



NEWSLETTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL SERVICE ORGANIZATION OF COSA

Holiday Issue

November ~ December '06

GIFTS of Recovery

This process has brought me from despair to hope,
 from woundedness to healing,
 from obsession to serenity,
 from self-hatred to self love,
 from isolation to community,
 from family of origin to family of recovery,
 from physical illness to physical health,
 from negative thoughts to positive thoughts,
 from mistaken beliefs to rational beliefs,
 from warped perceptions to realistic perceptions,
 from denial to awareness,
 from feeling responsible for everything to feeling
 responsible for myself,
 from caretaking to caring for,
 from self-negation to self-affirmation,
 from struggle to surrender,
 from unrealistic expectations to the serenity prayer,
 from "I love you because I need you" to "I love you
 because I love you",
 from having no choice to being aware of dozens of choices,
 from anxiety to calm,
 and from not wanting to be in my body and in my
 circumstances to being comfortable in my skin wherever I
 am.

My pain brought me to my knees from where I learned to
 surrender to the process of learning how to listen for God's
 will for my life.

~ JoAn D., Keynote Speaker at the 2006 COSA Convention in Indianapolis IN

In this Issue:

GRATITUDE for

GIFTS of RECOVERY,

~ by JoAn D.

COSA MEMBERS SEND
 THEIR WISHES FOR THE
 SPECIAL GIFTS OF
 RECOVERY TO YOU ~ pp. 3-4

COSA VOICES: 11th & 12th
 Step Shares ~ by *Emilah D. & Pat
 W.*

11th & 12th Step **Writing**
 Exercises ~ by *Julie H.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS Page 6

COSA's Texas Midwinter
 Women's Retreat

COSA Policy for Groups on
 Making Copies

In every Issue:

7th Traditions

Literature Order form

~ NEW ~

CDs AVAILABLE!

Volume 3, issue 3



SPREAD SOME SUNSHINE!
GIVE A GIFT SUBSCRIPTION OF

Balance

TO A COSA FRIEND!
to celebrate COSA Anniversaries, Birthdays,
or other special occasions!

It will be sure to bring the 'leaves' of
recovery to their life the whole year
through!!

See Literature Order form for details!

7th Traditions ~ Groups



- Apple Valley Group 50.00
- Baton Rouge group 70.00
- COSA Eau Claire 30.00
- Costa Mesa Group 52.00
- Dallas 29.00
- Houston Holy Name 20.00
- Houston Sat am 44.00
- Indianapolis Wed. p.m. 40.80
- Lakewood 25.00
- Louisville KY 2.25
- Mankato Group 35.00
- Minnetonka MN Group 60.00
- Pathway 1 Ohio Group 26.00
- San Francisco 19.22
- San Louis Obispo New Beginnings 25.00
- Spring, TX Group 56.50
- St. Louis Mon pm 10.00
- Tyler Texas Group 75.00

7th Traditions Individual



- San Francisco , CA 3.50
- Utah 7.00
- Location unknown 20.00
- Scottsdale , AZ 0.25

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 and announcements 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. WE NEED SUBMISSIONS!!!

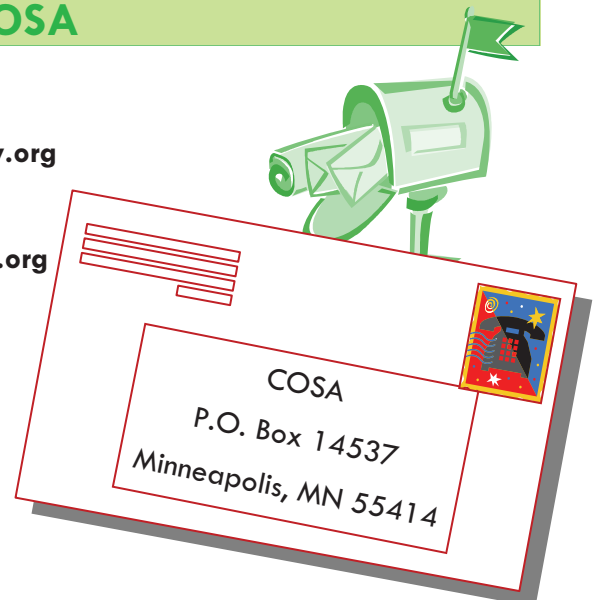
Please send your articles to: **COSACopy@yahoo.com**
or by snail mail to the COSA ISO PO Box listed on the envelope below.

Contact the ISO of COSA

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Holiday

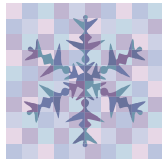
Gifts for the Holidays: *The Gifts of the COSA Program*

2006

With the twelve suggested steps of recovery, and the wisdom, experience and support of the COSA group, we discover the faith and acceptance to let go of the situations we were once desperate to control, and the courage and strength to grow in matters we once avoided or denied. Gradually, the gifts multiply. As our awareness increases, so does our personal power and self-esteem. In our relationships, we learn detachment and become more fully present. In continued recovery, we live our lives in deeper joy, serenity and fulfillment, one day at a time.

Serenity. ~Elaine K. Dallas, TX

Calm and peaceful holidays; spirit-filled New Year! 'Live and let live' is my favorite slogan. As a COSA I always focus on the let live but now that I am on the board and doing service work I am focused on the LIVE and its a great life. ~Lisa W., NOLA - COSA



Joy and Peace to you! ~Michele B. Orlando, FL

"I was recently married. I had very little biological family there, but felt more loved and supported than I ever have in my life. This is because I had my COSA family of choice there to

celebrate with me. I am so grateful to have learned what family truly means since joining COSA. Thank you COSA." ~Sarah B. Oakland, CA

"When I think of the holidays, I am grateful for Joy. The gift of recovery for me was Joy. Working the steps with the help of a wonderful sponsor and my Higher Power has made a glorious difference in my life. I wish this gift for all my brothers and sisters who still suffer." Jackie F. Houston, TX

"The gifts that I would wish for COSA family would be that they may be able to enjoy their holidays with their families" ~Joey Z. COSA Board Chair, Baton Rouge, LA

" Learning healthy autonomy-

paradoxically, by coming out of isolation and into fellowship, through acceptance that I can't do this alone and asking for help, through deeply honest sharing and support among members—is my growing reward in recovery. I am not alone, and I am becoming comfortable with my self." ~Maureen P. Oakland, CA

"I have never been big on the holidays, and this year is a real challenge because I will be newly single. I am planning to volunteer somewhere on Thanksgiving and Christmas because I know that sitting alone and moping will do me no good. I am praying to keep a grateful and serene attitude as I encounter Santa, the music, and the crowds at the stores." ~DM S., Denver, CO



What are your Wishes or Hopes or COSA stories, about the themes of Gratitude, Hope or Peace?

What Gifts would you most wish for your COSA family, and what COSA gifts do you want?

"I believe that while life is a gift, living is a skill. I am thankful for all the wonderful tools this fantastic program gives me for living a meaningful, worthwhile life. The greatest gift this COSA fellowship has given me, is a new way of living. Life may be a gift but living is a skill. Every tool I need for my journey can be found in this great program. ~Margie S., Richmond, Indiana

"I hope that COSAs around the world will find PEACE and Serenity. I am so grateful for the Gifts of the Program." ~Lindy T., East Bay COSA

"My prayer for everyone this year is that they receive the gift of connection. The connection to fellow COSA's, the connection to loved ones, the connection to self, and the connection to the universe." ~Cindy B., Houston, TX

"My wish is that everyone has peace, love, and understanding this holiday season with our families and friends. May we remember our COSA slogans and prayers to help us enjoy the holiday season." ~Karen S., St. Louis, MO

My heart
Reshaping
Once
Suffocated and Squeezed
Darkened and Dry
Receded and Reactive
Now
Awakened and Asking
Vibrating and Vocal
Feeling and Filling
Growing and Grateful
My heart
Reshaping
~ Amy L..



COSA VOICES STEP ELEVEN: SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD GOD— PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

For me, this step is the ultimate surrender: the way by which God restores me to sanity from my disease of codependency. It is about letting go of all control and trusting a God of my understanding to take care of me. The key to this step, for me, was learning discernment. When I began to meditate, I could barely sit for 5 minutes without getting frustrated by all the thoughts whizzing through my head. My teacher simply reminded me to detach from the thoughts and just watch, witness them. As I did this, the period of time I could sit became longer and the silent time between the thoughts became longer. On some days, there was more silence and connection to God than mind chatter! It was in these moments of focused silence that I learned to “hear” the God of my understanding.

I believe we all “hear” God in our own, unique ways. I hear God as a voice – steady and welling up from a deep place inside me. I also hear God in my body – a knot in my stomach when I am in fear – an inexplicable urge to talk to someone – a desire to take a different way to work than I usually do. The quieter my mind, the more clearly I can hear God’s will for me in my daily life.

The longer I witnessed the thoughts in my mind, the more I began to notice how many people were in there talking...Mom, Dad, my inner addict, my inner co-dependent, friends, etc. Through therapy, working the steps with my sponsor, and talking about this with people in the program, I began to discern the difference between each of those voices and God’s voice.



I discovered that all those other voices not true of the God of my understanding. I discern the difference between each of these voices and the God of my understanding. Each voice has character defects that express when I act on what I hear, whereas when I act on the guidance of a God of my understanding, all falls into place with ease, grace, joy and abundance. The bigger question is “Am I willing to truly accept that my life can be full of ease, grace, joy, and abundance?”

What I notice today is that I can follow that steady, deep voice of God AND all those other voices can be protesting loudly because I know who they are and why they are talking. For example, this morning I was catching a flight to Chicago to represent COSA at a convention dedicated to healthy sexuality. I was late for the airport and was praying fervently “I am present and surrendered allowing my life to unfold with ease, grace, joy, and abundance.” I was hearing God’s voice saying the timing was just perfect and remained anxious none-the-less. There were long lines at the security check-point and my flight was leaving in 30 minutes. I became very agitated – while praying at the same time, mind you! When I got through the security check-point, I was delayed because I didn’t have all my liquids in a quart sized bag. I had to go back to the beginning, find a baggie and go through the checkpoint again. By the time I got to the checkpoint the second time, I was in tears – my flight was posted as an on-time departure and it was past time! How could missing this plane be God’s will? I kept moving forward in the line, one step at a time, expressing my discomfort

(Continued on page 5)

STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~ FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Eleven Questions: Give some examples of times I might have experienced ‘conscious contact’ with a God of my understanding. What is my understanding of prayer and meditation? Am I increasing my use of them, and if so, how? Identify some ways that my practice of prayer and meditation can improve my conscious contact with a God of my understanding. What am I learning about ‘God’s will for me?’ What purpose do I see in this Step’s instruction for me to pray for knowledge of it? ...for the power to carry out ‘God’s will for me?’ ...only for that knowledge and that strength?



COSA VOICES STEP TWELVE: HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS A RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES.

For me, the essence of working Step Twelve is embodied in the opening phrase of the Step which references a Spiritual Awakening. When I first came to COSA, I had no spiritual connection whatsoever in my life. As a matter of fact, I was not even sure what that meant. And, when I came to COSA, I was on a mission to heal my excruciating pain. As I began to work the Steps and trust the process, I came to see that there was in fact a power greater than myself. Today, I have a spiritual connection that lives within the core of my soul and that sustains me through times of trouble and lifts me even higher through times of triumph. When I am truly in touch with my Higher Power, it is then that I can "carry this message to others."

Carrying this message to others and being of service is so fulfilling and empowering for me. Being of service can mean the obvious: sponsoring others in this program, working the phone hotline, being a group treasurer, participating on a service board or being available for phone calls. When I first began service work in COSA, I felt myself trying so hard to convince others that this was "the" way to a path of healing and recovery. In other words, I wanted other women to follow suggestions and do as I did. Today I know differently. Today, the best way I can be of service to others is to model good recovery skills and to live a life using the tools I have learned. In other words, I'll not tell you how to live your life in recovery. Rather, I'll live my life from what I've learned from other wise women who have gone before me. Perhaps in me, you'll see a way of living that you want for yourself and you will seek out the path and the tools that work best for you.



As I've grown in our program, I've learned that living these Step principles applies to every aspect of my life. In the beginning, my focus was on healing the co-sex addiction in my life. As I've been able to heal and move forward, I've learned that I can apply our Step principles to business relationships, to family relationships and to relationships that involve non-recovery people in my life. When I do live and work a strong recovery program, grounded in integrity, perhaps I can set an example for others who desire a grounded and serene way of life. If I touch one other person and encourage her/him to seek a life in recovery, then I will have been of service in this program.

~ Pat W., Houston, TX

STEP STUDY QUESTIONS~ FOR GROUP DISCUSSION OR PERSONAL REFLECTION

Step Twelve Questions: If I have not yet experienced the spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, do I understand that I may be spiritually asleep? and if I have experienced the awakening, what was it like when I was asleep? What does it mean to me to have a spiritual awakening? When I tried to carry the message and practice the principles in a state of spiritual sleep, what were the results? In light of the 12-step statement, "If it's not practical, it's not spiritual," how do I understand the relationship between Step 12 and Service?

COSA VOICES STEP ELEVEN, continued from page 4

and anxiety without blaming and shaming the security people or the others in line – praying all the way and still hearing "all is well." When I finally passed the checkpoint and rounded the corner for my gate, all the seats were full...the plane had been delayed and they had not even begun boarding!

Throughout the experience, I could discern God's voice saying "all is well, keep going through the steps" and another voice saying "This is horrible! I've missed my flight! I'm scared. I'm not being cared for – see there's no God! When will I get to Chicago? This isn't fair! Everyone out of my way! Move faster! What's so wrong with carrying on liquid anyway? UGH!!!!" It was VERY challenging to keep trusting and following that still, deep voice AND acknowledging and expressing the fear – but I did, and here I am, typing this article on the flight to Chicago. I never was in control – God was – and God's timing and process was just perfect.

~ Emilah D., Albuquerque, NM



Holiday

Make plans now to attend the women's winter retreat in Texas!

“HOPE AND HEALING”

Friday, February 2nd through Sunday, February 4th, 2007

The COSA winter women's retreat offers a nurturing respite from the challenges and conflicts of day-to-day living. The retreat center, located on fifty-five wooded acres in Northwest Beaumont in a quiet, serene setting, is ideal for reflection. From the moment you arrive, the warmth and gentleness of the grounds and the COSA activities invite you to a positive re-examination of your life, to heal and to reclaim hope.

For information call:

Mary: 713-249-5763 (Mobile); 832-717-7796 (Home);

E-mail: mck109@aol.com

Ginny: 713-206-9096 (Mobile); (713) 669-9027 (Home);

E-mail: Ginnylev@aol.com



Holy Family Retreat Center

9920 North Major Drive

Beaumont, TX 77713

409-899-5617

<http://www.dioceseofbmt.org/hfrc.php>

Make checks payable to: COSA Houston
P.O. Box 540441
Houston, TX 77254-0441

If you are registering for more than one person, please list all names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail: _____

I have enclosed a check for the following reservation(s): _____ Double Occupancy Room(s) at \$125.00 per person*

~ Cost includes two (2) nights' stay in a shared room and four (4) meals. ~

*Based on last year's attendance and to enable as many women as possible to participate, we don't anticipate that private rooms will be available. If attendance allows, private rooms will cost \$165 for the two (2) nights' stay and four (4) meals.

**VISIT US ON THE WEB AT
WWW.COSA-RECOVERY.ORG**

ISO Board Recommendation about Making Copies!

If you are reading this announcement page, you are one of the very fortunate COSA members who has the personal or group financial resources to subscribe to this wonderful publication. In an effort to make the Balance more accessible to all, your servant-leadership has reached a consensus that allows Groups who have a Balance subscription, to copy it for that Group's members. In order to keep our Organization fiscally responsible, and our Groups self-supporting, it was also estimated that a donation to ISO, of \$1.00/per copy made, allows Groups to sufficiently do their share in the publishing of this bi-monthly newsletter.

Please also note our consensus that members are NOT authorized to make ANY copies of COSA literature, but to purchase all copies from your ISO.

Your cooperation and understanding is greatly appreciated!