

# Balance

NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

## Convention Issue



May ~ June '06

### Discernment vs. Judgment

The other day I was listening to a sponsee talk about their partner as they were considering whether to stay in the relationship or not. I asked what the sponsee thought of one of the partner's behaviors. The sponsee said they didn't want to judge their partner. I said I was asking the sponsee to discern the appropriateness of an aspect of the partner's behavior, not to judge the partner. I made a distinction between judging, which I view as a character defect, and discernment, which I believe is a normal part of adult decision making. I think discernment is not only appropriate but necessary in deciding whether certain behavior is appropriate – not just the behavior of others, but our own as well.

For myself, I know that I have to discern the appropriateness of various candidates for president. I have to try to predict to what extent a candidate's behavior in the future will conform to how I want the country to be run. First, I have to know how I think the country should be governed – what are my values? Then I can compare each candidate's behavior – their track record and spoken words – to what I know that I value. Discernment puts principles before personalities.

Judging, I think, is personality-oriented. It fuels shame rather than understanding. Shame says who we are at our core is wrong. The judging I have done in the past is usually based on superficial impressions of others – like voting for a guy for President because I don't like the other guy's smirk.

Here is an example of discernment from my life. For my own safety, any sex addicts I spend time with need to be serious about their program. My sponsor says, and I agree, that people around you are either supporting you in your recovery or they are undermining it. Before I considered who I was going to hang out with, I first decided what it is to be serious. For my program, the people I hang out with need to have a sponsor, be working the steps, be going to meetings, and have a Sex Plan. That's just my definition, and it is now in my Outer Circle. I discern who I will hang out with based on how other people's behavior matches that Outer Circle value.

Other loving, supportive values that promote discernment rather than judging for me are:

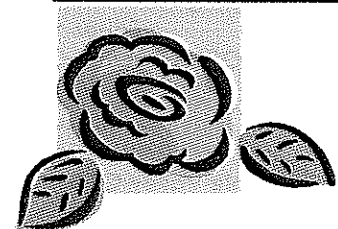
1. It is OK to disagree
2. Uncomfortable feelings are OK
3. It's OK to make choices
4. It's OK to say no.
5. It's OK for people not to like me or my choices

### In this Issue:

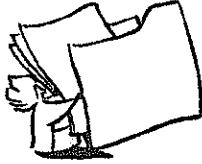
- Discernment vs. Judgment
- COSA Triggers
- Roberta's Rules briefer
- What's going on at the convention?
- 5th & 6th Steps

### In every Issue:

- 7th Traditions
- Literature Order form



**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...



*(Discernment vs. Judgment Continued from page 1)*

These values are particularly helpful in discerning what should I think or do about the people whose behavior does not fit with my own values. This is the part that I have really, really struggled with as a codependent. I have been hesitant to set boundaries with others because I don't want to hurt or seem to reject someone else. I know I have been shamed and abandoned in the past and I know how painful that feels. But I try to approach setting boundaries from a place of love and support. Shame and abandonment says "You are a bad person at your core, and you are banished forever." Setting my boundary says, "I love you as a child of God, but I can't support your behavior. You are free to behave as you choose, but I can't hang out with you as things are right now. I wish you the best with your recovery."

Practicing discernment rather than judgment helps me to be compassionate as well as respectful to myself and others, to place principles before personalities, and stay focused on my Higher Power's will instead of my own.

~ Anonymous



**7th Traditions**

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 50.00 Desert Flowers. Eau Claire, WI               | COSA. San Antonio, TX                 |
| 32.00 Tuesday 12:15 Houston, TX                    | 100.00 San Francisco, CA Sat. morning |
| 50.00 Phoenix, AZ                                  | 100.00 Houston Wed Noon               |
| 7.50 East St. Paul-Mon. night group                | 120.00 Minnetonka, MN group           |
| 30.00 7:30 pm Wed Costa Mesa, CA                   | 55.15 Indpls Wed Night - Methodist    |
| 39.00 Dallas, TX COSA                              | 43.00 Houston Sun P.M. Cosa           |
| 52.67 "Work It Cause You're Worth It." Hampton, VA | 30.00 Houston Thurs Holy Name Group   |
| 23.00 Sunday Precious                              |                                       |

**7th Traditions Individual**

25.00 Virginia Beach, VA

Please send your donations to the COSA mailing address below!



GIVE THE GIFT THAT IS "BLOSSOMING" WITH EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH, AND HOPE!

Give your COSA friends *Balance* Gift subscriptions to celebrate COSA Anniversaries, Birthdays, or other special occasions! It will be sure to "grow" their recovery the whole year through!!

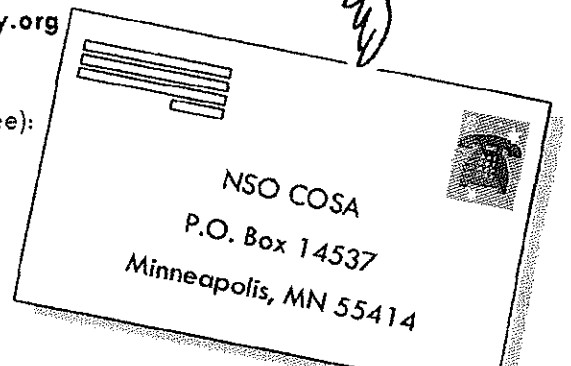
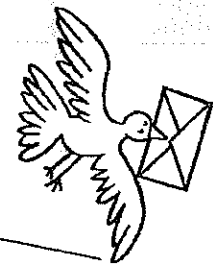
See Literature Order form for details!

**Contact the NSO of COSA**

*Balance*, the newsletter of the National Service Organization of COSA, is published six times a year. The NSO-COSA holds the copyright to the newsletter.

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## "Roberta's World"

**WARNING: MAY CONTAIN BORING MATERIALS!**



In 2004, the NSO of COSA decided to change from Robert's Rules of Order to Roberta's Rules of Order for our meetings.

To educate the fellowship on this change, we share our "Special Rules for Meetings" from Roberta's Rules  
*Delegates may want to pay special attention!*

In 2004, the NSO of COSA decided to change from Robert's Rules of Order to Roberta's Rules of Order for our meetings. To educate the fellowship on this change, we share our "Special Rules for Meetings" from Roberta's Rules.

### **Rule 1: Use of Special Rules**

These special Rules for Meetings are to be used as the regular business meeting method of the National Service Organization of COSA, Inc. The rules are subordinate to: (1) the organization's **bylaws**, (2) The **Articles of Incorporation**, and (3) current State and Federal **laws for nonprofit public or mutual benefit organizations**. These Special Rules may be further modified by Concordance, or "substantial agreement," of the Board of Directors. We define Substantial agreement as a 75% majority. This does not prevent striving for consensus. All committees, teams, or task forces in the organization use these rules for their business meetings as well.

### **Rule 2: Meeting Roles - also referred to in our meetings as "Shared Roles"**

The Chair of the organization, or a member she or he appoints, will preside at the meeting and be called the **Leader**. She or he will appoint a **Timekeeper** and a **Note Taker**.

The Leader is responsible for conducting a focused meeting with the help of a volunteer who acts as a **Facilitator**. The Leader will remain fair and impartial. The Leader will make the final decisions regarding the meeting content and Agenda after gathering input.

The Facilitator will remain neutral and focus on the meeting process to help reinforce the group's agreed-upon meeting **Safety Guidelines**. The Leader and the Facilitator will confer on matters of **meeting process**. The Facilitator will make the final decision on the fairness of the meeting process. Our meeting facilitator also moves us through the agenda and calls for **straw poll** levels of support as needed - red, yellow, and green, like traffic lights!

All participants will help create and be asked to uphold the meeting Courtesy Guidelines. Participants will strive to reach a **consensus** agreement, but if it cannot be reached with 10 minutes, the final decision will be made by a 75% substantial majority vote, or **concordance**.

The Secretary (Note Taker) will take brief notes during the meeting, on paper or a flip chart. As "tangential topics" come up, he or she will make a **Side Bar** list of any topics which may come up during discussion that have potential to get us "off track," so that we can address them at another meeting. He or she will write a **summary** of the meeting and distribute it to members within three weeks. He or she will send it by e-mail, fax, or if these options are not available, by regular mail. The NSO COSA board also sometimes has a second member at the meeting take the role of **Action List** and **Side Bar** recorder.

The Timekeeper will keep the Leader and the group aware of time. If the group has agreed upon a specified **time limit for any individual to speak**, the Timekeeper will give the speaker a one-minute warning. At the end of the time, the speaker will be asked to stop. This person cannot speak again until all the others have had an opportunity.

### **Rule 1: Use of Special Rules**

(a) These special Rules for Meetings are to be used as the regular business meeting method of the National Service Organization of COSA, Inc. The rules are subordinate to (1) the organization's bylaws, (2) The Articles of Incorporation, and (3) current State and Federal laws for nonprofit public or mutual benefit organizations.

(b) These Special Rules may be further modified by Concordance, or "substantial agreement," of the Board of Directors. For this organization substantial agreement is defined as a 75% majority. This does not prevent striving for consensus. Once these Special Rules are approved, all committees, teams, or task forces in the organization will use them for their business meetings.

### **Rule 2: Meeting Roles**

(a) The Chair of the organization, or a member she or he appoints, will preside at the meeting and be called the Leader. She or he will appoint a Timekeeper and a Note Taker.

(b) The Leader is responsible for conducting a focused meeting with the help of a designated Facilitator. The Leader will remain fair and impartial. The Leader will make the final decisions regarding the meeting content and Agenda after gathering input.

(c) The Facilitator will remain neutral and focus on the meeting process to help reinforce the group's agreed-upon meeting Safety Guidelines. The Leader and the Facilitator will confer on matters of meeting process. The Facilitator will make the final decision on the fairness of the meeting process.

(d) All participants will help create and be asked to uphold the meeting Courtesy Guidelines. Participants will strive to reach a consensus agreement, but if it cannot be reached with 10 minutes, the final decision will be made by a 75% substantial majority vote, or concordance.

(e) The Secretary (Note Taker) will take brief notes during the meeting, on paper or a flip chart. As "tangential topics" come up, he or she will make a list for future discussion. He or she will write a summary of the meeting and distribute it to members within three weeks. He or she will send it by e-mail, fax, or if these options are not available, by regular mail.

(f) The Timekeeper will keep the Leader and the group aware of time. If the group has agreed upon a specified time limit for any individual to speak, the Timekeeper will give the speaker a one-minute warning. At the end of the time, the speaker will be asked to stop. This person cannot speak again until all the others have had an opportunity.

(g) Any Board member may present a verbal or written Proposal to the Board for consideration. Any group of members (more than one person) may bring a Proposal to the Board at the Annual Membership Meeting.

### **Rule 3: Meeting Agenda**

(a) The Leader, with suggestions from the members of the group, will draft an Agenda. It will include the organization's mission, the meeting purpose (if other than a regular meeting), and the meeting outcomes or intended results. The Agenda will focus on accomplishing the current major strategies or goals of the organization.

(b) The Agenda will state expected start and end times, topics in order of priority (policy, urgency, or impact), estimated time limits in minutes for each topic, and the name of the person leading presentation and dialogue on each topic.

(c) Whenever possible the Agenda and other pertinent material will be distributed in advance by e-mail, fax, or regular mail.

### **Rule 4: Quorum**

(a) A quorum is not required to hold a meeting. However, no decision can be made that obligates the whole group without a quorum present in person or connected electronically. For this organization a quorum is defined as one person more than half.

(b) If the Leader determines that a quorum is present at the beginning of the meeting and the Agenda includes items to be decided, the decision making can continue even if members leave and a quorum is no longer present.



## COSA Triggers: Real or Illusion

Often I have said to myself that this person or billboard or character on TV "triggers" me. I will see another woman and judge her as inappropriately dressed or I will compare myself to her physically and judge myself as inadequate. I can see women on billboards or in ads and do the same thing. Sometimes on TV (or in real life situations), I see men and I judge them to be sex addicts. In the past I have said that these situations "trigger" my anger or "trigger" my fear or shame. But over time I have come to see these situations in a new way.

If I say, "That person, place or thing triggers me," then I am characterizing the other person, place or thing as the active part of that statement and I am just passively receiving the action. I bear no responsibility for "being triggered." I cast myself in the role of a victim. As a victim, I turn my will and my life over to other

people, places and things, and I risk getting stuck in a perpetual loop of powerlessness and unmanageability.

But if I really observe what I am doing, I see that I have an active role in the process. Today I see that when I am judging another person or myself in my COSA disease it is because I am

sexualizing them or me - or both. In my active COSA addiction, I routinely reduce others or myself to porn in my own head. I do not see them or me for what we really are - precious,

spiritual people.

Now, others may also be sexualizing one another or me, but that is a separate process that is their responsibility alone. Recovery through the Steps is available to everyone who accepts responsibility for themselves.

Today I no longer say "That person, place or thing is triggering me," I say "I am sexualizing that person." I choose to take responsibility for that behavior. With that one choice, a miracle occurs. I am no longer a victim. And if I find that I am powerless to stop sexualizing others or myself - which is often the case in my disease - I know exactly what to do. I work the Steps! If I turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power, I can be restored to wholeness.

~ Anonymous, Houston, TX



*(Roberta's Rules. Continued from page 3)*

### **Rule 5: Electronic Meetings and Attendance**

(a) Members who cannot conveniently attend a meeting due to distance or logistical problems may attend any meeting electronically as long as everyone can be connected clearly. A designated person will make the arrangements and the costs will be covered by the NSO-COSA.

(b) Members who miss more than two (2) meetings in person or electronically, may be asked to resign.

(c) Participants will follow the guidelines for electronic meetings.

### **Rule 6: Starting the Meeting**

(a) The tone of the meeting will be informal and friendly. Members will be given a chance to relax, with social time and food preceding the meeting to allow a 15- to 30-minute transition.

(b) There will be an opportunity in the beginning for everyone to "check in" briefly, update the group on any personal news, or make announcements of interest to the group.

(c) Anyone visiting a meeting will be introduced to everyone, and the group members to the visitor, with every attempt to include the visitor quickly.

(d) If desired there may be an invocation, spiritual practice, or moment of meditation or reflection to set a positive tone.

(e) Members will be given a chance to read and modify the Agenda at the beginning of the meeting. The group will reach concordance on the Agenda before proceeding.

(f) The first discussion will be about the meeting purpose, objectives, roles expected behaviors (Safety Guidelines), and decision-making method for all appropriate items. The group will reach concordance before proceeding.

### **Rule 7: Routine Reports and Consent Agenda**

(a) The Meeting Summary of the previous meeting and routine reports not requiring individual consideration will be placed on the Agenda at the beginning in a Consent Agenda section. This information will be provided to participants ahead of time or before the start of the meeting.

(b) The Consent Agenda items will not be discussed individually unless any member requests that an item be removed from this section and placed on the regular Agenda as a separate item for discussion. The Leader will check with the group for agreement to file routine reports as part of the organization's records.

### **Rule 8: Discussion of Issues**

(a) Any item may be discussed that is on or added to the Agenda prior to or at the beginning of the meeting. A motion or a second is not required.

(b) The member(s) who presents an issue for consideration should present it in the form of a Simple (verbal) or Structured (written) Proposal. Written Proposals should address the problem and its causes before the solution.

(c) When possible, Structured Proposals will be available for members to read in advance of the meeting.

(d) All members will be given an opportunity to speak or ask questions. No one member may speak a second time until all wanting to speak have spoken once.

(e) When discussing a Proposal, the Leader or Facilitator will structure the discussion to proceed from opening (idea generation) to narrowing (evaluating ideas) to closing (making decisions).

(f) The Leader or Facilitator will ensure that the discussion is balanced between pros and cons and all points of view are encouraged.

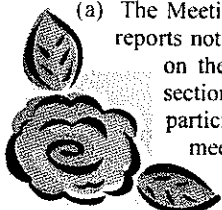
(g) Any member can suggest changes to a Proposal. The Proposal can be modified by group concordance. If the changes are not agreed upon, another member may present a different Proposal.

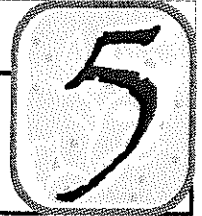
(h) Up to three Proposals on the same issue may be presented for consideration. If more than one Proposal is being considered, each should be presented in writing, and they should be discussed one at a time.

### **Rule 9: Decision Making**

(a) All members will be given an opportunity to speak at least once and not more than twice on each Proposal.

(b) After a Proposal has been presented and thoroughly discussed, the Leader will ask if the group is in agreement with the Proposal. No one member or a minority may block a decision.





## COSA VOICES ~ STEP FIVE

ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES AND ANOTHER HUMAN BEING  
THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.

This step has taught me more about trust and honesty than anything I ever knew about trust or honesty. This step has always been a humbling experience for me. I had taken care of making a thorough inventory of my life. I was able to see patterns in my life that lead me to pain. Through my 4th step, I was able to see strengths I never knew really existed in me. The fifth step was an opportunity for me to learn to trust God...to get to know God. It was easy for me to admit to God the exact nature of my wrongs. It was harder for me to admit my wrongs to me...I had lived in a convoluted world of half-truths, excuse making, getting even at someone or "something". I never could admit, I was wrong, I did something bad, I had truly hurt someone else. All I cared about was my hurt feelings...and my feelings were always hurt. My soul felt tortured on a daily basis. I would end relationships with others if someone said the wrong thing to me...I had no idea how to tell someone "hey, you know what, you said this to me...it really hurt my feelings, why did you say that to me" Simple basic human relationship stuff was way beyond my scope of life skills. See, it is my experience, that until I was able

to see the exact nature of my wrongs... I was always a victim. I was unable to forgive, because all wrongs done to me must have been done on purpose....what I learned most in this step, I am human, I have made a lot of mistakes, I have injured many by my self seeking ways. I have a big part to play in my life. I did not do most things with the thought of hurting others-in turn others do not usually do things to hurt me (2 sides of the street). By admitting to others the exact nature of our wrongs, reinforces that I am not alone. By admitting to God it reinforces I am not alone. By admitting to myself...I am able to forgive the sick person that I have been. I am able to go forward to do the right things for my life.....As with all the steps...there is true freedom. I am free to trust in my God, I am free to trust myself and I am free to trust others. I am not alone and for that I am forever grateful and blessed. I have a natural tendency to keep secrets-it keeps me separate, alone and sick-Step 5 moves me to a healthy place, that I would never naturally go. Step 5-kept me alive.

~ Greta P.

*(Roberta's Rules, Continued from page 4)*

- (c) If there is no concordance, the leader will call for a nonbinding simple straw poll (show of hands) and further discussion. As a result of the discussion, the Leader may suggest or request modifications and check again for concordance.
- (d) Following the modifications, the Leader will check again to determine if there is concordance or lack of substantial agreement.
- (e) If there is no concordance, the leader will call for a show of gradient levels, in a multiple-choice, nonbinding poll.
- (f) After the polling the members will be asked to voice their concerns and suggest a change in the Proposal that would result in their support for the Proposal--or at least move their support up a level.
- (g) If there isn't enough time or interest to continue discussing the Proposal, the group can "vote whether to vote." A two-thirds (2/3) majority approval is necessary to require a dual (yes/no) vote. When a dual (yes/no) vote is taken, a two-thirds (2/3) majority (concordance) is required to pass the Proposal.
- (h) Votes may be by show of hands or written ballot. Any member may request a written ballot.
- (i) If more than one Proposal is being considered, the group may decide to use a plurality vote and the Proposal with the highest number of votes would be approved.

### **Rule 10: Ending the Meeting**

- (a) There will be time on the Agenda at the end of the meeting for the Leader to summarize the progress made at the meeting in relation to the organization's Mission or Goals.
- (b) The Secretary (Note Taker) will summarize the agreements made and the follow-up action steps agreed to by the group, clarifying the tasks, the person(s) responsible, and the task time limits.
- (c) The members will remark on their personal experience (meaning, learning, or impressions) during the meeting and make suggestions on what to continue doing and what to change to improve future meetings. The Leader and Facilitator will implement feasible ideas at the next meeting.
- (d) When the Agenda is complete, or the time established for the end of the meeting is reached, the Leader will close the meeting. The meeting can continue after the established time limit only if there is substantial agreement to extend the meeting for a specified time period.
- (e) The Note Taker will send out a Meeting Summary and Action Plan within three weeks.

# Help Wanted

## NATIONAL COORDINATOR (OFFICE WORKER)

We are currently accepting inquiries by members interested in working part-time to keep the "business" for the organization of COSA running smoothly. *Our current National Coordinator is stepping down from her duties as of the convention, so we are looking to fill this position as soon as possible!*

**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.

**Stipend position, negotiable.**

**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.

**If interested:**

Please contact NSO COSA via email:

**Info@COSA-Recovery.org**

or the phone line, at: **763-537-6904**



*(Roberta's Rules, Continued from page 5)*



**Parliamentary Rules Backup**

Traditional parliamentary procedure can be very useful in highly complex and controversial situations when there is a need for a more formal structure for debate and voting. It is hoped that this situation is the exception, rather than the norm. In cases where these special rules are not effective, we will use the newly revised tenth edition of Robert's Rules of Order (Robert, 2000).

**What's Up in Indy this year?**

**What's Going on** this year at the COSA Convention? So much, it's hard to describe it in words. If you've never experienced the gifts that attending a convention can bring to your recovery journey, it would be difficult to imagine all there is to experience.

**Annual Mtg. of the Board and Delegates** Unless you attended the Annual Meeting last year in New Orleans, you may automatically think "dull, boring, contentious." Since implementing our new ideas found in Roberta's Rules, the Annual Meeting is anything but those things.. It is interesting, energizing, lively and engaging, with a sense that the board and delegates are truly working for the entire COSA community's best interest. Any COSA member may attend!

**Workshops**

There are always so many to choose from, it's difficult to decide which one to attend. I usually end up purchasing a tape of the ones I miss, so I can have the opportunity to gain the experience, strength, and hope that I know is in each of them. Some of the workshops this year will focus on our recovery work, and attendees will have a chance to roll up their sleeves and dig in for some deep work. This can be difficult, however I know that I have gained insights and information that I had not found in my home group. Of course, to balance the equation, we have workshop offerings that are the "funzies" part of conventions, which have included yoga, creative crafty activities, and workshops that help us let out our inner child with bubbles and toys.

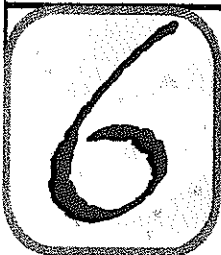
**Community**

So many COSA members remark after their first convention what a wonderful experience it was to see all those faces from all corners of the United States, and even some from countries abroad now. Attending a convention brings the awareness that we are "not alone" even more into focus. Dealing with the affects of sexual addiction in a loved one is not limited to our home group, our town, our state. It is bigger, and the Experience, Strength, and Hope is bigger too. At convention, we find the anticipation of a joyful, more serene life somehow seems more tangible.

**Hope to see you there!**

The convention will be great this year! If you can't attend, look for the addition of new tapes from the workshops on our literature order form, and make plans to join us in Minneapolis next year instead!

~ Christi G.



**~ STEP SIX ~**

**WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.**

When I think of Step Six, I always go back to a thought I found in a recovery book I read as a tool for Step work. It reminds me that the closer I come to being healed of a certain defect or issue, the harder it becomes to live with myself. This is helpful as I deal with my behaviors I would like to discontinue. You know, the ones that we have done the work of becoming aware of, become ready to let go of, and yet we still continue to struggle with? It can be so frustrating to me, as I had hoped, really hoped, that by becoming aware of those devices that once protected me, that it would become easier to let go of them. "I use food to cope with my anger at my husband's behaviors?" Well, now that I know that, I can let go of that. Right? Well, it hasn't been that easy. But I know that I'm on the way to becoming changed. I know this because without fail, each time I discover another protective device or defect, I begin by broadening my awareness of what that defect means for me. I begin to notice when I'm "doing it again" and again. And again. As the reading I like says, "it glares. It bites. It stands right there in my way. I despair of ever changing, of ever being any different." I am a person who is used to, and capable of, hard work. (I'm finding it can be one of my defects!) I have been, and still am sometimes, so used to working hard at everything that I forget that I can relax, be grateful for who I am, and that I do not have to do this alone. I can work instead on remembering to let go and allow the process to work. I can remind myself that these defects have helped me to survive at one time in my life, and that letting go of them will allow me to be open to having them replaced with something even better. I can trust my Higher Power, trust myself, and trust the process. I don't have to do it alone. I don't have to work so hard. And for that, I'm grateful.

~ Christi G.

