

# Balance

Newsletter of International Service Organization of COSA



## Holidays, not Holi-dazed

Happy Holidays?? Yes, indeed! Over time, I've developed a plan that helps to ensure the end of my year is peaceful, meaningful, and healthy. While these practices would ideally be used all year long, they become critically important to me about November first. Take what you need and leave the rest.

I start by adding a note to my calendar around mid-October, reminding myself that now is the time to prepare for a peaceful end to the year. I review my November and December schedule and clear as much space as possible. If an event or appointment gets canceled, this is a great time to consider whether it can be a permanent cancellation. Then I start adding the good stuff. For me, that means a weekend of cookie baking with my daughter, a day to thoroughly clean and decorate my home with holiday lights, gatherings with friends, and at least one movie night. If I expect to be invited to any family events, I reach out early about the details, letting folks know time with them is important and I want to prioritize it. By committing carefully in November and December, I keep the calendar chaos to a minimum.

While I'm working on my schedule, I ensure that it's loaded with self-support. My weekly COSA meeting is a requirement and I keep that time sacred. If a meeting falls on a holiday, I reach out to someone ahead of time and see if we can still check in or have a mini meeting. Also, I try to set a reminder each week to reach out to a program friend with a quick text, checking on them. I help myself most when I help others so this action item is meant to be about the other person. Having a regular haircut and pedicure helps me feel good about my grooming routine so I get those scheduled. Feeling good physically is a good place for me to start when I want to feel good mentally. To further ensure my physical wellbeing, I get any necessary medical appointments booked



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and get my prescriptions refilled to last into January. Increasing my self-care during this busy time pads my resilience, making me better able to enjoy the season with gratitude.

One of my mantras is, “You can’t pour from an empty cup,” and it becomes especially important during busy times like the winter holidays. I don’t wait for January to double down on my daily habits! For me, this includes a morning reflection when I read a little something related to recovery, note a few things I’m grateful for, journal, and check in with my HP. Sleep hygiene is very important to my overall health so I sometimes move my bedtime reminder up by 15 minutes or indulge in a quick power nap when I need it. Remaining focused on my current daily health habits is a means of keeping a promise to myself and building trust in myself. And it pays off when I’m happy, healthy, and relaxed on New Year’s Eve!



Parties are usually fun but the added excitement at this time of year can make them overwhelming for me. Once I arrive at a gathering, I scan for inner circle issues like food, drinks, or people that might present a slippery slope for me. Right at the beginning is the time to remind myself of boundaries around any of these things and make a plan to help myself if I need to. Setting reminders on my phone to take breaks during the event can be helpful. I step outside into the brisk fresh air, take a few deep breaths, stretch, or text a friend to ask how they’re doing. It takes just a few minutes to reset myself and be sure I’m not drifting into sketchy emotional territory.

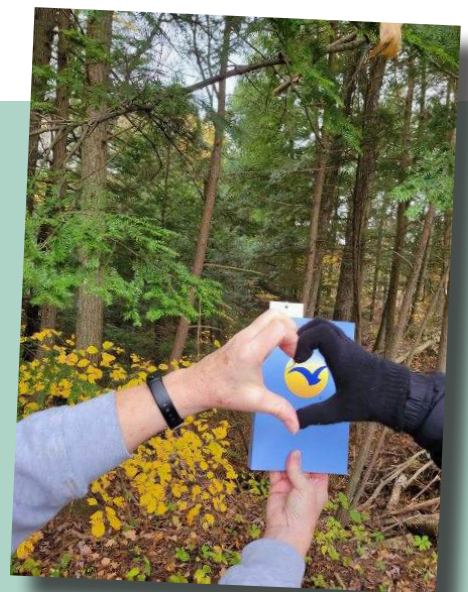
When the leaves begin to turn, it’s my cue to commit carefully, prioritize the good stuff on my calendar, and pay extra attention to the care of my mind and body. I look forward to seeing this year out gratefully and welcoming the new year with peace in my heart. However you celebrate, be well.

~Happily Anonymous

PS: Another COSA chimed in with this: One of my top tips is to have “business hours” for myself so that I don’t over commit. I set a bedtime, too!

## WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU RECOVERING?

As we grow in our recovery, we develop a new way of living that includes taking our recovery out into the world with us. Please send an anonymous photo to [balance@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:balance@cosa-recovery.org) showing us where in the world you have taken your copy of *COSA Recovery*. This photo might include your favorite reading spot, a special pen you use for notes, or a sweet treat! Be sure to include the location of your *COSA Recovery* photo so we can see how far and wide the COSA message is being carried!



*Hocking Hills Ohio: 3 COSAs, 1 hike*



# Navigating the Plates of Recovery

The other day, my service sponsor suggested to me to set down some of the bigger plates before picking up new plates of responsibilities. I had a tendency to overcommit and then go into overwhelm or resentment. My life was getting unmanageable. I was spiraling down into the insanity of doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results. Obviously, this was not working as some of those plates were crashing down around me and shattering into bits of controversy and drama. The broken bigger plates were making the biggest messes and were affecting more than just myself. Yes, it was time I needed to set down some big plates before picking up even the smallest ones.

Was I ready to let go and let Higher Power take control? This segued into looking at what was on all those plates I was juggling, in addition to what food I was and am consuming. After all, when stressed I went through different extremes of overeating, starving, eating food detrimental to my health, and not drinking enough fluids. It is no wonder I was chronically dehydrated and had lots of digestive issues and conditions that ended in *-itis*.

Before recovery, I was eating a lot of unhealthy fast food—is it no wonder why we call it junk food?—that gave me a lot of indigestion. Other times it was like a dinner plate of food I didn't want to consume, but was dished out in a litany of guilt and shame such as “think of all the starving children in Third World countries...” This sometimes resulted in my not being permitted to have dessert when I didn't finish my plate. I continued to impose this miserable dialogue on myself beyond childhood until I realized this no longer served me well. I was tired of choking on these words of distress, inhabiting the victim mentality, and punishing myself and others.

I am now viewing good recovery as tantamount to fine dining. I start seeing the pre-meeting preparation as the appetizers of recovery, our Twelve Step meetings the main course, and the fellowship the dessert. My service sponsor felt using large (dinner) plates and small (appetizer and dessert plates) as a guide to how much service work to pick up and put down was an excellent analogy since we seemed to be in the habit of talking to each other during a meal or snack.

Picture the scene of showing up early to greet and partake in small talk with a bunch of good friends. The appetizer, usually the Serenity Prayer, sets the mood and calms our nervous system down. Then there is the nourishing main course. We get to savor the diverse textures of our personalities and flavors of the Experience, Strength, and Hope in our shares. And since the meetings are portioned out with the right amount of time, we have room for dessert! To me, fellowship after the meeting is like dessert: meant to be shared and savored in as many bites as we desire to take. We can also pass on it if we have other activities or preferences.

Working our COSA recovery means listening to words of wisdom, consuming and digesting these wonderful messages from the meetings. I keep coming back to meetings with those I admire and appreciate. Making my way to wonderful meetings is tantamount to amazing and nourishing fine dining dates with my best friends. I get to “take what I like and leave the rest.”

-An anonymous COSA foodie



# Announcements

## Busy at Work

Your **COSA Literature Committee** is once again hard at work for the fellowship! Based on your survey responses after *COSA Recovery* was completed, the top two new projects you have requested from the Literature Committee are:

- A companion workbook for the *COSA Recovery* book *and*
- A review and refresh of the COSA website.

We are pleased to report that **both** projects are currently underway, and we'll keep you informed of our progress!

If you're interested in helping, we are in need of more writers, editors, workbook field testers (see below), and people for layout & design support. Please consider these service opportunities, and contact us at [litcom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@cosa-recovery.org) if you are interested.

## Field-test the NEW *COSA Recovery Workbook*!

The Literature Committee has received glowing reviews of the new *COSA Recovery* book. And they're not done yet! They're now hard at work creating the companion *COSA Recovery Workbook* to help COSAs further their recovery.

### You are invited to help by field-testing the *COSA Recovery Workbook*!

Here's how it will work:

1. The Literature Committee will share a list of questions about a Step, a Tradition, a Concept, or a Tool.
2. You will be asked to read or re-read the corresponding chapter in *COSA Recovery* and then complete the workbook questions.
3. Finally, you will be asked to complete a survey questionnaire to help the committee as they tailor the workbook into a valuable resource for all COSAs.

The testing can be done in your meeting, with your sponsor/sponsee, or individually. Newcomers, longtime COSA members, and everyone in between are encouraged to participate.

Please consider this opportunity to work on your individual recovery as you offer a valuable service to the fellowship. You can have a hand in creating a book that will help the recovery of so many COSAs today and for years to come. **If you're interested in being part of the testing, please email us at [litcom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@cosa-recovery.org).**





# Announcements continued

## Editors Unite! (or is it untie?)

If this made you laugh, or cringe, you might be an editor at heart.

Your COSA Literature Committee is hard at work with a number of exciting projects that have one thing in common: they all need editing.

We have assignments to fit every time budget, even if it's only 15 minutes per week!

We offer training, resources, and mentoring to complement your existing experience. You'll be helping us carry the COSA message and making a positive impact on our fellowship. An extra perk is that editors get a first look at literature and communications as part of the behind-the-scenes team!

If you're interested or have questions, please email [litcom@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:litcom@cosa-recovery.org).



## Balance

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### Call for writers!



Writing for COSA's *Balance* newsletter is now as easy as picking your favorite recovery topic from a menu! The new online sign-up sheet is user-friendly and allows you to choose which Step, Tradition, or Tool you'd like to write about. There is also an option to write a short feature article for our upcoming series on Diversity in COSA.

Sharing your experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship is just a few clicks away! Click [here](#) to sign up today!

If you have questions or would like more information, email us at [balance@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:balance@cosa-recovery.org).

### 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.



# Announcements continued

## Resources for Meeting

Don't have a copy of *COSA Recovery* yet?

The Outreach Committee wants to know if you have barriers to owning this excellent tool of recovery!

Contact Outreach at [outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:outreachcommittee@cosa-recovery.org) if you would like a copy but need some assistance in obtaining COSA literature!

We're here to assist you and your meetings!

**Keep Your Meeting Information Current!**  
[COSA Meeting Registration /Update Form](#)

## *COSA Recovery*



**PRINT**  
US\$25.00  
**eBOOK**  
US\$9.99

*Get yours today!*

*Over 1,000 purchased!*

This beautiful book features all new, conference-approved writing on COSA's Steps, Traditions, and Concepts PLUS chapters on more than a dozen powerful COSA tools.



## Jot Your Thought

My favorite slogan for right now is:

**Bless them, change me.**

This slogan is so impactful because so often it is easy to see the flaws of others while I overlook my own!

~Anonymous

At the moment, I love the super short version of the first three Steps: **I can't. You can. Please help.**

~Anonymous

What's your favorite COSA recovery quote or slogan and why?

Jot yours down and send it to:

[balance@cosa-recovery.org](mailto:balance@cosa-recovery.org)

and inform us of whether you wish to remain anonymous.

# COSA TOOLS OF RECOVERY

## SPONSORSHIP, MY ESSENTIAL TOOL OF THE PROGRAM

What is sponsorship? Sponsorship is a personal and close relationship between two COSA members. Anything discussed is 100% confidential—practicing the tradition of anonymity. Sponsorship is not required, but has been proven to be a very beneficial tool of the program. Sponsorship is a great personal support between meetings or when we are stuck and do not know what to do. Sponsorship offers encouragement and accountability.

In the beginning, a lot of the terms and slogans sound foreign in our meetings. Finding a sponsor was one of them for me. I came to COSA broken. It had felt like my life was turned upside down. I imagine my purse being spilled and scattered throughout the living room floor. The last thing I wanted was that feeling of rejection—AGAIN. But, I was in enough pain that I was willing to go to any lengths. A voice kept telling me, “you never know until you ask.” Today, I know that was my Higher Power.

When it came time to choose a sponsor in the very beginning of my COSA journey, I went to a lot of meetings and found another COSA sister who had what I wanted (peace, serenity, worked the Steps, and had a relationship with a HP). It was also an added bonus that she was married to a recovering addict because I had a similar situation going on in my home.

My sponsor has shared her home, her experience, strength, and hope with me, she’s encouraged me to speak my truth, has gently and lovingly pointed out where I’ve needed to take my own inventory and possibly make amends (Step Ten in action!), she’s heard all my fears, worries, resentments, and “wins.” She’s taken me through the Steps with open arms in a judgment-free environment. She’s answered the phone when all I could do was cry. Every time we get off the phone I feel empowered and full of solutions. My recovering sex addict husband has even mentioned she probably saved his life (wink face). I don’t think I could work a COSA program without the guidance of someone that has come before me.

I’ve also had the privilege to sponsor in this program. I’m grateful that I get to walk other ladies through the Steps and give back what has been so freely given to me. You can’t keep it if you don’t give it away. It’s crazy how sponsorship works because when I’m sharing my ESH with a sponsee it’s typically something I need to hear too. Being a sponsor is another way I get to be of service in the program.

Lastly, I want to share some little nuggets of hope that I’ve had sponsors remind me of through the years:

Take care of you and the rest will take care of itself  
If we (the addict and I) work each sides of our programs, we get to meet God at the top  
You’re a recovery rock star!  
The Promises came true for me after Step Five  
Speak your truth, own your power  
Keep it in the “I” and “Me”, ten words or less  
Don’t complain and don’t explain  
No is a complete sentence  
Raise your hand for recovery

Gratefully,  
Monique, So. Cal

# STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10· **11** ·12

## SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS WE UNDERSTOOD GOD, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

I remember when I first walked through the doors of my first meeting and wanted to run away at the first mention of the word GOD. In my life it felt like God was the enemy who had never been there for me. How could God be real when all this pain was in my life? Or I thought that if there was a God, I must have been a really bad person to be constantly punished throughout my whole life.

By the time I got to step Eleven I was grateful that my whole outlook on God—a power greater than myself—was SO different. When I stopped being caught up with the word God I got to decide what that word meant to me. I called God my Higher Power, and I cannot describe what exactly my higher power is, but I know that it is a kind, a loving and accepting spiritual being that is not ME. I finally had Faith; the Steps had shown me that I could trust. I no longer looked at God as being religious but a Spiritual being, my Higher Power. What I had come to realise is that everything I had blamed on God was me pushing my HP away and not having any faith. I always relied on myself, and I always failed into a pit of misery. I thought I was in control, and I was too afraid to admit that if I just let go my Higher Power would take care of me. Of course, I could not get to this realisation without working the previous Steps.

I have worked the Steps a number of times with different sponsors and applied it in my daily life but my most recent experience of a spiritual awakening and new sense of freedom came to me when I got to Step Eleven while working the Steps in a Step study group. While working this Step in the group I got so much joy from hearing other people share their own experience, strength, and hope on meditation and how this worked in their life. We meditated together. We shared our experience, strength, and hope together. I felt my Higher Power's love and acceptance all around me. I feel a deeper and better understanding of my Higher Power the more I practise this Step. The more action I put into my daily discipline the more I am connected. Daily meditation allows me to live one day at a time with an open heart and an open mind. The more I participate in this program the more I feel the power of this Step at work. I feel connected. This Step gives me the opportunity to pause and reflect on situations in my life that I would have either bulldozed my way through making bad decisions or running away and never coming back—totally avoiding life. Now I wait, I grow in patience as I pause until I know what I am meant to do. I read somewhere that prayer goes outwards and meditation goes inwards just like breathing. When I remember this it doesn't feel so hard to put this into action. I pray, I reach for my Higher Power's hand and I meditate, I listen for guidance.

Pre-recovery I would have prayed out of greed for wealth and more and more of the things I didn't need. Today I pray for willingness, courage, compassion, serenity, and clarity. This serves me much better. My meditation style has changed throughout the years; in the early days I don't think I could sit still for more than two minutes with-



out my head wandering off into overthinking and obsessive thoughts. It's been a journey and I am grateful for all I have learnt.

Today I can sit in peace for a time; sometimes I choose to put on a guided meditation and sometimes I can just sit and be. I am enjoying the peace and love I have in my life today thanks to this program and this Step. As I write this I am looking over my notes from my Step study and I want to share a little bit with you. 'Step Eleven brings me great peace. This week being in this Step, I feel like I am floating, my heart feels incredibly full. I feel calm, peaceful, and balanced. I know I want to continue with this feeling so I know I must incorporate this Step daily.'

~Anonymous UK COSA



## STEP ELEVEN REFLECTION

Everyone's Step work is unique. In telling some of my own story, I hope that it may help others to find and appreciate their own unique way.

Having been in another fellowship years ago, when I got to the Eleventh Step that first time, I took the meditation thing very seriously. I started going to a meditation group that I have been a part of ever since. I put my recovery effort and service into my meditation practice and community and sort of wandered off from the Twelve Steps. Then years later... DISCOVERY!

I was thoroughly humbled by the traumatic impact Discovery had on me, and my once-reliable habit of meditation felt nearly shattered, though I kept plugging away as best I could. I soon found a COSA sponsor and set about working the Steps from scratch. This time when I got to the Eleventh Step, I took guidance from a popular guidebook for working the Twelve Steps. I consulted my Higher Power, my sponsor, and another Twelve Step friend who has known me for ages, and I was guided toward two things: 1) To do a self-guided, 3-hour meditation retreat every Sunday morning, and 2) To ramp up my efforts to sort and weed the oppressive, mixed-up piles of junk and treasures I had accumulated over the many years. With my sponsor and my other Twelve Step friend, I set up formal agreements that included witnessing and feedback from them, like a contract we were agreeing to.

The first commitment, the weekly 3-hour meditation retreat, was an excellent way to give my messy mind a chance to sort itself out. I soon found there was more room for Higher Power's wisdom to emerge from underneath the swirl of angry and obsessive thoughts that had so often plagued me. I started to feel more like myself. The second commitment, the physical sorting of my possessions, helped to address my "Do I stay or do I go?" di-

lemma. Whether I was going to stay in my marriage or not, I needed to assess and whittle down my possessions, to find the hidden gems and guidance buried in the muddled piles of my life.

As a result of doing all of this meditation and sorting, I was guided to enroll in a 2-year intensive meditation program. While there is still much distance and lack in my marriage, my relationship to it has changed. I am ever more able to catch my own reactivity and tend to its healing, not making things worse. And the “Do I stay or do I go?” dilemma has lost most of its bite.

I have taken ownership of my space in a new way, rough-sorting just about everything I own and divesting of much of the clutter I had been living with—so out of line with my anti-consumerist values! I uncovered creative projects that had been languishing and restarted some of them. Having more organized physical space created more mental space for considering what’s most important in my life and where I want to put my efforts from here on. My spontaneous creativity has space to breathe, and creativity has become one more clear sign that my Higher Power is awake and working through me. Like writing this reflection...

It is good to write for others. It makes me get clearer about what’s happened and where I am now in my recovery. In taking this opportunity to look back, I see my growth in ways I hadn’t realized before, finding Higher Power in so many places these days—in my relationships, in my old journals, in the wiser mind that is there below all the chatter and drama. So yay Eleventh Step! It has led me straight to the Twelfth Step, where I am doing things like writing this reflection to share. This service feels good.

A note about prayer—I’m not a monotheistic type of person. Prayer has usually felt awkward and confusing—who or what was I addressing prayers to? I didn’t know. Even so, in early recovery, I spent many a wakeful hour reciting the Serenity Prayer again and again, like a mantra in the night, because I didn’t know what else to do. I’ve used the Serenity Prayer countless times to remind myself that I need to get clear about either taking action or letting go.

Then there came a day when I reached out to a program friend while I was “in a state.” She asked, “Do you pray?” When I told her why I didn’t gravitate much toward prayer, she identified with that. Then she told me about the habit she’d intentionally built for praying in hard moments, saying simply, “Help me Higher Power. I need your help. Thank you for your help.” I kept trying this out, until now, I sometimes spontaneously say this simple prayer when I’m struggling with an unhelpful impulse or suffering in “unmanageability.” It humbles and opens me. It reminds me that no matter what swirl I get stuck in, I’m part of something much wiser, bigger, and more holy. It is already guiding me. All I have to do is pause, relax, and open.

~Kitty C.



# STEP 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL AREAS OF OUR LIVES.

## The Three-Legged Balance of Step Twelve: how Step Twelve is like a three-legged stool

**The first leg is a spiritual awakening.** My spiritual awakening was multifaceted and gradual. I began to understand in a new and more complete way that I not only have a Higher Power who loves and cares for me but that my Higher Power wants to be involved in my life every moment of every day. My initial Step Eleven experience was full of miracles (circumstances beyond my explanation) that solidified my trust in a power far greater than myself. I continue to practice listening to and then (hopefully) acting on the messages I receive. The messages may be either subtle or in-my-face-don't-miss-this-message. They may come in thoughts that pop into my head at the most opportune time, circumstances that only my HP could arrange, or sometimes people with their unique gifts to help me grow.



**The second leg to Step Twelve is carrying the message.** In the early years, my first reaction to any call to serve was disbelief that I had anything worthy of sharing. What could I possibly do that would be helpful to others in their journey? When I was new to COSA, my sponsor, counselors, and fellow COSAs reminded me that HP would place opportunities before me to serve. I didn't yet understand that my presence in a meeting, whether I said a word or not, was a form of service. In my first year of COSA, even before I officially worked Step Twelve, I served by reading the readings and later hosting the meetings, whether locally or on Zoom. When I formally completed my Steps, I was encouraged to become a sponsor (now that was scary) and start a new meeting. During year two, I had the opportunity to become a member of the CZR Intergroup and the delegate for my local meeting, which led to my being a member of the following year's convention committee. In year three, I served as the delegate liaison which brought me to board service. Serving on several different committees has helped me grow in my recovery and understand the privilege of carrying the message to others. Each opportunity to serve has given me a greater understanding of the gift of sobriety, the blessing of sharing what's been given to me, and the value of healthy relationships that I need for my recovery journey.

**The third leg of Step Twelve is practicing the principles of recovery in my life—all of them.** Although COSA doesn't have "official" principles, the Steps and Traditions are its backbone, essentially its guiding principles. Tradition Twelve states: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities." This is a reminder of the importance of people. One of my favorite opportunities to serve is hosting the Newcomers Meeting in the COSA Zoom Room each week. It is a reminder that every COSA I meet has a unique yet similar story. It is my privilege to live my recovery, to share my journey with others, and to gain from their stories through attending meetings, committees, workshops, and conventions, sharing and listening to my fellow COSAs.

It is only when these three equally important aspects of my recovery are in balance that I can experience the beauty of living a life of COSA recovery. My COSA journey continues to grow as I live a Step Twelve life, sharing the gifts my HP gives me for each moment and situation.

~Anonymous

# TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

OUR PUBLIC RELATIONS POLICY IS BASED ON ATTRACTION RATHER THAN PROMOTION; WE NEED ALWAYS MAINTAIN PERSONAL ANONYMITY AT THE LEVEL OF PRESS, RADIO, FILMS, TELEVISION, AND OTHER PUBLIC MEDIA OF COMMUNICATION. WE NEED GUARD WITH SPECIAL CARE THE ANONYMITY OF ALL PROGRAM MEMBERS.

I love this Tradition! The idea that COSA recovery operates according to “attraction” rather than “promotion” is so new and unique. It goes counter to everything else in our culture which is ruled by the advertising industry. How radical!

The Tuesday Tradition Study meeting has been looking at the principles which each Tradition expresses. The Meditation script was developed as a resource for use on the fourth Tuesday of each month. In that meeting we take time to meditate and sometimes write on the Tradition being studied that month.

The principle which Tradition Eleven upholds is Anonymity with a capital A. The simple definition of Anonymity is “the situation in which someone’s name is not given or known”. As a spiritual principle, Anonymity expresses the acceptance of each person as they are, as the unique divine creation they are at their core. We are all equal. This is congruent with the COSA Diversity Statement. All who have suffered the effects of compulsive sexual behavior are welcome, regardless of the differences which may be visible or invisible. In the safety of an anonymous environment, we can share and find relief from our isolation without fear of judgment or criticism. We are encouraged to discover tools and work the Twelve Steps to embark on our own transformative, healing journey to recover our Authentic Selves. This is so attractive to others that those who are ready will find their way to recovery with no promotion or advertising.

When I first came to COSA, the promise of anonymity in meetings was very comforting and freeing. On tele-meetings we did not even see each other’s faces. I discovered the warmth and support which the naked human voice can convey. Gradually I felt accepted and no longer isolated. I found the courage to overcome the family taboo against admitting I had a problem and needed help.

Tradition Eleven also guides me in my personal life outside of COSA. Having experienced the freedom of anonymity in COSA, I am very aware and sensitive about social media. I do not like it when friends post pictures and tag me and it cross-references onto my page. I often feel my privacy has been invaded. When I have been apple picking with my family in my private life, I am surprised and taken aback when a friend makes a comment, however kindly and well-intentioned. I have made it a practice to not go on the social media pages of COSAs I have met in meetings, served on committees with, my sponsees, or my sponsor. We all deserve to have the freedom to share what we feel like and when, and to remain anonymous.

Now, after almost ten years of recovery in COSA, I am living in anonymity in my everyday life. I recently moved to a new community where no one knows my past. At first I thought I had to “tell all” in order to be honest and authentic. But from this Tradition I know I have the right to be anonymous in my life and to be happy. I have the right to discover who I truly am and be my authentic Self in the present. I have the right to leave the past where it belongs—behind me. I choose not to live in the shadow of what happened before. No one knows who my father or my husband were. I am no longer eclipsed by the high public profile of my former SAH and his double life. I

am no longer in the fishbowl. I have stepped into the sunlight and am enjoying the freedom, joy, and happiness expressed in the Promises.

I am so grateful for the tool of Boundaries. When recently asked, “What did your husband do?,” I simply said, “I don’t want to talk about him or the past.” They are not me now. With my new friends in this small town I share that I have experienced heartbreak, betrayal, and separation and am in a recovery fellowship. Within our COSA fellowship I can share the joys and challenges of ongoing life and pursue my spiritual recovery path with support and understanding. Some people are curious and say, “She’s a woman who has her stuff together.” This is attractive.

Tradition Eleven upholds the freedom of anonymity and attraction. We simply need to be true to our authentic Selves and to our Higher Power. Then let that ripple out. Another level of detaching and letting go!

~Anonymous!



# TRADITION 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

## ANONYMITY IS THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR TRADITIONS, EVER REMINDING US TO PLACE PRINCIPLES BEFORE PERSONALITIES.

I love the passage in our *COSA Recovery* book on Tradition Twelve where it uses the phrase “focus on the message, not the messenger.” While the book is referring to the COSA message, I’ve heard the essence of the principle expressed in different ways along my COSA journey, but I really related to this choice of wording. This principle has had a profound impact on the way I listen and respond in all of my relationships. Perhaps nowhere in my life has this helped me more than in my relationship with my spouse. He can go from caring to caustic in the blink of an eye. Keeping principles before personality allows me to maintain my focus on what’s right, rather than who’s right. What a life changing difference this has made for me, and our relationship.

Looking back, when I first discovered my spouse’s sex addiction I developed a deep sense of self-righteousness. Everything was his fault. He was the addict, the broken one, the one with the problems. I was far above his lowly station and I wielded that against him. Fortunately for both of us, I found COSA. I started working the Steps with my sponsor and I began to get healthier. During one of our talks we ended up doing a deep dive into Tradition Twelve. She helped me see that anonymity has a spiritual meaning far beyond simply keeping the confidentiality of all COSA members. Spiritual anonymity sheds our labels and statuses, making us all equal. She helped me see that my spouse’s Higher Power loves him just as much as mine loves me. I don’t have the right to question Higher Power’s love and grace for anyone else. That opened my eyes and eventually, my heart. I had to let go of my Angel vs. Addict crutch.

I had to pray for the ability to see my spouse in all of his humanness, and to stop seeing him as just an addict. I prayed to see him as his Higher Power did. This didn’t mean that I condoned his acting out behaviors, it meant that I recognized and accepted his humanity. It didn’t happen overnight but I slowly began to feel the subtle shift. His recovery was very evident and that helped, too. In time I saw him as a perfectly imperfect human working hard to improve, just like me.

Meanwhile, I was listening for the message and not focusing on the messenger at work, too. I had a very difficult boss who regularly ranted and berated people. He wore me down to my soul, until I had a little recovery working in my favor. I learned to detach from the messenger and stay present to see if there was something actionable in his messy message. Often there was. If I had been fearful and shrinking back I would have missed the valuable information he was unskillfully trying to deliver, and the opportunity to find solutions. By standing in my power and with Tradition Twelve in mind, I was far more effective in my job and in my relationship with him.

Tradition Twelve’s principles of equality and putting principles first really has freed me to navigate life in a healthier, more emotionally sober way. I’ve found my own voice and value. Tradition Twelve has benefitted every area of my life.

Gratefully,  
~Anonymous

# CONCEPT 1·2·3·4·5·6·7·8·9·10·11·12

THE ANNUAL MEETING SHALL OBSERVE THE SPIRIT OF COSA TRADITION, TAKING CARE THAT IT NEVER BECOMES THE SEAT OF PERILOUS WEALTH OR POWER; THAT SUFFICIENT OPERATING FUNDS AND RESERVE BE ITS PRUDENT FINANCIAL PRINCIPLE; THAT IT PLACE NONE OF ITS MEMBERS IN A POSITION OF UNQUALIFIED AUTHORITY OVER OTHERS; THAT IT REACH ALL IMPORTANT DECISIONS BY DISCUSSION, VOTE, AND WHENEVER POSSIBLE, BY SUBSTANTIAL UNANIMITY; THAT ITS ACTIONS NEVER BE PERSONALLY PUNITIVE NOR AN INCITEMENT TO PUBLIC CONTROVERSY; THAT IT NEVER PERFORMS ACTS OF GOVERNMENTS, AND THAT, LIKE THE FELLOWSHIP IT SERVES, IT WILL ALWAYS REMAIN DEMOCRATIC IN THOUGHT AND ACTION.

To me, Concept Twelve is a reminder. It is a review of all of the things I have learned in COSA recovery and sums up that knowledge in this one paragraph. It begins by asking us to “observe the spirit” of COSA Tradition. But it doesn’t ask US as individuals, it actually asks the Annual Meeting. This is my hope for us today: This meeting shall observe the spirit.

It reminds us to bring all that we practice individually and in our meetings to this Biannual Delegate Meeting. That, as we gather to make the ripples across our fellowship, we remind ourselves those ripples will affect each Intergroup, each meeting, and each individual. It is an awesome responsibility.

In Concept Eleven, we learn that we must have the best people serving in roles they are best suited for. Ask yourself if this delegate role is suited for you. Are you doing your best to represent the meeting you are here to represent? I know you are! :)

The Twelfth Concept emphasizes that “power over” and “authority over” become perilous—whether that is financial peril or democratic peril.

The true power we have, we learned in the Steps. I begin to take responsibility for my actions, my part, my life. There is my power. I serve my fellowship by using my voice through my vote. I vote in business meetings, I vote for my delegate. My one vote represents my voice. And here, in this meeting, our voices are equal. Our ONE vote is equal.

What if the rest of our lives and the world used the Twelfth Concept? ***That it reaches all important decisions by discussion, by vote.*** Not yelling or throwing chairs or worse. We use the responsibility to honestly state our opinion through our meeting’s conscious vote. We don’t have to agree, but we can compromise. And when it is a Red, we agree to drop the topic. This is what substantial unanimity is—that we strive to be as like as possible, ***and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity.***

I believe we are all connected. Those ripples happen in one body of water. This Concept warns against personal punishment—hurt one, hurt all—and incitement, which is a fancy name for pot stirring; and ***...that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement.***

Today, let’s remain democratic in our thoughts and actions as we get to work on the business of our fellowship.

~Pat D., a grateful recovering COSA

# MAKING SEVENTH TRADITION DONATIONS



**COSA's  
Tradition  
Seven**

**E**very 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.

**Make Your Secure  
Donation Today**

## 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!

To find your meeting number:

- Go to <http://www.cosa-recovery.org>, click on the "Meetings" tab, then on the appropriate sub-tab ("Local Meetings", "Online Meetings", or "Phone Meetings")
- 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](mailto:iso@cosa-recovery.org). Your support is appreciated!

## Seventh Tradition: Financial Report

### August 2024

Individual Donations .....	\$ 115.00
Individual Recurring .....	\$ 933.00
ONL-67 .....	\$ 14.00
TN-03 Memphis .....	\$ 200.00
WI-07 Madison COSA West .....	\$ 15.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 1,277.00</b>

### September 2024

Individual Donations .....	\$ 270.20
Individual Recurring .....	\$ 1,159.00
AZ-02 Stepping into Recovery .....	\$ 50.00
CA-27 Santa Rosa COSA .....	\$ 342.00
CZR Intergroup .....	\$ 2000.00
FL-15 Naples Into the Light .....	\$ 100.00
OH-06 COSA-Columbus .....	\$ 240.00
PayPal Giving Fee .....	\$ 2.00
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>\$ 4,163.20</b>

## 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](mailto:balance@cosa-recovery.org)

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