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# Fear and Acceptance

## My Experience of Being a Male in COSA

I am a male, and I have been in COSA for 10 years. Most often I am the only male in the meetings I attend. I am straight and still married to my qualifying partner.

For the first time recently, while talking with another male COSA about the challenges of being male in COSA, I was led to explore and reflect on how that has affected my recovery, what I have learned, and what I may still need to learn. I started writing for myself, but became aware that maybe I have something to share with my fellow COSAs.

To a Male New to COSA:

This program has worked for this COSA male. In the beginning, I found the support in my recovery that I so desperately needed. Today, COSA is a community in which I flourish.

I have been the lone male in 99% of my COSA meetings. I felt different at the start, but I was accepted in every way, at every meeting. I am still the lone male in most meetings, but I don't feel different anymore, just accepted and loved for who I am. From my observations, it seems that this disease afflicts the core of both genders in very similar ways. Feelings of fear, abandonment, rage, confusion, low self-worth, doubt, and anxiety are universal.

I brought my handicaps relating to relationships with women into the rooms, along with all my other dysfunctions. These have included:

It seems to me that women view men who feel and display their emotions as weak or soft. I realized that if I tried to conform to that expectation by trying not to feel or display my emotions, I would only extend and exacerbate the

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## Fear and Acceptance

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damage already done to me earlier in my life, when I thought I needed to hide my emotions to survive. I have found that the more I examine my feelings and their origin, the better my life gets-and the more female COSAs are willing to open up to me.

It also appears that men do not have as much emotional capacity as women. I absorbed this from society, and when I first entered the rooms, I seemed to find proof that this axiom was true, but I have found that it is just another dysfunctional belief. Following the examples of courage in the rooms and slowly accessing the emotional part of me that I had hidden, I changed this belief about myself. Today, the rooms of COSA are the safest place in my life to feel whatever it is I need to feel, and I do so often.

I brought the fear that when I entered the rooms, I was a trigger for women's anger at their qualifier, who was usually male. I assumed this was true for a long time; this mistaken belief inhibited my recovery and inhibited me from developing healthy relationships with my fellow COSAs. Once I shared about this fear in the rooms, I found the opposite was true. I received feedback from a number of women that my honest effort at recovery had helped them gain a healthier perspective on men and helped them heal in many ways! This was not my intention, but it certainly was Higher Power's intention!

Due to my experiences in my family of origin, I had a lot of shame and guilt about men's historical treatment of women. I secretly feared that I was not safe for my fellow female COSAs and that I was a potential perpetrator, so I kept my emotional distance. Attending meetings and doing service felt okay, but really allowing myself to become a close recovery friend, didn't. I became aware that this attitude was holding me back, so I stepped up my participation, allowing myself to get closer to female COSAs. Then I became sure that one of my shares had offended several female COSAs, and I was ready to leave COSA to protect them from myself. My co-sponsor suggested that I check my assumption with these women and, when I did, I found that I was wrong. I had made up a big story in my head so that my perception of reality matched my dysfunctional perception of myself.

To My COSA Sisters:

Sisters are how I think of you, older sisters, younger sisters, all looking out for the best in each other! To get to this frame of mind has not been easy. When I first joined COSA, I felt handicapped in the program by my difference from you. It was not the group, or the people in it, that caused me to feel this way; it was the dysfunction I brought with me.

Looking back, I have realized that my family of origin saddled me with a lot of shame about being male. From my family of origin, I learned the belief that men will abuse women if given half a chance; I feared that was latent in me too. So in my early years in COSA I showed up at meetings and did service, but kept myself at a distance. I needed that distance to prevent what I imagined was latent evil in me, which I thought would emerge, if given half a chance. I feel I owe a Step Ten amends to those that were in the rooms with me at the time; I fear that my withholding was a damper on the recovery in the room. I also owe a Step Ten amends to myself for recovery opportunities lost, as I isolated from you to protect you from myself.

In these early years, Higher Power provided me with a woman cosponsor, with whom this fear did not seem to surface. I will be forever grateful to this person for her wonderful patience and love. This COSA relationship was, and still is, a blessing that started a long slow thaw in me that continues today.

Being a male in the rooms with mainly women, I feel I must discuss attraction. Doing so scares me, but here goes. Attraction happens in many ways for me in COSA. First and foremost I am attracted to your recovery, also to your

courage in recovery because I want what you have! This attraction I know is healthy, an outer circle behavior. I also notice your physical beauty; mostly my noticing stays in my outer circle of acceptable thinking, but sometimes I need to work to keep it so.

In my dysfunction, sometimes a story forms in my head that a primary relationship with one of you would be better than the relationship I have. This unhealthy attraction comes and goes, and floats around from person to person. These stories are annoying and distracting to me more than anything else, yet I am ashamed of them, as I know they are a measure of my disease. I do not fear acting on these stories, as I know to do so would destroy this very precious gift from my Higher Power: my relationship with my COSA fellowship. It helps me to think of my closest COSA friends as sisters, very close and dear, but sisters.

I want as intimate a recovery relationship with as many of you as are willing, and I am also still learning exactly what that intimate, yet appropriate, relationship with my COSA sisters looks like. Asking you to see into me is scary but necessary for me to break my isolation and my rampant self-sufficiency. Seeing into you, I find your courage inspirational, and your wisdom grounding. The pain in many of your histories fills me with sadness and compassion, yet I am amazed at your strength. I have found intimacy with you that I didn't think I was capable of. I had thought I was defective, and deficient in my ability to care and be cared for. Our recovery together has taught me that this is not true.

Thanks for listening,  
Chris C., Alamo

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

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

To find your meeting number:

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

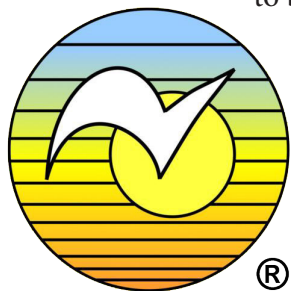
**Seventh Tradition: Financial Report  
January/February Donations**

Mesa, AZ (AZ-02) .....	\$40.00
Alamo Thursday (CA-02).....	\$40.67
Irvine CA (CA-13) .....	\$31.00
COSA San Francisco (CA-18).....	\$90.00
Claremont, CA (CA-20).....	\$0.00
Santa Anna, CA (CA-40).....	\$100.00
Palm Beach Gardens, FL (FL-13) .....	\$100.00
Columbus, OH (OH-06).....	\$75.00
Durham, NC (NC-06).....	\$0.00
Upstate COSA (SC-01).....	\$75.00
Houston Sunday PM (TX-22) .....	\$41.00
Hampton, VA (VA-01) .....	\$50.00
BHAM Recovery (WA-09).....	\$200.00
LaCrosse COSA Group (WI-17) .....	\$50.00
Individual Recurring Donations.....	\$2,551.00
Individual Single Donations .....	\$706.50
Donation from Charitable Trust.....	\$500.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$4,650.17</b>

# Letter from the ISO Board Chair

To our Fellowship,

We are coming up on another service year, starting at the tail end of our annual convention, to be held this year in Orlando.



Each year, I am asked to write a vision for the board of the International Service Organization of COSA.

This year, we want to show you that ISO service is worthwhile, rewarding, and an excellent opportunity to learn how to be more human.

Why? It's because the people serving now aren't here forever. They have term limits. They have other work to do. They have life emergencies. And rotation of service is the way of our fellowship.

If you have someone in your meeting who does ISO service, ask them why they do it.

Do you think of the ISO of COSA as them, those people over there?

The ISO of COSA belongs to all of us. It belongs to all of us who identify as COSAs.

Getting involved takes a big leap of faith. So does walking through the door to your first meeting. Scary, but you did it. And I'm guessing you're glad you did.

And I'm guessing many people will tell you that there are even more gifts behind that next door, the one between you and ISO of COSA service.

So, this year, we hope we show you why we serve. We hope we show you we're glad we did. We hope you join us in some small way.

Emily G.  
International Service Organization of COSA

What Does the ISO Do?

The ISO oversees the production and sale of literature and the coordination of the annual convention. Board members have monthly meetings where they discuss the business of COSA. The ISO manages the website where you find meeting schedules, the COSA Store, issues of our bi-monthly newsletter, *Balance*, in addition to free recordings of Step Studies. We are working on a basic text for our fellowship. We answer the calls and e-mails of newcomers and old-timers alike, and we are doing all of this as volunteers. COSA has one part-time staff member.

# 2017 ISO of COSA Annual Convention

## May 26-29

**DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel  
Orlando at SeaWorld  
10100 International Drive  
Orlando, Florida 32821**



*It is time to Step into the Sunshine!*

The Convention Committee has been busy planning this four-day event to be held in Orlando, Florida, during the Memorial Day weekend with hopes that you will join us! What a great opportunity to expand your recovery by gaining 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 26**

- Opening Session with COSA speaker at 7:30 p.m.
- Twelve Step meetings and informal gatherings for fellowship and fun (“Outer Circle”)

### **Saturday, May 27**

- Options for self-care, reflection, and connecting
- Panels and workshops throughout the day (approximately 9:00 a.m. until 5:30 p.m.)
- Luncheon with COSA speaker at noon (Cost of lunch \$40)
- Twelve Step meetings & Outer Circle activities

### **Sunday, May 28**

- Options for self-care, reflection, and connecting
- Panels and workshops throughout the day (approximately 9:00 a.m. until 1:15 p.m.)
- COSA Banquet (6:30p.m. until 9:30p.m.): this special event is planned to be a festive occasion for attendees. The cost of the banquet is included with the cost of Early Bird and Early Registration.\
- Twelve Step meetings offered various times
- Outer Circle activities

### **Monday, May 29**

- Twelve Step meeting
- Serenity Send-off: 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 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.)

A listing of workshops and panels is posted at <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2017/2017COSAProgram.pdf>

## 2017 Convention

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### Convention Registration

The registration fee is \$190 through May 10. The weekend convention fee includes all of the events with the exception of Saturday's luncheon. Saturday's luncheon for registered COSAs is an additional \$40. The cost of the Sunday Banquet is included in the registration fee; tickets for extra guests are \$90 each. **Walk-in and day-only rates are also available.**

### Hotel Registration & Location

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Orlando at SeaWorld  
10100 International Drive, Orlando, Florida 32821

Special COSA Rate: Single/Double \$129 per night plus resort fees and taxes

**Parking for non-hotel guest is \$18 per day.**

### *What happens at the convention?*

The convention kicks off with a speaker on Friday night followed by two days of workshops and panels on a variety of recovery topics. Special functions will feature speakers sharing their recovery stories. There will be a variety of COSA Twelve Step meetings, a meditation room, and many opportunities for fun and fellowship. Please join us!

### *Support*

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.

### *Silent Auction & Serenity To-Go Store*

Silent Auction is COSA's fundraiser at our annual convention, which raises seed money for the following year's convention, which Oakland, California, in 2018.

In the past, we have had a HUGE variety of items donated for the Silent Auction, such as note cards, scarves, jewelry, CDs, DVDs, luggage, themed gift baskets, pottery, paintings, posters, books, etc. Even services such as life coaching, photography, and time-share vacations. Items with a recovery theme or connection are great, but anything pretty or practical, of a reasonable size, is welcome. You can either bring your donation with you to the convention or mail it to us. You don't have to attend the convention to donate an item. Please e-mail [silentauction@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:silentauction@cosa-recovery.org) with information about items you'd like to donate or any questions you have.

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 <http://www.cosa-recovery.org/2017> 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.*

I had three cosponsors when I gave my Fifth Step in COSA. I was the first in our group to give a Fifth Step and I believe we were all nervous. None of us had any prior Twelve Step experience and we relied primarily on four books to guide our Step Work. It was hard enough thinking about sharing my Fifth Step with one human being and my higher power, but the idea of three people made me feel naked. One of the things I was confused about was whether it was appropriate to share the resentments I had listed in my Fourth Step towards my cosponsors (yes, I had them). Given our fellowship's traditions of anonymity and 'principles before personalities' I couldn't figure out how to follow the guidance in the books (for a full and complete Fifth Step share, including names) while being true to the Traditions. I was scared that my cosponsors would be mad at me and/or that they might feel shame hearing what I had to say about them in front of others. What to do?

The Big Book says we don't have to share our Fifth Step with our sponsor (or cosponsors), it can be a person of our choosing. So I considered not sharing my Fifth Step with my cosponsors. But I don't belong to a church or temple, so I had no spiritual teacher to turn to. I thought about sharing it with my therapist, but knew the work of my inventory was many pages long and would take hours of important therapy time. I couldn't turn to old friends or family members (they were all in my inventory too). Perhaps I needed a complete stranger?

Very confused and knowing that the date for giving my Fifth Step was fast approaching (I followed the guidance to set the Fifth Step date for a month after I began my Fourth Step), I finally stopped trying to figure things out by myself (it's probably not a big surprise that one of my character defects is not asking for help) and turned to friends in another fellowship for help and the experience, strength and hope I received from reaching out of my isolation helped me to find clarity.

Here's what I heard when I asked for help: pray about it, ask my HP for guidance (in my early recovery days I tended to forget this every other minute or so); revisit the 'my part' column for my resentments in general and my cosponsors in particular, and check to see that I was really clear about what my part was and how it revealed my own character defect (this was extraordinarily helpful and wound up being a major key to breaking my log jam); a reminder that the Fifth Step is not an indictment of others' behaviors, nor of my own; a reminder of how much support my cosponsors would be able to give me in subsequent steps if they heard my Fifth Step; to have faith and trust in the understanding and compassion my cosponsors desired to give me; and remember that my cosponsors might have resentments towards me when they would share their Fifth Steps (we are all human, there is no shame in having resentments, but it sure is harmful to hold onto them) and to think about how I would feel in their shoes.

In the end, after I reworked the 'my part' on my resentments, I got really clear about what to do. I decided I really wanted to share my Fifth Step with all three of my cosponsors because it was best for my recovery. I decided to make amends with them individually (even though I wasn't on the Ninth Step, I didn't have to wait to make amends for current stuff) and ask how they would like me to handle sharing the specifics of what I had in my Fourth Step about them. What an amazing process. It was really the first time I got to practice what would come later in my Ninth Step, about letting go of expectations that people would apologize to me for 'their part.' I think there was only one request to not share something in front of the group which was fine, after all I had in fact followed the Step as it was intended (God and another human being) and what better person to do it with than the person I had harmed (turns out I was judging them - hmmm, another character defect). It

## Step Five

*continued*

was still very challenging to share my Fifth Step with my cosponsors, but I never regretted the decision and I believe it was an important part of my recovery to go through the process of not asking for help and then asking for help at that critical time. Just as an addendum, as I grew in my recovery and understanding of how the Fifth Step helps me to be a better person, I ultimately shared quite a bit of my Fifth Step with my partner (that was a very unexpected surprise) and I shared a condensed version of my Fifth Step with my therapist. I continue to be amazed how people can better support me by knowing the dark as well as the light parts of me and even more awed that it seems to draw people closer to me. Who would have guessed?

~A Grateful Recovering COSA, Kerry M., Oakland, CA  
*Reprinted from the May/June 2008 Balance.*

## Step Six

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

Step Six has not been easy for me to complete. In fact, I am still in the process of working this Step. It has been easy for me to make a list of the things that I am ready to let go of or stop doing. I can easily come up with a list of my many character defects. I have come to realize that this reflects part of my own struggle with self-loathing that I continue to work on every day since I entered the program six years ago. I initially entered COSA feeling very afraid and filled with shame, wondering if I would be greeted with judgment and criticism, only to find that I have never been received with such acceptance and understanding in my entire life. It took years for me to begin working with a sponsor who has gently guided me towards working the Steps of the program, and I am so happy that I am doing this. Working the Steps has changed my life.

Step Six doesn't just ask me to become ready to let go of all my character defects. While this Step asks me to "let go" of all that stands in my way, including the old thoughts, behaviors, and patterns that I do not want to engage in anymore, it also asks me to consider to become ready for what I truly desire. This is the hardest part for me. Part of my work in Step Six included making a list of what I would like to start doing and a list of all the things that I would like to receive now and in my future; my work also included trusting my Higher Power in my process of recovery. I initially didn't understand why I couldn't come up with this part of my list. The list of what I was ready to let go of was easy, but shifting to what I actually desired in my life was very hard for me. Why did I have this mental and emotional block?

I discussed this with my sponsor one day and, in sharing this with her, discovered that I had never admitted an old experience of abuse that had occurred when I was a child. She listened with warmth and compassion and gently suggested that I go back and re-visit my Fourth Step. I found that I needed to re-work this Step and include this difficult and important part of my life to be able to return to working my Sixth Step. By doing this, I could finally let go of this painful secret and share it out loud in the trusted hands of my sponsor. In turn, I was better able to discover the self-compassion, love, and trust necessary to work Step Six.

Loving myself enough to become ready to have God remove all these defects of character has been an important part of Step Six and of my own recovery. It is not a perfect process but I am making progress every day, and I am grateful for the many gifts of the program that I have received along the way.

~Anonymous



## Additional Resources on COSA's Website

NEWCOMER INFO:	<a href="http://cosa-recovery.org/newcomers.html">http://cosa-recovery.org/newcomers.html</a>
MEETING GUIDE:	<a href="http://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The_COSA_Meeting_Guide.pdf">http://www.cosa-recovery.org/PDF/The_COSA_Meeting_Guide.pdf</a>
ONLINE STORE	<a href="http://cosa-store.myshopify.com/">http://cosa-store.myshopify.com/</a>
FREE DOWNLOADS:	<a href="http://www.cosa-recovery.org/freedownloads.html">http://www.cosa-recovery.org/freedownloads.html</a>
WRITING FOR COSA:	<a href="http://www.cosa-recovery.org/submissions.html">http://www.cosa-recovery.org/submissions.html</a>

## By the Fellowship - For the Fellowship



We encourage every group, intergroup and member to submit articles that share your ESH (experience, strength, and hope). Also, articles and announcements that share up-coming COSA events in your area; such as retreats, workshops, speakers, etc. We also would love to hear your ideas for what you would like to see in future articles. The *Balance* is a newsletter for the membership, by the membership.

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

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

or by mail to:

ISO of COSA  
Central Office  
9219 Katy Freeway, Suite 212  
Houston, TX 77024 U.S.A.

ISO of COSA

Phone: 866-899-2672

E-mail: [info@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:info@cosa-recovery.org)

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

## 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.*

After I discovered my partner was a sex addict, I was fortunate to find a therapist who was familiar with cases like mine and who knew of the International Service Organization of COSA. However, I was terrified to attend a meeting and stalled for several years. The idea of sharing one of the most painful moments of my life with a roomful of strangers actually made me feel ill; I hadn't even shared what had happened with my family or friends. It was a miracle I had even sought the help of a therapist.

Some of my resistance came from a place of shame. I hadn't yet learned to accept my powerlessness over compulsive sexual behavior—that nothing I could have said or done would have changed my partner or my partner's actions.

My resistance also came from a place of willfulness. As a child I had learned that no one—except for myself—would help me with my problems; my burdens were mine to carry and resolve alone. This story stayed with me as an adult. My belief was that as long as I worked hard and did what I thought was right, then everything would be okay and I would be safe. If anything bad or negative happened, it was because I had failed in some way or hadn't been good enough. I couldn't even help myself, so it was hard to see how a group of people who were in a Twelve Step program and whom I had never met could be of use. Then at some point, I hit a level even lower than before, and in desperation I made the decision to attend a meeting.

At my first meeting this “group of people whom I had never met” expressed thoughts and feelings I had kept within myself for years. Their stories showed me that I wasn't alone. Initially, knowing that I was with people who understood where I came from was why I kept attending meetings. But as I returned again and again, and heard more about how everyone worked the Twelve Steps in their lives, that was what cemented my belief in the program. I gradually began to understand how the Steps could fit into my life. Each group member's stories of recovery—through the practice of the Twelve Steps —gave me hope that I could change. Seeing and hearing how others practiced the Steps, and learning about the resources they used, showed me that the Steps actually worked. It wasn't until I began the work myself that I started to understand the Steps more fully, and saw how I could benefit from them. I still had problems and I still experienced pain and sadness, but I now had tools to manage these challenges.

My group meeting was the engine that delivered me to a place of sanity and serenity—and the Twelve Steps were the fuel that kept all of us going. My gratitude for my group, the ISO of COSA, and the Steps, is immeasurable. And whenever newcomers are welcomed to the program, I'm grateful for them as well. While I wish they hadn't experienced similar suffering, their working their own program supports mine as well. Sharing my practice of the Steps and witnessing their recovery through their own work, inspires me to continue working the Twelve Steps, to stay with the program, and to keep coming back.

~Anonymous

### 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.

# 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.*

Before recovery, I scrutinized words and facial expressions for hidden meanings. I used to be on the lookout for every micro-expression, inferring sinister purposes from others' actions. I feared that people were manipulating me in the way that I tried to manipulate others. In recovery, I work on keeping it simple. I try to take things at face value. I try to remember not to take things personally. This keeps me sane and sober. It turns out that the world is not out to get me after all.

I am reminded of this when I study the Traditions. They are simply stated, but there is much to learn from scrutinizing the words and applying them to my life. My first response to Tradition Six was, "Of course! We COSAs would never think of having an outside enterprise!" Then a girl and her mom came to my door selling cookies for a non-profit organization. I once belonged to this organization, and I am a big fan of shortbread cookies. Of course, I bought four boxes.

Over a cup of coffee (don't open the boxes alone!), I thought about COSA and fundraising. One of my meetings is trying to raise funds to help our delegate travel to the Convention. We are doing this with a weekly Seventh Tradition collection, and we aren't sure that we will meet our dollar goal. After the cookie transaction, my coffee-enhanced mind lit up with how we could raise money for the delegate in other ways. COSAs are talented, crafty (in a good way), and bake like pros. We could have a COSA bake sale, or make stuff to sell online! Before I could go further, my Higher Power reminded me of Tradition Six. I remembered fundraisers I had been involved in for other non-profits. All of these fundraisers came with "problems of money, property and prestige."

One year, I volunteered to be the "cookie czar" for the fundraiser for my daughter's group. There were money problems; I could not balance the sales against the inventory. There were property problems; I ran out of room to store all the boxes, and I lost some. And prestige problems? You betcha! Some of the members wanted to be recognized for selling the most cookies. There were grumblings that some parents, not their daughters, were selling the cookies at work. My character defects had a field day. I had so many resentments that no garage would contain them.

In contrast, COSA is a safe place for me because we do not lend the COSA name to "any related facility or outside enterprise." We do not brand COSA, or rely on fundraising events that sell COSA products to the public. We do what we can, imperfectly, to maintain the fellowship, support other COSAs, and carry the message through our Seventh Tradition. We are not competing, promoting, or taking inventory of cookies or of other people. We do service to help others and strengthen our recovery, not to get recognition. I'm grateful that the Traditions make COSA and service a good experience for me. Tradition Six helps me keep my garages—physical and spiritual—empty of cookies and resentments.

~Anonymous

Burlingame Tuesday Night Meeting