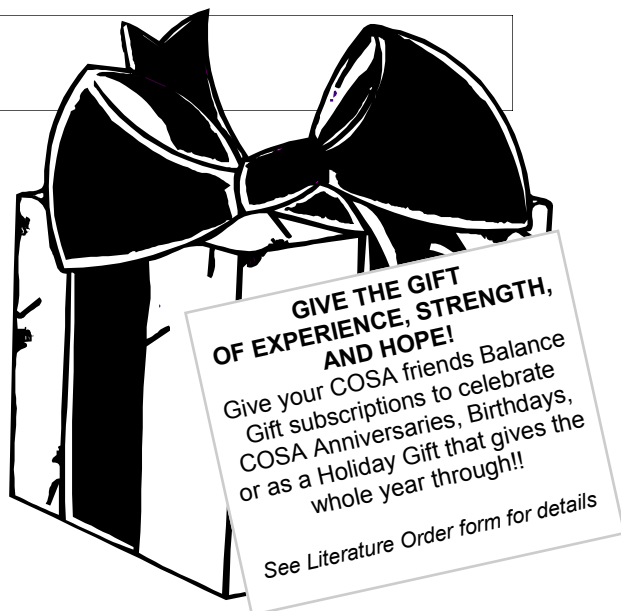
Balance

COSA VOICES~ STEP ONE

Being in constant crisis... ties in with my realization about focusing on others' problems and trying to fix and control others. It also ties in with my knowing that I am drawn to crises. I got so used to being in crisis that I looked for it--- and when I am in crisis there are things I don't have to look at or deal with and I have an excuse. I'm too busy coping and surviving. So part of Step 1 for me is also letting go of crisis (and perhaps the need to control it at all times).

Letting go of crisis has similar results initially to admitting powerlessness over others or outside events. There is a sense of emptiness, a sense of being at loose ends. Not so much a sense of panic or anxiety as not knowing what to do, where to go next. After all, if I'm used to living in crisis mode and now I don't have it, then I no longer have what I know and what I've grown used to. So if I let that go, I can for now accept the emptiness or rather look at it as space, less clutter and quiet, and I can decide what if anything I want to have in its place. I think for a little while I'm just going to see if I can explore and enjoy that emptiness. I know for me the question becomes: OK, now I know that I feel a need to control to feel safe, and I know that in reality it does more harm to me than good, so how do I unlearn this?

Step 1 is about committing to learning to live life on its terms. I used to escape through books. I don't know if I tried to make my life turn out the same way, but given the options many of us had, opening up a book or turning on the TV was a lot more healthy and constructive than turning to drugs or sex. Of course, the problem is when we blur the line and no longer recognize that they are only books or TV shows, or wanting to turn characters and plots into reality. It is only very recently that I realized that I had engaged in that when I married my present husband. I had the feeling that I had "paid my dues", having been through so much trauma, and that now I was going to do things right and live happily ever after. I think we still can live happily ever after, but it's a matter of learning a healthier definition of happily ever after. That of course includes letting go of our present unhealthy definition of that term, admitting that we are powerless to create the storybook world, then learning to love and accept that which is real.



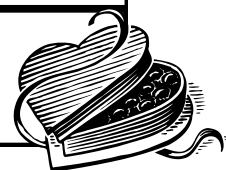
~ EJ, a COSA member online.



COSA GIFTS ... Loving thoughts for us all!

With the beginning of the New Year, we asked COSA members what gifts they would wish to give to their fellow COSA members.

Here are some of the answers we received:



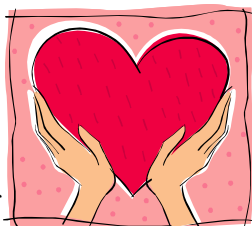
Always remember that you have choices in creating ...memories and we can define our own ...traditions that fit with our recovery. ~ Shannon T.

I wish you peace and serenity this winter, and the joy that comes from knowing that we are not alone. ~ Joanne B.

My prayer for everyone ...is to look at life through loving eyes, feel life with a heart full of love, and see life as a true miracle. ~Cindy B., Houston TX

Sometimes the Winter can be a difficult time. To all my fellow COSA sufferers, survivors and recoverers, I send a hug to you. Wishing for you, from the bottom of my heart that you may experience the Season being centered and grounded, having peace of mind, harmony, good cheer, and Many belly laughs. ~Teresa C. in CA

May a feeling of peace & well being radiate from deep within you. And may you surrender all the stress to feel the unconditional love & interconnectedness of all that is. ~ Helene, Portland



I would want to wish everyone to receive fullness of life and recovery. ~Donna J. Michigan

I wish all of us sanity and serenity....~Dianne D.

My wish for my fellows is liberation from the pain, fear, and confusion of addiction -- and if they are still suffering the tyranny of addiction, my hope is that they keep coming back until the promises are realized and they experience the precious freedom, authenticity and relief I prize every day of my recovery. ~ Scott in Vermont

Balance



SPRING RETREAT “Trust”



As we dig into our trust issues, we will cover the other topic suggestions. Trust can't happen without 'attitude changes'. Trust can't happen without 'patience with self'; Trust can't happen without 'willingness to change'. Our 'inner child' will receive healing.

**Friday, April 21 thru
Sunday, April 23rd, 2006**

The retreat will be held at Colombiere center, in Clarkston, Michigan. Cost for the weekend is \$121.00 per person/double occupancy or \$131.00 per person single occupancy, which includes sleeping room, linens, meeting rooms with meeting room services and five meals. If you wish to attend, a non-refundable deposit of \$55.00 per person must be submitted by **FEBRUARY 28, 2006**

Send deposits of \$55.00 to :

Ila Davis, P.O. Box 502, Mt Morris, MI. 48458

Make checks payable to Ila Davis.

If you have any questions, write to the address above. Approximately two weeks before the retreat you will receive a packet with information for the weekend, including a map to the retreat center.

Patrick Carnes, in his book *A Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps*, describes the concept of this retreat well when he writes; *“Most groups also have a social life outside the meetings. Before or after meetings, people meet for coffee or food. Sometimes breakfasts or lunches where people gather as sort of a “second” group meeting for extra support. Some groups have retreats together to intensify work on the program. While these are not a part of the meeting, they are essential to program life. To regard them as an option for which one does not have time is to miss out on an important part of developing a program for oneself: building a support network.*

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEET-	HELP WANTED COSA NATIONAL COORDINATOR (Office Worker)
<p>The San Francisco Bay area meetings have designed and implemented our first Telemeeting! What is a Telemeeting? It is a COSA meeting that is held via a telephone conference call.</p> <p>How does it work? Participants dial a teleconferencing server and enter a passcode. All participants will be joined together in one call, with one member leading the group as Secretary.</p> <p>How much does it cost? The only cost is normal long-distance charges. (Calling cards are great for this, with rates as low as \$.04 per minute)</p> <p>When does it meet? Tuesdays at 7 pm Pacific (8pm Mountain, 9pm Central, 10 pm Eastern)</p> <p>Can anyone call in and participate? The telemeeting is open to any man or woman who's life has been affected by compulsive sexual behavior.</p> <p>TO LEARN MORE, OR TO ATTEND: Go to: www.COSAcall.com, or Contact the telemeeting coordinator at:</p>	<p>We are currently accepting inquiries by members interested in working part-time to keep the “business” for the organization of COSA running smoothly.</p> <p>Position Description: Track literature orders, meeting and groups contact lists, 7th tradition donations, office expenses; organize and maintain COSA archives. Fulfill literature orders. Provide sales and management skills to set up and operate our Memorial Day weekend annual convention bookstore, with COSA NSO volunteers. Set up and operate COSA office equipment and store the COSA archives in own home. Provide assistance to NSO Board with basic structural and transitioning tasks and facilitate communication between members and between NSO volunteers.</p> <p>Stipend position, negotiable.</p> <p>Ideal Candidate's Qualifications: Active COSA member working the 12 Steps of recovery. Great communication skills, and commitment to follow-through with tasks greatly desired. Development and transitioning skills desired to support COSA's growth and expansion preparatory to establishing COSA's own office space.</p> <p>If interested: Please contact NSO COSA via email: Info@COSA-Recovery.org or the phone line, at: 763-537-6904</p>

Balance

COSA VOICES~ STEP TWO

Sanity means having a sense of stability and serenity. It means that every little thing will no longer send me into a tailspin. It means making conscious decisions rather than acting out of fear and neediness. It means no longer making the same mistakes over and over and expecting different results. It means living in reality and accepting reality.

Sanity is separating myself from other people; being financially and emotionally independent. Sanity is knowing and loving myself for who I am. Sanity means feeling less like a rollercoaster or a flag in the wind, but more like a leaf gently flowing down the river or going with the flow of life. Sanity is keeping the focus on me rather than focusing on other people or things that I cannot change or control.

Before I came to any 12-step group, I thought of my higher power as a male god who, while he cared about me, I didn't think he could forgive me unless I changed the

behaviors and repented. I also didn't believe he could care for me and be there for me unless I was forgiven. This did not work for me and my co-addiction, because I could not change the behavior on my own. I don't think I believed that my higher power could help me or save me either—I thought I had to do it all on my own. I think I also deep down felt like my higher power would not love and accept me if I wasn't as close to perfect as humanly possible. This left me not really living because I was afraid of messing up. This stifled my growth and wellbeing.

I definitely believe in a power other than my own. I believe that other people have their own free wills that I cannot control. I also think there's an order to the universe that is greater than me. This means I can control my behaviors to an extent, but I can't control the outcomes.

To me, a power greater than ourselves means god or a guiding fac-

tor to the world. It means there's someone or something that has control of things and is watching over us. It means that when I am faced with something I feel I can't deal with, I can turn it over to this power. It means that there's a force caring for my overall wellbeing and I can learn to trust in it.

I believe in a God or creator of the universe. I believe He has created an order to the universe. There's some uncertainty there because I don't want to think of my higher power as some sort of dictator. On some level I see it as more like Mother Nature, always keeping the universe in balance and playing some part in weaving the events of the world. At the same time I see my higher power as a loving father. He loves me, and holds me and cares for me. He can help me and guide me in ways I can't help myself. He will hold my hand and provide for me. I am never alone because my higher power is always with me. I can trust my higher power (the loving father and the guiding mother nature) to care for and provide for me. Releasing things to my higher power leads to great improvement in my life.

My higher power is like the current in the river of the ocean; it's foolish to battle against it.

My higher power can be both mother nature and a loving father because I believe that God is greater than I or any other human being can fully comprehend, so he comes to us in whatever ways we most need. My higher power has to be male and female to fill all the holes in my heart. My Higher Power always has my overall best interest at heart, even when it doesn't feel like it.

~ HH, COSA member online

(Continued from page 2)

light; sunshine was gone.

I rolled a stone over the tomb of me and left me alone.

I don't want to know who I am, I am not who I thought.

I am powerless to stop this craziness.

I don't want to be me and live what is behind me and before me.

I cannot imagine, manage, a life; my life.

But something new, came.

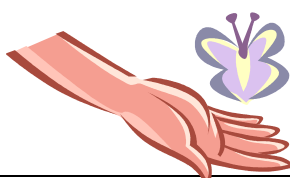


I can choose to **try**, to **heal**, to **re-learn**:

I **need** a sister or brother's help and hope

I **choose** a sister or brother's strength

I **learn** from a sister or brother's experience



And,
It's o.k.
to be afraid.
I'm **NOT** alone.

~ Babs M.
Apple Valley, MN
COSA Member

COSA Convention News!

Mark your Calendars NOW



for the

COSA NATIONAL CONVENTION & NSO ANNUAL SERVICE MEETING

When: May 25-29th, 2006—Memorial Day Weekend

Where: Indianapolis, Indiana

Title: “Ready, Set, Growth”



We want to take this moment to thank each of you who submitted your vote for the Convention title.

We have more to ask of you:

- ≈ **Block the dates today.** We want your calendar clear so you can be there.
- ≈ Talk to your group about being a delegate or supporting a delegate. Your delegate will be your voice to the National COSA Board. We want your voice to be heard and counted.
- ≈ Begin taking an extra donation, plan fund raisers such as pot lucks with open talks, dances, or other ideas to monetarily assist in sending your delegate.
- ≈ Remember to wait for the **COSA registration form:** When you call the hotel, we need you to reserve under the group code “Ready, Set, Growth.” Your registration and reservation with us will assist us in meeting our financial obligations for the week-end.
- ≈ When the next mailing comes to you, there will be a flier included with pricing for the weekend. Be sure your newsletter is renewed and your address has been updated. We want you to receive the registration form.



WE WANT YOU & YOUR GROUP REPRESENTED IN INDIANAPOLIS!

Convention Co-Chairs: Jenny E., Ohio & Ila D., Michigan

