

# Essay®

P.O. Box 300  
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June 1994

## Abstinence in Marriage - Its Value and a Plan of Action

### Value of Abstinence to the Sexaholic

1. To discover lust and its part in the relationship and to decouple lust from sex. Going into total sexual abstinence reveals the presence and nature of lust. Before, sex and lust were so intertwined we couldn't see anything but the sex. Taking sex out of the picture reveals what's really there. And it is this hidden component that must be seen and progressively overcome for true recovery.
2. To discover how sex-addicted we really are. Plus, how can I say I'm truly powerless over sex addiction if I've never stopped having sex?
3. To discover the extent of our emotional dependency and *mis*-connection with our spouse. Taking sex out of the relation reveals what's really holding these two people together. It's often a shock to realize how little else there is.
4. Often, continuing sex in the relationship covers defects in the sexaholic they are otherwise unable to see, defects hindering recovery.
5. Taking sex out of the picture "takes the pressure off" the relationship.
6. To discover the Real Connection. Until our spiritual life-connection with another human is severed, both sexually and emotionally—the *mis*-connection—the real Connection cannot be made with the true Source of our lives. Abstinence removes one more road block that's been keeping us from God.
5. Promises a better marriage and opens the door to real love.

### Value of Abstinence to the Partner

1. Reveals their misconnection with us, emotional or spiritual. There *must* be such a misconnection; anyone married to a sexaholic has to be misconnected emotionally and spiritually. Reveals whether we have been their higher power. Reveals their relation to lust and sex. Reveals their possible sex or lust addiction.
2. Reveals their attitude toward having sex with us. More often than not, spouses express great relief. Once in a while they express rage. Either of these is a very intense emotion, which in itself indicates the presence of something wrong that was being covered over by sex.
3. Promises a better marriage and opens the door to real love.

### Value of Abstinence to the Marriage

1. Reveals what part sex has in the equation holding it together.
2. Puts the marriage on a sounder basis.
3. Makes greater intimacy possible if the couple can survive the initial transition through withdrawal. (Sound and thorough preparation is necessary before entering abstinence. See articles in *Recovery Continues*.) The necessity of having sex limits the depth of the intimacy that can be achieved. When sex is mandatory, intimacy cannot rise above a certain level. Couples typically discover that sex *kept* them from intimacy.
4. Opens the way for a *shared* Real Connection. With the relation based on the spiritual, since the physical connection is desexualized and the emotional dependency connection is (hopefully)

being healed, the two are in a position to go to God *together* as partners. The two can now admit to God that they are powerless over their marriage and ask him daily, together, to keep them sober for that day, one day at a time.

### Plan of Action

1. Prepare yourself spiritually beforehand. Read the articles in *Recovery Continues*. Write about it. Discuss it with your sponsor. Hold a check meeting [see page 4] if necessary. Examine your motives for going into it. Are you ready to release sex? Share all this with others before announcing your intentions to your spouse to make sure *you* are okay with it.
2. Discuss it with your spouse and outline your reasons. Emphasize that it is to make the union *better*. **Listen** to your spouse's reactions. **Understand** what they are thinking and feeling. **Care about** their reactions and feelings. Be sure of your own motives—that you're not doing this to escape the marriage, to punish or manipulate, or whatever.
3. At times, members have decided to go ahead with abstinence even when the spouse objected. Ultimately, we are doing it not for them but for our own

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recovery, and without recovery there's no marriage anyway. We turn our marriage—as we do our will and our lives—over to the care of God, one day at a time, and go ahead with it.

4. Men should read the paper "The Physiological Aspects of Male Sexual Abstinence" if they are worried about physical consequences of sexual abstinence. (Available from the SA Central Office.) It is also helpful to talk with other men to hear their experience. In my second year-long abstinence I came across a technique that helped. I visualized shutting off the main water valve coming into the house. It takes several turns, and in my mind's eye, I slowly and deliberately shut down that faucet. Face and talk about the fear involved.

5. Start practicing the three C's: *Improve* your non-sexual physical contact, *communication* and *care* with your partner. There's usually little or none of this previously, another reason for going into abstinence. This is where we do what does *not* come naturally. We look at the person in the eyes. We smile. We say Thank You. We touch them on the arm, on the hand. We help them. We start the process of growing up. Do something nice without being found out. Do one difficult thing you would not

Events listed are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by Essay or the Central Office.

July 8-10, 1994

SA-S-Anon International Conference, Portland, Oregon

Theme: Discoveries! Contact Ed or Marie G., (503) 640-9820.

January 13-15, 1995

SA-S-Anon International Conference, Los Angeles, CA

Theme: Living in the Solution. Contact Mary S., (310) 379-5355, FAX (310) 379-2161.

normally do each day in your relation with that person.

6. Abstinence should be open-ended. Setting time limits can be self-defeating, yet people often want to know how long abstinence should last. If you're going to "try it for a month," forget it. The body's natural rhythms barely go through even one cycle in a month's time. How can one expect to gain anything from abstinence without going through many such cycles? Also, adjusting to withdrawal both psychologically and in the home usually takes a month or so to even get started. And how can your marriage get *better* in just one month? How can you establish new directions and focus? You can't even see what's wrong with the relation in a month; more like a year to get the first inkling of what's wrong! Also, if you're concerned about time, it may indicate

you're not really surrendered to abstinence, counting days, etc. When people ask me how long it should be I reply, "Until you no longer have to have, expect, demand, or need sex." In other words, until there is complete freedom from having to have sex. Also, after you have begun to see what's wrong in your relations. We learn about abstinence by going into abstinence. "Practice makes perfect."

7. Find another of the same sex who is also going through abstinence in marriage, is contemplating it and establish frequent sharing with that person. Helping another in abstinence will help you and provide the larger perspective to your own situation. "*One drunk talking with another.*"

8. Share your continuing experience in your group. ■

## Sponsoring Newcomers: One Member's Approach

Call me every day, regardless of how you feel.

Certainly call me if you think you are going to slip—before you slip!

If you don't reach me before you slip, keep making calls until you reach someone. Make actual contact. Leaving phone messages is not enough. You are not to go on a slip without calling.

Read at least four lines or so from either the AA Big Book, the 12 & 12, or the SA white book every day, preferably first thing in the morning. We'll talk about what you read in your daily

phone call. Better to read a little and get something you can take away with you and *use* rather than going on and on.

**We will be working the Steps.** That's what this program is. That's how we recover. We work them and keep working them until they become *principles* instead of just Steps—principles that take hold in every area of our lives.

**Read Step One** in all three books preparatory to writing your First Step Inventory. Then start writing your First Step Inventory. Your sexual history. Focus on the *patterns* of your sexaholism, the *progressive nature* of your

sexaholism, and the critical nature of your sexaholism, that is, *where it has led you*. Where had it taken you when you came in the door? Also, the focus is on the level of surrender. Are you done with it, ready to move on and let it go and recover from it? The sponsor should help keep you from merely reliving your sexual history. Instead, you're sending it away. In sum, the First Step is *seeing it, confessing it, and sending it away*.

Take no more than 3 or 4 days to write your First Step. It may be painful to go through, so don't spend too much time and get immersed in it or bogged down. If you get triggered, call me or someone



else immediately. Some have slipped during writing their First Step. Keep it succinct, 5-8 pages max.

As soon as you've written it, you'll **read your First Step Inventory to me privately** and we'll go over it together. (The sponsor will try to see that the sponsee is not still in it, that it's not triggering him, that he's surrendering it. He'll make sure he's gone deeply enough and that we hear the powerlessness and that he's done with it all and is willing to let it all go—surrender.)

**Attend** at least \_\_\_ meetings per week, two or three, if not more. As many as you need to stay sober and comfortable. I'll help you decide how many. *Sobriety must come first in your life.* Are you willing to go to any lengths to stay sober?

In your phone calls, I don't want to hear a lot about what your day has been like, or what she or he did to you, etc. I do want to hear about what you've read that morning and how you apply it to yourself. Also, about **every major lust temptation and resentment temptation** and how you thought or acted wrongly about others.

After giving your First Step to me and we have decided you're ready to give it away, make an appointment to **give your First Step to your group** or to a selected group of members to meet in fellowship at someone's home. (In groups where there is little or no sobriety or recovery, or with sponsors who have insufficient recovery to discern when a sponsee's First Step should not

be given or is going off track, special measures may need to be taken. In such cases, a select group should help judge whether the sponsee is ready to give a First Step to the entire group. This could take the form of a check meeting [see

p. 4]. This will protect the regular group meeting from cases where members might inflict on the meeting an ordeal of unsundered "dumping" or mere sexual replay. This can be not only toxic but shift focus from the solution onto the problem, destroying any value which giving the Step can have. First Steps can be wondrous examples of insight into powerlessness and surrender leading into recovery, as well as dreadful negative experiences for all concerned. Some people simply may not be ready to give their First Steps when they come into the program.)

I'm going to **work the Steps** with you. That's what a sponsor does—help guide you through the Steps. You'll soon see that it's impossible to do them alone, and that isolation is a large part of our illness. We'll be applying the Steps to every problem that comes up. That's what I'm here for. You'll have to make outreach calls to others in the program too, and that will evolve.

I'll be asking you to join me and others in fellowship times after meetings or elsewhere so you can get to feel comfortable being *part of* instead of apart from. **Fellowship outside of meetings** is very important.

Repeat the same process for **Step Tw**, except that normally you won't be giv-

ing it to the group. Then read your **Second Step** to me and I'll work on it with you. **Same for the Third Step.** When you read your **Third** to me, you'll be working toward making the decision to actually turn your will and life over to God. If you're ready and wish to do so, we can do this together in private. If you're a religious person, you will come to see what areas of your life you have *not* actually surrendered in spite of your religious beliefs and rituals. (When I surrender my will and life that includes, for me, my sexuality, sex, marriage, and orientation.) "Are you now ready . . . ?" If you're not ready to turn your will and whole life over to God, we'll keep going back to it. **Prayer** can now become part of our working together daily.

Now we move on to **Step Four**, the searching and fearless moral inventory, as outlined in the Big Book. We add a column to this chart: "What does this tell me about *myself*? I'll work with you on this.

**And so on through each Step**, one at a time. You'll be reading the material on each Step in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the *12 X 12*, and *Sexaholics Anonymous* (the white book) and working with me on doing it.

I'll be asking you to write **Fear** and/or **Gratitude lists** on occasion, as well as other inventories, as things come up in your life. We may also be in **check meetings** together. I may have you write about some aspect of your life you have a need in, and we may call such a special check meeting for you. ■

**Two important motions from the May 29, 1994 meeting of the Central Office Oversight Committee (COOC):**

**MOTION:** Moved that the COOC agrees to move the Central Office from Simi Valley, California. Carried Unanimously. (Margo C./Paul S.)

**MOTION:** After the COOC reviewed several possible locations, Nashville, Tennessee became the prime area of consideration due to the high concentration of SA members, much long-term sobriety, and a proven track record of service. The COOC proposes that the Central Office be moved to Nashville and that a COOC subcommittee present a moving plan at the Portland International SA conference. Carried unanimously. (Jim C./Margo C.)

One member pointed out that we can invite participation and response from the Fellowship. He asked that we make it clear that Nashville meets a variety of requirements and that other possible sites would, too. Another member pointed out that if the services are available, SAs will probably support wherever the Central Office is located. The Chair pointed out that the COOC has the authority to make such a decision. We will certainly announce it in Portland and in the *Essay*. David M., COOC Secretary



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## Check Meetings (also known as "group sponsorship")

**Need:** Often a sponsee will have a problem that does not readily yield to the sponsor's efforts or is outside his or her knowledge or recovery experience or ability to deal with it. In such cases, there can be great wisdom and breakthrough by bringing the issue to a small, select group of trusted members, together, under God.

**Example:** A woman several years sober realizes she still cannot forgive the men who perpetrated wrongs upon her. In this case it was suggested that the woman write a Step 8-1/2 inventory (see page 125 in the white book) on her unforgiveness. This is patterned after the Fourth Step inventory, including the added column "What does this tell me about myself?" The woman wrote on each person or incident: what happened, how her unforgiveness expressed itself within her, and what this tells her about herself and her own spiritual condition and attitude today. The focus was to be

on her response to the wrongs, responses both within her and in her behavior, not on those who wronged her. She wrote it out and called some members to hear and offer feedback. They began with prayer for guidance, and she asked for guidance and courage. She read her inventory all the way through. (Had it gotten off track, the members could have intervened, if appropriate.) When she was through reading it, they prayed again, and one by one the members told what they heard her saying.

We do not criticize or pass judgment or give advice. We simply play back what we hear, what comes through between the lines. We do not take responsibility for the other person's life or decisions. We are simply a sounding board. We speak as we would be spoken to.

**Example:** A member who is a minister has been sexually involved with members of his congregation and calls a check meeting for guidance on how to

make amends to these persons. It's very touchy because this might injure others. The man's sponsor suggests a check meeting.

**Example:** A member is stuck in her career/education and seeks a broader range of input and wisdom than her sponsor is able to offer.

**Other Examples:** A member can't get or remain sober or is an habitual slipper. A member discovers he's over his head in debt and doesn't know what to do. Another member doesn't know how to cope with his wife's response to his decision to go into total sexual abstinence. His sponsor is single and has never had to face that problem. Other members seek help with tough problems such as fear, wet dreams, dating . . .

Sometimes the person needs to write on something that surfaces during the check meeting that had little direct connection with the original topic. "Back to the drawing board." ■

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## Group News

**London, England:** I wanted to let you know what's been happening in London, it's all very exciting stuff. . . The meetings have been going very well. We now have five solution meetings going, four of which I am very involved in. I started one on Monday night and we changed the formats at the other meetings and a new meeting was started on Sunday morning, which is really nice.

Yesterday (4/4/94) we had our first convention!! to celebrate the fourth birthday of SA and a celebration of the new meetings and the new unity we have been experiencing here. A man who lived near Bath contacted us. He has a meeting there and yesterday four of them drove up for the convention, which was wonderful. They took the new meeting format back with them. One man lives in Leeds and is going to

start a meeting there. Another wonderful thing happened. In the *Essay* we saw an article from a member in Scotland who said he was all alone and desperately needed SA support. He had been told about SA by a woman from AA. We wrote to him last week. He called immediately, was told about the convention, got a train Sunday evening and stayed with an SA member who brought him to the convention on Monday. He was overwhelmed, a bit like me when I arrived in the LA meetings . . . (he didn't cry as much).

It was a wonderful day, a real celebration. At the SA countdown amongst 18 members that were present, the clean time added up to 19 years, 287 days. We have one other woman who has recently joined us with 18 days, so we check in with each other and spread the

word to other women. We try not to get disheartened and most of the time feel at peace and laugh a lot. Z.S.

**New Jersey-Delaware Valley:** We have begun the New Jersey-Delaware Valley SA Intergroup. Our fifth meeting will take place on May 22, and we are working on having an 800 number for phone inquiries. S.O.

**Lovelady, Texas:** At our last meeting six of eight members personally expressed agreement with the SA definition of sobriety. We also use SA literature during our meetings. However, being in prison, our members have access to only one group which they may attend. It would be nice to also register with SA since a majority of our fellowship subscribes to the SA sobriety definition. We have extended an invitation . . . for



veterans in recovery to attend our meetings as visitors and would like to extend the same invitation to SA members through the *Essay*. **H.A.**

**Pensacola, FL:** We remain small. Our group anticipates using the book meeting format to alleviate the meeting being a potential (or actual) dumping ground. Our group is barely staying current, discovering what lust is, and attempting to be honest. Only one member has more than one year of sobriety. As always, please direct any leads or inquiries from our area to us in hopes that some may want what we freely have to offer. **R.B.**

**Quebec, Canada:** SA was rekindled in late 1993 and now brings together two or three regular members with maybe half a dozen other "orbiting" members. But for now we do have abstinence, and maybe a chance to grow. We adopted SA's sobriety definition because it works for us, and have not yet been confronted with the kinds of questions that divided us in the past. We're taking it one week at a time. **L.H.C.**

**Huntsville, TX:** Hello from the group here at Ellis 1. I passed [the *Essay*] along to everyone here, we all get a lot out of it. We all need to know that SA is going strong and that we will have places to help us once we are released. We have about 15 active members that show up for most of our meetings and these people really work on their recovery. As you know we lost our good outside friend J.W. He has been transferred . . . He attended three of our meetings and we really enjoyed having him. If you have anyone else in either the Houston or Huntsville area we would be happy to contact them and invite them to one of our meetings. I would much rather go to one of their meetings but I feel the officials here wouldn't agree on that. Oh well, such is life. Keep up the good work, you are needed. **E.N.**

**Dillon, Montana:** I appreciate the ministry you provide . . . and may it flourish even to a greater measure than increasing sexual compulsivity in our land. We have established a small group in Dillon, Montana. **R.A.**

**Bland, VA:** I'm doing pretty well under the circumstances and our little meeting here at the correctional center hopes soon to have a place to meet indoors. . . members in Staunton and Harrisonburg, VA remain in supportive contact, as does the shining light of a sponsor I'm graced with, from GA. I hope the group here will be making a modest donation

**Welcome to the following new groups:**

Provo, UT  
Norfolk, NE  
Dillon, MT  
Pensacola, FL  
Calcutta, INDIA

to C.O. during the second quarter . . . Though I'm scheduled for mandatory parole in April 1995, I'll extend into my six months of parole with the "therapeutic community" I came to this center to join, to help support the process of my recovery. **C.H.**

## Member Sharing

### Presence . . .

I'd like to share something that happened to me after I'd been sexually sober for about seven months. I am just starting to experience life as a recovering sexaholic. Through God's grace, my soul has been opened to a whole new way of living. At first, it was through not acting out. Then, as I got sober and my sobriety progressed, things began to get more positive. Today less of me is in the problem and more of me is in the solution.

Conscious contact with the God of my understanding through prayer has become a great part of this new life. I pray in the morning on my knees after I get out of bed. I call another sexaholic every weekday and we pray together. I pray on the train ride into the city where I work. Lately, my prayers in the mo-

ment of temptation have been especially helpful and effective. Every night before I go to bed I get back on my knees, thank God for the day (*both for the good and the seemingly bad*), pray for His protection in my sleep, and for others. I pray for SA, sexaholics I've met at conferences, and my sexaholic friends here in my hometown. I need to start praying for S-Anon.

It was after my evening prayers one night as I lay in bed that my addict decided to pop a lust image into the VCR in my head. This kind of thing starts in my mind, takes over my body, and finally consumes my soul. But not this time. I had said my prayers and I was ready and willing to work my program. I remembered a sentence from page 166 of the SA white book, "Cast it out!" I lay in bed motionless, but in my mind I hollered "Get Out! Go Away! I

want no part of this temptation! Lust is an unwelcome visitor in my soul! Get out of my house! Over and over again.

Then I experienced something like a vision, something I'd never experienced before. In my mind and in my soul, I felt the *presence* of my Higher Power. He walked over to me as I was casting out the lust, put His arm around my shoulders and said, "Good, that's how you do it. Good for you." This may not seem like much, but I did get to sleep sober that night.

As I see it, God really is doing for me what I can't do for myself. For years, I've been trying desperately to get that exact kind of acknowledgement and encouragement from my father and others. My sexual acting out was just a destructive way to try and fill up this hole. I thank God I don't have to act out



any more. *I just don't have to do that any more.* I have a new beginning, a new way, and a new life. Thanks in large part to all of you. **C.B.**

### **We care about each other . . .**

I would like to share a story with the members of this program—some I know, some I will meet and some I may never meet, but I share a common bond with each one of you. We are sexaholics and we care about each other's sobriety.

My sexual addiction started with an incestuous relationship with my mother around the age of six. I became addicted to compulsive masturbation, pornography, voyeurism, fantasy sex and adul-

**. . . when I had to confront people from my past, I faced them as an adult, not as the child I would have been without SA recovery.**

tery, all fueled by lust, alcohol, drugs and anger. I came to this program about to lose everything—my wife, children, home, and I even thought about ending this pain and shame and ending my life. I hadn't realized that this addiction had been killing me for years, only slowly. It killed my ability to be a husband and father or even a friend. I could not continue like that. I started to come to meetings, thanks to a member who 12th-Stepped me, and for this I will never be sufficiently grateful.

I accepted the sobriety definition in SA and withdrew from my addiction. I found a relationship with God I never thought possible and with the help of God as my Higher Power and the program and fellowship of SA, I have been sober for two years and seven months. I even tried to start a meeting in my area. After 38 years of living with the lust addiction and finally finding a way out of the black pit my lust kept trying to drown me in, anyone would think this would be enough to keep me moving in the right direction, but we addicts know "enough is never enough."

I started trying to test the presence of my Higher Power. I wanted a sign or I couldn't or wouldn't believe God was guiding my life. I lost track of the life I now have. A life where I haven't acted out in 31 months, a life where my wife loves me and supports my recovery, my children still love me, and I have friends in SA that care about me and accept me as I am today.

Well, I went to meetings and whined about my Higher Power misconnection for weeks, and then my mother died. I was filled with emotions that were hurting my heart. Sorrow, shame, guilt and even anger at myself for not having been a better son. I felt a hole open inside me that was screaming to be filled. I have felt this before and I have used sex, drugs, alcohol, food or some other medication I thought would fix it, but they didn't. I think this was when I got scared and my powerlessness was obvious to me. I hit my knees and asked God to forgive my mother, as I have, and for forgiveness when I doubted His presence. Through my tears I suddenly felt I had a direct line to my Higher Power and my prayers were more like a conversation. Maybe this was the first time I really prayed with my mind and my heart.

Then the most incredible things began to happen. I went to my home group meeting and some of my SA friends expressed sorrow for my loss and I told them about my concerns about going to the funeral home. One of the members at this meeting was a close friend who I have shared my fears and anger about my mother with for some time. I hadn't talked to him but he had heard my mother died and decided to drive two hours to this meeting. I knew he had come because he knew I needed him. I didn't tell him I needed him there, but I know God told him. Another member asked me where the viewing would be. He said he might be there. On the drive to the funeral home the next night I talked with my wife about the fears I was experiencing, a conversation I could not have had before coming to SA. I would have stuffed these feelings in the

past. I hadn't thought about the member of SA who asked where the viewing would be until I turned in the parking lot and there he was waiting for me. I didn't tell him I needed him there but I know God told him.

I realized that part of my recovery was based on avoiding people, places and things that might jeopardize my sobriety, and my fear was having to face a situation I couldn't turn and run from. I hadn't turned this fear over to my Higher Power until that night. When I did, God sent this SA member to help me. He stood by me and when I had to confront people from my past, I faced them as an adult, not as the child I would have been without SA recovery. My friend suggested we go outside and talk. We talked about what I was feeling and about gratitude. Then we prayed together. This weight was lifted from my heart and I thanked God that night for one more day of sobriety, for my wife

standing by me, for this way of life we call the program of Sexaholics Anonymous and the members in the program who don't just talk the talk, but also walk the walk.

The next day was the funeral. I received a call that morning from a good friend in SA who had been out of town and wanted to see how I was doing before I went to the funeral. All this love from people who want nothing in return but to remind me we share a responsibility in helping each other stay sober. It has made me more humble, more grateful and much more prepared to hear God when an SA is in need. **B.J.**

### **When the student is ready . . .**

My name is Mike B. and I'm a sexaholic. I'm writing to share my joy and gratitude for what the fellowship of SA has done and is doing for me. Why am I joyful? I have a reprieve, one day at a time, from my obsession with lust. Also, I'm grateful for the open forum provided in our *Essay*—much like the A.A. *Grapevine*. I've learned that my way to life, sobriety and recovery is not the



only way. I am learning tolerance. My arrogance, control, ego and fear take over when I hear differing opinions, or when someone can't stay sober, or when someone is not doing it the way I think they should. Fortunately, I'm accepting this part of myself today and following the suggestions of my sponsor to be the kind of person I aspire to be.

I hate being critical and judgmental. It brings me such pain—much like the pain and remorse of my sexual acting out and lust. But with over five years of sobriety in SA it's time to look at some other defects. I'm grateful for the willingness. I used to take it for granted until my sponsor told me it was a gift from God. Before, in sobriety, I would shame people who didn't have it, self-righteously believing that I'd earned my willingness through all the hoops I jump through to stay sober. Then I could never understand why I was so offensive to people. I assumed they wanted to hear and do all I did in my program. Of course, I'd offer my vast wisdom unsolicited! After one of my "I'll fix you" bouts, I'd feel confused, rejected, and guilty, yet strangely responsible for their sobriety and recovery. "If only I say the right thing, they'll get sober," I thought. I went to S-Anon for several years, read

Al-Anon literature, shared as honestly as I could, but continued to use my "wisdom" regarding recovery as a bat to beat people with. It took a few incidents where people said, "Mind your own business!" which helped wake me up. Fortunately, God is teaching me so much through others who have been down the same path. That's the beauty of this program for me. I'm not so unique, and when I reach out with any concern in my life, I'll find good orderly direction. It proves again, when the student is ready, the teacher appears. See you at a meeting.

### Turning it over

I became willing to turn my life over to the care of God. My first time was when I first entered the program. Then I finally admitted that it was not up to me to define the bottom line. To really turn over to my sponsor—regular contact, honest sharing of my lust and resentment and regular work on the Steps is my next step.

"Knowledge is Power" was always my motto. It kept me alive surrounded by others who were stronger or cooler than me. I always believed that my brains gave me power over the rest of the

world, and always felt superior to every one else because I was smart. When I went to college I had to deal with some people who really were smarter, but not many, and they were really geeks. So I was still superior to them, too! When that didn't work there was always sex, drugs, and rock and roll.

I've learned that my way to life, sobriety and recovery is not the only way. I'm learning tolerance.

I never had a problem thinking that this put me nearer to God. If God was something you felt, I guess that I never knew God. I never really believed that God ever did anything for me but make me smarter than everyone else.

When I started working the Third Step, I thought I had to **know** how to do it—how to ask God. How to give it up. Like there was a right way. If you did it right, it worked. If you didn't, it didn't work. What an excuse. I didn't know the right words, so I couldn't do it. Knowledge is Power—what nonsense. Just do it. Just give it up. If you just give it to Him, He'll take it. **D.F.**

## Feedback Corner

### On Sponsorship

I heartily support your line "... the fact remains that we could make a significant spiritual breakthrough were we to submit to the direction [of a sponsor] and carry it out without questioning." That's the key. Until I started doing that (and I only did *that* because I was desperate, and had begun to see the point) my self-will had me still in its grip. And it's my self-will that leads me inevitably back to acting out, in some new guise or other. I have learned that my *perceptions* of my sponsor turn out to be *exactly* the issues I need to be inventorying in myself. He, more than anyone else in this wonderful fellowship, has the power to be a mirror to me of my

own defects, *because* I chose him! When I find myself beginning to take *his* inventory instead of my own is when I know I have reached a new threshold on this road of progressive victory over lust. I can submit and break through that threshold, or retreat and wait until the pain gets even worse. The paradox has been that in submitting to direction in the area of lust, I get to enjoy new freedom, in seems, in countless other areas, and life becomes a celebration. **I.R.**

[The *Essay* subscription order form now includes a section where members can comment on the *Essay*. The following are representative of the comments received to date. Ed.]

**New York:** Reading the *Essay* has helped me to understand the fundamentals of the program . . .

**Germany:** Very helpful, keeps me on track and informed with new developments and ideas.

**California:** It's good—keep it close to God and the Steps and it'll stay that way.

**Wisconsin:** I can't say enough about how helpful the *Essay* has been in my recovery. I have hopes it might become bimonthly instead of quarterly.



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## The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted 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 persons 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.

## 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 spiritual 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, TV and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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**THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—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 persons 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 alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA 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 AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual purpose. 7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers. 9. AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA 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, TV and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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(The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AA has approved the contents of this work, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with programs which are patterned after AA but which address other problems does not imply otherwise.)



# Box 300

P.O. Box 300  
Simi Valley, California 93062

June 1994

## Notes From Central Office

Any **loners** who wish to correspond with other loners can write to the Central Office and we will arrange to give your address to other willing members, **and**, we still need **contact people** (name and phone number) for new

inquirers to call. The listing on page 11 is printed so that all readers can see the locations in which contact people are needed. The table shows, by state, the *first three* numbers of the postal Zip Code areas in which we have no contact

person. If you live in one of the Zip Code areas that are not represented on the list, please consider becoming a contact person. Be assured that only first names and telephone numbers will be given out. **Pat, Central Office**

## SA Fellowship Service Structure Adopted

In order to be more effective in the task of the Twelfth Step and First Tradition of carrying the message to the suffering sexaholic, the fellowship appointed a committee to recommend a service structure appropriate for Sexaholics Anonymous. The resulting recommendation was adopted at the business meeting held at the international conference of Sexaholics Anonymous in Rochester, NY on January 15, 1994 and is here presented for the information of the whole fellowship. [See Flow Chart on page 10.]

This service structure has evolved over the past two and one half years with the prayerful consultation of members of SA and with the contributions from several other 12-Step fellowships. This structure has been designed with SA's unique purpose and requirements and is reflective of SA's current development. We recognize that as the SA Fellowship grows we hope that the service structure will be flexible and yield to further growth and the changes it will bring. Toward that end it is the responsibility of the Oversight Committee to oversee and inventory the service structure every five years and recommend changes to the structure.

The individual SA Group is the basic unit of the Service Structure. Each SA Group sends an Intergroup Representative (IGR) to the local Intergroup meeting, which meets regularly (perhaps monthly).

An Intergroup is formed when there are several SA groups in a geographic area. This Intergroup helps with the service work, i.e., establishes phone lines with answering service, develops 12-Step procedures, tabulates local meeting lists, provides communication and information on a local level, etc. Each Intergroup would select, among its trusted servants, one Regional Delegate (RD) to attend an Annual Regional Assembly.

Regions are established as follows (schedule currently in use by this Study Committee and the Central Office Oversight Committee):

**NorthWest:** AK, Yukon, NT, BC, ALTA, WA, MT, OR, ID

**Southwest:** CA, HI, NV, UT, AZ

**North-Midwest:** SASK, MAN, ND, SD, MN, WY, NE, IA, WI, MI, IL

**South-Midwest:** CO, KS, MO, NM, OK, AR, TX, LA

**Northeast:** QUE, ONT, NB, ME, VT, NH, NY, CT, RI, MA

**Mid-Atlantic:** PA, DC, MD, NJ, OH, VA, WV, DE

**Southeast:** IN, KY, TN, NC, SC, MS, AL, FL, PR

**International**

The Regional Delegate's term of service would be established by the individual Intergroup, with a recommended term of two years minimum. The sobriety recommendation for a Regional Delegate is established at a minimum of two years SA sobriety. It is recommended that the Regional Delegate be elected by January 1995 and that an annual Regional Assembly meet at some time in 1995.

The Regional Delegates meet annually in their regions to discuss and deal with matters affecting the SA Groups and SA Fellowship in their regions. They select one of their number as the Oversight Representative (OR) to the Annual Oversight Assembly.

### COOC Announcements

- The COOC has voted unanimously in favor of moving the Central Office from Simi Valley. See *Essay*, page 3 for further details.
- The Mid-Atlantic Region (PA, DC, MD, NJ, OH, VA, WV and DE) is in need of a COOC representative. The COOC replacement policy is reprinted on page 11.



## Service Structure Flow Chart For SA Fellowship

The Annual Oversight Assembly would consist, therefore, of the Regional Delegates from each of the Regions above. The International SA Fellowship could also send a Representative, selected through a process to be self-determined, to the Annual Oversight Assembly. The Assembly would concentrate on matters affecting the growth and functioning of the SA Fellowship as a whole. The first Assembly would also nominate and elect the first Oversight Committee (OC), consisting of nine "Overseers": five sexaholics and four non-sexaholics. One of the SA Overseers must be elected from the greater Los Angeles area because of proximity to the Central Office.

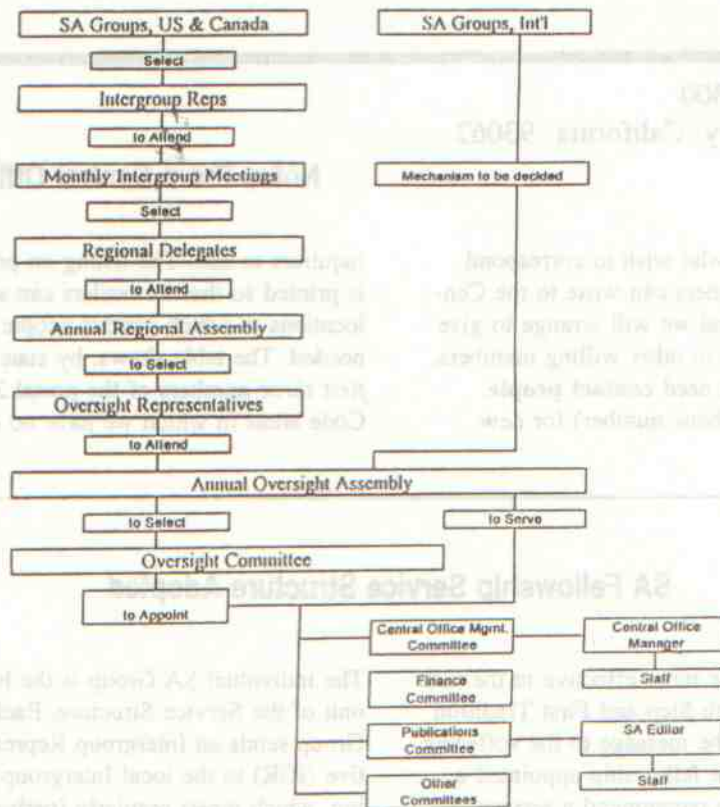
**Note:** AA experience has shown the desirability of non-sexaholic representation. This lends a broader perspective to the workings of the Oversight Committee and also allows representation of SA to the media without anonymity problems.

The sobriety requirement for sexaholic members of the Oversight Committee is five years of SA sobriety.

The first group of Overseers would serve staggered terms of two to five years. Future Annual Oversight Assemblies would select replacements for the original group as their terms expire. Replacements would serve for five years.

The Overseers would meet as a group three times each year. One meeting would be at each of the semi-annual International Conferences and another five or six day meeting at Simi Valley in conjunction with the Annual Oversight Assembly to be held in the spring or fall each year. We recommend that the first Annual Oversight Assembly be held in 1996.

The Oversight Committee will be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the SA Central Office through the local OC member. The Oversight Committee will be charged with carrying out the agenda of the Annual Oversight Assembly.



The Overseers will elect their own officers, including a Chair, a Vice-Chair, Secretary(s) and a Treasurer. They will accomplish their work through a committee structure. Some of their committees might be the Central Office Management Committee, the Translations Committee, the Finance Committee, the Publications Committee, the Prisons Committee, and the Tapes Committee, etc.

Each Oversight Committee will consist of two Overseers, two Oversight Representatives and one local Simi Valley/Los Angeles area SA member.

As the SA Fellowship grows and expands, additional Oversight Representatives might be added to the Annual Oversight Assembly and the Oversight Committee might be increased.

As noted in the text of the SA Service Structure, there are specific time frames for development of the elements of the

Service Structure. The first time reference in the text is January 1995, one year from now, when a Regional Delegate needs to be chosen by the local intergroup to attend the Annual Regional Assembly in 1995. Therefore, the first task is to form local intergroups if not already formed. Each SA group and/or individual member (loner) should contact other SA groups in their area to arrange the formation of an intergroup. For guidelines on forming intergroups please contact Bill T. via the Central Office, P.O. Box 300, Simi Valley, CA 93062. Then it will be the task of each intergroup to contact the other intergroups within their region to plan the Annual Regional Assembly in 1995. For further information on existing intergroups in your region contact Pat at Central Office in Simi Valley, CA.

With your involvement in forming this basic service structure, Sexaholics Anonymous can unify to carry the message to the still-suffering sexaholic. ■



Alabama	350, 352, 354, 355, 356, 359, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 363	N. Carolina	All of state except Asheville and Burnsville
Arizona	855, 859, 860, 863, 864, 860	N. Dakota	All of state
Arkansas	All of state	Nebraska	All of state
Colorado	800, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 811, 812, 813, 814, 816	Nevada	All of state
Florida	324, 323, 327, 328, 329, 338	New Mexico	All of state except Albuquerque.
Georgia	304, 305, 306, 307, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319	New Hampshire	All of state
Idaho	832, 835, 838	New York	120, 123, 128, 129, 133, 134, 135, 136
Indiana	467, 468, 476, 477	Oklahoma	734, 737, 743, 745, 746, 756, 757
Iowa	All of state except Iowa City, Dubuque and Davenport	Oregon	976, 978, 979
Kansas	660, 662, 664, 666, 676, 677, 669, 678	S. Carolina	All of state
Kentucky	400, 402, 407, 408, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 420, 423, 424	S. Dakota	All of state
Louisiana	703, 704, 712, 713, 714	Tennessee	373, 374, 377, 379, 380, 381, 383, 385
Michigan	All of state	Texas	783, 785, 788, 798, 799, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796
Minnesota	553, 554, 556, 558, 560, 561, 562, 564, 565, 567	Utah	845, 846, 847
Mississippi	All of state	Vermont	All of state
Missouri	633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 647, 648, 652, 654, 655, 656, 658	Virginia	238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245
Montana	592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598	Wyoming	All of state except Casper

### Intergroup Committee Seeking Information

The intergroup is a key element of the new service structure for SA. The Intergroup Formation Committee is attempting to obtain basic information from existing intergroups in order to establish a central listing of the intergroups, to provide a network among intergroups, and to gather useful information for areas attempting to form an intergroup. As of June 1, we have received either information or requests for information from the following areas: **Northwest Region:** Portland, OR; Seattle, WA, Vancouver, BC. **Southwest Region:** San Francisco Bay Area; Southern California

(LA). **North Midwest Region:** Chicago, IL. **South Midwest Region:** Houston, TX; Oklahoma State; Wichita, KS. **Northeast Region:** Binghamton, NY; Geneva, NY; New York Metro (includes Connecticut); Rochester, NY; Tri-State (New York City). **Mid-Atlantic Region:** Baltimore/Washington, DC; Cleveland/Akron, OH; New Jersey/Delaware Valley. **Southeast Region:** Daytona Beach, FL; Nashville, TN.

We are asking each intergroup not listed above to call or write the SA Central Office in Simi Valley as soon as possible with the following information:

Intergroup Name/Area Covered; Intergroup Address; Intergroup Phone Number; Name of Current Contact; Contact Address and Phone Number (if intergroup address/phone number do not exist). The Intergroup Formation Committee will send your group a form asking for more detailed information.

If your group would like more information about forming an intergroup in your area, contact the committee via the SA Central Office, or through Bill T. of the Chicago Area Intergroup, P.O. Box 258, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137, telephone (708) 790-6269.



## COOC Replacement Policy, Adopted by the COOC on April 5, 1992

### Qualifications for COOC Membership:

1. A minimum of two years sexual sobriety as SA understands sobriety be required to become a member of COOC and to continue as a member of COOC.
2. Members shall have a proven record of active group participation and service experience at national, conference, intergroup or group level associated with willingness to serve on COOC.

### COOC Vacancy Occurs:

1. When a member of COOC resigns in writing and COOC accepts the resignation.
2. When a COOC member relapses or redefines his/her sexual sobriety in such

a way that the SA sobriety qualification is no longer fulfilled, that person is no longer a member of COOC and the position becomes vacant.

3. COOC may declare a COOC position vacant if the member is inactive for three months and is not present on two consecutive meetings (conference calls) without reason.

### Selection/Replacement Procedure:

1. COOC formally declares the position vacant and the Chairperson/Secretary notifies all registered groups and contact persons in the Region of the vacancy and invites the Region to proceed to fill the vacancy. The requirement of two years sexual sobriety as SA understands

it is to be explicit in this notification.

2. The Region, following group conscience, selects the COOC replacement. Steps may include: preparation and circulation of a list of qualified volunteers /nominees from the region who are willing to serve; actual selection by vote of groups, intergroup or more comprehensive regional structure.

If the Region notified fails to select a qualified candidate within six months of the notification of vacancy and COOC decides further delay would harm the fellowship, COOC may proceed to name a qualified candidate from the region to fill the vacancy on an interim or temporary basis.

### Statement of Income & Expenses First Quarter 1994

Income	<u>\$27,764.49</u>
Expenses:	
Miscellaneous	244.96
Miscellaneous - Sales	4.69
Salaries and Wages	300.00
Auto	18.00
Bank service charges	9.00
Education and seminars	208.00
Legal and accounting	590.38
Miscellaneous - other	113.17
Office expense	372.14
Outside services	9,332.57
Postage	2,605.33
Printing/tape duplication	3,701.26
Refunds	67.05
Rent	2,550.00
Repairs and maintenance	370.24
Supplies	299.46
Taxes	334.85
Telephone	1,891.33
Bad debts	<u>40.46</u>
Expenses	<u>\$23,052.89</u>
Net Income	<u>\$4,711.60</u>



## DONATIONS FOR THE FIRST QUARTER — 1994

Akron, OH	\$	35.00		Oakland, CA	50.00
Alhambra, CA		141.26		Olympia, WA	32.00
Anaheim, CA		66.00		Orange, CA	50.00
Ardsley, NY		14.00		Painesville, OH	50.00
Baltimore, MD		115.00		Palatine, IL	25.00
Barrington, IL		100.00		Palm Desert, CA	52.10
Bend, OR		25.00		Paramount, CA	10.00
Chicago, IL		100.00		Pasadena, CA	117.00
Chino, CA		20.00		Philadelphia, PA	15.00
Cleveland, OH		250.00		Portland, OR	218.49
Crystal Lake, MI		50.00		Redlands, CA	53.46
Dallas, TX		40.00		Riverside, CA	17.62
Deerfield, IL		41.50		Rochester NY conference	2,300.00
Denver, CO		50.34		Rochester, NY	2,084.95
Downers Grove, IL		211.75		Roseburg, OR	11.25
El Cajon, CA		107.21		San Diego, CA	103.75
El Paso, TX		6.25		Saudi Arabia	100.00
Elmhurst, IL		19.00		Seal Beach, CA	15.00
Elmsford, NY		18.00		Seattle, WA	175.00
Encinitas, CA		10.00		Silver Spring, MD	25.00
Escondido, CA		70.00		Simi Valley, CA	60.00
Florence, AL		50.00		Smyrna, TN	8.36
Ft. Collins, CO		30.00		St. Louis, MO	50.00
Galveston, TX		20.00		Suitland, MD	125.00
Gooding/Twin Falls, ID		150.00		Sunnyvale, CA	65.00
Hacienda Hts, CA		65.25		Thousand Oaks, CA	20.00
Idaho Falls, ID		50.00		Timonium, MD	53.00
Irvine, CA		45.00		Torrance, CA	10.00
Laurel, MD		30.00		Tucson, AZ	90.00
Lincroft, NJ		.00		W. Los Angeles, CA	100.00
Long Beach, CA		42.00		Warner Robins, GA	80.00
Los Angeles, CA		5.75		Washington, DC	230.00
Menlo Park, CA		35.00		Westfield, NJ	30.00
Midlothian, IL		12.75		Willow Creek, IL	<u>178.00</u>
Milwaukee, WI		147.00			
Nashville, TN		245.82		Total Group	\$10,202.86
New York City, NY		50.00		Total Individual	<u>1,788.75</u>
Newberg, OR		64.00			
N. Hollywood, CA		500.00		Grand Total - First Quarter	<u>\$11,991.26</u>
NY Tri-State Intgp		500.00			



# SA LITERATURE ORDER FORM

ORDERED BY:  
(Please print or type)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

SA  
 P.O. Box 300  
 Simi Valley, CA 93062  
 ☎ (805) 581-3343  
 FAX (805) 581-4057  
 Payments must be made  
 in U.S. funds only.

- First Order     
  Repeat Order     
  Money Order Enclosed     
  Check Enclosed

Quantity	Cost	Title	Description
_____	\$10.00	<i>Sexaholics Anonymous</i>	With title or plain white cover
_____	\$ .20	<i>SA Brochure</i> English _____ Spanish _____	Problem, solution and 20 questions
_____	\$ 4.00	<i>SA Meeting Guide</i>	Suggested formats and experience in starting a new group
_____	\$ 8.00	<i>Recovery Continues</i>	Articles that discuss various aspects of recovery
_____	\$ 6.00	<i>Member Stories - 1989</i>	Twenty-one recovery stories
_____	\$ 2.00	<i>Discovering the Principles</i>	SA's growing experience with the Traditions
_____	\$ 7.00	One year subscription to the <i>Essay</i> newsletter	NOTE: \$7.00 per year (4 issues). \$5.00/year per subscription for an order of 10 copies or more.

\_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost of Merchandise

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Deduct 20% (for orders over \$200)		
CA Residents add sales tax = .0725		\$0 - \$9.99      \$1.75
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		\$20.00 - \$29.99      3.40
		\$30.00 - \$49.99      4.25
Shipping/Handling (See Chart)		\$50.00 - \$99.99      5.00
		Over \$100.00      6.50

\_\_\_\_\_ ORDER TOTAL (U.S. Funds Only)

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