



God grant me the serenity
to accept the things
I cannot change,
courage to change
the things I can,
and wisdom to know
the difference.

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Sexaholics Anonymous
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www.sa.org

1981, the Beginning

ESSAY®

The Origins of ESSAY 1981

ESSAY began in 1981 with a series of letters from Roy to all the members of the fellowship who wanted to keep up with events in the young and growing fellowship of SA. Some minor editing has been done to leave out factual information that is no longer true so as to prevent it from being confusing to the reader. The originals are archived at SA International Central Office.

Simi Valley, CA
30 July 1981

I'm finally far enough away from Sunday to begin putting things in a little perspective. Thought I'd get some of these random thoughts down and send 'em along with the finalized group starter package. I hope you can take a minute to give me some of yours, too.

The feeling of oneness was remarkable. Can't help feeling the unity was due in part to our individual commitment to what we're after—freedom from the obsession of lust and sexual sobriety. This was reflected in our policy statement on defining sobriety, which we decided to leave as is. And as Steve H

**IN THIS
ISSUE:**

The beginning of Essay 1981
Letters from Roy K. in July, August, and October

Sexaholics Anonymous...

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.*

Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and received permission from AA to use its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in 1979.

**Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine, Inc.*

Dear *Essay* Reader,

This special edition of *Essay* about the origins of our fellowship newsletter includes letters sent by Roy K. to the brand new fellowship created by the enormous reaction to a letter in Dear Abby, his untiring efforts to see that every letter was answered, and a transcontinental trip to establish SA meetings across the United States.

Parts of these letters appear in *Beginnings . . . Notes on the Origin and Early Growth of SA*.

Essay is available by individual subscription, through your group, or online at the SAICO online store. Individual subscriptions are \$12.00 each annually; the group rate is \$10.00 each for ten or more subscriptions delivered to the same address. *Essay* is available in an email subscription, too.

Sincerely,
Essay Editorial Committee

The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexaholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and television.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

*I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere
reaches out for help
I want the hand of SA
always to be there.
And for that I am responsible.*

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all person we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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remarked, perhaps it was the tough, uncompromising and clear stand on this crucial matter in the material sent out that has attracted so many to identify and want that very sobriety all over this country.

The other reason we had this unity, I feel, was what we did not do. When I opened my big mouth and gave forth with my opinion on the one loaded topic we knew might arise, and when the other party did not pursue that argument into detailed rebuttal as she could easily have done, unity was maintained. The self sacrifice on her part avoided what could have turned into acrimonious debate. That was surely seeing Traditions 1 and 12 at work.

We were providentially allowed to witness what lack of personal commitment to sobriety can mean. There will apparently be those only too willing to call themselves sexaholics (as there were in 1979) but who have never even come close to taking the first Step and who have no desire to stop. Such cannot be part of our Fellowship. Perhaps unknowingly, they come to steal and destroy. There will also be those who are needy to the point of death, but have not yet reached surrender. Needy and tragic as these people are, we can do nothing for them. As we discovered in AA, this Program is not for people who need it but for those who want it. The simple test in these cases will be, Do they want to stop? This is and must remain the one requirement for membership and the basis of group unity.

As I reflect on all our stories—and how I'd love to hear a full pitch from each of you—I can't help but feel that what we were really looking for and running madly after so compulsively in our scarlet pursuits was connection with the Source of our lives. It seems that Sunday we were connected—connected to each other and somehow, in and through that, connected with the Love that is God. And this is why the meetings are so important; most of us will not be able to stay sober without meetings. The meetings are where we give of ourselves in sacrifice to each other and where we receive the connection this brings. That's just the way it seems to be. And

with meetings like we had Sunday as a possibility for each of us where we now live, each in his own city, we have great hope.

For now, after that joyous but heavy parting, it is each of us where we are, sharing the message of our own recovery and growth—our experience, strength, and hope, and carrying it to others.

I wish we could meet every week together as we did Sunday. Who knows, perhaps there will come about some way we can have a conference phone call periodically with all nine of us on the line without breaking the bank.

I want to thank each of you for your love and self-sacrifice and deep honesty in self-disclosure you gave Sunday and look forward to working with you in our common effort.

18 August 1981

Simi Valley, CA

Dear SA People,

Sherman H. dropped by from Boston this weekend and joined our Saturday night meeting and saw the operation at SA Central. His persistence in asking me how I overcame the obsession of lust has prompted me to try to remember what it was like and some of the practical techniques I used in working out the principles of the Steps in my own life. Rather than wait to have a polished piece, I'll send along my rough draft. Please read it over and jot down any comments and send it back so I can benefit from them for the final draft.

Another reason this may be timely, is that the news from all you people is, most of you are going through some hard times, and some have slipped. The high from 7/26 and the meeting here won't do it for us. This and other "band aids" help out, but in the long run, radical spiritual surgery is the only hope

Name _____

Address _____

Area code & phone _____

Best time(s) to call _____

Special instructions/precautions when calling _____

Essay presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. Opinions expressed in Essay are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by Essay. Manuscripts are invited, although no payment can be made. All articles submitted are assumed intended for publication and are subject to editing. All materials submitted become the property of SA and Essay for copyright purposes. In submitting articles, please remember that SA's sobriety definition is not debated, since it distinguishes SA from other sex addiction fellowships. Essay is not a forum for non-SA sobriety. In submissions, please do not reference unadjudicated illegal actions.

experience in sobriety (I could never see what was really happening while I was practicing). If you disagree or have anything to add or clarify, please send in your feedback. Women too. Some women have trouble with the concept of lust, and we should get your perspective too. The diagram on the back of the sheet goes with the discussion. I hope to hear from many of you on this; we thus hammer out some important concepts together.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

This "letter" has turned out to be something of a newsletter. Which isn't a bad idea, as some have suggested. "ESSAY" was just an off-the-cuff stab at a clever name. Are there any budding journalists around? And I'm sure someone can come up with a better name for it. "Grapevine" for the alkie is certainly appropriate. (ESSAY = SA...get it?) Love to hear from you!

ACTION ITEMS *** ACTION ITEMS

1. all GSC delegates: Obtain and send in the vote on "Dear Abby".
2. FIRST STEP FEEDBACK: Any groups trying this, let us know how it works out. (Sample First Step will be mailed out on request.)
3. GROUP SECRETARIES: Take up the GSO contributions matter in your next business meeting
4. Anyone wanting to get in on the phone/writing network: Fill out and return to GSO.
5. Any member: Let me know how you're doing.

*I embrace you all & wish I could meet
with you all each week.*

Roy K.

for our disease. And that's where we start "trudging the road of happy destiny" together. Meetings and working the Steps. That's what works.

There's good news too. The boys in Houston have been meeting and send along their gratitude. They didn't realize they had so much in common till they actually got together. Jim H in NYC sends along his best wishes; they're planning to get together soon up there. Jim T reports from Peoria that they had their first meeting in St Louis. And various individuals are following the Suggestions: going to AA meetings, buying the Big Book and Living Sober and making phone calls to others. The good news is that apparently some people want to stay sober! So far, about 75 in all throughout the country, with new takers coming in every day. Kelly and Nolin have been meeting in San Diego.

Which brings up the problem at SA Central. It has shifted from a mail-out operation to talking on the phone for hours each day. Though expensive, this is the best and only way to really communicate how the Program works and getting to know all these beautiful and suffering people who want sobriety. For many of them, SA is their "last and only hope." If any of you know how to beat the phone rates, let me know.

As most of you know, we conducted a group conscience of the Steering Committee by phone and came up with a letter to the media, which was sent to all responsible media requesting SA information. A copy of that final letter is enclosed. We went to press with it as soon as the majority voted; some of you could not be reached in time. There were no nays. Thus, we have at least acknowledged legitimate and responsible requests without releasing any information. At the same time, we've identified ourselves to the press as desiring the same relationship A.A. has traditionally enjoyed.

Remember, you can call at reduced rates; check for times in your areas. It's good to hear from you all; keep up the good work.

By the way, some of you have discovered the perils of not using a meeting format to structure the meeting. Our egos as sexaholics are not known for their diminutive stature, you know; with the alkies, we've got the biggest ones around. The format serves as insurance against personalities that would dominate meetings. Little statements like "no crosstalk at this meeting" can save much anguish. The format becomes kind of a silent authority everyone learns to live under.

Each group has the autonomy to design its own format, but once agreed upon, it should be used at every meeting. At least this what we've found seems to work best.

[handwritten]

Good sobriety!
Roy K.

20 August 1981

Simi Valley, CA

Dear SA People,

One of our new people was asking me precisely how it was that I could live free of the obsession of lust today. I referred him to my story, "Free at Last," but that did not satisfy him, and it got me thinking. The results was that I began to list the various techniques I've used. Then I tried putting them together in a readable form. The result is enclosed, even though it's only a rough draft. Eventually I might want to finalize it. Please feel free to adapt some of these to your own case, since the principles involved apply to all of us.

The S.A. phone bill averages about \$100/mo.

For example, the actual cost of mailing this letter and enclosures to every member on our GSO list will run over one hundred dollars. Each group should vote to determine if it wants to help support GSO and what percentage of its surplus over their own expenses should go to GSO.

"D E A R A B B Y"

Some of us are debating whether to let "Dear Abby" run the SA name and POB address as the opportunity arises within her column correspondence. She tells us that she gets a number of letters she'd like to refer to SA by merely giving to the readers in her column the SA name and POB address.

Pros and Cons: This would mean more contacts for the membership around the country, but not as many as the first time (2500 inquiries). The SA national membership would have to bear the expense from group/member contributions to GSO. It would mean another full-time effort at GSO for at least 2-3 months.

ALL DELEGATES TO THE GSC TAKE NOTE: You are responsible for obtaining the vote on this matter from the members/groups you represent. Please advise GSO.

By the way, this will announce the list of new GSC Delegates: Kent A. of Phoenix, John D. of Cleveland, Steve H. of L.A., Jim H. of NYC, Sherman H. of Boston, John L. of Fresno, Tom N. of St Louis, MO, Jim T. of Peoria, Lee W. of Houston, and Dave W. of Springfield, OH. (Some are new and some are holdovers.)

W H A T I S L U S T ?

I've been asked this question time and again and keep trying to get a better handle on it. I've enclosed another attempt to take a look at this most important subject: "What Is Lust?" Purely my own tentative thoughts based on my own

to carry the message of my recovery—wherever it happens to be at—to another. I can’t stand just plain sobriety; it’s not enough. I need something to live or, and nothing better fills that black hole of emptiness always lurking behind the center of my being. The measure I give is the measure I get back.

7TH TRADITION

“Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”

Some members have suggested we should tell everybody what the financial picture is at the General Service Office (formerly call SA Central), so here goes. First, everyone should know that we’ve gone in for non-profit (charitable) tax-exempt organization status with the Internal Revenue Service. This means that all contributions to local SA groups and to SA General Service Office (GSO) are tax deductible. And once GSO gets its official exemption letter, we will go in with a letter listing all SA groups who want to be listed and get a Group Exemption Number, which can be noted on individual Income Tax Return Forms, officially legitimatizing all member contributions.

When I saw what happened in the Dear Abby column, I figured that paying for whatever the response to that column entailed out of my own pocket was one way I could make amends for all the persons I had directly or indirectly helped confirm in their disease. Now that SA is going strong nationally, it will violate our 7th Tradition not to have the task borne by the whole body of members. So here’s the current cost of running the operation at GSO:

Total member donations received since June 22nd	\$258.50
Current running expenses:	
Postage	.37
Printing (11 sheets @ .03/sheet)	.33
Envelope & label	.05
Per mailout	.75

Many of you have called in, and we’ve had little mini-meetings on the phone. Some have indicated that even though it costs a little, it’s nothing like what we used to spend on our habit, and talking makes it better! Remember to ask your local operators the time of day reduced rates are in effect. You’ll be surprised how little it costs.

We’re still in the slow process of getting most of you together out there, and we know how anxious you are for SA meetings. We wish all of you could drop by and meet with us here or in the other groups that are getting started across the U.S. But what we have now is better than nothing, and it’s up to each person desiring sobriety to take those difficult but necessary first steps out into the light. There’s no release and healing unless we do.

For some of use this will mean rereading the Suggestions for Serious Inquirers and going to whatever other meetings we can. For others it will mean starting to read the A.A. literature, like Alcoholics Anonymous. For others, it will be calling those in your area and meeting informally for coffee. And for still others it will mean getting your meeting actually started. Each of us has some action he or she can take. And remember the 12 Step Program is a program of action; no one does it for us; we really wouldn’t want them to if they could.

Everyone, at least, has the phone number of at least one recovering sexaholic on the program—mine. And anyone who asks can receive other phone numbers and names of members closer to them, if not in the same city.

I look forward to hearing from each of you and wish you each,

Successful Sobriety!
Roy K.

1 September 1981

Simi Valley, CA

1 September 1981

Dear SA People,

I've decided I can't pass up a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that just camp up to be able to meet many of you face to face. For \$398 I can fly unlimited mileage during September anywhere American Airlines flies in the U.S. The restrictions on this offer have pretty much dictated which cities I can cover with the 12 flight coupons allowed, and in what sequence. Interestingly enough, this will allow me to drop in on almost every S.A. group that wants to get started. Plus, it will allow me the chance to meet some people where no group is in the immediate offing.

If you want to meet when I come through, look at the enclosed itinerary and reply right away by calling me. If I've already left, call anyway and leave your message with whoever is "minding the store," or my wife.

You can coordinate this with the others in your area whose phone numbers many of you already have.

It would be an immense help to me to have someone in each city get me around from place to place and perhaps even suggest which lodging would be most convenient.

Finally, after all the letters and phone calls, it will really be something to be with many of you in person. How good it will be to sit down face-to-face and share our experience, strength, and hope with each other.

the "back burner." By the way, our dialog with the Minnesota sex addicts may not get off the ground anyway; they seem to have backed off, so it's on "hold" for now.

FROM THE GRAPEVINE

I'm enclosing some articles from this month's AA Grapevine, the monthly journal of AA. The best of AA is embodied in the Grapevine articles, and many use it as their "meeting in a pocket." To the marrieds, I wholeheartedly recommend the article "How to Stay Married Though Sober." The others are also right down our alley.

12TH STEP WORKS WONDERS

Many of us are either just starting our groups or trying to get one started. In our last general letter of 12 October, we listed some hints for 12th Step work—getting new members. Chapter 7 of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) is entitled "Working With Others," and is a "must" for every serious member of S.A. Her's the first sentence (with references to alcohol changed):

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from slipping as intensive work with other sexaholics."

One is hard put to offer anything better on dealing with prospective members.

By the way... I hope everyone knows by now that I'm not engaged in some sort of philanthropic or benevolent enterprise. I'm active in SA as an avocation; (my vocation is writing.) And for this very reason—it's the best insurance I can have for not "going back out there." Plus, there's nothing I enjoy more, once I'm doing it. But I suffer the same inertia, procrastination, and lack of motivation anyone else does. It's just taken a lot of practice to learn that to feel better, to stay sober, to experience real joy, there's no better way than trying

and postage will run \$2.00 actual cost to us when we get ours duplicated.

(2)Phone Network. There are many members who still have no group yet and write or call in wanting contact with other recovering members. It's been suggested that we have a list of members who volunteer to call or write other members. Some groups have already discovered the great benefits of not only meeting more than once a week but calling another member once a day or so. If you are a "loner" member or a group member and want to talk or write to other members, please fill out and return the form.

And do we have a volunteer somewhere in the country who will coordinate all this?

Speaking of telephones, I now have three-way service available; I can get two other parties on line and have a three-way conversation. We've had several transcontinental meetings via phone already this way. This additional service cost \$9.00 to install and \$5/mo to use. What a gift! A few other members have this service; if you do, let us know so we can tie you into the network. It's a service well worth having for anyone who likes to talk to other SAs. (The telecommunications long-distance discount service really saves. It knocks off at least a third from the regular price; more if it's used on off hours.)

THE MINNESOTA CONNECTION

The informal national group conscience we took recently has made itself known. All but two groups voted for dialog with Minnesota, but others who voted yes expressed reservations that we not compromise our alignment with the principles and traditions of AA. Acceptance of "Lust Kills" and "The Problem" was unanimous. Acceptance of the Statement of Principles was unanimous, with some feeling, however, that we should not try to finalize this kind of thing at this point and put it on

May God bless you in all that you plan and do and want to be.

Hoping to see you soon,

"On a wing and a prayer,"
Roy K.

Sherman H and Roy K. Take Flight

Simi Valley, CA

12 October 1981

To All of the S.A. Groups:

Greetings, and some random observations on our recent trip through some ten cities in 24 days.

1. Sherman H. and I want to thank everyone who helped. We simply could not have done it without your knowledge of the areas, transportation, lodging, use of typewriters, and, in the case of three S.A. couples, cars, cooking, laundry, and space to get ourselves together—not to mention use of Xerox machines, office space, etc. The beautiful spirit of cooperation and helpfulness was unbelievable! In each city, we left with great longing in our hearts, if we could only meet again. And again... Already we have been welded together in a Fellowship stronger than anything we have ever known.
2. Without a doubt, S.A. is now national. There are some 11 groups, either in process of forming or already going strong, with new groups coalescing all the time. Individual members who say they want sobriety but are not yet part of groups yet bring the total number of S.A. members to about one hundred. And the ranks grow weekly. It looks like we'll have our first bona fide S-Anon group for spouses this week in western Ohio. Jim T. of Peoria has offered to be the Illinois area representative, which will eventually shift a load off of S.A. Central. Other members are spearheading making contacts for new members in their areas. For all of this we are truly grateful. This is the direction things should be moving in.

powerless over his disease, and whose life had become unmanageable. The format this particular member used was as follows:

Key Incidents	Associated Feelings	What Does This Incident Tell me about Myself?
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The feedback revealed that using notes when giving the Step diminished spontaneity. The member who gave it agreed, but felt making the notes had been an invaluable experience. Another danger was the tendency to get too analytical. It doesn't seem to help recovery to know why we did what we did, but it does seem to help to see what it did to us and others.

This giving of the First is different than doing a Fourth Step, where we write down everything we have done to ourselves and others in a fearless and searching moral inventory. Some find they are incapable of doing a First Step right away; they're still making a slow turnaround and can't yet see the past clearly enough. You might want to try this in your own group and report on the results. We're all for accelerating the process of recovery. Let us know what happens.

GETTING TOGETHER

Some members have made suggestions about facilitating the bond of unity across the country:

- (1) Tapes. Have groups or members record on cassette their sharing in meetings, as long as last names are not used. Thus, groups and "loner" members about the country can see how others are doing and how they're doing it. We've started this in L.A., and our tape will be available for any group or member who wants to order one. Just a couple of sharings at meetings is all it is. We plan to leave room on the other side so you can add one of your own stories and pass it along or exchange with others. Looks like cassette

We look back on our lives, even the bad times, and it seems we've always gotten what we've really needed. All of our past is what got us here; and we're grateful to be here. Think of where else we might be! Someone's surely been looking out for us, in spite of ourselves. And it seems He's more interested in our freedom and joy than we are.

OFF THE HONEYMOON?

Another word from around the country is that many have come off the S.A. "honeymoons" and are facing the realities of living sober (or not living sober). We're finding out what the alkies discovered: we can't stay sober, joyous and free without doing the things that make us sober, joyous and free. And those things are no big mystery. We don't have to "reinvent the wheel," thank God; the 12 Steps are the distilled essence of what it has always taken anyone to live sober, joyous and free. But we're rediscovering them for ourselves through experience.

When we are new, when we could care less what those blasted 12 Steps are all about, when we don't even know which end is up, and when we're not even sober yet, all we have is Step 0: "We participate in the Fellowship of the Program." In whatever way we can: going to meetings, phoning other members, writing, getting our own meetings going, going to other types of meetings, reading the literature...

FIRST STEP

In the Los Angeles group we've experimented with doing a "formal" First Step. The member who was the "guinea pig" made notes on his sexual history as it bore on the development of his feelings & emotions and the powerlessness/unmanageability of his life. On the appointed meeting night he gave his First Step, referring to those notes. When he was through, he asked for feedback from the group, which then related its feelings about his story and what it was telling about himself. Everyone agreed the man was a sexaholic,

3. The best news of all is that people are staying sober! Not everybody, of course. But people who shouldn't be staying sober are staying sober—people who don't even have an S.A. group yet! Without realizing it, perhaps, many have taken their First Step—a change of attitude that makes the receiving of help from above possible. Of course, phone contacts with other members, reading the literature, and trying to work the principles of the Program as best they understand them are also going for them. And we're all pulling for each other! Ma Bell never had it so good with so many new transcontinental phone calls being made. Who ever heard of sobriety by telephone?
4. Wherever we went we sense a deep and genuine hunger for sexual sobriety, together with an affinity for the S.A. program of recovery. We recall the time when we were sitting in the offices of the Director of an Alcohol and Drug Abuse program within a large corporation, telling him and his assistant our own personal stories and all about S.A. while they reviewed the literature. We could not get out of there, such was the interest and enthusiasm generated. We found universal acceptance among professional people both to ourselves and the program of S.A. We also found that going with at least another member was much more effective than going alone.
5. Sherman H. of Boston was an invaluable help and companion in Boston and NYC and became—at his own expense—a team partner in all the remaining cities as well. He also flew to Cleveland while we were in the western part of Ohio. To have undertaken the trip alone would have been much more difficult and far less profitable. This was a great gift, and another in but a whole series of unbelievable circumstances.
6. We must have experienced several such "circumstances" each day. It turned out that the order of the itinerary—established by American Airlines—was the best possible order; had we known the outcome, we could not have designed better. We learned as we went. Sherman and I

would often look at each other as some new impossible barrier had been crossed, shake our heads and say, “I just don’t believe this!” Like the new air fare that opened up the day he needed it for the itinerary, and his being able to make the same sequence of cities. Or the time a chance meeting with a stranger on a bus ended in receiving a key contact who opened up the whole state of Minnesota and other crucial contacts in major Eastern cities. Or the time we just happened to call Bill L. in NYC, only to discover he and his newly-formed group of sex drunks were at that very moment going over the S.A. literature! A quick taxi drive found us together in one of the most glorious meetings of the trip. (By the way, that group has now merged with S.A. and is our first NYC group.)

For me, the greatest victories were in the spiritual/emotional area. More than once, we were faced with utter despair, confusion, and uncertainty, often beyond our means. But without fail, every time we surrendered our natural inclination and asked for guidance, we saw a marvelous victory.

7. It was Sherman’s idea to try and come up with an S.A. counterpart to “The Problem” used by The Adult Children of Alcoholics groups, which is one of the more recent Al-Anon family groups. In the air, between flights, at odd times during meals, or whenever inspiration struck—4:30 in the morning, for example—he would talk and I’d write, or whatever. Until finally, rewrite after rewrite, “The Problem” as you see it now appeared. We are asking that you read it, since it is being proposed as potential S.A. literature. Do you approve?

We found The Problem to be the single most effective piece of S.A. literature to date. It has served as an excellent opener when explaining what S.A. is and when telling our own story to someone. All this aside, we’d still like your honest opinion.

U N I O N

The word from the S.A. members around the country is unity. We’re being welded together in a fellowship of recovery. Men and women are getting sober! Coming out of themselves into the light, and making contact with other members. Coming to. Becoming part of the healing process of each other’s lives. That’s good news.

And there’s more. New S.A. groups are forming. There’s cross-fertilization starting between groups. And the spouses have started their own Fellowship—S-Anon, patterned after the Al-Anon family Groups associated with A.A. They’ve discovered they need a Program of their own. They haven’t remained untouched; ours is as much a family disease as alcoholism.

So much to be grateful for. Maybe I should make a list of my own; doing so has been know to keep me out of the “poor me’s.” What am I grateful for?

For my sobriety. I would have nothing without that.
For the sobriety of others in my life, even though they may be phone dollars away.
For the Presence. A God of my very own. A faith that works.
For the fact that most of the time I can now live comfortably with myself and others—one day at a time.
For the joy of seeing others gain victory over the obsession and come to life.
For the Fellowship this creates. I need this as much as anyone else.
For the love of other recovering men and women—a bond that’s closer than anything I’ve ever known.
That all my needs are met (not all my wants).

(d) Of course, the best source of contacts is within the sphere of our own personal lives. We can do no better than quote from the Big Book”

Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do for the man who is still sick. The answers will come if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven’t got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

(e) Remember to keep in close contact with S.A. Central for new contacts that write or call in.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

Please get back to Roy K. at S.A. Central as soon as possible with the answers to the following three questions:

1. Do you want dialog with the Minneapolis groups?
2. Do you agree with the Suggested Statement of Principle for opening that dialog?
3. Do you like “The Problem” as a piece of S.A. literature? “Lust Kills”?

Your input is extremely important to the history of S.A.

Thanks again for your help,
Roy K

8. One of the most interesting parts of the trip was making contact with the existing groups of recovering sex addicts (not S.A.) in the Minneapolis area—in itself another unbelievable turn of circumstance. One of their members had written in after the Abby column, telling us of their existence. Here were groups of men—with a separate group of female addicts—who were using the principles of the 12-Step program to recover from their disease. They are still debating whether to call themselves Sex Addicts Anonymous or Sex Abuse Anonymous. They also have groups for spouses based on the Al-Anon family Groups. All of their meetings are closed.

Most of these men have read and some are using our S.A. literature. We shared our own personal stories as we met with them on four occasions. They were very receptive, not only to us and our S.A. literature, but to continued dialog with S.A. toward possible merger. We consider them friends and brothers in recovery.

There are differences in approach between them and S.A. They have, for instance, introduced into their meetings certain elements not normally found in traditional A.A. meetings. One of these was group therapy type of procedure; another was cross-talk, where member are allowed, even encouraged to interrupt one who is sharing. Another difference is that they leave the definition of sexual sobriety up to the individual. This latter, I feel, is a very crucial difference, since in 1979, S.A. made the mistake of letting people define their own sobriety with painful results.

Since we and our Minneapolis brethren have indicated a desire for continued dialog, it was felt one way to begin this would be to prepare an S.A. statement of principle, describing where we stand on these important issues. In consultation with a few of our sober and active members, I have prepared such a statement. Would you please study this statement carefully, then decide whether you agree or not. If not, please indicate your revised wording and return to S.A. Central as soon as possible.

We are asking you, first, whether you feel S.A. should enter into dialog with the Minneapolis groups. Thus, you should know a little more about them.

They have had some experience in dealing with criminal cases. One of their groups has also had considerable experience at the treatment level of instituting the only 12-Step program for in-patient and out-patient hospital care for sex addicts and their families. This arose from the fact that the treatment center was getting sex-offender court cases. Thus, they have some experience that we do not. Plus, they are asking for dialog

8. Finally, I would like to try and summarize some of the avenues of approach we've discovered and used in making new contacts for potential sexaholics. Many of you are now at this point in wanting to "carry the message."

a) There are usually one or more key 12-Step Program persons in each city. Often this is someone directing an alcohol/drug dependency program. This may be connected with a hospital or may be private. Many of these people have come from the ranks of A.A. and use their knowledge of the disease and experience of their own recovery in setting up programs and helping others.

The point is, addiction is not a matter of chemicals, but personality. We get addicted because of what we are inside ourselves. And thus, persons with drug, alcohol, compulsive gambling or overeating problems are also likely to act out their disease in sexual obsession/compulsions. One of the great sources for contacting sexaholics is thus in the 12-Step programs dealing with these addictions: N.A., A.A., G.A., O.A., and the like.

Likewise, people who have come from these fellowships into positions of leadership in city, county, or private programs are excellent sources of referral for potential S.A. members.

Find and meet with these key people in your area as you grow in sobriety, confidence, and your own personal need to carry the message of recovery to others. We've found they are sympathetic, provide names of other leaders in the field, and even provide prospects. Any time you contact such people, ask if they know of others who might be sources of referral.

The white and yellow pages in the phone directory do wonders in this regard under such headings as "Alcohol" and "Alcoholism." Try it; you'll be surprised. Also, look in white pages under City and County headings.

Persons that are knowledgeable in these programs know that when they release people back into society, unless they deal with all their obsessions and addictions, it will be just a matter of time before they've slipped back. The professionals are constantly looking for programs like ours for "maintenance." Not all the prospects from such referrals will be good "takers," but some will be.

(b) Another source is counselors, therapists, and psychologists practicing in either the private, religious, institutional, or corporate realms.

In one large city we found that within a large corporation with some thousands of employees (factory and office workers), there was an alcohol and drug program in the company's Human Resources Department run by 12-Step Program people who were extremely enthusiastic about S.A. and had professional contacts throughout the whole community.

(c) Religious leaders can be very helpful. Call up one you know and tell him your story of recovery and take him the literature. Again, "The Problem" has been found to be very effective as an opener in such interviews. It not only breaks the ice but leads naturally into the heart of the matter.