

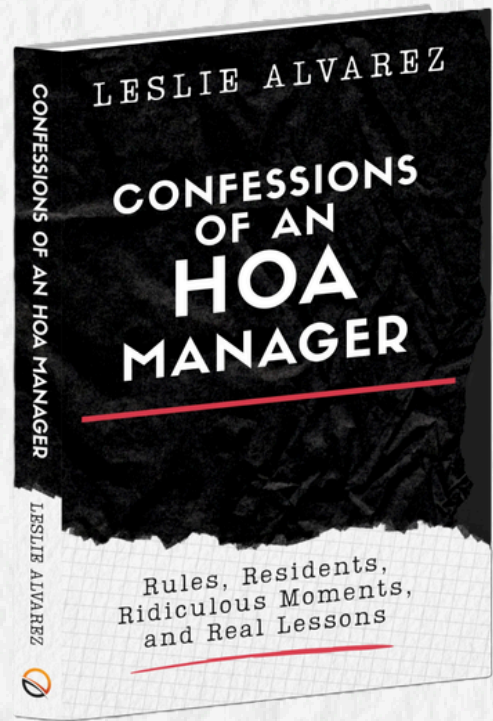
CONFESSIONS OF AN HOA MANAGER

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

ABOUT THE BOOK

Behind every manicured lawn, freshly painted building, and neatly written violation letter is a side of community association living most homeowners never see.

In *Confessions of an HOA Manager*, Leslie Alvarez pulls back the curtain on the unpredictable, emotional, and often unbelievable world of HOA management. With honesty, humor, and hard-earned wisdom, she shares the stories that shaped her career: the residents in crisis, the angry board meetings, the strange complaints, the emergencies no one could have planned for, and the moments when compassion had to stand beside compliance.



This is not a book about rules for the sake of rules. It is a book about people.

From sinkholes and gas leaks to feral cats, board politics, collections, conflict, and the quiet human struggles that unfold behind closed doors, Leslie reveals what really happens when private lives, shared property, legal obligations, and neighborhood expectations collide. Some stories are funny. Some are heartbreaking. Some are difficult to believe. Every one of them is true. And behind all of them is a manager who was expected to function as part referee, part counselor, part problem solver, part investigator, and part punching bag, often before her first cup of coffee.

Written for HOA managers, board members, homeowners, and anyone who has ever wondered what happens on the other side of the management office door, this book offers more than stories. It offers perspective.

CONFESSIONS OF AN HOA MANAGER

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

Leslie's message is clear: Communities work better when people understand one another. Managers need backbone and compassion. Boards need training and humility. Homeowners need information before outrage. And everyone deserves to know what actually happens on the other side of the management office door.

This book will make you laugh, cringe, and think twice before you fire off that next email to your HOA.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

- Before reading this book, what was your opinion of homeowners associations and HOA managers? Did the book change it?
- Which story surprised you the most, and why did it stand out?
- Which situation stayed with you after you finished the book?

BEHIND THE RULES

- When should an HOA rule be enforced consistently, and when should individual circumstances be considered?
- Is treating every homeowner equally always the same as treating every homeowner fairly?
- What responsibilities do homeowners accept when they choose to live in a deed-restricted community?

THE HUMAN SIDE OF COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT

- Leslie often finds herself managing fear, grief, anger, financial hardship, and personal crisis—not just property. How much responsibility should a manager carry for the human problems behind a community issue?
- What is the difference between showing compassion and avoiding a difficult but necessary decision?
- Did any story cause you to think differently about the private struggles that may exist behind a neighbor's door?

SAFETY, RISK, AND RESPONSIBILITY

- Were you surprised by the physical and legal risks HOA managers and community staff sometimes face?
- Where should the line be drawn between providing good service and protecting the personal safety of managers and employees?
- What responsibility does an HOA board have when its policies or expectations place a manager or staff member in danger?

COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

- Many situations in the book became worse because someone ignored notices, avoided a conversation, or failed to ask questions. Why do people often wait until a manageable problem becomes a crisis?
- How can a homeowner challenge a decision without immediately turning the manager or board into an enemy?
- Think of a conflict from the book—or from your own life—that might have been prevented by one honest conversation. What needed to be said?

BOARDS, MANAGERS, AND LEADERSHIP

- What happens to a community when a board expects the manager to enforce its decisions but does not support the manager when conflict follows?
- How should a manager respond when a board wants to take an action that may be legally questionable, unsafe, or unfair?
- Which qualities matter most in an effective HOA leader: knowledge, courage, compassion, consistency, or good judgment?

COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORLINESS

- Is following the rules enough to make someone a good neighbor, or does community living require something more?
- Why do minor disputes over parking, pets, noise, landscaping, or shared spaces sometimes become deeply personal battles?
- Which has the greatest influence on a healthy community: strong rules, strong leadership, or strong relationships?

HUMOR, PERSPECTIVE, AND THE UNEXPECTED

- Which story best captured the feeling that “you simply cannot make this stuff up”?
- How did Leslie’s use of humor affect the way you experienced the more difficult or disturbing stories?
- What does her ability to find humor in stressful situations reveal about the resilience required in this profession?

ETHICS, JUDGMENT, AND DIFFICULT DECISIONS

- Was there a decision Leslie or another person made that you would have handled differently?
- What should a manager do when the legal answer and the most compassionate answer do not appear to be the same?
- What can happen when a leader delays a necessary decision because it feels uncomfortable?

PERSONAL REFLECTION

- Did any story cause you to reconsider how you handled a conflict, complaint, or difficult person in your own life?
- Have you ever judged someone without fully understanding the responsibilities or pressures they were carrying?
- Which lesson from the book could be applied beyond HOA management—to a workplace, family, church, business, or organization?

QUESTIONS FOR HOA HOMEOWNERS

- After reading the book, what do you wish more homeowners understood about the work of an HOA manager?
- What can homeowners do to address concerns constructively before a disagreement escalates?
- What is one action every homeowner could take to make community life easier for everyone?

QUESTIONS FOR HOA MANAGERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

- Which story most closely reflects a challenge you have experienced in community management or leadership?
- What warning signs, procedures, or safety concerns from the book should managers and boards take more seriously?
- How can HOA managers protect their emotional well-being while working in a profession filled with conflict, urgency, and competing expectations?

FINAL DISCUSSION

- Is this book ultimately about HOA management, or is it really a book about human behavior?
- What does the book reveal about what happens when rules, emotions, money, property, safety, and power intersect?
- Complete this sentence: A healthy community begins when

_____.

SUGGESTED BOOK CLUB ACTIVITIES

COMMUNITY CASE STUDY

Choose one situation from the book and divide the group into three perspectives:

- The homeowner
- The manager
- The board

Ask each group to explain what their person wanted, feared, and believed was fair. Then discuss how the situation could have been resolved.

REWRITE THE RULE

Select a disputed rule or policy from the book. Rewrite it so that it is clear, enforceable, fair, and easy for homeowners to understand.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Choose one of the book's most difficult situations. Stop the discussion before revealing how Leslie handled it. Ask each member what they would do next and why.

THE IDEAL COMMUNITY

Have each person name one quality they would include in an ideal HOA community. Use the responses to create a shared community values statement.

ADVICE FROM EXPERIENCE

Invite members who have lived in an HOA, served on a board, or worked in property management to share one lesson they learned the hard way.

CONVERSATION GUIDELINES

Because discussions about HOAs can become personal, encourage members to:

- Discuss ideas without identifying or embarrassing neighbors.
- Avoid turning the conversation into a complaint session.
- Listen to perspectives from homeowners, managers, and board members.
- Separate poor individual behavior from the purpose of community associations as a whole.
- Focus on what could create healthier, safer, and more cooperative communities.

A CLOSING THOUGHT

Behind every rule is a reason. Behind every complaint is a person. Behind every difficult decision is often information the rest of the community cannot see.

Confessions of an HOA Manager reminds us that healthy communities are not created by rules alone. They are created when people communicate, take responsibility, respect boundaries, exercise good judgment, and remember that the person on the other side of the issue is still a human being.

CONFESSIONS OF AN HOA MANAGER

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

Leslie Alvarez has spent nearly 30 years inside the strange, demanding, and often unbelievable world of community association management — and somehow lived to tell about it.

She holds the industry's most respected and coveted designations and has built her reputation on steady leadership under pressure, clear communication when emotions run hot, and a willingness to do the hard thing before it gets harder.

Confessions of an HOA Manager is the book she's been writing in her head for decades. The stories sound made up. They aren't.

Leslie is also the host of the Confessions of an HOA Manager podcast and a speaker on leadership, resilience, and finding your confidence somewhere between the chaos and the next board meeting. She lives and works in South Florida, where, somehow, the stories keep coming.



CONTACT

Leslie Alvarez
book@lesliealvarez.com
(281) 896-1478
CommunityACE.com

