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Balancing Service Work and Individual Recovery

A few months into my recovery I was asked to tell my story at a meeting. I felt way too new and insecure in the program, and I didn't think I had enough experience, strength, and hope to offer. I said no.

Soon after that, someone told me that in recovery, our Higher Power is leading the way. When we're asked to do service, it is our Higher Power overseeing our lives, and if we want to continue to strengthen our recovery, we need to say yes. Even if we don't feel ready. Our Higher Power knows best. I felt guilty for saying no. I also had regrets that I didn't listen to my Higher Power and embrace an opportunity for growth in my recovery.

A couple years later I was approached again to tell my story. This time it was for a retreat organized jointly by COSA and another Twelve-Step fellowship. I didn't even think about it. It was way too scary a proposition and something I could never picture myself doing. But, remembering that prior bit of advice, I said of course I would.

In retrospect, I'm glad I felt obliged to take it on. It was indeed a very scary experience for me, but a very healing and momentous event in my recovery. Now though, with more recovery under my belt, I realize that the instruction that I must to say yes to all opportunities for service is not a healthy strategy for me.

I know what it is like to take on way too much. Prior to COSA, I was Superwoman. Anything you want, I'll do it! At times, I felt that if I wasn't doing something for someone else, I wasn't really alive. And I was numb to how it was making me feel. It wasn't until after the fact that I realized I couldn't do it all, and that I had exhausted and drained myself trying. When I was in the midst of obligation, I powered on and didn't take time to even feel my feelings. I ignored myself, what I wanted, and what I needed.

Now that I'm further into my recovery, I have a healthier understanding of boundaries and their value for my self-care. Saying yes to all requests for service jeopardizes my sanity.

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I need to find balance between offering service to the program and to others, and taking care of myself. So often, I'm the last person on my list of people to whom I pay attention. And then my feelings of anger and resentment seep in.

Knowing when and how to set boundaries is something I'm still learning to do. When I am asked to do service, or even when not asked directly but when a position needs to be filled at a meeting and no one else steps forward, my knee-jerk reaction is: Sure, of course I can do it. My healthy reaction though is to pause. I've heard it said that God is in the pause. I need to pray on it and wait for an indication from my Higher Power for guidance. I think service, as well as everything else in my life, has to do with figuring out what is my Higher Power's will for me. And that can be hard for me to shake out at times. So I try not to force it.

Doing my circles of sobriety around service was really helpful for me in finding that balance, and in having an idea of what to listen for when I ask for my Higher Power's guidance. My outer circle, which consists of my healthy behaviors, is to provide service without any expectation of recognition or strokes. It is to cleanly share the experience, strength, and hope that I've received from my Higher Power through my program. It is a spiritual practice for me. My inner circle, my list of proscribed behaviors, is where my ego takes over and I neglect my self-care. My motivation for providing service is a huge indicator for me of whether or not this is healthy behavior. Am I agreeing to do service because I'll feel guilty if I don't? Am I doing it just to feel liked or needed by others; to feel important, or better than? Or am I volunteering to give back the gifts that I have received in recovery and to strengthen COSA?

I need to be aware, as I know that my ego can rear its ugly head around the issue of service. My character defects of perfectionism and feeling the need to control everything surface. For example, when I first got into recovery, my community didn't have a face-to-face COSA meeting. I, along with two other COSAs started our local group. The original two stopped coming soon after we found a regular meeting location, but the meeting grew as others began attending. And, to be honest, I felt responsible, as if it was MY meeting! I felt that I was necessary for the meeting to exist! Ego run wild or what?! Yes I was providing service, the upside of it, but when I feel as if it's all on me, I don't make room for my Higher Power.

A beautiful recovery lesson for me has been learning how to listen to and let my Higher Power's will in, and how to honor others and their Higher Power. I don't have to carry the load when I'm doing service. I'm part of the greater good—a tiny part but a very significant part. I've come to realize that all acts of service are significant. Whether I'm another COSA's sponsor, a trusted servant at a meeting, answering a phone call from a newcomer, writing for the Balance, making a Seventh Tradition contribution, sharing my story at a convention, or setting up chairs for a meeting, I'm part of the COSA fabric.

So the question, "Does service take me away from my individual work," I think can be answered in two parts. Yes it can, when I stretch myself too thin and don't make time or reserve energy for me. My pre-recovery behavior of neglecting my self-care and being lost in the jungle of trying to please others can easily return if I do too much, including service.

And no, service doesn't take me from my individual recovery when I am able to reserve energy for myself while doing service. Service is in fact a vital part of my individual recovery. When I have the opportunity to contribute, I am a valuable member of COSA. I feel connected. And knowing that I'm helping the program or another COSA member fills me up. I feel closer to my Higher Power. In fact, for me, doing service can naturally strengthen my individual recovery. That's what service is all about!

In Healthy Service,
~Liz



Letter from the Chair

Greetings Fellow COSAs!

Preparing for our annual COSA convention is one of my favorite times of year. I am always in awe at the sheer numbers of willing, dedicated volunteers who come together with their fresh ideas and talent in order to bring our convention to life. It is very fitting that the theme of our convention is “United We Are Strong.”

Not only does the theme echo our First Tradition, it also describes Houston’s survival of Hurricane Harvey’s devastation in 2017. The city of Houston united with a common goal of recovery and restoration. Houston didn’t merely survive; it has come back strong and thriving. It sounds to me like Houston and COSA members have a lot in common.

There’s an old saying that “Everything’s bigger in Texas” and our Convention Committee has taken that seriously! This convention has as many as four different workshops and panels happening simultaneously throughout the day, giving attendees a bounty of recovery topics to choose from.

But the convention is more than just a feast of recovery activities. There are very welcoming, thoughtful items peppered throughout the event. Our Convention Committee gave a lot of attention to detail and consideration to creating a wonderful attendee experience.

For me personally, the convention is a slingshot for my recovery. It propels me to greater self-awareness and gives me additional healthy tools to use as I navigate my world. I also get a chance to make new COSA friends and connect with my “seasoned” friends, too, all the while in an environment steeped in a concentrated dose of Higher Power.

There’s still time to register to attend. I hope you’ll consider joining us in Houston. I’d love to meet you. You’ll know me right away—I’ll be the gal grinning ear to ear, walking to a workshop holding a big glass of sweet tea, just like my southern grandma used to make for me. I can hardly wait!

<http://cosa-recovery.org/2019/Registration.html>

Joyfully,

Sandy S.
International Service Organization of COSA Board Chair

2019 ISO of COSA Convention



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

Hotel and Meal Deadlines Extended!

Hotel rate: May 5th

Guest meals: May 5th

Meals with registration: May 5th

COSA Convention Schedule

Who · What · When · Where

The 2019 ISO of COSA Convention is jam-packed with a variety of ways to share experience, strength, and hope with COSAs from around the world. Please review the outline shown below to see what workshops are being offered and the general schedule for workshops and events.

There are Twelve-Step meetings, a quiet room, a hospitality room, craft area, Silent Auction, bookstore, and Serenity-to-Go Store available at various times throughout each day.

More details (such as which sessions are open to COSA and SAA or only open to COSA, which sessions are recorded, who the speakers and session presenters are) will be available at the convention.

*Times are subject to change

\$ Denotes optional events at additional cost

Thursday, May 23	
9:00a – 5:00p	Board meeting
6:00p - 7:30p	Delegate registration and orientation, convention registration
Friday, May 24	
8:00a – 9:00a	Delegate registration
9:00a – 5:00p	Delegate meeting
5:00p - 9:30p	Convention registration
6:30p – 7:00p	Newcomer Orientation
7:00p – 9:00p	Opening Ceremony

Saturday, May 25				
7:30a – 10:30a	Convention registration			
8:45a – 10:00a	Working the COSA Program around Sexual Anorexia	Make a Decision in God's Care	Diversity in COSA Recovery	
10:30a – 11:45a	Family in Recovery	The Decision to Separate in Marriage, with a Partner, or from Family or Friends	Trying Again: Starting a Relationship in Recovery	Understanding our Financial Triggers and Creating Boundaries
12:00p – 1:30p	COSA Speaker (free) and Luncheon, \$, meals must be ordered before May 5			
2:30p – 3:45p	Self-care after Relapse of a Partner	Acknowledging Grief: A Tool for Recovery	Yoga and Meditation in Recovery	Empathy: I Feel Ya'
4:15p – 5:30p	Circles of Recovery	En Espanol: Working with the Newcomer	COSA/SAA: Recovering Couples	
6:30p – 9:00p	COSA and SAA Speakers (free) and Banquet \$, meals must be ordered before May 5			
Sunday, May 26				
7:30a – 10:30a	Convention registration			
8:45a – 10:00a	So What Does the ISO Board Do?	Being a Male in COSA – Inner Thoughts and Inner Voice	COSA Traditions Explored Creatively	HIR (Healthy Intimate Relationships)
10:30a – 11:45a	There is Always a Meeting	Formal Disclosure: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly	Healing from Trauma	First Step Presentation
11:45a – 6:15p	Outer Circle activities on your own. Can also join SAA for Kemah Boardwalk, NASA Space Center, and museums. \$ Buses leave from Marriott Marquette (SAA hotel) at 1:00. Tickets must be bought in advance from SAA registration desk.			
6:15p – 9:00p	COSA and SAA Speakers (free) and Banquet \$, meals must be ordered before May 5			
Monday, May 27				
9:00a – 11:00a	Serenity Send-off			
12:00p – 1:30p	Convention review and pre-planning next convention			

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Registration is available online until May 15.
Walk-ins are allowed during the convention.

COSA Convention website

<http://cosa-recovery.org/2019/Registration.html>



Registration Deadlines for Full Convention (May 24 - 27)

Regular registration [online by May 15 or walk-in for the entire weekend (no meals)].....\$100

Day Rates

On-site registration Saturday or Sunday day rate (no meal included)\$50 per day

Hotel Registration

<https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1545236183046&key=GRP&app=resvlink>

Discounted hotel convention rates are available until May 5.

Delegate Registration

Remember that there is a separate registration for delegates. You will be guided to it if you identify yourself as a delegate in the online registration form.

Convention Scholarships

Generous donations from other COSAs provide full and half scholarships on a first-come, first-served basis. Apply on your registration form. Scholarship recipients must volunteer for at least four hours of service work at the convention.

Convention Support

There are many ways to give support for the convention if you attend, and even if you don't.

- Contribute to the Convention Scholarship Fund; all donations to COSA are tax deductible:
<https://cosa-convention-registration.myshopify.com/cart>
- Volunteer for a service position – on your registration form or by e-mailing:
conventionvolunteers@cosa-recovery.org.
- Donate items to the Silent Auction, which raises seed money for the following year's convention. (The 2020 convention will be in Columbus, Ohio.) Items such as CDs, DVDs, original artwork, jewelry, clothes, items for the home; services such as photography or life coaching; restaurant coupons; or even timeshare or other vacation home stays. Regifting is OK. Items should be reasonably sized and of good quality. You can bring your donation with you or mail it to ensure arrival by May 21. For the mailing address or questions, contact:
silentauction@cosa-recovery.org.

Transportation and Houston Area Information

Please see Hotel/Travel Information tab at the top of the convention webpage <http://cosa-recovery.org/2019/Registration.html>

Please contact convention@cosa-recovery.org if you have any questions.

We look forward to seeing you in Houston!



Can you donate a gift certificate, item or basket for our upcoming COSA convention silent auction?

Any donations of time, talent or treasure are welcome!

Popular items from past years include:

Artwork: paintings,
needlework, photography,
crafts

Scarves

Plants

Electronics
Themed Gift Baskets

Books/CDs/DVDs

Gift Certificates

Journals, notepads

Jewelry

Housewares

Personal Services:

massage, hair stylist

Please email descriptions and the estimated value of your donations by Tuesday, May 21, 2019, to silentauction@cosa-recovery.org. Donations may be shipped early (our preference) or dropped off at the Serenity Store upon your arrival at the convention.

Please contact us via email for the shipping address.

All proceeds benefit the ISO of COSA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

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.



**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)

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!

Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

February 2019

Individual Donations	\$ 76.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 963.00
February Total.....	\$ 1029.00

March 2019

AZ-02 (Tempe Stepping into Recovery) ..	\$ 50.00
AZ-04 (Tucson Miracles-in-Progress)	\$ 85.00
CA-23 (Long Beach).....	\$ 150.00
CO-04 (Boulder Monday Night).....	\$ 27.00
FL-13 (Palm Beach Garden)	\$ 75.00
MD-04 (Prince George)	\$ 50.00
PA-07 (Sunday Serenity Group).....	\$ 75.00
Individual Donations	\$ 596.00
Individual Recurring.....	\$ 1473.00
March Total.....	\$ 2581.00

COSA Day in the UK!



Join fellow United Kingdom COSA members for the 5th Annual COSA Day on Saturday June 8th!

Enjoy a day of recovery, fellowship and support; featuring three workshops throughout the day.

When: Saturday, June 8th from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Where: Richmond Bridge Friendship Club TW1 2EF

Cost: £10

For more information contact: cosadayuk@outlook.com



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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STEP 1·2·3·4· 5 ·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.

Step Five was a huge step for me and, surprisingly, a big relief. After years of being the “strong one” who held it all together, it was great to have permission to admit my faults and the secrets that I had been hiding behind my whole life. I had always been praised for my accomplishments in life and was sought after for sensible advice. It was really hard but also powerful for me to tell another human being about my shortcomings because although I had friends and “best” friends, there were things that no one knew about me. I was ashamed of these secrets. This Step gave me permission to be human, vulnerable and honest. It also gave me permission to have emotions and not try to be perfect.

My boyfriend, who was in recovery when I met him, suggested I come to COSA. This seemed strange to me since he was in recovery already, and I, of course, had my life together, so all would be fine! But I was really wrong. After problems cropped up in the relationship I decided to give COSA a try. I often looked at my boyfriend in wonder. He admitted all of his flaws and showed the world who he really was. At first I thought, “I would never tell anyone any of those things about myself!” But, after working, in tandem, Steps Four and Five with my sponsor, I was shocked to see some of the glaring defects of my self-righteousness, judgement, and self-pity, and how they affected my relationships. I did not like admitting them to myself, but God and my sponsor understood. It was a weight lifted off of me to tell my sponsor about an affair that I had during a marriage a long time ago. I had told no one of this and lived with it a long time. I think I really started to believe my own lie that it never happened! When she asked me if I had ever told my boyfriend, I was shocked that this was something that she suggested I might look at doing. I was resistant to say the least. Then I attended a COSA convention and heard a lot of Step One shares and cried and cried the rest of the day, knowing this would one day be me giving my own story. The shares were so honest, beyond what I ever thought I would own up to, but I realized this was what was next for me. I knew what I needed to do right then. I was terrified to admit the affair to my boyfriend, but went through with it anyway. I felt closer to him than ever for taking the leap of faith to be real and vulnerable.

The openness I gained in working Step Five has become a part of my daily life now. I review my day every night and try to honestly admit what I could have done better or tell my sponsor or a friend anything I did wrong or could have done better. I also try to reach out to more people rather than suffering in silence. My recovery program is about daily honesty and I am grateful to live my life this way now. Thank God for Step Five. Thank God I no longer have to try to be perfect. I feel human for the first time in my life and it feels good!

~Lisa

Reprinted from *Balance* May/June 2011

STEP 1·2·3·4·5· 6 ·7·8·9·10·11·12

WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.

Out of all the challenging and wonderful Twelve Steps, I think this Step is my favorite. For me it's a time of transformation, of crossing lines—between resistance and surrender, between fear and faith, between controlling and allowing, and of moving into grace.

It's where the good intentions formed and committed to in Steps Two and Three meet reality. Am I really going to do what I set out to do in Step Three—surrender my will to another? It's where the rubber meets the road.

As I sit in the middle of this Step I feel fear of letting go into an unknown I may not like. I feel a need to control the outcome, to pick and choose what gets taken and what remains. I come face to face with my doubt in my higher power and myself. And I don't know how to overcome the resistance that seems to live in my cells, not just in my mind.

But there is also a need in me to change, to somehow find a better way to live. A need, also deep in my cells, that brought me to COSA, that didn't let me give up, didn't let me die when I could have. And that need to find another way propels me to sit in the middle of my quandaries, feel my feelings, and acknowledge my confusion. I may not be able to control the outcome, but I can set an intention—for a moment, for a day, for a step, for a life. I can set an intention to be entirely ready to know a better way to live. And I can ask for help in getting there. I can ask to be shown the way to willingness. I can, as honestly as I know how, acknowledge where I am and where I want to go. And then let go of the result.

And I am not sure we even need to believe we will be answered. I think, sometimes, that all we need to do is release, completely, our wants, ideas, wishes and pleas, so they can float without tethers in the air. So we have no more attachment to them. That way they can wander at will and find their own answers, their own peace. And sometimes they bring answers and peace back home to us.

And my work is to become entirely ready to release all of me to this process, leaving no part of me out, no matter how painful, no matter how good, no matter how small. And then my work is to become entirely ready to receive what is given, in gratitude and grace.

~Tracy S.

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

EACH GROUP HAS BUT ONE PRIMARY PURPOSE -- TO CARRY ITS MESSAGE TO THOSE WHO STILL SUFFER. WE DO THIS BY PRACTICING THE TWELVE STEPS OURSELVES.

When I think about Tradition Five, one of the benefits is that it is always clear what each of our groups is there for. Our primary purpose is to carry our message from Step Twelve that “we have had a spiritual awakening as the result of working these Steps.”

When in doubt, I can always come back to this directive to carry this message to those who are still suffering and to let them know that even though our lives have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior, today, those of us who have worked these Steps have had a spiritual awakening. I have seen again and again from my own experience, both with myself and in watching my fellow COSAs, that we are different than when we arrived in COSA, and we are different than who we were before we worked the Steps.

So, in a business meeting, when I think about group matters such as our meeting location or time, our script or format, etc., and I am unsure how to move forward, I try to think about these things and how they impact our ability to carry this simple and yet profound message. Does what we are considering doing impact our Twelve-Step work? For me personally, as a COSA member, it means that it is important that I practice the Steps in my life as well, including Step Twelve. Carrying this message continues to help me stay sane and sober myself. There have been many times I have been upset or agitated about some situation in my life, and I have arrived at a COSA meeting and done something of benefit to myself by carrying this message—serving as a meeting Secretary, volunteering to read or speak, or even just sharing about my experience of having a spiritual awakening and working the Steps.

In meetings I try to share with newcomers after the meeting, if it is within my self-care to do so, and I try to share about how I am using the Steps as a means to reduce my own personal suffering.

When I was new, this offered hope for me! And while today I sometimes find myself suffering when I am affected by compulsive sexual behavior and again reminded of my powerlessness over it; these effects no longer rule my life as long as I turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

~Sarah S.

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

A COSA GROUP OUGHT NEVER ENDORSE, FINANCE, OR LEND THE COSA NAME TO ANY RELATED FACILITY OR OUTSIDE ENTERPRISE, LEST PROBLEMS OF MONEY, PROPERTY AND PRESTIGE DIVERT US FROM OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE.

One of the things I am very grateful for is that in COSA we do not lend the fellowship's name to facilities or outside enterprises. If the fellowship were to be associated with other enterprises or places, it would probably make it much more difficult for me personally to be willing to call myself a "member." I have found COSA to be so neutral that it has been a very easy place for me to be.

While I have personally benefited from other help outside of COSA, when I share in a meeting, I am careful not to endorse this help or other modalities of healing I have received. I don't want to give a newcomer a misunderstanding about what or who the fellowship endorses or sanctions.

Anyone who has been affected by compulsive sexual behavior can attend COSA; they need no affiliation with any other places or enterprises. This keeps the meetings safe and free of other affiliations. And it gives me the freedom to keep coming back, no matter what I am affiliated with (or not) in my personal life and choices.

From a personal perspective, I think about this Tradition a lot. My primary purpose in life is to be close to the God of my understanding and to try to be of service to God. When I was contemplating divorce, I deeply considered whether if I left my marriage, would this bring me closer to my primary purpose or further away? In my life, I came to the decision that my marriage took up a lot of time and energy that took away from my serenity, happiness, and was not working for me. I felt it was eating up valuable time that I could better use to be of service to God.

It definitely tugged at my heart, though, that I would give up the "prestige" and reputation of being a person who was happily married. I had to let go of this idea that Godly people do not get divorced, and allow myself to be seen for who I am—a person who tried her best to save her marriage and a person who is now divorced. I would have never envisioned this for myself, and I had many angry words with God about it at the time!

Now, several years later, I no longer consider this a "mark" against my prestige. I am a perfectly imperfect person, and I am ok with that and with being divorced.

The same has been helpful when considering other decisions. I have to consider whether I am letting money, property and prestige divert me from my own personal primary purpose. Therefore, when I am looking at a decision, such as applying for a job, as I have had to do several times while in recovery, I think about where I might work and ask myself: Is it in alignment with my primary purpose?

I don't want to let material items take attention away from the service I want to do for God in my life.

~Sarah S.