

Concept Eight

The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

At the founding of COSA, our Steps, Traditions, and Concepts were adapted from those of AA. Because there are organizational differences between the two fellowships and COSA does not have any separately incorporated services, it is sometimes helpful to draw parallels between the corresponding entities. The *trustees* referred to in Concept Eight are the International Service Organization (ISO) of COSA board members; the *constantly active services* are the board committees like the Convention Committee, Literature Committee, Technology Committee, etc. and the *services rendered* refer to the annual convention, program literature, the COSA website, etc. *Custodial oversight* refers to a caring, guardian-like stewardship instead of a hierarchical task-based management. The board approves the appointment of each committee chairperson, thus exercising a custodial oversight and ensuring appropriate leadership at the committee level.

The ISO board's attention is required for matters relating to the overall direction, policy, and financial health of the fellowship. The board's administration and management of these tasks guides both the fellowship and its service to those who still suffer. So they are not overwhelmed by minutiae or distracted from matters of overall policy, the board members rely on committees to carry out the more active functions such as maintaining the website, providing meeting support, planning the annual convention and delegate meeting, publishing literature, and collecting Seventh Tradition donations. Once the board has approved leadership at the committee level, it humbly steps back and allows the committees the autonomy to manage themselves.

Within each board committee, this same protocol is practiced. Subcommittees may be formed to fulfill the committee's responsibilities and carry out planned service. The committee chairperson provides gentle oversight while encouraging all members to focus on carrying out their own duties, each to the best of their ability. Again, we are reminded that our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

By distributing power and influence among the members of the fellowship, we keep the foundation strong and stable. This Concept helps to prevent the board from exercising too much direct authority over the service work of the fellowship, which in turn makes the jobs of the board members less demanding. It allows both the board and the board committees freedom to use their unique talents and gifts to do their best service.

In our daily lives we learn to recognize that we are sometimes obliged to focus on overarching topics and delegate more routine tasks to others. If we are involved in a big project at work, we may need to reach out to an associate for assistance in managing our daily responsibilities. We can depend on our families to help with household chores when we are occupied with a job like

doing the taxes or focusing on a career path. Discernment around our need to ask for support helps those around us as well. We can be more accountable and dependable when we are not overburdened by the misconception that we can do it all. When we practice the principles of the Twelve Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in all areas of our lives, we have more energy to share with others, and our friends and family members notice our peaceful demeanors.

Our ISO of COSA board members know that they cannot focus on both overall policy and the complexities of providing the myriad of services offered by the fellowship. They give careful consideration to the election of chairpersons who will oversee the board committees and then encourage those chairs to safeguard the work of the committees. This application of Concept Eight helps ensure that the planning and administration of COSA works best for everyone.

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