

P O Box 300

Simi Valley, CA 93062

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 and are assuming these and other responsibilities for their areas. For all of this we are truly grateful. This is the direction things should be moving in.

By the way, S.A. Central has had its own bank account for some time now, and we are in process of filing forms with the IRS that will grant us non-profit-organization status so membership contributions are tax-deductible, as in A.A.

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 even 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 sensed 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 couldn't 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 it 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 (enclosed) 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.

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.