



# Balance

*Summer Issue* *May/June 2016*

## My Favorite Recovery Tools

I am amazed how different my life is since finding recovery in 2008. How did I grow from a needy, insecure woman who got most of her validation from others to a confident woman who can provide her own validation?

This is my journey.

Those of us who have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior know how this part of the story goes, right? When all the denial stops working and you can see a sliver of the truth. When you lose your balance in the world, and you're not sure how to hold on. When what you thought was real isn't, and you panic and plead to try to make sense of it. When you're so afraid you think you may be crazy; that this might be the end. My world changed the day I saw a clinic invoice for STDs with my husband's name on it. I had been married for 17 years.

As you also know, the journey to accepting, to really seeing this kind of truth is not fun. It's painful, disorienting and surreal. I had difficulty determining what was true and what wasn't. Had I really had good times with him? Had I really loved this man for 20 years? Had he really loved me? I remember looking at him at dinner one night thinking, "Who are you? How can this be true?"

There were times when I thought I would lose my mind; when I thought that I might not make it. When I see a newcomer show up at a COSA meeting for the first time and she can't speak and can't hold back her tears because she is so filled with despair, I see myself. I felt so alone, scared, and damaged. It's hard to describe the suffering I endured. I know you know.

Holding on to the fantasy that I had a good marriage, that we were lifelong partners, was no longer possible. The reality (that I had worked so hard not to see) was that my husband was a sex addict. What started as "just a hooker" was really a long, secret sexual life.

This intense pain and sadness turned into great motivators for me because I couldn't stand my life! I had to do something different, so I jumped into recovery. I worked the program hard. I went to meetings and slowly told more truth. I read COSA literature and books about addiction, betrayal, and codependency. I saw a counselor, dug deeply into the truth and cried and cried and cried.... I got a sponsor, worked the Steps, prayed for guidance and wisdom, volunteered for service positions, listened to others' stories, used contact lists for reality checks when I thought I'd go mad, wrote the truth in my journal, continued sharing with people I trusted, and kept showing up.

For about a year and a half into my recovery I was still all about him. (We still lived together and both worked a program. We were trying.) He'd screwed up this marriage, and he'd better fix it! I felt justified, righteous, and entitled to this view. I can't identify exactly when the transition back to me started. Maybe my recovery was reminding me that my life was about me, not him. Maybe blaming him stopped making me feel better. Maybe I had more detachment and could finally see myself as separate from him. Regardless of the catalyst, it became time for me to look in the mirror. I finally started to ask, "How did I get here? What was my part?"

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**Lead - continued**

This is when my metamorphosis into a grown woman really began.

Ever since I can remember, I have put so much energy into other people--and not just my husband! I have had opinions about how they should behave, what they've done wrong, and how they could make it right. The proportion of time spent on others versus myself was completely out of balance. This contributed to my suffering and perhaps even caused it. I was so focused on others that I literally got lost. COSA recovery brought me back to myself.

To start, I worked a program. In that process, I learned that I am responsible for my own happiness. When I hold other people responsible for my happiness, I'm completely dependent on them and how they behave. When I take responsibility for my own happiness, I am dependent on my own behaviors and choices. All that energy I use to spend on others I redirect back to myself. All that energy spent on trying to figure out someone else's life I now spend on my own.

The biggest difference in my behavior now compared to eight years ago is my level of self care. I am learning to take care of myself. I depend on myself to make myself feel better, and it's a different life. I write in my journal, call someone, go for a walk, cook a lovely meal, get back in bed, arrange my things the way I like them, attend a meeting, pay my bills, make a doctor's appointment, pray, read, connect with an old friend, seek clarification when I'm confused, soak in a bathtub, take my old clothes to the Goodwill, buy vitamins.... All these little things that keep me in my own business paying attention to what I need changed my life.

The tool that has helped me the most though is pausing when I'm unsure about what to do. I take time to check in with myself today, and this helps me to rebalance my attention and energy. It might be as short as a few seconds or take days and days. I pause and ask myself:

- What do I want?
- How can I take care of myself right now?
- What feels right?
- What am I willing to do?
- What am I unwilling to do?

These are simple questions and ones that took me a while to figure out! I had very little self-awareness. I fumbled and stumbled. I'd say the wrong thing and not mean that at all! I had to "hit the rewind button" and try again many times. I'd say yes when I meant no and no when I meant yes! I had to make amends. It wasn't easy or natural. I had to retrain myself to get my focus back on myself. That's what my journey in recovery is about: coming back to myself.

Figuring out and doing what I want still isn't entirely comfortable, but I do it anyway. I decline an invitation when I don't want to go. I keep my mouth shut when I want to give advice, and it hasn't been asked for. I don't send money when others do if it's not right for me. I tell the truth when someone asks if I want to drive. I spend more time with just myself and try to get more comfortable with that too.

Someone in recovery told me years ago that my husband had given me a gift by telling me the truth. I had no understanding of this idea then and thought it was absurd. Now I can see that he did give me a gift.

I get to be in my own life now. I've come home.

Kathy

## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Hello to the Fellowship!

I've nearly made it through a year of service as the International Service Organization of COSA board chair. Whew!

I think the challenge I've come up against most often this year has been feeling inadequate to the task of doing this job.

It's not because I'm not qualified to do it. It's because I'm a newcomer to this role. So many things come as somewhat of a surprise because I've never done this job before. You know what has lessened that fear and feeling of shame? Sharing it with my mentor, our previous board chair. You know what she tells me? "Oh yeah, I felt like that too." Now, every time I feel my heart barreling toward a shame spiral featuring the hammer of inadequacy, I can remember I'm not alone.

It's been an instructive practice that's helped me in other parts of my life. For instance, I'm adding a second unit to my home. I've never done that before. And remembering I'm a newcomer at that too takes some of the sting out of the fear of "doing it wrong." I'm grateful for this lesson that I know I will take with me long after this service commitment ends.

We've been busy this year. I hope you'll take moment to look at the annual report to see all that our board and committees have accomplished. You'll find it here on the delegate page:

<http://cosarecovery.org/2016/Delegates/DelegateInfo.html>.

We've added about seven new meetings to our roster this service year—we've lost a few too, but not as many as we've gained.

I'd like to welcome meetings in Austin, Texas; Santa Ana, California; Bozeman, Montana; Lexington, Kentucky; Mobile, Alabama; Roodepoort, South Africa; plus a new online meeting.

The new Austin group had held just three meetings when I spoke to one of its members in late March. They're already doing amazing service through outreach. They printed up 100 packets of information and have already disseminated a majority of them, reaching out to local therapists and partners of potential COSAs.

Wow. They've got four founding members and they've taken their meeting format from *The COSA Meeting Guide*. That's something everyone can download for free from the website here: [http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The\\_COSA\\_Meeting\\_Guide.pdf](http://cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The_COSA_Meeting_Guide.pdf).

I also heard from the new group in Santa Ana. They started up when another meeting in a central area of Orange County lost their location. So the members split into two groups and the Santa Ana meeting was born.

This was difficult, as members of the original group had built ties with their meeting mates. They found themselves making geographic choices to attend one meeting or the other.

The Santa Ana group now has about eight regular members who have grown close. They use electronic candles to make their meeting cozy. They work hard to make newcomers feel welcome. They've done outreach, too! Recently, they sent letters to a number of therapists and counselors in their area. Great service, Santa Ana! Thank you.

I look forward to hearing about your local meeting when I see you at the International Service Organization of COSA Annual Convention in May in Chicago.

Grateful to be of service,

Emily G.  
International Service Organization of COSA Board Chair

## MY FAVORITE RECOVERY TOOLS

### Lead Article Two

One of my favorite recovery tools is analogies. They help me visualize ideas and give me images to hold onto when I forget who I am, where I've come from, and where I am going. For example, one of the first analogies I thought of was my marriage as a garden. I had thought it was beautiful with tall flowers and vegetables and herbs. But it turned out to be a holographic garden. It wasn't real. I thought my marriage was built on truth and intimacy but my husband's addiction demanded he live a double life that I was not aware of for the first 18 years of our marriage. When the hologram vanished with discovery of the addiction, all that was left of the garden was a charred wasteland where a bomb had exploded. My life really felt like that for a year or more. Then as recovery took hold and sobriety became a reality, my husband and I started watering the ground together, spending time on our marriage like we never had before. The funny thing is that now our garden aka marriage is not verdant and grand. It's sort of scraggly and unkempt and it has weeds that we try to pull as soon as we see them, which we call making amends as soon as we can own our stuff! The great thing about this analogy is that it shows me how reality isn't perfect, it's work and it's worth it! Just like a real garden is!

Another analogy I really like is that of the vacuum cleaner. When working on Step One, I was thinking of how to differentiate between powerlessness and unmanageability. I think powerlessness is like realizing the vacuum is broken and unmanageability is like still trying to use the broken vacuum. It really works visually if you realize that to use a broken vacuum cleaner you have to exert a whole lot of energy and believe in a lot of magical thinking and indulge in lots of denial and minimization, all of which I was super good at as a co-addict/codependent!

The other night I was spending some quality recovery time with a group of women whom I refer to as my sisters. And we thought we would see how far we could take this little vacuum cleaner analogy. It works great for Step One so we thought what about Step Two? "We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." In the analogy, does that mean that we realized that we could get the vacuum fixed? I don't like the word fixed since I know recovery is going to last my lifetime, so no. Maybe it means that somebody, namely Higher Power, can do the vacuuming? No I don't like that because it's my house to vacuum, I need to keep it clean but I know I need help. So there it is, I just need to ask for help! Step Two is about realizing I need help and thinking about asking for it.

By the way, the vacuum analogy works for other recovery things too like, I have to "stay on my side of the street" with my vacuum, I can go to the shop (meetings/phone calls/journaling/etc.) and get a tune-up and I can ask for help with my vacuuming! Now Step Three - "turn[ed] our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God." Does that mean we turn our cleaning list over? Or Higher Power is our new housekeeper? No, not working for me! This is where the analogy falls apart and I have to switch from a vacuum cleaner to a car.

Let's go back a few Steps and insert car where we had vacuum cleaner. Step One - I realize I've been trying to drive a broken car. Step Two - I realize something has woken me up from my insanity and I get out of the car to get some help! Step Three - "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God." I had to ask myself, "Does that mean that I let God drive the car?"

The help I get is a new driver? I am simply the passenger in this car that I call my life?"

Nope! That doesn't work for me. What about free will and all the stuff I do to cause car accidents and neglect the upkeep of my car? I think I DO drive the car, I DO get to navigate. I get to choose if I follow the law and don't get tickets or visa versa. For me, Higher Power, also known as HP, isn't the driver. He's my mechanic and my wingman and my father and my friend and all the things we need on this trip we call life! I have turned the car over to the CARE of God. He is caring for my car, for my maps, for my provisions, for everything! And if I need to sit down at a rest stop and throw a tantrum about how we are getting nowhere and we have already visited this state before, my HP is good with that. HP is always patient and never bored or resentful of me and my creativity with directions. Just as a quick aside, I refer to my Higher Power as a He most of the time because, for me, that is just the analogy that fits.

The car analogy keeps on working! Step Four is "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." So on this recovery journey I have gotten to go back and revisit lots of the places I have been before, and HP has been super patient as I have slowly realized the impact of my insanity and love of denial and minimization. Step Four is a doozy but it's made doable by having HP along for the ride!

**Lead Article Two - continued**

Then Step Five, "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another person the exact nature of our wrongs." The analogy is still working because if HP has been with us in the car helping and guiding and loving us, He already knows about our wrongs and He knows a good person for us to share those with. So for this part of the analogy we get to bring a friend along on the drive. And maybe we already had a car full of amazing recovery friends who have been cheering for us or crying for us along our way. I know exactly who has been in my car! It's my sisters who were with me the night we thought up this awesome, powerful analogy that is helping me imagine and hold on to my recovery every day!

The car analogy will hopefully keep working for the rest of the Steps. I will find out as I work them! There is one other tool besides analogies that I would like to offer you today. I recommend it only be used when totally alone and preferably not while driving! The tool is cussing. Yep, that's right, swear words. I have never been a big cusser. I actually had to google "cussing" to come up with some real cuss words. Then I had to keep them in a note on my phone because I couldn't keep them memorized, in fact I still don't have them memorized but I always have them somewhere handy so I can pull them out when I really need them. They have helped me get my anger out in a healthy (not harming others) way. And I am very grateful for them!

So take your pick, and whether it's analogies or cussing or both, I wish you health and hope on your recovery journey. I am so very grateful to be on it with you!

Trish H.  
from Tucson

## 2016 ISO of COSA ANNUAL CONVENTION

### COSA's 23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Convention



**We are *WINDING UP!* Hope to see you in the Windy City!**

The Convention Committee hopes you will join your fellow COSAs for the four-day recovery event to be held in Chicago this Memorial Day weekend! What a great opportunity to gain insight into working the Steps, the Traditions, and recovery tools while connecting with other COSAs!

Here is a tentative schedule to give you an idea of what to expect:

Friday, May 27

- Opening Reception at 6:00 pm.
- Opening Session with COSA speaker at 7:00 pm.
- Twelve Step meetings and informal gatherings for fellowship and fun ("Outer Circle").

Saturday, May 28

- Early morning options for self-care, reflection, and connecting.
- Panels and workshops throughout the day (approximately 9:00 am-5:00 pm).
- Luncheon with COSA speaker at noon (cost of lunch not included with registration).
- Twelve Step meetings offered various times.
- Outer Circle activities.



**2016 ISO of COSA Annual Convention - continued**

Sunday, May 29

- Early morning options for self-care, reflection, connecting.
- Panels and workshops throughout the day (approximately 9:00 am-4:00 pm).
- COSA Banquet (5:30 pm-9:30 pm) – this special event is planned to be a festive occasion for conference attendees. The cost of the banquet is included with the cost of weekend conference registration. For those wanting to bring a guest, tickets can be purchased separately. We will have both a COSA speaker and a guest speaker recovering from sex addiction.
- Twelve Step meetings offered various times.
- Outer Circle activities.

Monday, May 30

- Twelve Step meetings offered.
- *Serenity Send-off*: this is a time for connecting, self-care, and preparing for re-entry. It will be a group activity to transition from the convention back into life (9:00 am-11:00 am).

**Book your stay at the convention hotel**

This year's convention will be held at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place. Please reserve your room under the COSA group block name, ***Winds of Change***, so COSA meets its minimum reservation and is not charged for unused rooms. The link to book your reservation is located on the COSA website at [www.cosa-recovery.org/2016](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2016)

**Easy online registration**

Also at the COSA website is our two-part registration process. First, complete the registration, and then submit payment. The weekend convention fee includes the cost of all the events with the exception of Saturday's luncheon. To get the discounted pre-registration fee of \$200, pay by May 13<sup>th</sup>. The fee includes the Sunday Banquet! Walk-in and day-only rates are also available. Saturday's luncheon is \$40 and extra banquet tickets are \$95 each. If you have questions or problems with registering, contact the Convention Committee at [convention@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:convention@cosa-recovery.org). Please note that all food functions are buffet style to accommodate those with special dietary needs.

**Offering financial help with registration**

The COSA service scholarship fund will provide financial assistance to COSAs on a first-come, first-served basis, helping with the registration cost. 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 nonrefundable \$25 administrative fee is required for every registrant requesting a scholarship.

**You are not alone! We offer care & support!**

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

**Volunteering**

Our convention is run entirely by volunteers. Please consider helping with registration, Twelve Step meetings, the silent auction, sound recording of meetings, or in other ways. Indicate your willingness to help when registering and you will be contacted by the Volunteer Committee. For those who can't attend, the Convention Committee has jobs for you, too!

**Silent Auction and Serenity T0-Go Store donations needed!**

A fun way of raising seed money for the next convention is our silent auction. We're asking for items to be sold at our silent auction or convention store, called "Serenity To-Go". In the past these items have been everything from affirmation cards to vacation time shares to stained glass. We also accept gently used items or things like artwork, kitchen utensils, quilts, jewelry, or greeting cards. Gift baskets or boxes are also good possibilities. (Keep in mind that many of these items will be transported with their new owner on an airplane.) If you can't come to the convention, we still want your donated items. We have an advance shipping location or you can send it along with a friend to the convention. For any questions, including shipping instructions, please contact [silentauction@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:silentauction@cosa-recovery.org).

The **Serenity To-Go** Store is a new initiative offering self-care items like scrubby gloves, bubble bath, and lotions for purchase. There will be travel size items available so you'll be able to pack them easily for the trip home plus your purchase goes toward seed money for the next convention which is a win-win for all of us! We will also have some gift items like cards and bags there for purchase as well.

**For additional information, consult the website at [www.cosa-recovery.org/2016](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2016) or contact the COSA Convention Committee at [convention@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:convention@cosa-recovery.org).**

## **STEP FIVE: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Considering Step Five was daunting and confusing, particularly to a codependent perfectionist such as myself! I grew up in a chaotic environment. My parents and brothers seemed to be constantly fighting, and I felt the stress and anxiety of our family problems, which included sex addiction and co-addiction, codependency, and an older brother with a disability. I remember at one point, my dad told me that my middle brother and I could not cause my parents any trouble “because we already have enough with your (oldest) brother.” I got the message clearly: be a good girl, follow the rules, perform well, keep up appearances, don’t make mistakes, make us proud.

Along with these pressures, I also grew up in a very conservative religion. My parents faithfully took us to religious services and youth programs each week and included family worship in our weekly routine. I didn’t realize until coming into Twelve Step programs just how much shame I’d accumulated in growing up this way. It seemed that shaming messages were actually encouraged in my religion, that somehow feeling badly about myself would help me understand my “true nature” and would bring me closer to God. This was all quite confusing, but ironically, it was normal to me. I didn’t know anything different.

This brings me to Step Five. Considering my background, how could I possibly admit to another person, to myself, and to a God of judgment all of my “wrongs”? How terrifying and humiliating! In actuality, working this Step was just the opposite—a gentle and healing experience. My sponsor was gentle with me, and in working Step Five, she never pointed out the word “wrongs” or made me feel “wrong” for my experiences. I started to feel very safe with her. It seemed that, no matter what I shared, she listened to me with love and acceptance and without judgment. What a new experience for me!

In this way, Step Five became a natural continuation of Step Four. In Step Four, I wrote out all kinds of inventories--of fears, resentments, and relationships, and also of character flaws and assets. My sponsor encouraged me to share my work with her as I went along, so that I was rather naturally working Step Five. Sometimes my awareness’s from Step Four were very painful. It took spiritual courage to peel back the layers and to gently let go of denial. I started to see patterns in my thoughts, behaviors, and relationships. I realized that my denial had been a protective tool to shield me from the inevitable pain of facing my past—and facing myself. I also saw that my denial and ignorance once served me; in the past, there was no safe place for me to process all my pain. What a gift to find the safety and support of the COSA fellowship and my sponsor. I was finally safe enough to open up my wounds with someone I could trust. Before I knew it, I was truly working Step Five—sharing my life experiences with another human being, and thus hearing them myself. In some ways, it was like hearing them for the first time, as I was much more aware of myself. And somehow, I suppose it was also like sharing them with a Higher Power, One that was forming into a very loving God, quite different from the judgmental God I had once feared and resented.

And the magic of the Steps began to happen for me. Slowly but surely, this painful yet amazing process was working its way through my spirit. It was incredibly freeing to share the darkest parts of myself with another human being and to be met with love and acceptance instead of judgment and shame. It was a model for me of how to begin loving and accepting myself.

Another amazing part is that the more my shame level decreased, the more I had the capacity to see where I actually had done wrong and harmed others. I couldn’t see this at first. I was so caught up in my shame that I wasn’t able to look at myself honestly and critically; my attempts would turn into a self-hating session with little productivity and lots of leftover emotional baggage. But in working Step Five gently, sharing all my experiences and not just my perceived “wrongs,” I was building a solid foundation for becoming aware of some truly harmful behaviors that I’m now following up on in Steps Eight and Nine. In the end, my sponsor helped me understand that, ironically, the one I had hurt the most was myself.

I am truly grateful to this program, my Higher Power, and a wonderful sponsor for walking with me on this incredible journey. My sponsor has witnessed my struggles and my process. She has not had to be my Higher Power or have all my answers. As she guides me through the Steps, I am learning to find myself and my own answers. My story is not over; some days I still struggle with shame, I still reach out to my sponsor, and I continue to experience the warmth of her love and acceptance. But I feel myself growing each day. I am connecting to a Higher Power of my own understanding whose love for me is vast, and whose healing powers are beyond measure. And I feel lucky and blessed to walk this spiritual path with my sponsor and with others who share my story. It is our story, and I wish spiritual courage for us all as we walk this path together.

Gratefully,  
Larissa

**STEP SIX: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

I was just finishing my work on Step Five when I attended the ISO of COSA Convention in 2008. I went to a workshop called "Forgiveness: Working the Twelve Steps." The presenter said that Steps Six and Seven were grieving Steps. I am very grateful that I was able to attend this particular workshop. I went home and completed my Step Five with my sponsor. This was so validating for me. I felt loved and accepted.

As I approached Step Six, the question for me was: Knowing what I knew, and without my rose-colored glasses on, could I accept and love myself? I was overwhelmed with feelings of deep loss. Loss of my childhood, loss from not being loved for just being me, loss from not being there for my children, loss of two marriages, loss of my faith, loss of friendships, loss of family...so much loss of what might have been. Now, I understood why this Step was labeled as a grieving Step.

I had kept all my secrets hidden for so long, and now another person knew my whole story. I thought to myself "What do I do now? What do I do with all this pain of loss?" Constant thoughts kept swirling in my mind: "what ifs." I know that I am my own worst critic. I can label all my defects and weaknesses with no problem. In Step Six, there were two challenges that I had to come to terms with: my negative thoughts and my difficulty accepting the past. However, I had Step Five to rely on. From Step Five, I had validation and acceptance from God and my sponsor. These two sources provided me with great examples of what healthy acceptance felt like. I was able to continue my journey to discover who I was.

To this day, I am very grateful for my sponsor who gently guided me through this pain. I had to redefine myself and reevaluate who was trustworthy. Could I be trustworthy? What type of person do I want to be? What is motivating me to act in unhealthy ways? These three questions were monumental in helping me to describe myself for the first time. In the past, I relied on my mother or my two husbands to define who I was. As I worked Step Six, I found myself trusting in untrustworthy sources to define me. My sponsor made a suggestion that every time that I looked in the mirror I should say one positive thing about myself. I must have had a panic-stricken look on my face. My sponsor changed the suggestions to once in the morning and before I went to bed. This provided me with a way of being honest with myself.

I have learned that I am able to accept my weaknesses because I have identified my strengths. I have balance when I do this. I created for myself affirmations which I had heard from trustworthy people in my home COSA group (as well as from people whom I met at the COSA convention). I loved the medallion night when each member says positive things about you. This was the first time that I heard truthfulness. Each person said what they meant. There was no double meaning. I could trust what they said. I used this as a guideline for my affirmations.

For me, this was a slow process. Sometimes I wanted to stay in the cocoon. Other times, I was ready to explore new and better ways to express myself. I felt like a caterpillar transforming. I felt that I was slowly becoming a person that I could be content with and that I was showing love, compassion and forgiveness for myself in a healthy way. So, yes, Steps Six and Seven are considered grieving Steps. However, through the grief, I was transforming into being the person that I wanted to become.

Anonymous

**COSA - Additional Resources on our website:**

- NEWCOMER INFO: <http://cosa-recovery.org/newcomers.html>
- MEETING GUIDE: [http://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The\\_COSA\\_Meeting\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The_COSA_Meeting_Guide.pdf)
- ONLINE STORE <http://cosa-store.myshopify.com/>
- FREE DOWNLOADS: <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/freedownloads.html>
- WRITING FOR COSA: <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/submissions.html>



## Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

### January - February 2016

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

Mesa, AZ	\$120.00
Santa Ana, CA	\$40.00
Duluth, MN	\$92.50
FL-11	\$100.00
OH-01	\$50.00
Mesa, AZ	\$40.00
FL-14	\$50.00
PayPal	\$1,926.00
Recurring Individual	\$835.00
Individual	\$3,609.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,862.50</b>

### 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.

**TRADITION FIVE:** 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.

I like this Tradition because it brings it back to the Steps. My initial impression is that it is a reminder to strengthen faith in my Higher Power.

That is where I find myself doubting the most these days. Step Two tells us to believe that a power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity, and then Step Three encourages us to let our Higher Power do the heavy lifting by turning our will and our lives over.

If I'm thinking about the person next to me, I can easily believe for them—"Hey, no problem, their Higher Power can guide them to the right doorway."

But alone or in a group setting, I forget. My strongest muscle is my oldest one—the one that tells me I'm flying solo.

Tradition Five reminds me this is faulty thinking.

If I am not living by the Steps, I am letting the group down. More importantly, Tradition Five reminds me that when I neglect my commitment to the Steps, the newcomer suffers.

A strong sober meeting is one that keeps newcomers returning. If I'm standing around after the meeting handing out advice or trying to dominate a business meeting instead of letting group conscience guide us, I'm putting a dent in that sobriety.

I am sure I have done both of these things, and this meditation on Tradition Five serves in part as an amends. I can identify my defects in Step Four—which in this case would be arrogance—that I know better. In Step Five, I can admit that to someone else—you all, in this case. In Step Six, I can look at how my life would be different without this character defect—to help ready me to have my Higher Power remove it.

So, how *would* my life be different? I might be more attractive to others and have more friends. I have seen that humility can be a magnetic quality. Replacing arrogance with humility would not only serve newcomers, but also myself and all those around me – including other COSAs. Letting go of arrogance might relieve the responsibility and regret I feel when I overstep. If I'm not telling people what to do, and simply sharing my own experience, strength, and hope, I might feel lighter—less like a hammer in one of those gopher games. Also, there'd be fewer amends to make.

Step Seven. Here goes. Higher Power, I humbly ask that you lift my character defect of arrogance. I understand this is to be done on your timing—not mine. Thank you.

Step Eight. Whom have I harmed? Myself, the business meeting group, and anyone to whom I have given unsolicited advice. I have harmed myself by creating a barrier with others through my arrogance. That leads to isolation, which allows my obsessive thinking to get me into trouble. I have harmed the business-meeting group by interfering with group conscience. I have harmed people I have advised by assuming that I know better, insulting their intelligence and their own relationship with their Higher Power.

Step Nine. I make amends to myself by taking care of myself, maybe doing some practical self-care, or doing something nice for myself—maybe a pedicure, or taking a swim. I often overstep as a way to avoid what's going on with me. I make amends to the group by apologizing to the group in person, with an aim towards watching this behavior going forward. I do the same with the individuals.

Step Ten. When I see my arrogance cropping up, I notice it and make amends to whomever I've harmed as soon as I can.

Step Eleven. I continue to remember that having faith in a higher power is something I need to actively practice. Forgetting about my Higher Power is what got me into this mess in the first place.

**Tradition Five – continued**

Step Twelve. A spiritual awakening. I am learning that I can allow the weight to be lifted off my shoulders, and that I need ongoing help to do that. It's not something that's natural for me, but it's a gift we all deserve. And I am sharing that with all of you.

If I can remember the effort that it took to write this down, it might help me consider humility as the better option. I know it is one day at a time. This is the way I am carrying the message today.

Emily

**TRADITION SIX:** 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.

COSA's Tradition One states "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon COSA unity." The COSA member is guided to understand and apply the principles of recovery. We are then given eleven other Traditions that show us what we can do to accomplish the goal of unity allowing recovery.

Tradition Six allows groups not to lose focus on our primary spiritual aim. We don't promote COSA, contribute funds, or allow the use of the name "COSA" for any reason that could divert us from that aim. Conversely, we don't endorse outside enterprises, outside recovery activities, political philosophies, or religion. We may cooperate with other recovery groups but we do not otherwise endorse or recommend these outside activities. We rely on our Higher Power for guidance and keep in mind in each activity that our primary spiritual aim is to reach out to other COSAs.

In COSA we share experience, strength, and hope from one COSA member to another, and that can be done at a meeting, in a parking lot, or over the phone. It's the message, it's the talk; it's not the place. All COSA needs is for one member to meet and talk to another member or members, and that can happen anywhere. This is in keeping with the spirituality of our program, with no diversions from our primary aim. For me, I can share experience, strength, and hope with others in COSA at online meetings, video conferencing meetings, in forums by responding to messages or having my messages responded to, or by phone meetings that I participate in. It does not matter what occupation or political viewpoint a COSA member has, nor does it matter whether I am corresponding using the latest and greatest smart phone or a flip phone received from the local women's shelter. We are all one with a primary purpose, to reach out to other COSAs to share the message of recovery.

In peace,  
Angela S.

**Don't forget to read about the  
2016 ISO of COSA Annual Convention – see page 5!**



## 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://www.cosa-recovery.org/Writing\\_Guidelines\\_Revision\\_20110521\\_Final.pdf](http://www.cosa-recovery.org/Writing_Guidelines_Revision_20110521_Final.pdf)

Please send your articles to [COSACopy@yahoo.com](mailto:COSACopy@yahoo.com)

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