

Balance

Newsletter of International Service Organization of COSA



July/Aug/Sept/Oct 2023
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Fall Delegate Meeting November 19

The fall delegate meeting will be held **November 19, 2023**. Please make sure your home meeting is represented! More information will be posted soon at: <https://cosa-recovery.org/conventions/annual-delegate-meeting/>.

Submit Items by October 5

Meetings and individual COSAs can submit items to be voted on at the Delegate Meeting using the Delegate Business Form. These are due **October 5, 2023**. The form can be found at: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdcPKHH16zUQIWZSs6xPI3VDYJqqOU6rc2rsG_MAYSST13Ucw/viewform.

Exciting Scholarship and Grant News from the ISO Outreach Committee!

Are you planning a COSA retreat, activity, or outreach event? Are you starting a new meeting? The ISO Outreach Committee is thrilled to offer both grants and scholarships to support COSA events and their attendees.

Grants are available to help defray cost aspects of COSA events such as space rental, food, literature, or materials to be used for the COSA event. Scholarship funds are available for COSA event committees to use to support individuals attending their events.

A New Meeting Starter pack is now available for COSA members who are starting a new registered meeting online, in-person, or hybrid.

Funds are also available for COSA groups or members who want to share COSA information in person or by distributing literature.

Please visit the **Resources** tab at cosa-recovery.org to learn more and to find the applications.

<https://cosa-recovery.org/resources/>

<https://cosa-recovery.org/resources/outreach-scholarship-grants/>

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Letters from the ISO of COSA Co-Chairs

Hello COSAs,

I am thrilled to serve as Co-chair for the ISO board with Eveline S. Why co-chairs instead of one chair? Neither of us could volunteer to take on the whole chair role but each of us can bring the gifts we have and let Higher Power handle the rest. Eveline and I mesh well together, each having different areas we're comfortable with. And that's kind of the magic of service. No one person is everything, but every contribution is equally meaningful. I've been in COSA for over 20 years, yet I've never shepherded anyone through all 12 steps. Each time, the person changed sponsors or left the program or stopped working steps. For the longest time, I felt like a defective COSA because of this. Then one day I realized, sponsoring isn't my gift and that's okay. I have a comfort level with leadership that far outweighs my sponsoring skills and that is the gift HP has prodded me with and developed in me. We can't all serve in the same way. I started seeing my way of serving as equally valuable.

That's the beauty of service. We each bring the gifts we have and let Higher Power do the rest. Each time a person shares in a meeting or sponsors, answers a phone call or chairs an intergroup, writes for COSAs In The Know or serves on the board, they are serving and carrying the message to those who still suffer. Along the way, we grow in our own recovery. A win-win! I also remember that our gifts can change over time. Stepping out to try something new is a way of getting to know our ever-evolving selves better. You can do this! When everyone serves a little, no one has to do a lot.

Many of our meetings close with a prayer that includes the line "...together we can do what we cannot do alone." I am forever grateful for the service, in all its wonderful forms, of those who came before me and those who walk alongside me on this recovery journey. You are valued. You are appreciated. Thank you.

Peace always,
Julana S.
ISO Co-chair

To Our COSA Fellowship,

I am so grateful that through the collective voices of our delegates I have received your trust and the privilege of serving as your board member during these challenging times of COVID. I am also humbled to be serving with Julana as your co-chair on the board for this second half of my two-year term. When I first came aboard, my intention was to collaborate and govern with others in recovery, to responsibly keep abreast of issues and manage the ever-changing technology which our organization needs to use to carry the message forward, while continuing to practice the principles of our program in all areas of our lives. Then I realized I had made a mistake: govern = control. When I governed, I was not in alignment with Tradition Two which states, "...Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." I have learned to be curious, then work at guiding and not engaging in power struggles. I have leaned more upon our Higher Power and the collective wisdom of our fellowship.

I believe this past year has been a year of creatively revamping, redirecting, reframing, all while still honoring the diversity of our COSA community. For instance, COSA held our first annual virtual retreat in February, 2022. Then we had our in-person convention without our counterpart Twelve Step program and on a weekend other than the Memorial Day weekend. It felt like we were breaking prior traditions (not COSA Traditions), yet together we create miracles by granting grace and connection while "carrying the message forward." I am so thrilled about our upcoming book and excited to participate in this re-boot of our newsletter, Balance, and hope you are, too!

Please join us in practicing the principles of the COSA Steps, Traditions, and Concepts as we continue to navigate the changes in COSA. I look forward to bearing witness to your ESH in new Balance articles; hearing you speak at our meetings, in a panel, at a retreat, at convention; and seeing whatever else Higher Power inspires you to do. I am humbled to be reminded that you—the members of our fellowship—are the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in our world affairs. Moreover, I agree with Julana: "together we can do what we cannot do alone."

Gratefully in service,
Eveline S.
ISO Co-chair

ISO of COSA
ANNUAL DELEGATE MEETING SUMMARY
International Service Organization of COSA
May 28, 2022

Agenda Items:

Meeting Convene and Welcome 9:00 AM EDT (US)

The meeting opened with the "Serenity Prayer." Participants read the "Twelve Steps of COSA," the "Twelve Traditions of COSA," and the "Twelve Concepts of COSA."

Attendees introduced themselves.

The Annual Delegate Meeting Rules of Order were read.

The Safe Communications Guidelines were read.

Mary H. presented a study of Concept 10: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

There were questions about how to "raise hand" in Zoom, and about how to request to speak on a proposal. These issues were clarified.

Explanation of Board Nomination Process & Board Nominee Introductions

Chris explained the slate and the voting process. All candidates, including those who self-nominate, go through a vetting process. The vote is yes or no on each person. All of the slate could be voted in. All board members are elected as at-large members. The board consensus determines who is chair, treasurer, and secretary.

Discussion included:

Questions about the nomination process were made. It was suggested to make the process appear more open, perhaps through the involvement of the delegates or a wider swath of the COSA community. Some of the delegates' perception is that it is an insular, clubby selection process where you need to know someone to get on the board. The nomination committee will take these suggestions and make improvements to the process.

Board prospects briefly shared with the delegates why they wished to serve. The nominees were: Eveline S., Amy B., Mary H., Tracy S., Juliana S.

All candidates were elected.

2022 – 2023 Budget Review

Tracy shared the year-to-date (March 2022) financial results. These showed COSA has been prudent, with expenses less than income to date, although the reduced expenses of the convention were due to lower than hoped for turnout, and the expenses for moving the board had not been included.

Discussion included:

1. Delegates questioned the financial year timing with respect to the delegate meeting. This timing, it was pointed out, requires the delegates to vote on and approve an incomplete financial picture of COSA's performance for the year. The question was asked if the timing of either could be changed. The bylaws require the delegate meeting be within 13 months of the previous delegate meeting. Tracy promised to look into the possibility of changing the financial year.
2. Delegates were confused by the presentation of the information, since the column headings were unclear, and the methodology was not intuitive for laypeople to understand and vote upon responsibly. The finance committee will look into alternate means of presenting the information.

The year to date financial results were approved by the delegates on the second vote with a greater than 75% majority.

1st Vote: YTD Financial Results Approval Straw Poll: [36 GREEN] [1 YELLOW] [1 RED]

2nd Vote: Budget Approval Straw Poll: [37 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]

Tracy shared the budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The budget is a template for the next year's expenses. It assumes an in-person convention in a TBD location. The budget keeps convention income the same as had been budgeted in the last few years. The budget assumes sales will be low. Expenses for board travel are higher due to the number and distance of board members. The convention hotel has not been determined, so we do not have firm numbers on that yet.

1st Vote: Budget Approval Straw Poll: [37 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]

Budget passes.

Basic Text Chapters

Sara P. explained the reasons for having a basic text and gave a brief history of the basic text project. Sara P. presented an overview of the process for surveying, writing, collecting fellowship feedback, final draft, and approval of each chapter. Chapters presented to the delegate meeting have been edited for content. After the book is finished, a professional editor will edit for grammar and punctuation and ensure consistency throughout the book.

Because each chapter has gone through such an extensive process, including the incorporation of the fellowship members' input, the delegate meeting vote is to approve or not approve each chapter. In order to honor the fellowship feedback, there can be no amendments made at the delegate meeting. The goal is to have the basic text ready in 2023. Ten chapters were being presented at this meeting.

Discussion:

Q: Who will look at consistency from chapter to chapter?

A: There are writing guidelines for each section. The professional editor will also address this.

Q: Are there efforts to increase committee membership?

A: The Literature Committee is always looking for new people.

Q: During the voting process, are you still open to feedback?

A: We will follow the normal voting process, except there cannot be amendments to literature. You can speak to specific issues, but the vote is to approve the chapter as submitted.

- **Concept 6:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [1 YELLOW] [0 RED].

Comments were made by dissenting voice

2nd Vote: To approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Concept 7:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Concept 8:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Concept 9:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Step 12:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [1 RED].

Comments were made by dissenting voice

2nd Vote: To approve Chapter [32 GREEN] [1 YELLOW] [1 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Honesty:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [1 RED].

Comments were made by dissenting voice

2nd Vote: To approve Chapter [27 GREEN] [3 YELLOW] [4 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Practicing Gratitude:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [1 RED].

Comments were made by dissenting voice

2nd Vote: To approve Chapter [33 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [1 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

- **Serenity Prayer:**

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Chapter [34 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

Delegate Business Item:

The proposal by the board is: "To hold future annual Delegate Meetings via video conference only. Dates will be determined by the board after surveying the fellowship."

1st Vote: Straw Poll to approve Delegate Business Item [34 GREEN] [3 YELLOW] [0 RED].

Discussion included:

Delegates were concerned about the wording that implied the board would determine the timing of the virtual delegate meeting going forward and were not comfortable with that. The suggested alternative was that the board could determine the timing of the next meeting (2023) but that the delegates would vote on the permanent timing of the virtual delegate meeting at the 2023 convention.

The proposal was amended to: "To hold future Delegate Meetings via video conference only. The date of the delegate meeting will be determined by the board for the 2023 meeting, and the timing of future meetings would be determined by vote at the 2023 Delegate meeting."

2nd Vote: To approve amended Delegate Business Item [36 GREEN] [0 YELLOW] [0 RED]. **Proposal Passes.**

2023 Convention Survey Review for Results to date:

The results of the survey to date were presented by Julana S. The survey is still open and Julana encouraged the delegates to fill out the survey and to encourage their meeting members to do so also.

Delegate New Business, Questions, and Concerns

1. Request to mail the *Balance* to COSAs who struggle with the use of email.
2. There was a request to provide a call-in number for the virtual portions of the conventions, to accommodate those who might not be computer savvy. It was noted that each Zoom invite has a phone call-in option.
3. There was a suggestion for a European-based COSA convention; many thought this was a good idea.
4. There was a request for ESH about starting an intergroup, duties, procedures, etc. The guidelines developed by the Northern California Intergroup were offered to be shared.
5. A request was made to provide more open communication from the Nomination Committee with the delegates regarding the process of selecting board candidates. Perhaps this could include publishing notes from the interviews with candidates, or other means to provide greater openness.
6. There was a request for more clarity in the delegate orientation about the three different kinds of voting and where they apply.
7. There was a question about where questions fit into the voting process.

Meeting Conclusion

The meeting concluded with the "Serenity Prayer."



2024 COSA Conventions

Mark Your Calendars!

The *What, Where, and When* of the 2024 Conventions

Again this year, the ISO of COSA is carrying the message by organizing the virtual convention in February and the in-person convention in June. Our members convene and share recovery through speakers in long-time recovery, workshop presenters on tools of the program, and panel speakers on topics near and dear to the hearts of recovering COSAs. Please save the dates and be on the lookout for upcoming website and email announcements.

VIRTUAL CONVENTION

FEBRUARY 24-25, 2024

IN PERSON CONVENTION

MAY 31-JUNE 2, 2024

COLUMBUS, OH

Hotel and convention locations forthcoming!
(Same weekend and city as the ISO of SAA)

Call for Volunteers

If you are interested in attending or volunteering, please [complete the form](#)

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfa8lwd4UdJ2pcAEo6Allg5vHHjomg3nRCw4Y-dQLUOJI_PXA/viewform?usp=sf_link

Info and Questions: 2024COSA.Convention@gmail.com

2024 ISO of COSA Convention Chairs
Bobby S. / Stephanie H.

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6· 7 ·8·9·10·11·12

HUMBLY ASKED GOD TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS.

I recently read about Swedish Death Cleaning. It is a form of decluttering and deciding what isn't wanted any more, or when a dying person doesn't want loved ones to deal with their belongings. The article listed these suggestions: knowing when to begin, starting with simple tasks, recognizing what to discard, asking for help, and saving what matters. This sounded a lot like recovery!

For me, knowing when to begin starts with becoming aware. Sometimes this is a painful event. Recently, I felt I didn't matter to someone because of a behavior they exhibited. I knew it was my Higher Power refining me, showing me what needed changed in me, because I had been guilty of that same behavior for years! The truth is, changing that behavior wasn't that important to me. I justified it, and continued that behavior. So my HP went to work, showing my shortcomings through others. So I asked God to help me change this behavior. With my COSA program, I have improved but accept this will always be a challenge for me and there is no need to shame myself.

When I was new to recovery, I attempted Step Seven like I attempted most things; my pride and lack of humility provided all the knowledge I needed! I would ask to have a behavior removed, and when it didn't magically go away, I would get frustrated and berate myself! Everything seemed like a monumental task. Again, my HP helped me to see I was being told, by many different sources, to do the simple things. Life has been much more enjoyable since surrendering to the simple tasks. I go to meetings. I will help if I am able. I say no if I am not able. I speak my truth. I let others be themselves. I surrender all I cannot control—which is a lot! And I have started taking my time, planning, and paying attention to the details. Last Thanksgiving, I followed all the recipe directions; everything turned out quite nicely!

Asking for help has had its ups and downs in my life. Sometimes I was shamed and I felt like I was a huge bother. I am blessed in COSA to have many to tell me the truth with my best interest in mind. That does not mean I hear what I want! A Higher Power puts us together. Often when I receive a program call, what that person talks about is something that has been heavy on my heart. Sometimes they remind me of what I need to do for me, or I can thank my Higher Power for encouraging me.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's quote "Happiness is not found in things you possess but in what you have the courage to release" is in our home. The best example of Step Seven is when I had been triggered right before going to sleep. Unfortunately, in the past this had led to pacing, crying, yelling, and raging. But I knew, and my HP knew, I had to let that false power go. And so I lay in bed, crying, amazed at how much my body wanted to move and how much my HP helped me stay still. I no longer rage, but even more miraculous is that I no longer have the desire.

Step Seven is me asking HP to come even closer, intimately revealing the things that do not serve me or HP. It is not magical. It is not done in bulk. I have worked Step Seven in small increments, often, by doing simple things.

~A Zoomer in Ohio

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7· 8 ·9·10·11·12

MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WE HAD HARMED, AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

When I first heard Step Eight read at a COSA meeting I was not ready to hear it. I had been harmed. Why was I being asked to make a list of all persons that I had harmed? It was not that I did not believe that I had never hurt anyone or that I had not made amends in the past. I have hurt people, and I have apologized and made restitution where needed. I was hurting, struggling to get through each day. I needed help desperately. I could have been so self-righteous (a character defect of mine) and walked out, but I had hit my bottom. I had nowhere else to turn, so I chose to minimize this Step (minimization being another character defect that I used in life). I put Step Eight up on a shelf. I knew it was there, but I did not want to deal with it when I came into COSA. It is my belief that the Twelve Steps come in a certain order for a reason. I needed to work the previous seven Steps to help me become willing to own my part and make amends. COSA has helped me understand that I am not responsible for anyone else's behavior, but I am responsible for my resentments, my fears, and my behavior.

When I was ready to work Step Eight, I went back to my Step Four inventories to identify the people I had harmed. As I began to make my list and had conversations with my cosponsors, it occurred to me that I needed to put myself on the list—maybe even first. The list kept growing as I identified people with the help of my cosponsors and my Step Four work, which my cosponsors were familiar with from my having recounted my Step Five to them. Eventually, all the people that I am aware of having harmed were on the list.

I struggled with becoming willing to make an amends, especially to myself. Was I willing to make a living amends to myself? What would that look like? But I did not have to make the amends yet to myself or others—that is Step Nine. I began to focus on the willingness and not the doing. Some amends I was willing to make, others I was not sure about. I kept asking the God of my understanding and my cosponsors for help with willingness. Was it the timing? Was it fear? Was it going to cost me something? For me, being willing to make an amends for my part became easier when I heard that making an amends does not mean that what the person did was right; it just means I am cleaning up my side of the street.

Today, I still work Step Eight, with a daily Step Ten, which helps me recognize when I have harmed someone and need to become willing to make an amends. I am encouraged that this program is about progress not perfection, and that willingness is about letting go of my will and becoming willing to do the will of the God of my understanding, which is Step Eleven. For Step Eight I just need to make the list, own my part, and be willing to make the amends.

~Ann Marie V.

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8· 9 ·10·11·12

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

I entered Twelve Step recovery a wounded, bewildered, traumatized person many years ago. I asked myself “how could a nice person like me end up in situations like this?” I swung from feeling “I should apologize to the world for being such a disappointment” to “the world should take responsibility and apologize to me.” Over time and through the lens of 12 Step recovery I saw that the “tools” I had acquired to cope with life were defective and few. My limited understanding of how healthy relationships might work needed to change. Although I found it very hard to believe or admit, it was entirely possible that I may have caused harm to others—and I was not purely a victim.

Twelve Steps offered and continue to offer me hope, direction, a solution and a higher power that I have learned to trust. I am thriving in this life because of my regular participation in group studies of the Twelve Steps. Keeping an open mind, listening to others and applying the steps to my daily life have made me a more pleasant person to be around. I am now able to see and admit my own character defects through the work I do in steps 4, 5, 6 & 7.

I benefit by hearing an assortment of experiences through my on-going participation in a Step study group. This choice to remain in the Steps is the true foundation of my journey in recovery.

I began studying Step Nine many years ago but did not begin to make “direct amends to such people wherever possible” who I had harmed, until I had been in recovery for a number of years. I had my own hurts, traumatic experiences and resentments that needed to be faced through the steps, before I could see my own harmful part.

My resentment work started with my family of origin but did not end there. There was a lot of debris to sort through before I was able to start to get some clarity about what my part was in many relationships. I eventually was able to see harms I may have caused family members, but there was more territory to cover. I was finally able to see my true character with former colleagues, old friends, former roommates, school administrators, former bosses, clients, landlords, etc. Wow, I sure did have a history of my own behavior. Gulp.

I could never have seen my “true character” unless I had done this work with others who came before me—who lovingly walked me through the Steps, helping me to uncover my true self, as I held tight to my higher power. Where was I “selfish”, “dishonest”, “self-centered”? And for me, I had to add “self-righteous”, “critical”, “judgmental”, “intolerant”, and “mean”, because these defective ways of relating showed up a lot in my relationships. I was finally able to get down to the facts of my own behavior. This is not something I could have done by myself—I needed other sets of ears and eyes. I needed experienced, committed recovering fellows to gently love me through this process. I can’t change my thinking with my thinking.

So there I was, becoming ready to carry out Step Nine—making direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. I thought Steps Four and Five were tough! Now I know why Step Nine is all the way at “Nine”: there are a lot of awarenesses and facts about “me” that I needed to see and accept before I could make any amends. And what a list I and my higher power came up with! This was a tall order and I could not possibly have gone it alone. I reviewed every amend, word for word, with another recovering person that understands this Step deeply. It is amazing what I “could have said” in an amend, that would foul it up. My willingness to share with others first, before I make an amend, keeps my amends “clean”! I bring my higher power with me to any amend. I need the love and support of my higher power to carry this step out each and every time.

My first amend was with an old roommate who is also a good friend. I kicked this woman out of our apartment

years ago because I thought she was the bad roomie. Through my work in the Steps, I came to realize I was just as bad, if not worse. I met her for coffee (25 years later) and made my direct amends for being a selfish, inconsiderate, hurtful roommate. She lovingly accepted, we cried, and are closer today than ever before.

I made my direct, in-person amends to my mother. I had NEVER felt I could make an amend to her. There was so much damage to me as a kid, I couldn't fathom how I would EVER be able to do this. With the love and support of a sponsor and my higher power, I made that amend for being a critical, impatient, at times even a mean daughter. Three weeks later I received a letter from Mom with what I would describe as "her amend". I never expected that—ever. I never expect anything when I make an amend, I am merely cleaning my side of the street, and that is it. This is how Step Nine lays it out, and that is how I go about it. I cannot go into an amend with "expectations", nor can I ask for anything.

I sent a letter to my former private high school and made an amend for being a bad influence on other students, for causing trouble and for being untrustworthy. I enclosed a donation to the "Sisters of St. xxx home". I received a beautiful letter back wishing me well. I made a restitution – paid a debt of 40 years ago. I was not able to pay the entity directly, so I made a direct contribution to a charity that helps children access free flights to cancer centers. I now contribute to this cause every year. I don't have to, but I want to!

My relations with my family are vastly improved, and my family members have not changed! It is through the process of taking a spiritual journey in the Steps that I have changed. I stopped criticizing and controlling, and I admitted my wrongs. The relationships we have today are peaceful and mature.

The insights I have, spiritual awakenings I've experienced and progress I've made is directly proportional to my willingness to participate in the study, practice and working of the Twelve Steps and surrendering my trust and all outcomes to my higher power. Being able to face the facts is an act of humility. Working through the Steps with others provides me with the support and perseverance needed to continue. I am not doing this alone, but with others in recovery and my Higher Power. Freedom, peace, and acceptance are just a few of the gifts I've received for committing to this process.

Through my surrendering, Steps Four and Five unfailingly continue to show me the "facts" of my life and of my character. My higher power is right there with me, holding me as new things are revealed to me, about me. I once felt the entire world needed correction. I have experienced a mental shift that tells me that it is my own thinking and behaviors that need correction.

Each time I arrive at Step Nine, I have greater trust in my higher power, my foundation becomes more solid, and I acquire the humility to see the facts. I am grateful for the grace and healing the Twelve Steps have given to me, and for the freedom I experience on a daily basis.

In healing,
~A COSA - Naples, FL

STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

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

I was not necessarily searching for a solution to my “perfectionism” when my Higher Power brought the solution to me. I had grown quite comfortable, and very competent, with pretending to look perfect. I did not want anyone to see the fear, hurt, or anger I held inside of me. I was too prideful to admit my wrongs, and I was an expert at rationalizing my actions. I had perfected the denial of my emotions. In other words, I was living my life in illusion.

It was during a recent Step Study that my Higher Power would confront me with an acute awareness that my perfectionism was a mask. As long as I wore this mask, I wasn’t being “real.” Pretending to be someone I wasn’t isolated me and kept me from living the authentic life that my Higher Power wants for me.

My Higher Power wants me to be an authentic, “real” human being. To be “real” would mean that I have both character defects as well as character assets. Because I had made a habit of trying to look perfect, I was denying my own character defects. After many weeks of self-reflective journaling, gratitude came with my acceptance of being perfectly imperfect. I also accepted my responsibility to admit mistakes and make amends for any past harm that I had caused, or any that I may cause in the future. Once I had this understanding of how and why I was hiding behind the mask of perfection, my Higher Power stepped in with the solution.

Step 10 has become my daily practice of spiritual perseverance in which my Higher Power allows me to reflect on myself and my actions. I no longer have to pretend, deny, or rationalize. I can admit my mistakes and make amends. I have discarded my need to appear perfect because my Higher Power and Step 10 are there to help keep me “real.”

~Shanan from Alabama



TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

EVERY COSA GROUP OUGHT TO BE FULLY SELF-SUPPORTING, DECLINING OUTSIDE CONTRIBUTIONS.

COSA's value and sustainability depends on its ability to remain "self supporting." For if our COSA fellowship were to be dependent on another entity or on an outside group of people for its support, its path could easily be influenced by those outsiders. I believe that Higher Power, and only Higher Power, guides the direction of our fellowship. If COSA were not self-supporting, outside influences would interfere.

I love relating the wisdom of the Traditions to my personal life. When I'm able to be fully self-supporting, I am better able to make decisions that are best for me. That, in turn, helps me rely on and trust myself.

When I was a child, it was clear to me that my parents expected me to get married so that I would have someone to take care of me, like my dad did for my mom. But I saw a relationship of inequality that I did not want for myself. Although my dad took care of my mom financially, at times he treated her disrespectfully. I sensed that my mother had to endure it because she needed him. It wasn't what I wanted.

I chose a career that would allow me to be self-supporting. It turns out I was capable of supporting myself financially, but not emotionally. My career didn't help me with that. Recovery did! Prior to recovery, I depended on others for my ok-ness. If you saw me as worthy, I was able to see it as well.

Learning to be self-sufficient financially as well as emotionally, or as the Seventh Tradition states, "self-supporting," I am able to live my own authentic life. I am able to be true to myself, without worrying what others think and without being influenced by them. When I feel beholden to someone else, I neglect myself and put their wants and needs before my own.

For me, self-sustaining goes hand in hand with self care. It helps me experience autonomy, to feel connected to my Higher Power, and to believe in myself. I am open to a sense of stability and vitality when I trust that I can count on myself. I feel solid and grounded—alive.

When I am self-sufficient, I am able to hear my true voice and experience a real sense of self as I become secure in who I am. I become acquainted with a new joy and freedom as never before when I listen to my own beat, which is measured by my Higher Power. I can make choices that are right for me and I can honor the full person Higher Power created me to be. In recovery, I no longer work so hard to try to please others or to let them determine what is best for me. I recognize that I am responsible for me and for my own happiness. It's so freeing.

But unlike COSA's need to be fully self-supporting, it's important for me to find a balance. If I live with the notion that I can do it all and don't need any help, I miss out on connection with others and experience a sad sense of isolation. When I try to be a superwoman who doesn't need anything from anyone, I can so easily slip into my old unhealthy patterns of overachieving. Recognizing that I can accept help from others is an important part of my recovery. I am worthy of help.

I appreciate the Seventh Tradition's reminder to be self-supporting so that I can be independent and whole. At the same time, I need to find a balance so I can have healthy connections as I accept loving help from others in ways that support my sense of autonomy and raise my ability to care for myself.

~Anonymous

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

COSA SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NON-PROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.

This tradition frees us to simply be ourselves. As members in the COSA fellowship we are not professionals. We are recovering human beings. We do not need to have all the answers. This frees us to be open to our Higher Power. We only know what has worked for us in our recovery. We have space to grow in humility.

As non-professionals, the wisdom we develop is timeless. The Twelve Steps have a magic and wisdom which guide us. We are free from any coercion to try a particular therapy which may be in vogue right now, but will be replaced with a new one tomorrow. We share from a special place of care and love, heart to heart. Our ESH (Experience, Strength, Hope) is our experience of the Twelve Steps and the healing changes in our lives. The sharing in meetings, in reach-out calls or with a sponsor is not a therapy, but it may be therapeutic. As non-professionals, we offer our ESH as an act of service. Service comes from a very different level of motivation than doing a deed for monetary reimbursement.

We gift our ESH to the fellowship. Love itself heals. The exchange from one suffering COSA to another, heart to heart, is healing and supportive.

When a professional is engaged, we pay them for their skill, their knowledge, their advice or guidance. They perform a job based on their professional training, skills, and knowledge. They charge a fee based on that and their experience. There are times that specialized expertise is appropriate and necessary.

The Literature in Development Committee was given the task of writing the book, COSA Recovery. They developed a very democratic and inclusive writing process. Surveys were sent to request input from the fellowship. The chapters were then written and edited by non-professional COSAs. This writing was then sent to the fellowship for feedback for 90 days and then edited again to incorporate the feedback. This writing process was done from the heart by those in service on the committee and by the fellowship, individually and in meetings. Now in preparation for publishing, it is appropriate to employ a professional editor/proofreader. The committee is researching the next steps involved in publishing a book. There may be a need to employ other special workers who have expertise in the publishing world.

How does Tradition Eight guide me in my personal life? I try to be as autonomous as possible and assume responsibility for the maintenance of my house and garden. However, I hire someone to cut the grass. Recently, I hired workers to examine and clean the French drains. These professional workers have the equipment and skills to help me maintain things in good working order.

My sponsor listens to me and shares her experience with her trauma, but she is not my therapist. She does not tell me what to do. She encourages me to talk with my HP for guidance. Her heartfelt listening and holding of space for me are very healing.

When my daughter was having problems with math in high school, I was concerned and wanted to help her with her homework. She, in her teenage wisdom, said "Mom, you're my Mom, not my teacher!" She set a boundary which helped me realize I was overstepping my role as mother (non-professional) and trying to bring my professional skills as a teacher into this relationship. It wouldn't work! She just needed me to be her Mom—to love and support her as only a mother can. The same is true in COSA. Our ESH and understanding of the painful effects of compulsive sexual behavior are the precious gifts we offer to those who are still suffering. We have been there! We have found a way to recover!

This tradition reminds me that in COSA I am not a professional. This lifts a huge burden off my shoulders. What a blessing and relief for a recovering “know-it-all!” I do not need to be an expert on sex addiction, on Anorexia-Avoidance, or on Intimacy Disorder. I simply know my experience and what I have learned in my recovery that has given me Hope. I share what has worked for me and given me new strength. I can make mistakes and I can learn new things about myself as I hear the shares of other COSAs. An ongoing journey!

~Margie Z.
Montreal, Canada

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

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

I am so grateful for what I’ve learned in my recovery journey, and this is certainly true for the principle of Tradition Ten, which has included the discovery of comfort and safety in a fellowship that isn’t organized (per se).

In my professional work, I am all about management and the running of an organization, as I serve as both the membership and conference planner for a non-profit association. Having a hierarchy and organizational structure is my comfort zone and where I flow with my skills. I have excelled in my career because I have learned how to succeed in this setting.

In COSA, I have had to learn a whole new way of working and providing service. When I was new to COSA, this idea of having an organization without being organized was a bit confusing. I needed an answer to the question “Why isn’t COSA organized?” What I have learned is the danger of creating an organization or a company that becomes an “entity.” Once this happens, there can be a gradual shift from its initial purpose and formation to the work of serving the entity over the mission. In other words, there is a danger of losing the focus of our primary purpose, which Tradition Five tells us is to carry the message to those who still suffer. The Traditions are intentional about keeping the fellowship structure simple, the load light, and the tasks decentralized to protect this purpose.

Tradition Nine has been at work in my life during the writing of COSA’s basic text, *COSA Recovery*. I was one of the delegates that decided that a COSA recovery book was needed; I served on the ISO of COSA Board (the service board referred to in Tradition Nine), and served on the Literature Committee which was assigned the task of creating the book. The Literature Committee is then responsible to whom? To those they serve: the fellowship. There is no more organization than that.

From the initial directive by the delegates through the development and writing of *COSA Recovery*, I have reminded myself of the point of this book: to have a tool to carry the message to those who still suffer. The book is not for personal gain (no authors identified) or for funding the organization, nor is it a leadership handbook for an administrative body. Hence, we do not have a COSA manager. Rather, in COSA, we keep it simple by having a service board and committees as needed to help us with our primary purpose.

~Sara P.

TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

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

The integrity of the COSA fellowship is something that each of us must protect, not just for our own selfish reasons but also for the benefit of all those who have ever entered our rooms and those who will do so in the future. When we participate in a COSA meeting or in service to the fellowship, we are essentially wearing the COSA team jersey. It's imperative that we speak, act, and think only in ways that will serve the principles of our team: COSA and all who are affiliated with it.

Tradition Five reminds us that our primary purpose is to carry the COSA message to those who still suffer. It is not to right the wrongs of the world, to promote the religion that any one of us thinks is right, or to cure social injustice. We could easily be distracted from this primary purpose if we were to attach the COSA name to our personal or group opinions, no matter how well-intended we may be. We would risk drawing the fellowship and all that it stands for into controversy. Controversy leads to people taking sides and forming alliances, and these things will never lead to unity. By declaring itself free of any opinion on outside issues, COSA frees itself from distraction, thus keeping our focus on our primary purpose.

If we were to express opinions on outside issues as COSAs, we would risk the integrity of the program as well as that of its members. As individuals, we each have the right to our opinions on every issue under the sun. If we express those opinions in situations where we are identified as COSAs, it could be easy for others to assume that those opinions are held by other members of the fellowship or by the fellowship as a whole. When we gather as COSAs, we try diligently to speak only of our own experience and to be clear that what is right for one of us may not be right for another.

When we meet, serve, and identify ourselves as COSAs, we need to take special care to avoid the controversy that can be stirred by opinions on outside issues. Keeping our focus on the inside issues of COSA and its primary purpose will always serve us well.

~Anonymous

MAKING SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS



COSA's
Tradition
Seven

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

There are no dues or fees for COSA membership. Our fellowship is supported entirely through our own members' voluntary contributions.

SENDING DONATIONS: *Include your Meeting Number*

When **making a donation** to the ISO of COSA, please include your meeting number so that we can record it properly and post it in the *Balance*. We thank you for your support!

[Make Your Secure Donation Today](#)

To find your meeting number:

Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org>,

click on the "Meetings and Events" tab, then on "Find a Local Meeting."

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

RECURRING DONATIONS: *Keeping Payment Information Up-to-Date*

Thank you for your donations to the International Service Organization of COSA. Currently, our system is set to automatically update your credit card when it gets a new expiration date. If you need to increase, decrease, or cancel your recurring donations, please contact the ISO of COSA at iso@cosa-recovery.org. Your support is appreciated!

Seventh Tradition: Financial Report, March 2022-June 2022

March 2022

Individual Donations	\$ 327.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 1548.00
NE-03 (Omaha Sunday Balance)	\$ 30.00
ONL-34 (Common Solution)	\$ 50.00
TEL-07 (COSA Recovery Tools for Emotional Sobriety)	\$ 30.00
Total	\$ 1985.00

April 2022

Individual Donations	\$ 250.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 1450.00
AZ-02 (Tempe)	\$ 50.00
CA-09 (Monday Night Oakland)	\$ 501.00
CA-13 (Women's Circle of Hope Irvine)	\$ 275.79
CA-23 (Long Beach)	\$ 100.00
CA-27 (Santa Rosa)	\$ 92.00
NY-01 (Syracuse)	\$ 100.00
TEL-07 (COSA Recovery Tools for Emotional Sobriety)	\$ 90.00
TELEMEETINGS	\$ 40.00
WI-07 (Madison West)	\$ 20.00
Total	\$ 2967.79

May 2022

Individual Donations	\$ 270.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 1322.00
AZ-03 (Tempe Hope in Healing)	\$ 100.00
ONL-34 (Common Solution)	\$ 25.00
ONL-54 (Golden Gate International)	\$ 20.00
TEL-07 (COSA Recovery Tools for Emotional Sobriety)	\$ 30.00
TELEMEETINGS	\$ 40.00
Total	\$ 1789.00

June 2022

Individual Donations	\$ 270.00
Individual Recurring	\$ 1696.00
CA-09 (Monday Night Oakland)	\$ 200.00
CA-43 (Marin)	\$ 400.81
TEL-07 (COSA Recovery Tools for Emotional Sobriety)	\$ 60.00
TEL-08 (Telemeeting Intergroup)	\$ 1427.20
TEL-11 (Eleventh Step)	\$ 70.49
Total	\$ 4124.50

Photographs Wanted

Thank you to those who submitted photos! We continue to welcome your for photos (reminder: protect anonymity) for inclusion in future issues of *Balance*. We especially invite photos from non-US COSA residents. We would like to identify the location (city or landmark and country). Send photos to balance@cosa-recovery.org along with your first name, last initial, and email address.



COSA Authors Wanted

Writing can be a rewarding form of service. Not only does sharing our experience, strength, and hope help others in the fellowship, it enhances the writer's personal program of recovery, often bringing us to new levels of awareness and growth. COSA members may submit shares for consideration for publication in the bi-monthly newsletter, *Balance*. The Literature Committee has developed [specific guidelines](#) to help our authors keep their writing recovery-focused with consistent style and usage. Once you have reviewed the guidelines and prepared your submission, please email your item(s) to balance@cosa-recovery.org, along with your first name, last initial, and phone number.

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.



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 upcoming 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: <https://cosa-recovery.org/service/write-for-cosa/writing-guidelines-for-cosa-literature/>

Please send your articles and questions to: balance@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.