

1 **Concept Ten**

2 *Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of*
3 *such authority well defined.*

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5 Concept Ten endows the Twelve Concepts with a crucial principle: accountability through
6 appropriate authority. None of the other Concepts could be honored with much integrity without
7 the sage wisdom of Concept Ten. When a service role is delegated, the tools and permissions
8 required to fulfill that role must also be delegated, along with clear guidance and boundaries.
9 Accountability can best be expected when authority and responsibility are balanced.

10 Our COSA fellowship comprises many individuals, and the contributions of every member are
11 important. Concept Ten helps to ensure that each member who accepts a service role is also
12 awarded the authority they need to carry out their task to the best of their abilities. In addition,
13 clear expectations and limits around this authority must be understood by everyone involved.
14 Boundaries other than those established by a job description, the COSA bylaws, or the Twelve
15 Traditions and Concepts may need to be clarified at the outset of a service assignment. At the
16 ISO board and committee level, using the Service Guide is a helpful tool for consistency within
17 roles. Individual committees have the autonomy to develop their own written guidelines should
18 they choose to do so. This often eases many of the frustrations of micromanagement and frees
19 our trusted servants to use their own unique gifts and talents in service to the fellowship.

20 For example, when a group treasurer is asked to pay rent due for the meeting space, they need
21 access to the group's funds and permission to deduct the rent from the balance. The treasurer
22 must also understand that only the authorized amount should be withdrawn. Similarly, when a
23 delegate represents their group at the Annual Delegate Meeting, they must understand the
24 group's conscience on the matters being decided and commit to voting accordingly. The group
25 entrusts their delegate with the right of decision to change their vote should new information
26 become available. Responsibility supported by a well-matched and well-understood authority
27 helps to ensure the best results for our COSA volunteers and the fellowship as a whole.

28 The principle of delegating appropriate authority to match a responsibility applies equally when
29 the recipient is a board committee, subcommittee, or other group. When the Literature
30 Committee was tasked with writing the book you are reading, they assumed a great deal of

31 authority and autonomy. At the same time, they were given guidelines by the delegates about
32 the content of the book, as well as instructions to focus only on the basic text until it was
33 complete. The application of Concept Ten gave the committee both the creative freedom and
34 the guardrails needed to fulfill this commitment to the fellowship.

35 When Concept Ten is practiced throughout our service structure, the International Service
36 Organization (ISO) board and its members can focus on matters of overall policy and
37 international service. They are not distracted by a need to manage every project or committee
38 directly because the people who are managing the day-to-day business of the fellowship are
39 well-equipped to carry out their duties. Delegation of well-defined authority in order to complete
40 a task requires trust between COSA members, between the board and its committees, and
41 between committee chairs and committee members. Our willingness to give and receive this
42 trust is a sure sign of our growth and recovery. When confusion or misunderstanding occurs, it
43 is an opportunity for us to communicate openly to decide what is best for the fellowship as a
44 whole.

45 In our daily lives, Concept Ten is important as we strive to achieve accountability in our own
46 actions and hope to expect it of others. For instance, when a teenager is hired to mow a yard,
47 they need to have permission to handle the gas can and also understand the precautions
48 necessary for doing so safely. An employee who is responsible for the distribution of paychecks
49 is trusted to handle a great deal of confidential data. They are also expected to closely
50 safeguard each employee's personal information. When people plan an event together and one
51 is tasked with reserving the venue, everyone is more likely to come to consensus if a budget
52 and maximum travel distance are established before the commitment is made. This way, the
53 person in charge of the venue has freedom to make the choice they believe is best with
54 confidence and respect for everyone in the group. We are most able to do our best work when
55 we have authority that is right-sized to our task.

56 Responsibility without authority can lead to feelings of discouragement and frustration. Authority
57 without clear boundaries can lead to mismanaged resources and chaos. When responsibility
58 and authority are kept in balance, each of our trusted COSA servants is prepared to remain
59 accountable to themselves, to their own Higher Power, and to the COSA fellowship.