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When Things Fall Apart, and Come Back Together, and Fall Apart Again... The Evolving and Transformational Gift of the Twelve Steps

There's a fascinating magic that happens when we work our steps; whether we are just contemplating how to process Step One, in the middle of making amends in Step Nine, or walking into Step Twelve searching for ways to be of service and carry the message. This magic requires that we place our intentions on the Step ahead of us and diligently commit to working this Step (even when we are crushed, beat, and have zero hope or motivation). As we slowly move forward, each step naturally and gently opens the door for us to comfortably greet the next one. This grace lovingly prepares us for what's to come. Many of us have been broken and bruised so badly that we have zero faith in the beginning; all we have is this strong desire to feel better, and sometimes it is only this desperation that gets us to actually do the work.

I remember going to my first meeting in desperate need for answers: how do I fix the person that is crushing my heart? I thought this was the only answer to relieving my pain. At the end of the meeting everyone stood in a circle and read "I Put My Hand in Yours" and closed with "Keep coming back. It works!" With nothing to lose, I took their word and kept going back, committing to doing whatever it was they were saying "works," because everything else I had tried for my 30-plus years of life had failed. You can imagine my disappointment when the first Step was to admit I was powerless, because that meant that I had to admit that I had zero power to change people (although, rather than the word "change" I liked to call it "positively influencing" through various creative approaches).

Step Two didn't make it any easier on me; I then had to turn my life and my will over to my Higher Power which felt like a major threat to my existence. I thought that I knew what was best, and the best way to go about making that "best" life happen. But as I slowly let go of my will, I was pleasantly surprised at how my life unfolded in ways I couldn't have ever imagined, and in so many positive ways. Life was actually starting to feel "free" and lighter for the first time; and that required letting go of my desire to control the outcome. This is the Step where my faith was awakened. Ironically, the only way to get this faith, is by taking that one step forward. One step at a time. One day at a time. Eventually, we make a little progress, which builds upon our faith: faith

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that we can trust the Steps, and faith that without grasping and clinging and attaching to our need to control the outcome of our inevitably changing, uncertain life, everything is going to work out just fine.

As we courageously move forward, our faith becomes equivalent to unwavering confidence, and this confidence is priceless. What we come to see is that recovery isn't about life getting better. It's about us getting better at living it. We begin to see more clearly. We think more clearly. But we never forget that we will always have more to learn, and that our vision isn't 100%. We begin to love more boldly. We are braver and more courageous. We have unwavering faith and confidence in ourselves and our ability to overcome and pull through.

Recovery is about being grateful for, and finding meaning in all of it. But recovery is NOT about being perfect. Through recovery we learn to embrace and love ourselves completely, and in turn we learn to embrace and love others completely as well. Through this new-found clarity and love, we understand and trust that everything in our life is unfolding exactly as it is meant to, exactly when it is meant to. This brings a sense of calmness and peace, even when we inevitably experience ups and downs. Because of this faith and peace, we have so much more energy to put into the more important things in life, like giving back, being of service, helping others, bringing hope, joy, and just living in the moment, because that is the only thing we actually have control over: how we are living right now in this moment. So make this moment a good one.

Grateful COSA,
~Tamiko

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 *Balance*. We thank you for all your donations!

To find your meeting number:

- Go to <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.

RECURRING DONATIONS

Keeping Updated

Thank you for your donations to the International Service Organization of COSA. Currently, our system is set to automatically update your credit card when it gets a new expiration date. If you need to increase, decrease, or cancel your recurring donations, please contact the ISO of COSA at iso@cosa-recovery.org. Thank you for your support!

Correction to July Group Donations

MN-02 Gratitude Group donation of \$100.00
MN-01 Mankato was incorrectly identified as Minneapolis for a donation of \$50.00.

Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

September 2018

UK Richmond (INT-26)	\$ 127.50
Houston (TX-43)	\$ 80.00
Individual Donations	\$ 1710.00
September Total.....	\$ 1916.50

October 2018

East Bay (CA-09).....	\$ 120.00
Irvine (CA-13)	\$ 140.00
Winter Park (FL-12).....	\$ 30.00
Carmel (IN-02).....	\$ 200.00
Newark (OH-09)	\$ 36.00
Kingwood (TX-23).....	\$ 60.00
Eau Claire (WI-04).....	\$ 50.00
Telemeeting Intergroup (TEL-08).....	\$ 550.00
Individual Donations	\$ 1628.00
October Total	\$ 2858.00

November 2018

Long Beach (CA-23).....	\$ 100.00
Boulder (CO-04)	\$ 23.00
Doylestown (PA-07).....	\$ 75.00
Houston Intergroup (TX-18).....	\$ 1500.00
Individual Donations	\$ 1400.00
November Total.....	\$ 3098.00

Note: Donations made on PayPal for November did not draft until December 7, 2018. Regular recurring donations on PaPal for December will draft on December 31, 2018.



Letter from the Chair

® Dear fellow COSAs,

Although we've recently begun a new year, COSA is at the mid-point of the 2018-2019 service year. While the pages on calendars are advancing forward, COSA is advancing forward with the beautiful momentum that our COSA committees have been building this service year. Each committee is in full swing as we begin heading into "Convention Season."

Our committees are staffed with volunteers who bring their personal interests and talents to the committees they feel a connection to. With like-minded individuals gathering for a common goal and guided by a Higher Power, it's no wonder our committees achieve so much each year.

While committees do the heavy lifting that keeps COSA moving forward, we also have some very special individuals in behind-the-scenes positions that take care of the fine details. They answer our phones and email. They may be the first point of contact for a newcomer. Some volunteers comb through past Balance articles to select our weekly meditation for COSAs in the Know. All of these individual volunteers are vital to our mission of carrying our message of hope.

I'm so inspired by all of this cooperative work and the COSAs who make it happen. I feel very fortunate to be able to witness this on the fellowship-wide scale that I see. I appreciate you all. I'm also very grateful to be able to be of service to our fellowship. You see, I'm a volunteer, too, and I love being able to give back to COSA.

With a full and happy heart,

Sandy S.
ISO of COSA Board Chair

Basic Text Chapters to Review

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. It also will include a variety of tools and COSA stories 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 are presenting each of these draft chapters to the fellowship for feedback. Feedback for this section of the book can be submitted via email from November 1, 2018 through January 31, 2019.

Each chapter goes through a rigorous writing and editing process before it reaches the fellowship. Also, it is vital that we get additional thoughts, comments and suggestions on the content from the fellowship. It may be fun and helpful to review it with your meeting or group! We will consider all feedback received by the deadline. Final editing decisions will be made by the Literature Committee. We have included feedback guidelines below. Utilizing these feedback guidelines will allow us to review the feedback received in an efficient manner.

After we have reviewed the feedback and made any necessary changes to these drafts, final revised versions will be posted on the COSA website for all fellowship members and delegates to review by April 20, 2019. These proposed chapters will then be voted on for approval by the delegates at the 2019 Annual Delegate Meeting.

Feedback Guidelines

- Feedback can be submitted to cosacopy@yahoo.com.
- Please submit your feedback by January 31, 2019.
- Please communicate your thoughts in a respectful manner.
- Please reference a page and 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 page 20, 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:

[Step Six draft](#)

[Step Seven draft](#)

[Traditon Two draft](#)

[Tradition Four draft](#)

[Tradition Five draft](#)

[Tradition Six draft](#)

[Concept Three draft](#)

[Concept Four draft](#)

[COSA Tools - Meetings draft](#)

Thank you,

Your COSA Literature Committee

2019 ISO of COSA International Convention



**The Méridien Hotel
Memorial Day Weekend
May 24-27, 2019**

Welcome to Houston, TX

You're invited to the Annual COSA Convention, Memorial Day Weekend, in Houston, Texas. Houston is the most diverse city in North America, and that diversity makes Houston stronger. Like Houston, COSAs have diverse stories, which strengthens our fellowship. Join us as we all learn from each other to grow individually and together in our experience, strength, and hope as we hear about working the Steps, delve into the recovery process, and connect with other COSAs. The convention begins with a speaker on Friday night followed by two days of workshops and panels on a variety of recovery topics, recovery stories, COSA Twelve Step meetings, a meditation room, and many opportunities for fun and fellowship. Please join us and see how **United We Are Strong!**

2019 Program and COSA Speakers

There will be workshops, speakers, meetings and informal gatherings to allow members from across the globe to share experience, strength, and hope. Saturday and Sunday will include workshops and panels. Saturday's luncheon will include a buffet and speaker. Sunday evening is our special banquet followed by a COSA speaker sharing a personal recovery journey, then an SAA speaker sharing recovery from sex addiction. Monday will focus on self-care and re-entry back into daily life. Additional information will be posted and updated at <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2019>. Please email convention@cosa-recovery.org if you have any questions.

Hotel, Transportation & Convention Location and Pricing

This year's convention will be held at Le Méridien, a fantastic new hotel in the heart of Houston. Convention attendees will receive special convention pricing of \$149 per night for king or double queen, including free in-room wi-fi, free shuttles to many local attractions, and free access to Houston museums for a week with a room key. Look for specific room reservation information in future Balance articles, in emails, and online at <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2019>.

William P. Hobby Airport (HOU) and George Bush Intercontinental Airport (IAH) are 10 and 21 miles away, respectively, from the hotel. An Uber, Lyft, or Super Shuttle ride is the easiest way to travel from the airports. Uber estimates rides from IAH are \$28, SuperShuttle is \$21 for a shared ride. Uber estimates from HOU are \$14 and Super Shuttle is \$21 for a shared ride.

Convention pricing is as follows.

Full Registration Fees (Friday, May 24 - Monday, May 27, 2019)

Early Bird Registration (ends March 15, 2019) (Sat. lunch & Sun. dinner included).....	\$185
Online Pre-Registration (March 16, 2019 – April 29, 2019) (Sat. lunch & Sun. dinner included) ...	\$195
Regular Registration (online by May 15 or walk in for the entire weekend (no meals).....	\$100

Day Rates

Early Registration Saturday day rate by April 29, 2019 (includes Saturday lunch).....	\$105
Early Registration Sunday day rate by April 29, 2019 (includes Sunday dinner).....	\$130
On-site Registration Saturday day rate (no meals included)	\$50
On-site Registration Sunday day rate (no meals included)	\$50

Meals (must be ordered & paid by April 25, 2019)

Saturday Luncheon with speaker (for each additional guest).....	\$ 55
Sunday Dinner with speaker (for each additional guest)	\$ 80

Service Scholarships

The COSA Service Scholarship Fund will provide financial assistance with the registration fee to COSAs on a first-come, first-served basis. 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 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 10, 2019.

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 and Service

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

There are a few, but important, positions that still need to be filled. Please contact the convention committee at convention@cosa-recovery.org if you are willing to fill a role. Many hands make the load light!

Co-Program Chair, Communications: Be the point person for three subcommittees: COSA meetings, Quiet room, and Outer Circle. The subcommittee positions are already filled, we just need a coordinator.

Media Chair: Work with the Program Committee to help format the program, prepare attendee folders, and other related tasks.

Outreach Chair: Communicate convention information from other chairs to COSA meetings, Intergroups, and others who would benefit from convention information.

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. Your donation 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/2019 or contact the COSA Convention Committee at convention@cosa-recovery.org.

Le Méridien Hotel is located in the heart of Houston's cultural center. Downtown Houston offers 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 24-27.

Le Méridien is a four diamond, Marriott hotel created in 2017, with wonderful accommodations including free Wi-Fi for registered hotel guests, free shuttles to a multitude of places, a fantastic rooftop lounge, a large gym, and even free entry into Houston museums for a week.

Le Méridien Hotel's website lists a plethora of local attractions from live theater and concerts in the arts district to shopping to the museum district with free shuttles to all locations listed on their website <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/local-things-to-do/houdm-le-meridien-houston-downtown/>. Many of the sites listed are also within walking distance, as is the Houston Metro rail line.

In addition, there will be specific outings planned on Sunday such as the NASA Space Center and the Kemah Boardwalk.

Le Méridien Hotel has a fantastic onsite restaurant with many other bistros and restaurants within walking distance. A sampling is listed at <https://www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/houdm-le-meridien-houston-downtown/>

The SAA Convention is within a four-block walk and Le Méridien Hotel will have a shuttle available for those interested in participating in the SAA convention.





CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS FOR WORKSHOPS AND SPEAKER NOMINATIONS

Open for receiving proposals from December 1 thru January 10, 2019

Deadline for submissions January 10th

Hello fellow COSAs,

The Convention Committee would like your input! We are seeking nominations for speakers and proposals for panels and workshops for the 2019 Cosa Convention. Please think about:

- COSAs whose shares have made a lasting impact on your heart.
- If you have a particular passion for one of the Steps, Traditions, recovery tools, COSA sobriety or service or another topic relevant to COSA.

Any COSA can recommend a speaker. If you have COSA recovery, experience, strength and hope to share you may offer a workshop, or organize a panel. Your ideas are what make the convention great!

If you have questions about a specific Step, Tradition, or recovery tool, you can create a panel workshop and invite other COSAs to speak on it!

We are looking for speakers and workshops in both English and Spanish. If you are interested in presenting a workshop or nominating a speaker, please turn in your proposal between December 1 and January 10, 2019.

Please share this at your local and zoom meetings!

USE THE LINKS BELOW FOR WORKSHOP PROPOSALS AND SPEAKER NOMINATIONS.

WORKSHOP PROPOSAL FORM LINK:
<https://goo.gl/forms/yjraFVwF46ES8BME3>

SPEAKER NOMINATION FORM LINK:
<https://goo.gl/forms/j2B0Bogs9IGJ5RP12>

CALL FOR PARTICIPANTS ON PROPOSED PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Open for receiving proposals from December 1 thru January 10th

We are seeking participants to share their COSA recovery experience, strength, and hope in several pre-planned Panel Discussions in addition to those who wish to offer service in leading a workshop of their own design. See the Workshop Committee's list of Proposed Panel Discussions below.

Would you be willing to share your recovery experience on one of the topics below at the convention? Please complete a Workshop Proposal form as best you can at the link above and someone from the Program Committee will contact you to discuss your interest as a panelist. We look forward to hearing from you!

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PANEL DISCUSSIONS

DIVERSITY IN COSA RECOVERY

- We are a diverse group and welcome all genders, varieties of relationships, religions and spiritual preferences.
- Statuses: single, married, all relationship statuses and economic incomes- we are all affected.
- We learn from each other regardless of ethnicity, culture, language, or physical or mental challenges.
- Acceptance in COSA.

THE DECISION TO SEPARATE - IN MARRIAGE, WITH A PARTNER, OR FROM FAMILY MEMBERS or FRIENDS.

COSA members share their experience, strength and hope in making this decision.

- The outcome of separation, whether temporary or longer.
- What we learned as individuals and in our relationships.
- What changed, what improved.
- Focusing or refocusing on your personal recovery.
- Practicing self-care.
- Being supportive but not controlling or responsible for another's recovery.

SELF-CARE AFTER RELAPSE

COSA members share their experience, strength and hope on self-care after relapse.

- What are my needs in order to feel safe?
- What are my needs in order for us to stay in the same house?
- Clarifying, reviewing, and re-establishing my boundaries.
- Asking for an action plan - it's about safety.
- Technology boundaries.
- Broken trust - what needs to change?
- Re-energizing my personal recovery.

WORKING WITH THE NEWCOMER: GUIDANCE IN PREPARING A LIST OF NEEDS AND BOUNDARIES AFTER DISCOVERY

Helping the new comer understand what boundaries are.

- Working with the new comer to establish boundaries, when they are ready.
- Showing them simple tools of the program, to get them through each day.
- Sharing your own personal experience, strength and hope.
- Helping the new comer to define for themselves what it means to feel safe.
- Explaining physical or sexual boundaries, if it would be helpful.
- Encouraging words, recommended readings, etc.

SAA/COSA COUPLES MEETING PANEL DISCUSSION

Recovering couples share their experience, strength, and hope about being involved in their meetings and how this recovery has helped them both individually and as a couple.

- The benefits of sharing of ES&H with other couples
- Out of isolation as a couple, help from others in similar situations.
- Working with a sponsor couple.
- Learning new ways to communicate.
- Understanding our partners pain or anxiety like never before.
- Progress not perfection.

If you have questions or suggestions, please email the Program Committee at programcommittee@cosa-recovery.org.



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

2019 ISO of COSA Annual Convention
Le Méridien Hotel
1121 Walker St., Houston, TX 77002
Memorial Day Weekend May 24-27, 2019

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 U.S.):

Convention Registration Fees

Full Registration Fees (Friday, May 24 - Monday, May 27, 2019)

- Early Bird registration (ends March 15, 2019) (Sat. lunch & Sun. dinner included) \$185
- Online pre-registration (March 16, 2019 – April 29, 2019) (Sat. lunch & Sun. dinner included)..... \$195
- Regular registration (online by May 15 or walk in for the entire weekend (no meals)..... \$100

Day Rates

- Early registration Saturday day rate by April 29, 2019 (includes Saturday lunch)..... \$105
- Early registration Sunday day rate by April 29, 2019 (includes Sunday dinner)..... \$130
- On-site registration Saturday day rate (no meals included)\$50
- On-site registration Sunday day rate (no meals included)\$50

Meals must be ordered and paid by April 25, 2019

- Saturday luncheon with speaker (for each additional guest).....\$55
- Sunday dinner with speaker (for each additional guest)\$80

Indicate special dietary restrictions/preferences:

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

Scholarship Donation: My donation to the scholarship fund \$.....

Care & Support for 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 for 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 will be included on your badge).
- I attend online meetings (a computer icon will be included on your badge).

I will volunteer to (shift lengths will vary):

- Work the registration table
- Work during the Delegate Meeting (Friday only) as a Zoom volunteer
- Lead a COSA Twelve Step meeting (materials will be provided)
- Work in 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 and drink will be available
- Help with the Silent Auction before the Convention
- Help on the Care & Support team
- Help with scheduling other volunteers
- Help decorate the 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% volunteer effort and we need your help!

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

Yes _____ No _____ **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 10, 2019) and volunteer for a minimum of four hours at the convention.

Complete this form and send with check or money order in \$U.S. 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/2019 payment by credit card only (via website interface)

STEP 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9 · 10 · 11 · 12

WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER COMPULSIVE SEXUAL BEHAVIOR -- THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

On a deceptively sunny November day in 2016, I discovered that my husband is a sex addict.

The revelation was devastating. The gulf between the marriage I thought I had and the one I actually lived seemed unspannable. How could I have known him so long, yet known him so little? I was angry and hurt. Angry with myself, too, for being in this situation. All my choices seemed filled with pain, and I was overrun by grief for the marriage, the life, I had thought I had.

The first weeks were tortuous as his story came out. But I had hope in those first dark days. I had COSA meetings to come to, safe spaces where I was not the only person whose life had shattered. I had people to speak to about the swings in my emotions, my uncertainty about the future, the way my trust in the world had been undermined. And as I moved through my life from moment to moment, I looked for the bright spots. I saw over and over again how I was being taken care of, protected, loved, by something outside myself.

In the beginning I called it the Universe; later I identified that universal love as coming from a Higher Power that was akin to the God I grew up with...but a kinder, more compassionate version of that God.

There came a day in those early weeks I call my Rock Bottom Day. I'd learned a new detail, small but profound, and it shook me to my foundations. I couldn't decide whether I should continue to stay and work things out with my husband or leave him; what's more, I couldn't envision how I would even begin to make such a decision. I was paralyzed, in mind and body.

I sat in my car and couldn't move: I was at the bottom of a pit, with no light and no hope and no way to pull myself out.

I knew I couldn't emerge—not on my own. I was out of resources, all my coping skills depleted. This thing was bigger than I was. I gave up utterly.

"All right, God. You win. I can't do this. I give up. I'm in your hands now, because there is nothing left in me."

In that moment I felt a hand reach down and lift me up. Warmth and light returned. I had strength again and I knew how to walk once more. One step at a time, I returned to my house...I returned to life.

That moment, even though it was before I'd begun my Step work, was my true experience of Steps One, Two, and Three. From powerlessness, I was given direction...from weakness, strength. When I thought I was at my most lost and alone, I was shown that help had always been with me. God was just waiting for me to ask.

Hope is setting foot on a path whose end I can't see. Faith is trusting that the path leads to something better. That day, I began to understand that I didn't have to know the outcome in order to begin the journey of recovery.

~Amy S

STEP 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9 · 10 · 11 · 12

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

Step Two, at first glance, seemed like an easy step for me to take. A power greater than myself; of course!

When I was a child my parents took me, against my will actually, to religious education. I didn't want to be there so I didn't pay attention to what they were teaching. There was, though, one lesson that stuck with me.

It was a fall day at my religious school and we were told to look out the window at the vibrant trees standing in autumnal shades of reds, oranges, and yellows. How can we doubt the existence of something more than we are when we take in this scene? And it happens at precisely the same time every year! Something glorious outside of myself and much bigger and greater than me is responsible for this magnificence. I have absolutely no doubt! I now recognize the existence of a Higher Power when I experience the everyday miracles that make up my life.

The second part of this Step was my challenge. Of course I believed in the existence of a Higher Power. But how the heck could this Power restore me to sanity?

Prior to recovery I didn't have a personal relationship with a Higher Power. From my perspective, God was overseeing everything and everyone but didn't have time for me. Maybe Higher Power was pointedly there for people who had some kind of special entitlement and who were worthy of divine guidance, but not li'l old me.

I think the transforming moments for me were at meetings when I listened to others share about Step Two and the presence of a Higher Power in their lives. Call it what you will: God, Higher Power, Allah, Almighty, Lord, Creator, Goddess, Great Spirit, Holy Ghost, Yahweh; the miracles are the same. If Higher Power was there in the details of their lives, well, why not in mine?

In my first couple of years in recovery, I became intimately acquainted with my Higher Power and for the first time I felt a personal divine love and protection. It came to me when I felt the most broken.

An example of when my Higher Power was unmistakably present for me, was a day when I was in incredible pain. I had been in recovery for about two years. I was working on my steps; I was going to regular meetings; I'd done some writing for the Balance, and yet on this particular day I experienced an intense unmanageability. I prayed over and over, asking my Higher Power for the serenity to accept the things I could not change. I wasn't finding relief. I decided to read the weekly COSA email in hopes of finding guidance. The article was about letting go and letting God. Exactly what I needed to hear! I felt as if it was talking just to me. And when I got about halfway into the article I recognized this writing. I was the author! And the lesson that I could let go and trust my Higher Power as well as trust myself hit me between the eyes!

Sanity for me is a feeling of overwhelming calm and peace. It's an opportunity to turn my focus inward and know a sense of balance and centeredness. It also provides fertile ground to focus outside of myself to experience true freedom and confidence.

I have come to believe that this Power greater than me can take me to a beautiful place of sanity. And I say to you now my friend, if it happened for me, it can happen for you!

Gratefully,
~Liz

TRADITION 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9 · 10 · 11 · 12

OUR COMMON WELFARE SHOULD COME FIRST; PERSONAL RECOVERY DEPENDS UPON COSA UNITY.

Honoring Tradition One means humbly supporting the program that has given me so much. This tradition has helped me realize how much better it feels to consider the greatest good for the greatest number than to focus on my individual agenda without regard to the cost to or impact on others. It is the difference between coming from a place of trust and love, and coming from a place of fear. Love expands, builds, and nurtures, whereas fear shrivels and tears things down.

For me, putting the unity and welfare of COSA first means being trustworthy, inclusive, and safe. It means not engaging in gossip, judgementalness, or crosstalk. It means being generous with my service while also letting go of my need to feel in control. It means being open minded rather than defensive in group business meetings; I can honor and give voice to my own perspective, and also be open to the viewpoints of others and the wisdom of the group.

I want to contribute to the promise of relief and recovery for the next suffering COSA who walks through that meeting door... and that COSA could be any one of us. I can do this by being unifying and positive COSA member, rather than a negative or divisive one. The priceless gift of hope has been given to me when I have needed it. Tradition One reminds me to keep it vibrant and pass it on.

~Betsy

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.



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

Please send your articles to 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

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**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.**

When I first walked into a Twelve Step meeting, I felt so, so scared of that God thing, yet I also felt wounded and raw. Back in the 80's, things had been challenging in my family for generations back. My parents didn't really believe in God, but my aunts did—and boy did they tell us about it every time we saw them! Their God ruled the world with an iron fist, hated sinners, and had a million rules to follow. After years of hearing this in a family filled with the shame of addictions, I felt dirty, alone, ashamed, hopeless, and full of hate at what my mother's side of the family tried to do in order to cover up their own family shame of compulsive sexual addiction. The solution: They wanted us to go to church, submit to their authority, and surrender to this authority they called God. Yet God didn't seem to listen to me when I prayed to end the abuse affecting me, so I stopped praying. As a teen, I created a lifestyle headed down a destructive road of being codependent in relationships with compulsive sexual addicts.

When finally I angrily sat down in my first Twelve Step meeting in 1986 at the age of 23, no one said I had to accept God. Each person welcomed me, looked at me with deep, kind love, and then simply talked about what God did on their recovery journey as they healed. Now THAT God of the group conscience spoke to me. No one forced me, no one told me what God had to look like and no one judged. It was God working through the group that attracted me and made me want to come back. It was the love, it was the hope, it was the acceptance; God was in the coming together as a group, and it was this that saved me.

In COSA, where I arrived many years later, this choice in defining God followed me and was there when I walked in the door. The God of the group conscience listened to my stories, answered the phone on bad days, smiled with love, and allowed me to define what a Higher Power meant to me. While our ideas on what God looks like do not always match, we can all come together and inspire one another's recovery because our one, ultimate authority expresses itself in the group conscience. And with the discussion, thoughts and ideas openly expressed by the members of COSA, we can then lovingly listen to one another, make decisions together, and work on our recovery as a loving, kind whole where we feel the presence of our Higher Power, no matter what name people use for it. For this, I am ever thankful.

In my family, we didn't discuss as much as fight to have our way. In COSA, I learned how to make healthy group decisions: We share opinions, one at a time, with respect, love, listening, and reverence for each other's words. Since I've been in COSA, we've had several intense discussions on various topics. I learned that no one is an authority on the decision, but if we discuss enough and do it with respect, God seems to speak toward solutions that can work for us all. We make important decisions, and the Second Tradition works through us all.

~Robin T