



Discernment vs Judgment

Discernment: The ability to judge well.

Judgment: The ability to make considered decisions or come to sensible conclusions or an opinion or conclusion.

When I googled the definition of discernment and judgment, the definition was almost the same: “The ability to judge well” or “The ability to...come to sensible conclusions.” But the definition of judgment went on to include “an opinion or conclusion,” verdict, adjudication, ruling, pronouncement, decree, conclusion, determination, and sentence.

I would like to think that I make sensible decisions, that I do things well, including making judgments. However, I have to ask myself how much of my biases go into my decisions. Do I go into a situation with a preconceived idea of who a person is or what the outcome of a situation will be? Do I make final judgments? The answer is often “yes.” Maybe that is because I have experienced situations or people with similar characteristics before and the results were predictable. Like most people, I learn from the past. Very few people touch a hot stove twice.

Not every situation is a hot stove, and that is where I believe discernment and judgment can be decisively different. In recovery I have learned that there may be no final judgment, that people and situations are not good or bad but are just right or wrong for me at that moment. I don’t need to pass a final judgment but I can use my ability to discern where I should be and who I should be with. Only my HP can make a judgment. What a relief that is to me!

~Anonymous

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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!



Letter from the Chair

Greetings all!

The ISO of COSA Board had our annual Board Working Weekend August 1 – 4 in Prescott, Arizona. During this weekend we met via video conference with each of the COSA committee Chairs and our Central Office Manager to hear about their business plan and goals for the new service year. In between those one-hour calls, we worked on other items like fundraising and improving processes, planning for how best to use all of our resources to further our mission of carrying the COSA message.

This year, we also conducted a Board Inventory under the guidance of our Nominating Committee Chair. Over the course of the service year, we created a mutually agreed upon list of questions designed to help us examine how we as a board are doing, identifying our strengths and our weaknesses. Then we each submitted our input anonymously, and our Nominating Committee Chair compiled the results. We set aside time during the working weekend to discuss all of the input. Our goal was to look for actionable ways we could improve.

With seven different people and personalities, the questions received a variety of responses. We each expressed our own views and perceptions – even when they didn't fall into agreement with others. That's part of the beauty of our COSA democratic process. A variety of views and voices actually fosters a stronger, healthier board.

In addition to the heavier work, we also had some fun. We held an icebreaker on Thursday night after dinner that helped the board members get to know each other better. We followed it with an interactive Traditions Study. Here's an example of a couple of them: we used Play-Doh to visually demonstrate our understanding of Tradition One. We used some magnets to demonstrate Tradition Eleven, with attraction, rather than promotion. It was a lot of fun and we learned some different perspectives on the Traditions. I have to say, we have some very clever and imaginative board members!

I am really happy to work alongside such a talented team. We got a great deal of work and planning done in Prescott. The downside for me was that I hadn't even boarded my flight home before I was already missing them. I admire their love and commitment to COSA. I love the camaraderie between us. I love that our common love for COSA brings us together.

With a full and thankful heart,

Sandy S.
International Service Organization of COSA Board Chair



Workshops and Speakers Call for Proposals closes NOVEMBER 30th

The 2020 convention Program Committee is accepting workshop proposals and speaker nominations through November 30.

Connecting in Columbus anticipates offering an array of topics, presented by willing COSAs who are ready to share their Experience, Strength, and Hope. There is only one month to submit your workshop proposal or speaker nomination.

Call for Workshop Proposals

Please consider presenting a workshop on a recovery-related topic from the Twelve Steps to the Traditions to the Concepts to using the many tools and resources of the COSA program...to receiving the gifts and promises.

We encourage you to consider sharing about your experience and the growth you have realized through service in COSA. We encourage you to share about the gifts of being sponsored and sponsoring, both valuable aspects of COSA recovery.

Perhaps you would be willing to share your ESH on our day-to-day struggles with forgiveness, anger, vulnerability, using the Traditions as a family, wisdom and discernment, shame, anonymity, compassion and sympathy, avoidance, expectations, boundaries, and more.

And we welcome your new ideas and innovative proposals for workshops or panel discussions. If you have an idea, please submit it. It may be a topic or approach we could all use, and you're the first person to think of it. We welcome the opportunity to work together in offering fresh opportunities for recovery-based learning to our fellow COSAs.

Call for Speaker Nominations

Perhaps the time is right for you to tell your story and share your ESH as a speaker at the convention. Self-nominations are welcome.

If you would like to hear more from a strong, recovering COSA who is part of one of your meetings, ask them if they would consider serving as a convention speaker. If they are willing, please nominate them to speak during *Connecting in Columbus*.

After November 30, the convention committee will carefully consider all nominations for speakers and workshops, and create a program of choices to deepen the recovery experience of everyone who participates in the convention.

Before November 30, please go to the *Connecting in Columbus* convention website and click on the link to submit [workshop proposals](#) and [speaker nominations](#). We look forward to receiving your proposals and, with your help, creating a valuable recovery experience for everyone at the convention.

Connecting in Columbus
Program Committee

Literature Committee Update on Basic Text

Dear COSA friends,

The Literature Committee has been steadily working on 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 tools and also 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 present draft chapters to the fellowship for feedback. In response to the delegates' request to allow more time for review, over the next few months we will have two review periods (with a few weeks of overlap)

Feedback for the following sections of the book can be submitted via email **September 18, 2019, through December 19, 2019:**

- [Tradition Three](#)
- [Tradition Seven](#)
- [Tool: Boundaries](#)
- [Tool: Prayer and Meditation](#)
- [Tool: Service](#)
- [Tool: Sobriety](#)

Additional chapters will be submitted to the Fellowship for review in November.

Please read through each draft and send us your comments and suggestions. It may also be supportive 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.

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 21, 2020. These proposed chapters will then be voted on for approval by the delegates at the 2020 Annual Delegate Meeting.

Feedback Guidelines

- Feedback or questions can be submitted to cosacopy@yahoo.com
- Please submit your feedback by **December 19, 2019 (OR BEFORE)**
Please try to get your feedback in as early as possible. You can submit feedback on one or a few chapters when you have it, and then later submit the rest. It helps us when feedback comes in at a steady rate instead of all at the end. If you can send some in one or two months before the deadline, that helps a lot. Even one week before the deadline is helpful. We are so grateful for your collaboration as we work on making sure everyone's voice is heard in the process of writing COSA's basic text.
- 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 or into a copy of the document; instead, as requested above, please just reference the line number and then state your specific suggestions and comments:

- See Table:

Line #	omit	add	because	so it would read
28	the phrase <i>abc</i>	<i>def</i>	It would be clearer and gentler	“ __ def __ ”
48		also	It would be clearer and more specific	“ __ also __ ”
68		This is just an example	This is an important and relevant idea which is not found elsewhere.	“ __. This is just an example. __ ”

- Please do not submit a rewritten document [one that does not show the brief original text and identify what you'd like changed].
- Please explain any changes you are suggesting. For example, “On page 2, line 34, I would like abc changed to def because xyz.” We want to ensure that when a change is made, it will produce the desired result. For more examples of feedback, see table above and written sentences below.
- 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).

Examples of possible feedback in written form:

- On Page 1, Line 28, please omit the phrase abc and substitute def because [e.g., it would be clearer and gentler.] So it would read ‘ _ def _.’

- On Page 2, Line 48, please insert the phrase “ __ ” between the words “ __ ” and “ __ ” because I feel it is clearer and more specific [or whatever your reason is]. So it would read “ __ __ __.”

- On Page 3, Line 68, please insert the following sentence because I feel this is an important and relevant idea which fits well here and which is not found elsewhere in this document. Sentence to be inserted between the words “ __.” and “The...”: _____. So it would read “ __. _____. The....”

Thank you,

Your COSA Literature Committee

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8· 9 ·10·11·12

MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

Over my time in recovery I've come to believe in coincidences less and less. Just this week while on the internet, I decided to punch in the name of a woman to whom I've owed amends for quite awhile. Her name is an unusual one, so I thought I might have some luck. I found her email address quite easily. As is my habit, I left the computer on and minimized the information to deal with it later, after I'd written the amends. Well, the days began to pass, and I was not becoming profoundly motivated to write the letter. Here is the "coincidence" I mentioned earlier: I went to a meeting, and was asked whether I'd be willing to write a Ninth Step article for the Balance. Not only was this request made just when I needed a little "push," but the article was requested of me within a few days.

This particular amends has been one that has troubled me for quite awhile. The fact is that I have had some extra challenges when it has come to making amends in my life. I have had trouble locating the people I need to do the Ninth Step with. This is not for just a couple; this has entailed a great number of them. And this has made me perhaps lazy, and I've even used this excuse where it has not applied. The truth is I've had this woman's mother's phone number all along and never called her. Now that I've written these amends, I'm not surprised. The reality of my behavior is very painful to me. The extent of my jealousy, competitiveness, and triangulating were so ugly to me that perhaps I wasn't yet ready to face them. For what it is worth my HP made it unavoidable this very week. As I spoke with the woman who asked me to write the article, it became clear to me that I needed to include the text of the amends in the article! Oh joy – the opportunity to share some of my most painful, long-standing, and shameful character defects with the fellowship! Then I thought about the words near the end of the Third Step prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book pg 63) and I was comforted. It helps me to understand that my character defects, and other suffering, are not present solely for my growth, but in fact to help others as well. I hope that my history of co-sex addiction, very readily seen in this amends letter, "may bear witness to those I would help find HP's power, love, and way of life."

"Jane, I am writing to make amends to you for events that occurred between you, me, John, and your Russian friend who attended University with you. It is important that I be accountable for my behavior regardless of how long ago I did it.

With regard to John – I pursued him when you had already gone out with him. Part of my interest stemmed from a sense of competitiveness I was acting out. Thus began a triangular nature to our relationship. I flirted with him in front of you once when all three of us went out to dinner, as well as during the class we all had together. It also played out in conversations that you and I had about him.

I continued this triangulated behavior one evening to the morning with you and your Russian friend at your place. I was jealous of you already – having wanted all of John's attention for myself. On this evening I wanted your Russian friend – who was already in love with you – to "choose me over you." It was a long insane night of competitiveness, jealousy, and disrespect on my part, and I am sorry. I no longer pursue men who are involved with other women. I commit to no longer setting out to make other women jealous based upon my own insecurities and desire to somehow be "more important" to a man.

If there are any other ways in which I have harmed you, I would appreciate you sharing them with me. Thank you for your time, Carolyn."

I recently changed my own name, it is now Shankari, and I hope this letter and article will be of service to those who read it. The last thing I want to say is that my sponsor taught me never to send an amends letter without first having shared it with her to check my motives and to be certain I am not being harmful in any way, following the very important part of the Ninth Step which states (in my italics): Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

~Shankari

Modified from *Balance* Volume 3, Issue 2 (September/October 2006)

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.

HOLA from COSA en Espanol!

Help us get the word out: **COSA Meetings in Spanish**

Tuesdays, 5:30PT, 7:30CT, 8:30 ET

Call in number: 515-603-4906

Access code 1057988#

All levels of Spanish Speakers are welcome to join
and support this meeting and help carry the message.

For information send email to cosaenespanol@gmail.com

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9· 10 ·11·12

CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.

From Blame and Shame, to Truth and Authenticity

Step Ten, for me, held so much personal significance, especially the first time I worked the Steps. During this Step, we work toward living in authenticity. Step Ten states:

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.”

By working the previous Steps, I thought I had resolved much of my anger with my husband and his disease. Why, then, did I feel a sense of resentment--stuck on the Tenth Step as if it were made of wet cement? As with many of the other Steps, I had to look further back than I thought--back to my family of origin--back to the origins of where my black-and-white view of “Always Be Honest” and “Resent Liars” began.

As a child, there was chaos, very little safety, and no boundaries. Both of my parents were addicts--my mother was an active alcoholic; my father, full of rage. Both were dishonest throughout multiple affairs. I kept every family secret. It was more important to my parents that there was a scapegoat for their unhappiness and anger. I stepped into that role. Although it was a horrible job to possess, it was far surpassed by witnessing the abuse to one of my siblings.

In this family’s hierarchy, my duties included taking blame for things I hadn’t done. I paid the check for any mishap to which none of my siblings would admit. I stepped up to defray the rage my parents had against each other. Physically, it was torture. Emotionally, it was disturbing.. Taking responsibility, to me, had nothing to do with honesty. It meant only pain, degradation, and confusion.

As an adult, I became a “right-fighter.” I’d fight to exhaustion to prove I wasn’t responsible.

Working the Tenth Step allowed me the freedom to work through and put into perspective all of these issues, and examine my self-righteous ideals resulting therein. I can now take ownership for what belongs to me. Now, I don’t have to take responsibility for others. Without wincing, I can now stand, imperfectly, in my authenticity.

Instead of sinking helplessly into the wet concrete, I can leave my footprints to dry there, evidence of my presence, and of my ascent upward.

~Lori M.

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

COSA, AS SUCH, OUGHT NEVER BE ORGANIZED; BUT WE MAY CREATE SERVICE BOARDS OR COMMITTEES DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE

When I'm in a playful mood, I might interpret this Tradition as recommending that we be disorganized. In reality, of course, we need a certain amount of structure in order to be effective. What the Tradition is cautioning us against is being organized in such a way that one person or a few people make autocratic decisions for the many. What it encourages us to do instead is to honor the principles of equality and shared responsibility.

Tradition Nine reminds us to be inclusive and democratic. No one person is in charge, and we practice rotation of leadership at all levels of the fellowship. Every COSA member has a right to voice his or her opinion as long as we are respectful when we do so, and no one is excluded from being a member of the fellowship as long as he or she identifies as someone whose life has been affected by compulsive sexual behavior. Our program is for all of us and by all of us.

For COSA to work at the International Service Organization level, we empower and trust the hard-working volunteer members of the ISO Board and committees to make well-considered, informed decisions. If we didn't delegate some of these tasks, we would have a difficult time keeping things running smoothly. Still, we aim to keep bureaucracy to a minimum and keep the well-being of the fellowship first and foremost. The Board will often ask all of the members for input, and each group may send a Delegate to the annual conference for important votes. Through this generosity of service, transparency of process and open dialogue, we all benefit. We are all part of the whole. Each of us is important.

Tradition Nine is not only healthy for the fellowship but is also valuable for me in my individual recovery and service work. If I am having a hard time accepting how someone in my home group works his or her program, Tradition Nine reminds me that all COSAs are welcomed as members, not just some. We are each free to work toward our own recovery in our own way, with the help of our own conception of a Higher Power. Through COSA's democratic approach, I have learned a lot about honoring and expressing myself in group situations. I have walked through my fears of rejection, tempered my perfectionism and my need to feel in control. Now I practice taking care of myself emotionally when tension arises or disagreement arises. I practice good listening skills and try to cultivate open-mindedness in considering other people's opinions. Tradition Nine helps me maintain a right-sized conception of my place within the program (and in the world). Instead of feeling unimportant or invisible, or – at the opposite extreme – feeling overly important and indispensable, I can find a place of peaceful moderation somewhere in between. I can remember that I am special...and so is everyone else!

~Anonymous

Reprinted from *Balance* Volume 7, Issue 4 (September/October 2011)

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

COSA HAS NO OPINION ON OUTSIDE ISSUES; HENCE THE COSA NAME OUGHT NEVER BE DRAWN INTO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY.

One of the benefits that come from being in COSA (or any Twelve-Step Group), as we all usually come to realize, is that we feel safe, heard, and understood, regardless of our backgrounds and experiences. I've mentioned this before, but what I have found is that the Traditions are intertwined and connected to all the other Traditions. The Fifth Tradition, for example, is one reason and a major pillar for why the Tenth Tradition works and serves us so well, especially in this regard. The Fifth Tradition states that, "each group has but one primary purpose...to carry its message to those who still suffer." This means that while we may each have our own opinions on outside issues, when we come to COSA, it is all set aside, as we remember our one purpose: to carry the message to those who still suffer. We come to COSA to share our experiences, strength, and hope, and to learn from others sharing theirs.

I remember during one of my darkest moments, I was befriended by a woman in my home group who made me feel loved and safe. We became great friends, and I saw her as my sister. Our relationship during my early years in recovery was limited to what we shared about our personal struggles with the disease that we were confronted with. I saw no wrong in this woman. She was the smartest, bravest woman I knew. Her strength gave me strength. One day, however, I found her on a social media site and realized she had completely different political views than I did. Had I not been as far along in my recovery, I would likely have jumped to conclusions about how we could no longer be friends, or that I couldn't respect her as much as I used to. Looking back, of course, I realize this is quite silly. However, this example reminds me why it is so important that COSA has no opinion on outside issues. Outside issues have nothing to do with what we are there to accomplish: our "one primary purpose." I am so grateful for my friends in my recovery group. Because my focus remains on the Steps, my personal recovery program, and carrying COSA's message to those who still suffer, goes so much better. The only way this can be accomplished is to leave irrelevant things outside, and thus never attach the COSA name to any of those issues.

Just imagine if COSA had an opinion on various political issues! It would divide us rather than bring us together. It would become an unnecessary and irrelevant burden that prevents us from connecting, healing, and thriving, as we would surely be distracted. Outside issues would become a wedge dividing us and keeping us from recovery.

My friend, with the opposing political beliefs, is still my dearest of friends. Through our common mission in COSA, we have not only cried, laughed, grown, and healed together, but we have also been able to provide support and share our strengths and hopes with others just like us. This is what COSA does for us, and this is why COSA has the Tradition of having "no opinion on outside issues; hence the COSA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

~Grateful COSA

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

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Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

June 2019

TX-23 (Kingwood).....	\$ 25.00
Zoomroom	\$ 500.00
Individual Donations	\$ 571.00
Individual Recurring.....	\$ 1014.00
Total	\$ 2110.00

July 2019

AR-02 (Bryant).....	\$ 85.00
AZ-02 (Tempe).....	\$ 17.00
CA-13 (Irvine)	\$ 48.00
CA-23 (Long Beach).....	\$ 150.00
CA-26 (La Canada)	\$ 114.13
CA-27 (Santa Rosa)	\$ 50.50
MD-05 (Edgewater)	\$ 50.00
PA-07 (Doylestown).....	\$ 100.00
Telemeetings	\$ 60.00
Individual Donations	\$ 258.00
Individual Recurring.....	\$ 1241.00
Total	\$ 2688.63



International Donations

Our international groups and members can now use the “Donate” button on our website to contribute as a group or as an individual or make recurring donations to COSA. The technology required to make this change has been challenging, but our Technology Committee’s talent and dedication has paid off. This opens new opportunities to honor our Seventh Tradition and fund our mission to carry the COSA message even further.



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 266, Houston, TX 77024 U.S.A.

Phone: 866-899-2672 E-mail: info@cosa-recovery.org

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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.