

## Concept Nine

*Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.*

Concept Nine tells us it is vital to have sober, sensible, and dedicated leadership at all levels of the COSA fellowship. This is true for the International Service Organization (ISO) board, board committees, Intergroups, and local meetings alike. This Concept also reminds us that in order to keep the fellowship vibrant, healthy, and safe, we must rotate service leadership. At some point in the early history of COSA, the original founders turned over their responsibility for the board, its committees, and the services they provide, to a new board. It was recognized as part of the natural order of growth and renewal that these new board members would eventually entrust other new board members to carry out the primary world services of COSA, creating sustainable leadership throughout the life of our fellowship.

We can form committees and fill them with volunteers, but without good leadership at all levels, we cannot effectively fulfill our primary purpose. COSA's service structure relies on the many people who manage the myriad of services provided by the fellowship, and like most people, the trusted servants in COSA do their best work when they are guided and encouraged by good leaders. Effective leaders have a thorough understanding of the goal as well as knowledge about the skills and abilities of those with whom they work. They are willing to put principles before personalities. They promote harmony, clarity, and teamwork among group members. They are trustworthy, accountable, and humble.

Special care must be taken to elect service leaders who recognize their primary obligation is to carry out the service plans of the fellowship. Members who accept a service leadership position are accountable to the fellowship, to the ISO board, and to their own Higher Power. A strong leader knows that good ideas can come from anywhere and that sometimes it's best to abandon their own plan in favor of someone else's. A leader's focus must always be on what is best for COSA as a whole. We are all equals in the COSA fellowship and in our service structure. Our leaders do not govern.

Regular communication between leaders and those they serve can help generate new ideas **that** lead to change and growth. For those who aspire to serve as leaders in the fellowship, regular communication can also create a forum for learning to share their talents. COSA is full of people who are ready and able to provide leadership service. To ensure the smooth rotation of leadership, current leaders reach out to others and invite them to serve, so that the next generation will be ready to assume the role when the time comes.

Over time, it is necessary for even the best and most experienced leaders to step aside and make room for new leaders, thus allowing fresh ideas and perspectives to be brought to the table. Especially when a leader feels unable to continue in their role or to fulfill their duties due to life changes, they can let go of worry and step down before the end of their term, trusting the

outcome to Higher Power. We trust that Higher Power will ensure the appearance of new leaders when the time is right.

The principles of Concept Nine can also be applied in our workplaces, communities, and families. Healthy leadership supports the stability and growth of the organizations where we work and volunteer, and of the communities in which we live. Great ideas can be talked about and agreed upon, but without leaders who are committed to seeing those visions come to life, such ideas may molder into obscurity. With good leaders at all levels of our organizations, we accomplish more as individuals and as groups.

Concept Nine paves the way for our policy of service rotation, guiding us to avoid seats of perilous power at all levels of the fellowship. Our COSA fellowship will remain strong and sober when we carefully elect good leadership throughout our service structure. Over time, the responsibility for leadership and stewardship must be passed on to others. As we keep our focus on what's best for COSA as a whole, we develop trust, respect, and humility, which serve us well in all areas of our lives.