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# FEELINGS

What are feelings? How do we deal with them? To me this is the question of recovery. I believe that we, who are affected by compulsive sexual behavior, may have grown up with no real guidance as to how to feel or identify uncomfortable feelings when we had them. This is certainly true for me.

I grew up with a functional alcoholic father and a codependent mother. I had a sister whom I wanted desperately to bond with, but she was too self-involved to notice me. My sister and my father argued all the time. My mother would complain to me about my father and my sister. And my sister worked very hard to make me feel stupid and ugly. I became the peacekeeper.

Because of this dynamic, as a child, I didn't learn the names of feelings. I didn't learn how to properly deal with feelings. Instead, I learned to squash my feelings down. I thought that I would feel good if others felt good. That became my goal: make everyone happy, no matter the cost. I began to disregard my feelings and replace them with what I thought or assumed others felt. This began a lifelong pursuit of guessing what others were thinking and feeling. On the positive side, it made me an excellent listener. On the negative side, I lost all sense of self.

My husband told me about his sex addiction when we first met. I sprang into action; I would save him! Our love would be true and strong enough to overcome anything. And once again I squashed my feelings and focused on his. It wasn't a conscious thought; it was just natural for me. When my partner was upset, all my feelings and needs were pushed to the back and his needs were put in the front. I firmly believed that if we focused on his needs and I helped him learn how not to be an addict, then we could get over this hump and move on.

My husband and I started Twelve Step fellowships about five years ago. I am now completing Step Eight and working

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### SAVE THE DATE!

ISO of COSA's 25<sup>th</sup>  
Annual Convention  
Oakland, California  
May 25-28, 2018



on Step Nine. Through this Step work and many, many meetings, the biggest thing I have learned is that I have feelings that I just don't know how to deal with, or don't want to deal with. The tricky thing with feelings is that I have to feel them. I have to feel them in order to let them go. If I don't, something worse will come. For example, if I get sick and ignore the sickness, it won't go away. It will get worse and worse until eventually it will hinder my living in one way or another (if not fatally). The same goes with feelings. For example, my husband acts out and I feel sad and hurt (because it triggers my trauma and I see it as betrayal). I can deny it or I can ignore it, but only for a short time. If I continue to ignore these feelings (hurt, trauma, betrayal) and do not feel them, something worse will come. I may start developing headaches or become spacey. I may develop an addiction or go into the codependent crazies. I find that the four steps that follow help me to deal with my feelings much more effectively than diving head first into my codependent behaviors.

### **Sit with the feeling**

Staying with the original example: my husband acted out and I am sad. The first step is feeling my feeling: sad. This is the hardest part of recovery: learning to "sit with the feeling" and actually take time to feel: sad, anxious, or mad. The key here is not to do anything about it yet (don't try to cure it) but to accept what I am feeling. I will be honest; this is the hardest thing I've had to learn. When I was deep into my codependency I would get stirred up about something, then react. I would be angry, controlling, inappropriately happy, gossipy, or manipulative. You name it; I did it. There was no conscious thought here. I would start to feel, push those feelings aside, and react. Now, in recovery, I start by feeling the feeling; then I move in to investigate.

### **Investigate the trigger**

After I identify the feeling and take sufficient time to feel it, I move to step two: investigate the trigger. Behind each feeling is a reason I am feeling it. I'll stay with the same example: My husband acted out; I feel sad. I now ask myself, "Why do I feel sad?" Many quick answers come: I was betrayed, he's a liar, and he doesn't love me if he acts out. But what I need to do is dig a little deeper. In my childhood, I couldn't count on emotional support from anyone in my family, so I started reaching out to older men, looking for emotional support from them, which of course only hurt worse. I wouldn't let myself feel the pain of being emotionally abandoned so I evolved my codependence. Years later, when my husband acts out, I feel sad because I am triggered back to the feelings of being emotionally deserted as a child.

One of the reasons this step is so important to me when dealing with my feelings is that I tend to believe "my husband made me feel sad because he acted out." But can anyone make me feel anything? I need to look deeper to find that the action my husband took triggered feelings in me that were not dealt with when I was a child. Now that I am in recovery, I can find healthier ways to deal with those triggers. Think outer circle, think tools of sobriety.

### **Understand my part**

The next step is to determine whether I have had a part in the undesirable situation. If I did (and usually I do...after all, it takes two), then I need to come to terms with my part and, if necessary, make amends for my actions. (It is important to note that as we are affected by compulsive sexual behavior, we have absolutely no part in someone's acting out!). Again, with the same example: My husband acted out. I need to have a plan for how I deal with his acting out. Yet I can still look at my actions, this is called, "keeping my side of the street clean." I also need to have my boundaries in place and follow through with keeping myself safe and with any consequences my partner and I have agreed on. So, if my partner comes to me and explains he acted out, I need to maintain my sobriety.

Part of maintaining my sobriety hinges on whether I can understand my part. I look at the situation and find my part in it. Did I yell, did I come unglued, did I snoop? Ultimately, I need to look at my circles and see if I fell into any of the middle- or inner-circle behaviors that I have decided count against my sobriety. If I did, I give myself grace, pray to a God of my understanding, and move on to making amends.

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**Make amends**

Making amends is important; it cleans the slate so that the negative feeling doesn't become part of the bag of stuff I carry around with me. I make amends and then, no matter what the other person's response, I let it go. Making amends to our partners after they act out seems like an insane task. But again, I am taking responsibility for my part, and saying sorry for what I did during disclosure of his acting out ...I am not taking any responsibility for the acting out itself.

It is inevitable that once I take these few steps I feel better. It doesn't matter whether the other person apologizes or changes their behavior. What matters is that I am at peace with my part in it and the uncomfortable feelings usually dissipate.

Tracy E.

**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.



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

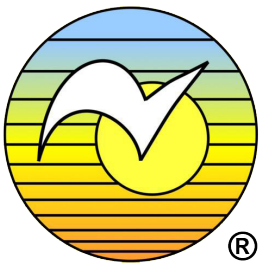
**Seventh Tradition: Financial Report: May/June Donations**

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.
- Search for your meeting and note the meeting number in parentheses next to your meeting name.

COSA Telemeeting (TEL-08).....	\$600.00
COSA ZOOM (ONL-05).....	\$400.00
COSA Tenth Step Meeting (TEL-12) .....	\$100.00
Spanish Telemeeting (TEL-14).....	\$100.00
Birmingham New Beginnings (AL-05) .....	\$20.00
East Bay (CA-33).....	\$200.00
Burlingame (CA-38).....	\$100.00
Columbus (OH-06) .....	\$80.00
Mankato (MN-01).....	\$50.00
Owatonna (MN-04).....	\$40.00
Syracuse (NY-01) .....	\$100.00
Individual Recurring Donations.....	\$2,626.00
Individual Single Donations .....	\$840.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$5,256.00</b>



## Letter from the ISO Board Chair

To Our Fellowship,

We just wrapped our board's working weekend. We used to call it a retreat, but realized as a group, the label is a bit of a misnomer. Our board takes time away from their jobs, families and other responsibilities to come together at a retreat center once a year with a lengthy agenda. There is not a lot of quiet time. We are working hard to set our plans in motion for the coming year.

We started out by reviewing the feedback from May's annual delegate meeting in order to improve the meeting and the flow of information to delegates. After considering the feedback, we decided to carve out time at some of the delegate video chat meetings, to focus just on new delegates. That way, returning delegates would not have sit through information they had already heard and new delegates could feel free to ask anything they'd like. We are also hoping to improve the sound quality for Zoom delegates – though we may face this challenge again inadvertently as we switch locations every year. But we will do what we can to make this better. We will also put someone in charge of managing speakers at the podium, in order to improve the sound quality for all attending.

At our working weekend, each committee presented their plans for the year. The convention committee's plans include looking at the possibility of presenting a convention speaker and/or workshop via video conference. They are also hoping to improve the sound quality for those who call in to the convention to hear the speakers and workshops in Oakland.

The technology committee is working on converting older convention recordings to the MP3 format, so you'll have access to a lot more recovery with a click of a button. The committee also plans to put old fellowship emails in an archive on our website, so if you miss one, you can find it.

The board, in conjunction with the literature committee, is looking to produce a collected text of COSA Step booklets, so COSAs can have Steps One through Twelve all in one place. For some of us, the individual booklets work well. Some find their booklets get misplaced and have a hard time locating them when they need them. Since we are using existing materials and not writing new material, this will not impact the work being done on the basic text. It honors the moratorium requested by the Literature Committee.

The budget and finance committee is happy with the tremendous generosity of our fellowship. The donated funds from groups and individuals have allowed the International Service Organization of COSA for the first time to raise the ISO's prudent reserve to \$20,000 (formerly \$10,000). The new amount is just above our guidelines to have three months' worth of operating funds set aside. This gives our fellowship a stability we can all give thanks for.

The nominating committee is looking to start the conversation about board service and committee work with delegates and convention attendees. The committee held a panel at the Orlando convention aimed at demystifying board service – the recording of it is available at our online COSA store. The committee wants to have the panel again in Oakland and will consider the feedback attendees provided to make it even better.

Feedback from a COSA member via email prompted the board to decide to ship literature and mail more anonymously. The return address label will no longer contain a reference to the ISO of COSA or the COSA logo. Thanks to that COSA for bringing this concern to our attention.

This is just a brief snapshot of what was discussed at our working weekend. As a board, we enjoyed being together and holding Twelve-Step meetings in the evenings. There were a few tears as we readied ourselves to head home.

Not to say that there weren't moments of frustration, disappointment and fatigue among us. There were. But I think it's safe to say there was a sense of unity and, from that, a distinct pleasure in the collective work we were doing. We were doing it for you, for our fellowship. But we got a lot of out of it for ourselves as well.

Thanks for the opportunity to serve.

Emily G.  
ISO of COSA Board Chair

## Step Nine

*Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*

The dreaded Ninth Step! Without my cosponsor and my Higher Power, I couldn't have taken that giant step into Nine. Actually, we took baby steps!

My cosponsor and I first reviewed our Step Four assets and defects, and then our Step Eight lists of people we'd harmed. We then wrote our amends in letter form, not intending to deliver them. Later we'd decide our process to make amends. To keep clean and honest, I had to focus on amends, not on others' reactions to them. One of my defects is focusing on the response I expect and using that to shape my behavior, while ignoring my core.

I asked my Higher Power for guidance and then handwrote each amends, feeling closer to my center and my Higher Power as ink connected to paper. My letters included:

- 1- My behavior and character defects that were still in action.
- 2- My feelings about the behavior: sadness, remorse, shame, guilt.
- 3- How I intended to change my behavior (living amends).

My cosponsor and I shared our letters with each other. What needed clarification? What parts seemed incomplete? Reading the letters to my cosponsor got things directly into the open and felt very healing.

I then had to decide how to deliver each amends.

I snail-mailed my amends via a handwritten card to someone who, sadly, was an ex-friend. She wasn't receptive to meeting with me. I heard nothing back. To this day, this amends feels incomplete. My amends are for me, not the recipient. If they serve to heal a relationship, well, that's an added bonus. But maybe, had I been more persistent or creative, I could have made direct amends. Progress not perfection!

I courageously contacted my ex-sister-in-law, whom I hadn't spoken to since she and my brother divorced four years earlier. Although it was very awkward, I made amends directly from my heart and experienced peace with her.

Just thinking of making amends to my husband was challenging. I couldn't look at the harm I'd done because what I had done seemed tiny in comparison to the monstrous harms he'd committed against me. The deeper

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## Step Nine

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I got into my recovery, the more I could see how I had harmed him. Comparing our actions served no purpose in my healing process. It wasn't until I was able to look at my dysfunction in the relationship and the harm I'd caused that I was able to let go of my resentments against him and move toward my own serenity. I read my letter to my husband. It said exactly what I wanted to say. I felt serenity and relief.

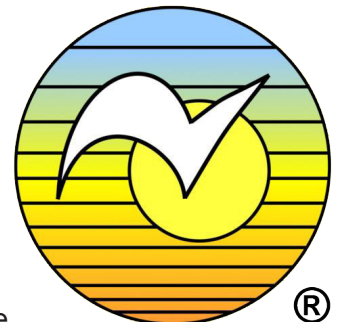
I had amends to make to my friend's father. He had died two years earlier, so I decided to read my letter to his daughter, my dearest friend. She knew nothing of my husband's addiction or my recovery. I had kept this part of my life secret. What a gift to vulnerably share with her my story, my COSA recovery, and my amends to her dad.

I wrote an amends letter to myself focusing on my defect of prioritizing others, even strangers, over myself. I vowed that when I felt disconnected, I would check in with myself by pausing, and literally asking myself, "What are you feeling?" When I remember to do this, I feel verified and worthy.

My amends were not apologies, although apologies were often included. Amends were tools to mend the damage I had done. I can't change the past; I can change my behavior going forward. Upon completion of my Ninth Step, I felt a relief and lightness. My side of the street is a little bit cleaner. I'm grateful to be here!

Liz

## Update on COSA's Basic Text



We want to thank you for your feedback regarding the Basic Text. We began writing the next chapters this summer and we've received some wonderful input on the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts via our surveys.

As of this Balance edition, we are writing and editing several new chapters. We plan to have these out to you by November 1st for a 90-day review. We hope to share Traditions One and Two, and Concepts One and Two this service year. We won't know until October how many chapters can be completed but thought we would share what we are currently working on. It's exciting to add some new sections of the Basic Text in addition to our Steps.

Reminder: Please share this information with your meeting groups—that new chapters will be available for feedback by November and that a future fellowship email will outline all the specifics including how to provide feedback. Once feedback is received, at the end of the 90-day review period, we will incorporate your changes in early 2018 to prepare the chapters for the Annual Delegate Meeting in May.

Next Surveys: We hope to have new surveys out for our next phase of writing, which may be on additional Steps, Traditions, or Concepts. Look for new surveys in September.

What can you do to help? The Literature Committee could use your voice—it's so important—you can share your story and write with anonymity! We have so many ways of making a difference—writing, editing, or assisting in the wonderful work on the Basic Text. We will be writing not only on Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, but on Tools of Recovery, and COSA Stories as well. If you are interested in finding out more please contact us at [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com).

Thank you for your support!  
The Literature in Development Committee

## Step Ten

*Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*

I am human and make mistakes. In the past, I shoved my mistakes under the rug. In the beginning, this might have been the size of an ant hill. When I kept doing this, the ant hill became a mountain; I became a victim of my past. In order for this feeling and behavior to diminish, and to own my own power, I needed to become responsible by owning up to what I did. I continually asked myself, "What kind of life do I want to live?" In order for my recovery to be effective, I need to admit when I am wrong. This takes courage for me to do and to follow through with my decision because I am taking the risk of exposing my vulnerability. I do not want the other person to condemn me; that is not the purpose of this Step. This Step is like a black/white board. When I misspell a word, there are two choices that I have. One choice is—do I berate or criticize myself by name-calling or put-downs, or by telling myself I am not good enough? Another choice is—do I calmly say to myself, "Oops, I made a mistake," then calmly erase it and continue on? If I do the latter, I have accepted my humanness; I am not perfect. As I look back, was the whole black/white board erased due to one mistake? No, I needed to acknowledge what I had accomplished as well. I am maintaining the ant hill.

There are other ways that I gain balance in my life. I strive every day in my recovery to have contentment with who I am and the life I want to live. I stood up for myself because red flags popped up. When I started working the program, my sponsor told me that I have the right to keep myself safe. Wow! This was a very new idea for me. I had the opportunity to use this new idea when my husband's family had a family reunion. During these family reunions, there was a lot of drinking; then sexual innuendos would increase. I worked with my sponsor on what options I had. I calmly told my husband (now my ex-husband) that I would be leaving the reunion when I felt unsafe. I told him that I would tell him when I would be leaving and he had a choice to leave with me or stay. I would either come back to pick him up when he called me or he could sleep over at his uncle's house, or get a ride from a family member. He told me that I was prejudiced—that my perceptions had been affected by living with an alcoholic mother, and that I was transferring my past judgments to his family. Again, I told him that I needed to feel safe. I said, "This is what I will do to keep myself safe." I kept the focus on me. A wonderful thing happened for me —my actions matched my words. I left the reunion. I remember my sponsor being so proud of me. My sponsor told me that I was allowed to celebrate and acknowledge that this was a huge achievement for my recovery journey. This was another hurdle for me to overcome—allowing myself to celebrate my accomplishments and accepting compliments by just saying "thank you" and not downplaying it. I began to realize that this was a way to make amends to myself.

Another technique I use is a slogan that helps me to maintain my serenity, for example "progress not perfection." I try to decide if this is my issue or the addict's issue by using the Serenity Prayer. I rely on God for direction, and talk with my sponsor or another COSA member before I make my amend because I need clarity and understanding concerning my reactions, actions, and motives. These are just some of the tools that I use during my recovery journey.

In my past, I reacted to survive. Now that I am in recovery, I do not have to survive. I am able to live life fully. I do this one day at a time. I acknowledge what I have accomplished in twenty-four hours and what I could have done better. I might have said or done something that I felt was insulting, or my behavior did not match my words. Then I choose to make my amend to myself or another person. My ant hill is maintained. I know from the past what happens when I deny my feelings: I deny myself and the ant hill grows. My self-respect is maintained by acknowledging my behavior. This cannot be done overnight; there is no magic wand. I am living in the present moment, not the past or future. I have the fortitude and courage to make my amend when I put God first. God is with me every step of the way. Recovery is a lifelong journey. I am encouraged every day,

## Step Ten

*continued*

only twenty-four hours at a time, by God, who loves me unconditionally and has unlimited power. I am loved and lovable. I am realizing that all of us are equal in His eyes. So, I gather strength and perseverance to say I am sorry for my behavior, my words, or my actions, or for what I did or did not do. My responsibility is to be honest, direct and humble. This clears the air for the relationship to move on to another level. I am not responsible for how the other person receiving the amend will feel. My only desire is to say "I'm sorry"; then I need to change my behavior to match my words of apology. This will build integrity into my life, as well as trustworthiness and self-esteem.

So this Step is a balance sheet. I have accomplishments and successes; I have areas where I could do better. The best part is I have only to look at twenty-four hours—not one year, five years, or fifty years. There isn't any mountain to break down; I have a manageable ant hill. Therefore, my life is less chaotic. I have peace and serenity. I begin to see the world through a child's eyes, being in the present moment. This is just one of many gifts that I have gained in my recovery journey.

Bunny

### 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>

## Literature Committee Service Positions: Come join us!

- **Expedited Review:** Do you have a passion for editing? Does it come easily to you? We have a need for an expedited review coordinator. The person in this role reviews our fellowship emails before release to ensure adherence to guidelines. This role also involves final editing of our literature before publication, as a final review.
- **Balance Layout and Design:** Do you use desktop publishing tools? We are looking for backup support for our Balance Layout and Design position. You would be working with someone in this role to learn how we publish the Balance and other literature. Having two fellowship members with this knowledge allows for wonderful support in service.
- **Writers:** We are seeking talent throughout the fellowship for writing on our basic text. We sought writers for the basic text this year by asking fellowship members to submit writing rather than making a commitment to be on the committee. Yet dedicated writers are needed on the team to work on Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, as well as to editing submitted writing to fill gaps where needed. Strong writing skills needed.
- **Editors:** We are looking for new members who can do editing for chapters of the basic text. This may involve working one on one with a writer, and with a group of editors to get our drafts ready for final review. Strong grasp of the English language, grammar and editing skills needed.
- **General members:** Are you willing to be part of the COSA Literature Committee and assist in monthly tasks to achieve progress on the basic text? This may involve researching other fellowship books, working on surveys for our next writing, or working to support the team where needed. Must have available time to complete tasks monthly.

If you are interested or just have questions about these positions, write to [cosacopy@yahoo.com](mailto:cosacopy@yahoo.com).



# Tradition Nine

*COSA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*

This year, I attended my second COSA annual delegate meeting. Both times, I was impressed by how much the board, delegates, and committee members were truly focused on being of service to COSA members and meetings. It was an opportunity to see Tradition Nine in action. There are several ways I try to bring this example into my own program and meeting.

## **Don't Overcomplicate**

If it was up to me, I would probably create policies, procedures, and committees for every aspect of my home meeting. I would do this instead of working my program. Discipline and structure are important, but they are not ends in themselves. They should support my program, not replace it. Tradition Nine reminds me to create the amount of structure that is appropriate, so that the meeting can go about the business of helping those affected by compulsive sexual behavior.

## **Boundaries**

This Tradition sets out boundaries for service boards and committees. They are to be directly responsible to those they serve. Similarly, meetings are responsible to those who attend, with a particular focus on the newcomer. In my program, I am accountable to myself and my Higher Power. Understanding these boundaries keeps me focused. It helps me from succumbing to the temptation of the "shoulds." I often find myself thinking, "My meeting should do such and such...." Tradition Nine gives me a place to check on my "shoulds." I can look at each one and decide whether I think it is a good idea when viewed through the lens of Tradition Nine. I can give it to my Higher Power through prayer and meditation. I can discuss it with other COSAs. THEN, I can bring it up in my meeting at the scheduled group conscience time.

## **Listen and Consider**

This, to me, is the core of being "directly responsible" to those served by my meeting. If I bring an idea to my meeting for consideration by the group conscience, I do so to serve my meeting, not to sell my idea or myself. If I am coming from a perspective of service, I will listen to everyone and seriously consider their perspectives. It is hardest to listen to people who disagree with me, but they often have the most valuable feedback. They have the most to teach me.

## **Equality**

I often—more often than I care to admit—have to remind myself that the Tradition says "those they serve," not "those they control" or "those they take care of." I'm one among equals. Whether it's someone with 20 years of recovery, or a newcomer who does not yet know that recovery is possible, we are all equal. Every perspective is valid, and each person's needs are legitimate.

## **Service Is Shared**

This Tradition never says, "we may put all the responsibility on one person." There are times when I wish it said this, because I'd like to be able to control the outcome. However, my program, and the Traditions, tell me it is better if service is shared. One reason we do not organize is to make sure that those doing service are as close to those being served as possible.

Sara L., Saint Paul, MN

# Tradition Ten

*COSA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the COSA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*

In reflecting on Tradition Ten, I realized how grateful I am to have a place to go where we share honestly and focus on recovery, and do not get involved in discussions of outside issues. COSA is a safe place for all of us due to this Tradition. I like the reading in our meeting that says to try to "identify with the feelings expressed...." This allows me to listen with compassion in meetings and learn from people with whom I might not agree in other areas of our lives. We each have our own Higher Power, as we understand our Higher Power, and this is beautiful. We may have resentments against religions or institutions in our past, but we share those resentments in our Fifth Step with our sponsors, not in our meetings. I worked through resentment in my Fourth Step against some religious tenets that I no longer embraced. This has helped me to be more accepting of all belief systems, and appreciate that we do not need to share our belief systems with others in COSA. We keep our focus on our primary purpose: to carry the message to those who suffer. This promotes COSA unity because our political, religious, or other beliefs do not divide us. As our Third Tradition states, we are members of COSA solely because we have been affected by compulsive sexual behavior and are seeking recovery.

Here's an example of Tradition Ten in action. A newcomer shared about his depression and insomnia in one of my meetings. Following Tradition Ten, no one gave him advice during the meeting. We shared in "I" terms only. After the meeting, another COSA recommended non-traditional remedies to him, some of which are controversial. I was tempted to discourage this COSA from giving advice on remedies, especially since this newcomer looked overwhelmed (my codependence was active!). Then I noticed that the newcomer was listening to her, and they were forming a connection. This was after the meeting and they were free to talk about anything. If I had spoken up, I would have been voicing my opinion that this COSA should not talk about a subject she was free to discuss outside the meeting. The newcomer was free to take what he liked and leave the rest.

I try to follow Tradition Ten in all areas of my life, but I'm far from perfect. I know I can have opinions on issues outside of COSA, and I know not to drag COSA into my opinions. This is the easy part. It's more challenging in my work world. In my job, I give specialized advice in my field. In the past, I have given advice outside of my specialty as though I were an authority. Due to my self-doubt, I thought that people would think less of me if I said, "I don't know." When I follow Tradition Ten in my profession now, I stop myself before commenting on situations or issues I don't have expertise in. This makes me more reliable in my job and more sober in my relationships. I try not to use my work knowledge outside of my work life. I have learned that my opinions on most things, whether ballot issues or ballet performances, are not more important or informed than those of most people. This helps my humility too.

Elisa, San Francisco

## 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.

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