



# Anonymity: What does it really mean?

Prior to recovery, my understanding of anonymity was limited to what I derived from the dictionary: “unnamed, unknown, or name not made public.” However, through my time in recovery, my understanding of anonymity has evolved. I’ve come to truly appreciate the ways this spiritual principle impacts my life.

I was not familiar with Twelve Step recovery programs prior to coming to COSA so I didn’t really understand why anonymity was such an important component of them. Once I discovered my life had been affected by compulsive sexual behavior, the wisdom behind anonymity suddenly became very clear to me. The concept of anonymity (not making names public) brought great relief to me when I entered my first COSA meeting. I shuddered at the thought of anyone knowing that I was attending any kind of Twelve Step meeting; this in itself seemed shame-inducing to me. Despite my fear and shame, I was devastated and drowning in pain, needing the support of those who’d been through what I was experiencing. In those early days of recovery, I only understood the practical aspect of anonymity, but it was a powerful and welcome protection for me.


As I began to open up and share in the meetings, it seemed contradictory that I could be anonymous by the dictionary’s definition: “unknown.” The reality was that my fellows in those rooms were coming to know me intimately. They knew details of my life that my dearest friends outside of recovery had no idea about.

Once inside the safety of that anonymous gathering, I could share whatever was on my mind or heart without judgment...”

To the outside world it looked like I had it all together. No one could have imagined what was going on in my private life. Once inside the safety of that anonymous gathering, I could share whatever was on my mind or heart without



## IN THIS ISSUE

Anonymity .....	Cover
Profile of a COSA Meeting .....	3
<i>ZOOMing into a Video Meeting</i>	
Donations .....	3
Letter from the Chair .....	4
2018 Convention .....	5
<i>Details and Information</i>	
<i>Registration Form</i>	
	
Step One .....	10
Step Two .....	11
Tradition One .....	12
Tradition Two .....	13
Literature in Development .....	14
<i>January 31 Response Deadline for</i>	
<i>Basic Text Feedback on</i>	
Tradition One	
Concept One	
Concept Two	
COSA Tools - Outreach Calls	

## Anonymity: What Does it Really Mean?

continued

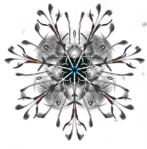
judgment and I would be truly understood and supported. It wasn't long before that gathering place became more than just safe; it became sacred to me. I still cherish the implicit promise made by all members in the meeting that we will protect one another's anonymity and keep what is said confidential. With my Higher Power's grace and that beautiful promise, my understanding of anonymity expanded from being just a practical principle to a spiritual principle.

Being intimately known within my meeting developed a new kind of trust and comfort inside me and led to an even deeper understanding of anonymity: that of being equal. True healing required me to be real, honest, and vulnerable. For me, part of that meant shedding the armor of illusions like status or titles. I had clung to them for security out in the world because I didn't feel I was enough without them. But in COSA, there's no hierarchy, no experts or bosses; everyone is equal. Whatever hats I wore and hid behind in the world got left outside the doors of the meeting rooms. I entered with just my stripped down, unadorned humanness and my most spiritual self, equal with everyone in the room.

I recently attended a lovely, traditional tea ceremony. One part of it resonated with me as a metaphor for the equality that spiritual anonymity brings. The ceremony was full of symbolism and rituals, many with spiritual meanings. One of the final steps in the ceremony involves pouring all the steeping tea from a metal or clay tea pot into a clear glass tea pot immediately before it is poured into the guests' tea cups. This translucent vessel is called the Fair Tea Pot. The purpose of this step is to show all the guests that they are each being served the same tea. The man or woman of high standing doesn't get the stronger tea and the dregs are not given to the person of humble means. Everyone can see that they are being treated fairly by each of them receiving the same quality. The message is that they are all equally important. In COSA this is also the case: all members are equally important, which is why we place principles before personalities.

As my understanding deepened further, anonymity helped me see that all the hats and labels I wore were self-limiting burdens. By removing those labels, I am now "unknown" by them. In this way, the essence of who I am is free to go beyond what my job description says I am, or how any other label attempts to define or limit me. It also allows me to have an active relationship with my Higher Power, not the static one from my past. With a Higher Power guiding my life and with spiritual anonymity as tool of my recovery, I no longer need that falsely perceived armor anymore. Anonymity doesn't make me invisible; it reveals all the beauty, gifts, and value of the self that my Higher Power intended me to be.

~Anonymous



But in  
COSA,  
there's no  
hierarchy,  
no experts  
or bosses;  
everyone is  
equal.

### International Diversity in Writing Statement

As the *Balance* receives more articles from our members from around the world, you may notice different spelling and word usage. We want to maintain the original voice of each author, so that we can benefit from COSA's beautiful diversity.

# Profile of a COSA Meeting

I LOVE ZOOM MEETINGS!

My world has changed so much since the spring of 2008, when I was referred to COSA by a therapist my husband was seeing at a rehab facility. Having been in a Twelve Step program for eating disorders earlier in life, I knew to get involved, get a sponsor, and work the Steps. But I was just so stuck in shame, embarrassment, and yes, anger that I was told to do the work, when it was HIM who was the problem...or so I believed.

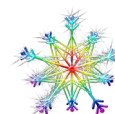
I found the old mIRC meetings early on and met some nice people who seemed far saner than I. Also, I found a partners of sex addicts email list and met more people who seemed to be living much more fully than I was, given that I was mired in my wrath and fear. It was there that I connected with my first COSA sponsor. She was wonderful, and firm, which I needed. I muddled along, working the Steps with my wonderful sponsor, but the lack of personal connection left me somewhat detached.

When cyber conference meeting rooms became readily available to the public via simple apps, some of us COSAs began to talk about what it would be like to start having cyber face-to-face (F2F) meetings. In the spring of 2015, we began holding Zoom COSA Recovery F2F meetings. Immediately, it became a personally connecting experience to be able to see each others' faces, hear each others' voices, see body language and meet others' pets and small children after the meeting, when appropriate. Zoom meetings have energized my personal program through connecting with others who understand this journey, and who are also working the Steps and implementing the tools in everyday life for heightened personal and spiritual growth.

Zoom meetings have now grown into five well-attended open meetings and three Step meetings each week. Another Step meeting is our hope for the near future. The Zoom meeting room is busy during non-meeting times when sponsors/sponsees meet up to work the Steps, and other COSAs meet for friendly chat and/or support during rough times, no matter what the time of day or night. Additionally, the growing Zoom COSA family has created an Intergroup and joined together in honoring the Seventh Tradition, which now covers not only the expense of the Zoom app, but also the [cosazoomroom.com](http://cosazoomroom.com) website, plus Zoom Seventh Tradition has sent its first generous donation to the ISO.

I so LOVE the Zoom family of COSAs and the rich growing recovery of the many members of the live face-to-face meetings.

~Joy/Grateful Zoom COSA Recovery meeting member



*Every COSA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

When sending donations to the ISO of COSA, please include your meeting number so we can record it properly and post it in the Balance. We thank you for all your donations!

To find your meeting number:

- Go to [www.cosa-recovery.org](http://www.cosa-recovery.org), click on the Meetings and Events tab, and then on Find a Local Meeting.
- Search for your meeting and note the meeting number in parentheses next to your meeting name.

## Seventh Tradition: Financial Report: September/October Donations

COSA Telemeeting (TEL-08) .....	\$ 150.00
COSA Eleventh Step Meeting (TEL-11) .....	\$ 176.20
Spanish Telemeeting (TEL-14) .....	\$ 100.00
Tempe (AZ-02).....	\$ 30.00
East Bay (CA-09).....	\$ 110.00
Long Beach (CA-23).....	\$ 100.00
Costa Mesa (CA-39).....	\$ 120.00
Winter Park (FL-11) .....	\$ 175.00
Memphis (TN-03).....	\$ 115.00
Individual Recurring Donations.....	\$ 2896.00
Individual Single Donations .....	\$ 30.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 3,576.00</b>





# Letter from the ISO Board Chair

Happy New Year!

We are grateful that as we begin this new year, all of our International Service Organization of COSA committees are active.

That may sound like a strange thing to be grateful for... But, for several years, the committees that carried the message through outreach and helped the fellowship honor the Seventh Tradition were deactivated due to lack of volunteers.

Now, they're both up and running.

The outreach committee is working to make it easier for local meetings to do outreach in their immediate areas. The resource development committee is sorting out what it will take to set up a planned giving program.

Both of these committees are working to build the strength of our fellowship. I am awed by those who have stepped up to serve in these capacities.

If you have an interest in doing work in either of these areas, or if you would like to help COSA with any of its other committees (literature, technology, budget & finance, convention), please contact [nominations@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:nominations@cosa-recovery.org) for more information.

In Service,

Emily G.  
ISO of COSA Board Chair



## ISO of COSA Diversity Statement

- COSA Diversity is consistent with the Third Tradition of COSA, which states that the only requirement for COSA membership is that our lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior.
- The COSA Fellowship welcomes all genders, all varieties of relationship to the addict, all religious and spiritual preferences, all employment statuses, all marital statuses, all ethnicities, cultures, and languages. COSA does not discriminate on the basis of class, sexual orientation or gender identification, physical or mental challenges, race, financial status, or national origins.
- In COSA, we find hope whether or not there is a sexually addicted person currently in our lives.
- COSA Diversity is consistent with the First Tradition of COSA, which states that our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on COSA unity.



## 2018 ISO of COSA International Convention

### The Washington Inn

### Memorial Day Weekend

### May 25-28, 2018

#### Welcome to Oakland, CA

This is the once-a-year event where you may obtain valuable information about working the Steps, reflect and grow in your recovery, and connect with other COSAs. This convention kicks off with a speaker on Friday night followed by two days of workshops and panels on a variety of recovery topics. Special functions will feature speakers who share their recovery stories. There will be a variety of COSA Twelve Step meetings, a meditation room, and many opportunities for fun and fellowship. Please join us as we get **Rooted In Recovery!**

#### 2018 Program and COSA Speakers

You are invited to attend and to expand your recovery through participating in the many events and opportunities available. Workshops, speakers, meetings and informal gatherings allow members from many regions to share experience, strength, and hope with each other. This year we have some exciting things planned. On Saturday and Sunday we will have workshops and panels. Saturday's luncheon will include a buffet and speaker. Sunday evening we will gather for a special banquet followed by a SAA speaker sharing recovery from sex addiction as well as a COSA speaker sharing recovery from the effects of compulsive sexual behavior. On Monday we will be focusing on re-entry with activities to help with the transition to daily life which will include tools to take with you. Additional information will be posted and updated at <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2018>. Please email [convention@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:convention@cosa-recovery.org) if you have any questions.

#### Hotel & Convention Location

This year's convention will be held at the Washington Inn at Oakland. To make a hotel reservation call The Washington Inn at 510-452-1776 and give them our Group Code (ISO18) or book online by going to [thewashingtoninn.com](http://thewashingtoninn.com) [click on the Reservations tab, enter your preferred dates, Check Availability --it will say no rooms are available for those dates because we have reserved all the available 40 rooms in the hotel--enter ISO18 in the box marked Group/Promotional Code and select your preferred room type (the available rooms have one queen bed). Any additional information will be posted and updated at <http://cosa-recovery.org/2018/HotellInfo.html>.

#### Service Scholarships

The COSA service scholarship fund will provide financial assistance to COSAs on a first-come, first-served basis, helping with the registration fee. COSA service scholarships are funded entirely by fellow COSAs; donations to this fund are greatly appreciated. To apply for a scholarship, register online and follow the

*continued from previous page*

instructions provided. Service scholarships require volunteer hours at the convention (4-hour minimum) and are limited. A fee of \$50 is required for every registrant requesting a scholarship. This includes an administrative fee of \$25 which is nonrefundable if cancelled after May 15, 2018.

### **Care & Support**

Part of the convention experience is receiving recovery support. Convention mentors are available to attendees to guide them through the convention process. Indicate your need for a mentor or willingness to serve as a mentor on your registration. COSA members also provide support to attendees throughout the convention.

### **Volunteering**

Our convention is run entirely by volunteers. Please consider helping with registration, hospitality, Twelve Step meetings, the silent auction, sound recording of meetings, or in other ways. Indicate your willingness to help when registering and you will be contacted by the Volunteer Committee.

### **Silent Auction Donations**

A fun way of raising seed money for the next convention is our silent auction. Please consider a donation, which you can bring or ship to the convention. You can donate to the silent auction even if you don't attend. For any questions, including shipping instructions, please contact [silentauction@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:silentauction@cosa-recovery.org). Also available to purchase with registration are two swag items for purchase: black polo shirts and convention totes! Your purchase goes toward seed money for the next convention which is a win-win for all of us!

For additional information, consult the website at [www.cosa-recovery.org/2018](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2018) or contact the COSA Convention Committee at [convention@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:convention@cosa-recovery.org).



**“Please consider assisting fellowship members who are not connected to the internet in printing the registration form and assist by explaining how to register via mail/paper registrations or by helping them to register online if possible”**

# DESTINATION OAKLAND

Oakland and the greater San Francisco Bay area offer plenty of attractions for COSAs who want to come a few days before or stay a few days after the Annual Convention which will be held May 25-28.

The Marriott City Center, immediately across the street from The Washington Inn, lists nearby attractions with [website links](#) on its website. You'll find information about Chinatown, Lake Merritt, Fairyland, historic buildings and museums, the Oakland Zoo, the Paramount and Fox theaters, area neighborhoods, and other popular locations.

Other resources and attractions in the Oakland and greater San Francisco area include:

**Jack London Square:** Just a half-mile from The Washington Inn, this vibrant waterfront area features restaurants, shops, entertainment, special events, a movie theater, boat tours, kayak rentals, and more. Of note: Yoshi's sushi restaurant here features live jazz; advance tickets required. <http://www.jacklondonsquare.com>

**Lake Merritt:** Walking, jogging, kayaking, tennis, gardens, nature, Fairyland for children, and more can be enjoyed at and around the Jewel of Oakland. <http://www2.oaklandnet.com/government/o/opr/s/Parks/OAK032396>

**Bay Bridge:** Walk, bike, or rollerblade a path on the new Bay Bridge to Treasure Island, the midway point to San Francisco. It is about 6 miles round trip. You can also walk one way and get an Uber ride back. <http://baybridgeinfo.org/>

**Tilden Park:** In the hills of Oakland and Berkeley, this is a wonderful place for walking and hiking. <http://www.ebparks.org/parks/tilden.htm>

**University of California-Berkeley:** Walk about the campus or check out restaurants and boutique shopping along College Avenue (accessible via BART getting off at the Rockridge Station). <http://www.berkeley.edu/>

**Visit Oakland:** 100 things to do in Oakland including an event listing, arts and culture, nightlife, sports, recreation, tours, etc. [www.visitoakland.com](http://www.visitoakland.com)

**San Francisco Travel:** Find information on a variety of Bay Area attractions like the Golden Gate Bridge, Cable Cars, Alcatraz Island, Golden Gate Park, Pier 39, Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown, Coit Tower, Union Square, the Embarcadero, and more! <http://www.sftravel.com/>

**Independent music listings:** <http://thebaybridged.com/>

**SF 511:** Trip planning, including public transportation and traffic information: <https://511.org>

**BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit):** <https://www.bart.gov/>

**San Francisco Bay Ferry:** Jack London Square is one of its ports. <https://sanfranciscobayferry.com>



**REGISTRATION**  
**Convention and Delegate**  
(click [here](#) to download printable form)

2018 ISO of COSA Annual Convention  
The Washington Inn  
Memorial Day Weekend May 25-28, 2018

Please complete the following:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

City, State/Country \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name tag (suggested format is first name, last initial, city, state, country if outside USA):

\_\_\_\_\_

**Convention Registration Fees**

**Full Registration Fees** (Friday May 25 - Monday May 28, 2018)

- Early Bird Registration (by April 1, 2018) (Saturday lunch & Sunday dinner included) .....\$175
- Online Pre-Registration (April 1, 2017 - May 10, 2018) (Sat lunch & Sun dinner included) ...\$190
- Walk-in Registration for the entire weekend (meals not included).....\$200

**Day Rates**

- Early Registration Saturday day rate by May 10, 2018 (includes Saturday lunch).....\$100
- Early Registration Sunday day rate by May 10, 2018 (includes Sunday dinner).....\$100
- On-site Registration Saturday day rate (no meal included) .....\$100
- On-site Registration Sunday day rate (no meals included) .....\$100

**Meals:** must be ordered & paid by May 10, 2018

- Saturday Luncheon with speaker (for additional guests).....\$ 60
- Sunday Dinner with speaker (for additional guests) .....\$ 60

**Indicate special dietary restrictions/preferences:**

- Vegan Vegetarian Gluten-free Dairy-free Sugar-free Kosher

**Scholarship Donation:** My donation to the scholarship fund \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Care & Support to Attendees**

- I am a first-time COSA convention attendee.
- I would like a "Convention Mentor" to support me at the convention.
- I would like a temporary sponsor at the convention.
- I will be a "Convention Mentor" to first-time convention COSA attendees.
- I will be a temporary sponsor to other returning convention COSA attendees.

**Additional Information**

- I am a delegate for my home fellowship (please note, delegate registration is done separately).
- I attend teleconference/telephone meetings (a phone icon is included on your badge).
- I attend online meetings (a computer icon will be included on your badge).

**I will volunteer (shift lengths will vary) to:**

- Work the registration table.
- Lead Twelve Step COSA meeting (materials provided).
- Work with the Silent Auction/Convention Store.
- Work in the ISO Bookstore.
- Be a Room Host (includes doing the recording of workshops).
- Work in the Hospitality Suite, where food & drink will be available.
- Help with the Silent Auction.
- Help provide Care & Support.
- Help with scheduling other volunteers.
- Help decorate COSA Banquet Room (Sunday night)

**Workshop and Panel Participation** (if checked, someone from the Program Committee will contact you)

- I am willing to be on a panel or workshop.
- I am willing to organize a panel or workshop.

Arrival Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE ISO of COSA Annual Convention is a 100-percent volunteer effort and we need your help!**

**Silent Auction Donation:** I will donate to the Silent Auction (Someone will contact you with further details)

**Payment** (required at time of registration) amount enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**If you are requesting a service scholarship, please complete the following:**

- I am requesting a service scholarship.
- I acknowledge that as a service scholarship recipient I am to pay the \$50 administrative fee (\$25 is non-refundable if cancelled after May 15, 2018) and volunteer for a minimum of four hours at the convention.

**Complete this form and send with check or money order in US\$ payable to ISO of COSA**

ISO of COSA - Convention Registration  
9219 Katy Freeway, Suite 212  
Houston, TX 77024

**Registration Online** Go to [www.cosa-recovery.org/2018](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2018) payment by credit card only (via website interface)



## Delegate Registration

ISO of COSA Annual Meeting | May 25, 2018 | Oakland, California

- This is my first delegate meeting.
- I will be attending the delegate meeting via video conference using ZOOM.
- I would like a delegate mentor.
- I would be willing to be a delegate mentor.

List your Meeting (include meeting number): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Alternate Delegate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fee for Delegates Attending in Person: \$63**

**Registration Fee for Delegates Attending via ZOOM Video Conference: \$19**

Our Zoom attendance is limited to 20, but we've never exceeded that limit. There are still spots open.

Registration/payment must be received by ISO no later than May 10, 2018.

### Delegate Certification

This certifies that the above individual(s) have been elected to represent our group at the ISO of COSA Annual Delegate Meeting.

\*Your COSA Group's Trusted Servant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Trusted Servant's Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Delegate Certification \_\_\_\_\_

You must be registered no later than May 10, 2018

Delegates with late registrations are welcome to participate  
but will not have voting privileges or be provided with a lunch.

No refunds after May 15, 2018



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

My powerlessness started when I was a little girl. My mother is an alcoholic and came from an alcoholic home. When I was growing up, she was angry, cried a lot, and was not in control of her emotions. I was criticized and humiliated a lot. When Mom cried or was unhappy (which was much of the time), I felt helpless and inadequate. I internalized these feelings of inadequacy and believed I was somehow responsible for her unhappiness. I did not know that I was not responsible for anyone's happiness but my own, and I had no control over another person's feelings. My little life was already unmanageable.

My childhood experiences led to struggles and confusion in all of my adult relationships. I did not know how to form healthy, intimate relationships. The thought of emotional intimacy terrified me. My fear of being hurt undermined my ability to form the companionship I longed for. My ability to know if and when I was safe was distorted; I constantly found myself in unhealthy and unsafe situations. Anger, mine or someone else's, paralyzed me; I avoided it at all costs.

Eventually, I became very isolated and thought I would die of loneliness. The pain got so great that one day in my late twenties, I prayed for a solution to my life. Shortly thereafter, in 1990, I began my journey in my first Twelve Step recovery program.

After ten years in this other Twelve Step recovery program, I met and married a kind, gentle, generous man. I was safe; he would not hurt me. He loved me; I loved him. It was the most intimate, trusting relationship, emotionally and sexually, I had ever experienced. God worked another miracle in my life. Two months into our marriage, I discovered his porn addiction. I experienced the trauma, fear, and anger that any COSA experiences. These feelings lasted a couple of years and I received no real help. I isolated and ate my way to almost 200 pounds. I tried everything to change him—rage, anger, silent treatment, abandonment, compassion, being sexy, being the best wife—you name it. Nothing worked. My life was unmanageable and I was truly powerless, again!

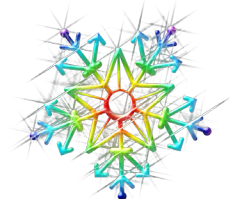
My hope was the knowledge that Twelve Step recovery programs worked; I was a living example of it. If my husband sought help in a Twelve Step program, there would always be hope.

After twelve years of marriage, he hit bottom and found Twelve Step recovery for his addiction. That is when I found COSA. Twenty-two years into my own personal recovery I found new hope in COSA.

What have I learned? My husband's affliction has nothing to do with me. I didn't cause it, I can't cure it, and I can't control it, but I CAN contribute to the insanity of it. My recovery is not dependent upon the success or failure of my husband's recovery; my recovery is dependent upon what I do in my own recovery. I am not my husband's Higher Power, recovery manager, supervisor, or sponsor, and I am not responsible for my husband's successes or failures in recovery. I have learned to practice strong boundaries. Sometimes what seems easier or feels better is not necessarily the right decision for me. I am able to make tough decisions in order to take care of myself. I have lost my fear of anger and have learned to express my anger. If I am not taking care of myself physically, emotionally, and spiritually, my life can become unmanageable. I am not responsible for anyone's happiness but my own.

I am grateful today for COSA and the support and guidance I receive.

~Mary  
Naples, FL





*Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

I had been attending COSA meetings for almost two years when I completed Step One. It took me a long time to take that proverbial first step—not because I wasn't ready to begin my stride into serenity and freedom; it was more that I was afraid to tell my story out loud to my COSA Community (okay, "afraid" may not be exactly how I was feeling—perhaps "terrified" would be more accurate). So here I stood, for a VERY long time, motionless at the bottom of my personal stairway, staring at the pictures on the wall, the images of a happy relationship now unrecognizable.

However, after completing Step One, for the first time in my life I knew I was powerless over someone else's behavior. In the past, utilizing this particular defense mechanism of attempting to control someone else had allowed me to fool myself into a false sense of safety. Now, from my place on this First Step, I could see it wasn't working. For me, control equaled comfort, so admitting I had no control was inconsistent with my well-being. Discomfort, for me, is a motivation to change. My place on the First Step immediately became uncomfortable. I wanted to climb, and climb quickly.

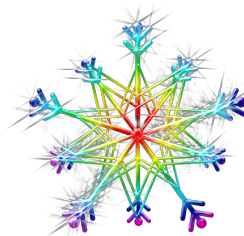
Of course, not only do old habits die hard, but one can quickly become dependent upon them again without a new tool to replace that now obsolete routine. After admitting I was out of control, and that my life had become unmanageable, I began immediately to attempt to control my situation again—not because I wanted to maintain this skill, but because I hadn't found any new tools yet to replace it. I found some strange sense of comfort in my anger and unmanageability. I was still really angry at my husband, and therefore could blame him and HIS addiction for my insanity. If I were to be TOTALLY honest with myself, these feelings and behaviors felt all too familiar. The part of me that wanted to control everything, believed that without the anger, my husband would relapse. Without my insanity, I'd be forced to look at my own life through the eyes of a sane person. That frightened me in a way I'd never been frightened throughout this whole ordeal. I was scared; I was on a very unfamiliar road, and I was really confused.

Yet, I was NOT alone. For the first time in my life, I had a supportive, sane family—my COSA group. I couldn't have told my story about Step One without trusting my COSA family. Taking Step Two is very different. My task wasn't about trusting them; instead, it was about accepting trust and support FROM them. Only then could I relinquish control.

In retrospect, I appreciate why Step Two immediately follows Step One. Step One, for me, was easy. I could admit easily that what I'd been doing had landed me in CrazyVille. (By the way, a First Class ticket to CrazyVille comes with few amenities. There are no peanuts, no heated washcloths, and no hope). However, there's hope built into Step Two—in the form of a Higher Power guiding me back to Sanity Town like the calm lady's voice on Google Maps. All I had to do was relinquish my place in the driver's seat, and hand over the keys. Best of all, for me, is that all of this takes place as a shift—as a change in consciousness, as a growth in outlook, as an opening of my heart.

I held my breath, and I stepped forward for the first time onto my Second Step. My life has never been the same.

~Lori M. (Connecticut Hope and Love)





*Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon COSA unity.*

I believe in the principle of group unity – although I didn't come to COSA feeling this way. In my family of origin, group unity felt like denial of my own reality and experience.

Today, I know that deferring to the group keeps me humble and leads to solutions I could have never envisioned on my own. It has taken many years for me to find this path.

In our beautiful fellowship, I have seen various COSA groups time and time again change their thinking on a particular issue or subject and watch how the group's growth and sobriety evolves over time. It has been incredible to see Higher Power weave this together.

From doing my own work, I have found that my assets in supporting group unity are: I am thoughtful and considerate, I value harmony, I pray before speaking, I pray when there is conflict, and I respect others' viewpoints even when they are very different than my own.

My character defects take over when I feel unsafe around someone who behaves in a way that seems to me mentally ill or emotionally unsober, or when I think someone in the meeting is trying to run the show. I want to shut down and leave when someone does this. I also don't like it when someone is angry and/or anxious and I think they are trying to control outcomes. I can get judgmental under these circumstances. I can also get impatient when I think people are talking or rambling. I can literally feel like these people are threatening my recovery by not being in a spirit of unity. That feels unsafe to me. I also don't like myself as well when I am exhibiting the very behaviors I spot in others as feeling "unsafe."

However, since I know the group's unity is crucial for my individual recovery I have learned to care for myself in these situations. My best efforts involve praying for everyone around me, taking care of myself, leaving if I need to, or speaking up. I can often be of service when I think consensus is taking too long by suggesting we defer a vote, or by excusing myself.

I consistently find it a challenge to balance the spirit of harmony and unity with caring for my own personal welfare. This is as challenging in business meetings as it is in my personal life. I tend to have a blind spot for caring for my own personal welfare when others are around. Connecting with God's will and with other recovering COSAs is critical for my being able to balance my own self care with my desire to be of service.

~Sarah S.



**BY THE FELLOWSHIP  
FOR THE FELLOWSHIP**



We encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles and announcements that share up-coming COSA events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers, etc. 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.

Guidelines for Submitting Literature: [http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/lit\\_guidelines.pdf](http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/lit_guidelines.pdf)

Please send your articles to [COSACopy@yahoo.com](mailto:COSACopy@yahoo.com)  
or by mail to: ISO of COSA, Central Office, 9219 Katy Freeway, Suite 212, Houston, TX 77024 U.S.A.

Phone: 866-899-2672 E-mail: [info@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:info@cosa-recovery.org)

*Balance*, the newsletter of the International Service Organization of COSA is published six times a year. The ISO holds the copyright to this newsletter Editing, Design, Production & Layout by COSA Literature Committee.





*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-- a loving God as expressed in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

I try to honor the group's decisions or views on something even if I do not agree. My experience has been that the group may agree on something and then shift its opinion later, so I don't need to worry about a group conscience or feel responsible for it. Following the group's conscience means I respect it and I am free to bring something up at a business meeting if I do not agree. This has been a long process of letting go for me!

Most of the time I value harmony so I feel inclined to want to be in alignment with the group. I find it difficult when others disagree with the group conscience when it feels like there is disagreement just for the sake of disagreement. I don't like conflict so it is hard for me when a group is not in agreement. And I find it hard at times to disagree with the group.

I sometimes abstain when I feel unsure and that feels like integrity to me, honoring that I am unclear. This gives me a vehicle when I am unsure. I am grateful for being able to abstain from voting when I am unclear.

In my personal relationships I also want group conscience and harmony and I struggle when it is not there. I feel fear around not having a group conscience and not being able to agree. This is where I really need my Step Ten practice to help me ask God to lift the fear so that I can be of better service to others and myself.

I also have a fear of authority and of losing authority in situations and in relationships. This can make me controlling at times. When I was growing up, to me, authority meant punishment, cruelty, and lack of safety. I have come to learn that some authority actually is safe. It is okay to question authority and I don't have to rebel against it or be in fear around authority. I can easily make others an authority though and feel "in danger." I have to be careful with this. When I make someone else an "authority" that can easily slip into making that person my Higher Power.

What I love about Tradition Two is that it says the authority is a loving God. That feels safe and reassuring to me. I trust God's authority and feel like I will be treated fairly and justly by God. This is an incredible relief to me!

~Sarah S.



Dear COSA friends,

The Literature Committee has been working hard to develop the newest sections of our COSA basic text. This book will be a valuable resource for all, including newcomers. It will offer insights into the COSA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, and will include a variety of COSA stories and tools illustrating the miracles of recovery. In order to ensure the book accurately reflects the diversity of COSA perspectives, as well as our common understanding of the COSA program, we present each of these draft chapters to the fellowship for feedback. Feedback for this section of the book can be submitted via email November 1, 2017, through January 31, 2018.

Please read through each draft and send us your comments and suggestions. It may also be fun and helpful to review it with your meeting or group! We will consider all feedback received and final editing decisions will be made by the Literature Committee. We have included feedback guidelines below. Utilizing these feedback guidelines will allow us to apply the feedback received in an efficient manner.

Lastly, after the feedback has been applied to these drafts, final revised versions will be posted on the COSA website for all fellowship members and delegates to review by April 20, 2018. These proposed chapters will then be voted on for approval by the delegates at the 2018 Annual Delegate Meeting.

#### Feedback Guidelines

- Feedback can be submitted to [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com).
- 
- Please submit your feedback by **January 31, 2018**.
- 
- Please communicate your thoughts in a respectful manner.
- 
- Please reference a line number for each piece of feedback.
- 
- Please do not insert comments or suggestions into the document.
- 
- Please do not submit a rewritten document.

Please explain any changes you are suggesting. For example, “In line 64 I would like abc changed because xyz.” We want to ensure that when a change is made, it will produce the desired result.

Types of feedback include grammar (spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, verb tense, etc.), content (principles and presentation of the Tradition, Concept or tool, paragraph structure and placement, flow, etc.), and overall opinion (please include your opinion on paragraphs or sections that you like or relate to as well as those you would like to see changed).

Click here to access the new draft chapters:

[Tradition One](#)

[Concept One](#)

[Concept Two](#)

[COSA Tools - Outreach Calls](#)

Thank you,

Your COSA Literature Committee

