

Essay®

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Spring 1999

The Luster's Fear of Dying

For the typical lust addict, our whole system screams out that we're going to die if we don't take that "drink." It's too fearful *not* to drink. Lust is our spiritual life-support system. Yes, the fear is that real. So, we wind up drinking. We're hooked on it and remain a slave. It's the fear of this kind of death that keeps us in bondage and forces us to keep slipping with lust.

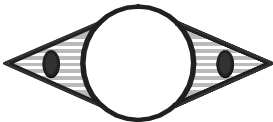
The sad fact today is that so many of us remain in bondage to lust because of this very threat of death. We are unable or unwilling to connect with the Life-giver instead. We can't break through this death-barrier; we shrink back at the death-threat of not drinking. It's so unnatural for us *not* to lust or misconnect. Ours is the compulsion of the look, the fantasy, or the misconnection, which when denied, is the very threat of death. But eventually we learn the hard way that for us to *drink* is to die. So recovery is learning to act against the fear—to lean into the fear—and go ahead and die. So we can live. The amazing paradox of our program.

This is why the decisive action-point of

our malady is the instant of temptation, typically in the look, the memory, or the fantasy. That's where we face the feeling of death each time. And that fear drives us to resort to that drug again and again and again. So we won't die! We've used and heard all kinds of formulas on how to deal with it. Some are foolish or frantic, such as the three-second rule: "If you look for over three seconds, you're lusting." Variations on such formulas are ingenious. (What's yours?) As though lust had anything to do with duration. Lust has nothing to do with duration and everything to do with *intent*. If the intent is to snatch a quick drink, does it really matter how long it is, or even what we see? No, the intent is what we *are*. We need salvation from the intent, from the disposition of our heart.

Most of us initially feel it's something we must do to get out of it. "I shouldn't be doing this!" we say to ourselves, as we go ahead and take the drink. This tells me that we don't fully understand the nature of what we're dealing with and that we underestimate

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Calendar of Events

*[Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers,
not as an endorsement by Essay or SAICO]*

March 7, 1999 SA/ S-Anon Spring Conference, Manhattan, NY, sponsored by SA NYC Intergroup.
Theme: Sobriety First. Contact SA NYC Helpline at 212/459-4044.

March 12 – 14, 1999, SA Regional Women's Conference, Sewanee, TN, sponsored by SA Nashville.
Theme: Working the Steps. Contact Barbara W. at 615/383-0652.

March 20, 1999, Chicagoland SA / S-Anon Spring Marathon, Glen Ellyn, IL, sponsored by Chicagoland IG. Theme: Practicing These Principles. Contact Intergroup at 630/415-0341.

March 27, 1999, SA Workshop, Eureka, MO, sponsored by St Louis.
Theme: Working the Steps. Contact Steve A. at 314/832-4145.

April 9 – 11, 1999, SA / S-Anon Convention, London, England, sponsored by SA UK.
Theme: A Time for Healing. Contact Joseph at 44 410 819 078.

April 9 – 11, 1999 SA Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS, Contact Wichita at 316/266-8125.

April 16 – 18, 1999, AS German speaking, Worms, sponsored by Frankfurt and Mainz groups.
Contacts: Doris, 49 6132-59976; Reinhold, 49 6151-52838; Yuval, 49 69-4980461.

April 23 – 25, 1999, Fifth Annual Australian SA Conference, Sydney.
Theme: Recovery, Unity, Service. Contact SA Australia at 3 9506 6719

April 30 – May 2, 1999, SA / S-Anon European Convention, Waterford, Ireland, sponsored by SA Eire. Theme: Surrender and Gratitude. Contact Dara M. at 353 42 67958, or Tom C. at 353 51 371053.

May 8, 1999, SA / S-Anon Marathon, Richmond, VA, sponsored by Central Virginia Intergroup.
Contact Central Virginia Intergroup at 804/254-9939.

May 21 – 23, 1999, SA Spirituality Retreat, Alexandria, VA. A weekend of spirituality and prayer.
Contact Howard S. at 202/529-4800, ext. 113 or John D. at 703/845-3632.

May 21 – 22, 1999, Sixth Annual Sharing of the Fellowship Retreat, Wheeling, WV, sponsored by Wheeling / Steubenville. Contact Shawn S. at 740/283-9561; S-Anon, Shelly R. at 304/277-4320.

Calendar of Events

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June 11-13, 1999, SA/S-Anon "Summer Retreat", Latendales, (English Lake District)
sponsored by SA UK. Contact Nicholas 44 1768 863 379

July 9 – 11, 1999, SA/S-Anon International Conference, Cleveland, OH,
Theme: How It Works. Contact Ed N. at 216/371-2206 or Peg V. at 216/731-4030.
Special Note: How it all began. Akron, OH, the home of Dr. Bob is only 25 miles away.
Dr. Bob's home is a museum open daily for tours with no admission charge. This home
and other sites in Akron where AA (and all Twelve Step programs) began can be toured.

August 20-22nd, 1999, SA/S-Anon Conference, Ammerdown, sponsored by SA UK.
Theme: A Programme for Living. Contact Bill F. at 44 1985 847 746, or
Brent at 44 1373 466 555

September 17 – 19, 1999, SA Pacific Northwest Retreat, Camp Don Bosco, Carnation, WA,
sponsored by Puget Sound IG. Contact Don L. at 360/371-2276.

October 22 – 24, 1999, SA Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS. Contact Wichita at 316/266-8125.

January 7 – 9, 2000, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Nashville, TN, sponsored by
Nashville Intergroup. Theme: Together 2000. Contact SA Nashville at 615/251-7516.

July 7 – 9, 2000, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Detroit, MI, sponsored by Detroit area
SA / S-Anon groups. Theme: Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs. Contact for
SA, Gary at 810/756-4793 or SA Detroit at 810/997-7518.

January 12 – 14, 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Los Angeles, CA, sponsored by SCAI.
Contact Southern California Area Intergroup at 213/480-1096.

*[Please note: Since international calling codes differ from country to country, we
include only the country codes, area code, and local number for all contacts. Please
call your local operator for guidance on making international calls.]*

The Luster's Fear (*Continued from page 1*)
the strategies of spiritual blindness and denial. We don't comprehend that lust is a disposition of the heart, an *attitude*. We rely on our own efforts—even our prayerful efforts—to save us. (Who says religious exercises can't support the illness?) This is why so many of us—sober from “acting out”—do not recover from acting *in*. Mere sexual sobriety just deals with externals. Sober is not well. The tragedy in such lust-avoidance or lust-distraction techniques is that we can still “feel better about ourselves” and support the illness.

Is Victory Over Lust Progressive?

Our program affirms that “true sobriety includes progressive victory over lust.” How can there be any argument with that? We know of no instant cures from lust yet though we keep an open, if skeptical, mind. But our relation to this sobriety definition may be too shallow. We can abuse it. We can hide in it. So let's examine the question: *Is there such a thing as progressive victory over lust?* There are two ways of looking at it.

On the one hand, I came slowly to see in my own progressive recovery what lust is and the many ways I denied and blinded myself to what was really going on. Apparently it takes a certain amount of recovery to begin to see lust for what it is. I didn't discover lust as the underlying pathology until I stayed sexually sober. The overt “drool” is merely one of the more obvious forms. What about addiction to Woman or Man—“Connect with me and make me whole!”? What about the “wandering heart”? Ours is preeminently the malady of the *misconnection*. What about lust in the marriage? Lust is cunning, baffling, and powerful, and more gets revealed. In this sense, victory over lust is progressive.

On the other hand, *in the instant of temptation*, there is absolutely no such thing as progressive victory over lust. Any rationalizations we have notwithstanding, whenever that image, that fantasy, or that memory hits, we either lust or we don't. We either drink or we don't. There's nothing progressive about it. There's no in-between. Suppressing it through will power might be considered kind of an in-between, but not really. Suppression or repression—will-powering it—is just another avoidance technique which may be worse than consciously going ahead and lusting. Worse because in that forced ascetic denial, we think we're making it. But the lust is still there inside, building up steam. It's like saying I really want to lust, but for whatever reason, *I will put it away*. That's really not surrendering it to God. It's locking it in a cage deep within. That's not *victory* over lust; it's merely trying to put a bridle on it, putting lust on hold. There's no freedom in suppression, only more fear. And it all lodges in the subconscious, storing up energy, only to bust out later in dreams or get expressed in other forms, such as resentment or even self-loathing, or cross over into other addictions, such as food or TV. For the lustaholic, there's no way out of our awesome dilemma. Except the Program way of surrender to God, dying to it, and being released from it in that moment of temptation.

In AA we hear the expression, “Resentment is the number-one killer of alcoholics.” With us, the killer is lust. “*Lust kills the spirit . . . Lust kills me.*” (White Book, p. 44).

Too often this idea that victory over lust is progressive becomes the excuse for aborting true recovery. “I'm sober so many years” equates to “I'm okay now.” As if calendar sexual sobriety is the “real” sobriety. Or, as we hear so often, “I'm dealing with lust the best I can; it's a goal to aim toward.” More often, we hear nothing at all about member

lust temptations. The person who calls himself technically sober is still drinking. Missing out on true recovery. This is tragic and damages group and Fellowship unity. Continuing sexual sobriety is only the prerequisite for recovery. The recovery which our program promises is being saved *in* that next temptation, being released from its power. Instead of being self-driven or fear-driven, recovery is the victory of impossible joy.

Therefore, the first and only line of defense in a lust temptation must be a changed attitude of the mind and heart. If that attitude is a decision to give up lusting in surrender and reliance on God, that attitude will be in place before we're even tempted. Then, when hit with the image, in that first blink of an eyelash, the Shield of his presence is already in place, and you don't have to *do* anything. Victory over lust is where you *are* in your attitude with your Lust-bearer, not what you *do*. The Shield is already in place, and you don't have to do anything. That's where we are either saved from it or not. Victory over lust begins with the daily decision to give up lust to God. Deliverance in the moment of temptation follows as a consequence. Morning and evening, I ask him to keep me sober from every lust.

Real Recovery

We may have this whole idea of sex addiction sobriety backwards. We need to consider and talk about this very seriously. Victory over lust is the real recovery, and continued recovery from acting out sexually flows from that. There is no true recovery if all we're doing is not acting out. Merely not acting out only minimizes the real problem, which is *acting in*. Question: Should the persistent practice of acting in be considered sober? More and more people are saying No.

On coming into the program, most of us are mainly concerned with stopping the act-

ing out. That's what we thought was killing us. But once sober, we begin to see the real problem. Remember that our program is aligned with the AA model of not drinking. But ours is an *internal* drug, the alcohol of the spirit. How does SA's Third Tradition read?—"The only requirement for membership is a desire to become sexually sober?" No. It reads, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to *stop lusting*," then adding, "and *become* sexually sober." Think about it. We need to get down to the nitty-gritty basics. The Calendar Sobriety Syndrome is killing us! I laud those who are beginning to set their dates back with a decision to stop acting in. Let's encourage and support one another in breaking through the Lust Barrier. Maybe that's the SA equivalent of AA's statement of "separating the men from the boys."

It's Impossible

This is where we'll discover that true sobriety from lust by our own doing is impossible. This is where we're up against our real powerlessness and have no recourse but to the One who can restore us to sanity in the very temptation. I wonder if it would not be better to challenge people right up front with the fact that *recovery* is impossible without victory over lust. Once we discover we're powerless over lust, let's challenge each other so we don't hide it. Let's keep bringing it into the light.

For myself today, I am absolutely powerless over lust in some form or other. But there is One, who himself is my victory over it, whenever I go through that fear of death, die to the temptation, upward to him, and bring him in, personally, savingly. It works. *He* works!

We should honestly face this impossibility of

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The Luster's Fear (*Continued from page 5*)
a “lust cure” so people will be forced to find their saving connection with God before settling into either the Slipper Syndrome or the Calendar Sobriety Syndrome or shifting from acting out to acting in. Why not state the nature of this problem as it really is, right up front: True recovery—joyous victory *over* lust—is utterly impossible without finding God, cleaning house, and working with others. That is the distilled essence of the original Twelve Step program. Have you found God in your lust? Fear of dying to lust holds us in bondage to the slavery of impossible addiction. And the longer we're in the Fellowship of recovery, the clearer we see the true spiritual nature of our addiction and our utter dependence on a Power greater than ourselves, greater than our lust. But in each temptation—over and over again—we, you and I, must be willing to go through the threat of death to discover that there really is *life after lust*.

The whole point here is that *we don't have to lust at all*. We can and will be tempted—by triggers, memories, and fantasies—but we don't have to drink at all. We can have total victory over lust in that next temptation, which is all we ever need. *There is no victory over lust before the fact!* No silver bullet that makes us immune. The victory is in the prior attitude, before we're ever tempted, in the intents and disposition of our heart. We either have it or we don't. And it's our choice, either for the god of Self, the god of Lust, or for the One who is eager and able to save us. The choice is ours. The choice either to give up, to die to self, to die *in* that next temptation, or to drink. Thus, victory over lust, our Great Impossible, becomes The Great Possible! We *can* discover and experience the expulsive power of a new affection. This is our calling, our hope, and our great joy in fellowship. **Roy K., Simi**

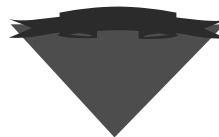
Valley, CA



New Groups

Lemoore, CA
Biloxi, MS
Cincinnati, OH

Additional meeting in
Salt Lake City, UT



Member News

Another Form of Lust

Recently a former sponsee came to me in a personal crisis. He was in a financial jam that I saw was clearly the consequences of his disease. I “let him have it”—for his own good of course, and with the best of intentions.

I pointed out to him he was his own case manager, his own doctor, and his own supervisor. The words felt “right” as they came out, and clever too! This was just the beginning. With the inflation switch on, my ego eagerly embraced the roles of doctor, case manager and sponsor—without the consent of my friend. He finally walked out on me, promising this was the last time he would come to me seeking help.

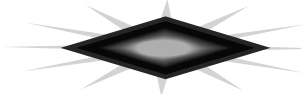
In the middle of this I knew I was out of control, but I was unable to stop my brilliant analysis and invasive advice. I had all the right solutions for the one who came to me in considerable pain and, I judged, in denial.

My self-appointed intervention left me feeling my own anger, humiliation, and shame. After checking in with a program member, I was asked to see that this was a case of long ago “having fallen in love.” I objected. “Well,” my friend said, “how does ‘falling in lust’ fit?” A recognition began to stir in me for which I did not have words. “I don’t see it,” I said.

“Your lust led you to pick this person to help,” my friend said with gentle understanding. “You were going to fix him. You appointed yourself to save him—imagining his gratitude and the indebted relationship you would have with him. He was to be an object for your ego’s gratification. It is not working out that way and you are mad. He is not serving your needs so you blast him.”

Ouch! This I could see, and more. This is my pattern in a number of “helping relationships.” Just because I did not see myself as romantically involved or scheming for sex does not mean I am not “in lust.” Lusting to dominate another, to fix, to save, to play God in their life is basic lust—the real thing.

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Thank God I am no longer alone. Thank God for SA.

Jim E., Omaha, NE

Bringing the Inside Out

What do frogs, Bill and Lois W. and kisses have in common? For me, a sex addict, each can trigger my obsession to act out sexually.

Let me start with frogs. Two years ago, after a year in SA, I saw a TV documentary on frogs living in rain forests. A man’s voice described how these wonderful creatures live and reproduce to provide an ecological balance for the vanishing rain forests, and all I saw on TV were drops of water splashing on leaves and plants.

But within two minutes I was so drunk on lust I had to leave the room. My lust-filled mind heard a voice similar to a voice I had heard in a porno movie. The drops of rain, in my sick perverted mind, were euphoric recalls of sexual actions.

How do Bill and Lois fit into this puzzle? Many months ago, my SA sponsor loaned me a video documentary on the history of Alcoholics Anonymous. In one scene, Bill W. and his wife, Lois, were having an intense argument. Within seconds of listening to their harsh words, I became intoxicated on lust.

I did not hear two people share their experience, strength and hope. My lust-filled mind immediately focused on how to “fix” conflicts: jump into bed and take a big dose of the drug that solves every disagreement and problem. Only recently have I realized that my lust totally distorted sex and that lust

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Member News (Continued from page 7)

killed almost every feeling of love that I have experienced. The intense feelings I experienced during that 15-second scene were so strong I had to turn off the video. But I was far enough into recovery that I realized I have choices about actions I take. Thanks be to God, to whom I surrendered my temptations, I did not lose my sobriety.

The Fellowship of SA has taught me that I have a pharmacy of drugs stashed deep within me and they are dispensed as memories and fantasies. This means I do not have to buy pornography, or have anonymous sex partners, because the intense memories from my past can be triggered in the present by any person, thing, event or experience. When triggered, I reach for one of those lust pills to give me a "fix" of relief and instant gratification. But it never lasts. Enough is never enough. The cycle progressively worsens *unless* I turn to God and the Fellowship. The only thing that works is complete surrender to God, have a desire to stay sober, pray, go to meetings and help other addicts.

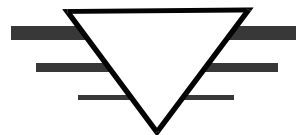
What about the kisses? That may be a trigger for many sex addicts. I kissed someone at a recent SA convention. She was not a sexaholic and I did not have any lust when I kissed her. I was not sexually triggered and I did not have to leave for fear of acting out. Isn't such behavior totally unacceptable for someone like me? I think not. You see, this person was a niece whom I had not seen in many years. Many people may think I am insane to even comment on such a trivial matter. For me, any kind of contact can be a trigger.

It was an incredible gift for me to be able to share my affection with her. It's been nearly three years since I stopped using kissing as the entree for sex. I have hurt so many women who thought my romanticism meant I loved them.

About the conference itself. It is a great experience to share from the depths of our being at conferences those experiences we never share any other place. I am blessed for having that opportunity. Much pain must be shared before healing begins. But I must be rigorously honest. It was easy for me to have euphoric recalls of my experiences by listening to others. I also experienced some fantasies as I listened. Thank God I could surrender those to my Higher Power and to members of the Fellowship. After returning home, I listened to tapes of the speakers. Again I confess I had erotic thoughts I had to turn over.

Today I have choices about how I cope with anything that is erotic for me. I'm just a toddler—recently I celebrated a year of sobriety—or maybe an infant in my progressive victory over lust. But whatever the stage

is, the most important thing is that I am growing in a



healthy way. I may be triggered, but that's OK. All I have to do is make the right choice so God can do for me what I can't do for myself. **Earl H. Gulfport, MS**

A Different Kind of Check Meeting

The high point of the Sacramento conference for me came when my friend "Alex" asked me to attend a check meeting. He was dealing with the difficulty of a separation

from his wife and had sought the counsel of an old-timer who had many years of experience with check meetings. The old-timer offered to lead the meeting and gave Alex the names of some women to ask as well.

A total of seven of us met in the leader's room. He began by asking us what we felt about the conference. Then he opened the meeting in prayer and surrendered his desire to be a father to Alex. Unlike other check meetings I had attended, this one was clearly under the guidance of the leader. He asked each of us to state our length of sexual sobriety and where we were with lust today. Then he asked Alex to state in one sentence why he had called the check meeting. He questioned Alex about the background of the problem. After Alex had finished, the leader said: "I think you are a sexaholic." He empathized with Alex's dilemma and feelings and shared from his own experience.

Then he asked one of the women, "Joan, what do you see here?" The woman shared about her marriage to her non-sexaholic husband and her own personal Third Step surrender: "Every day I surrender my orgasm for the rest of my days to God." Abstinence had been a powerful tool in her marriage and she could now refer to her husband as her "best friend," she said.

The leader seized on the topic of surrender and asked Alex if he had surrendered his wife, his kids and his marriage to God? "Even if they were all gone tomorrow all you would have is God," the leader said.

After asking Alex what he thought his wife might be going through emotionally and the nature of their interactions together, he asked: "Have you ever let your wife in?" This was difficult for me to understand. He continued: "They feel the Velcro of our addiction, the discomfort we have about ourselves because of the split within us. Even if you don't say anything, they are aware of it."

Then the leader asked one of the male

members for input. Joe spoke up: "Alex, where are you in the Steps?" He urged Alex not to make a major decision until first making a Step Nine amends to his wife. He then shared his own experience of getting through the first nine Steps within three months of leaving a treatment center. He offered to help Alex complete a Fourth Step at the conference. I was totally floored! You mean I don't need nine years to get through nine Steps?

The leader cited as an example AA's Dr. Bob, who began making amends to people he had harmed on the very day of his last drink. He had only one drink that day. I also realized that help for any program problem was readily available at the conference.

The leader said the check meeting was the



high point of the conference for him, and added: "This check meeting *is* SA." He said he surrenders SA on a daily basis. We ended the meeting on our knees in free-form prayer for Alex and his wife and children. The entire meeting lasted an hour and 20 minutes.

Brian C., Alexandria, VA

Step Two: Came to Believe that a Power Greater than Ourselves Could Restore us to Sanity

(Taken from the AA Grapevine, February 1999, p. 10)

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Step Two *(Continued from page 9)*

Beyond Sanity

“There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.” That quote from the Big Book describes me. I have a mental disorder—severe clinical and chronic depression—but I am in recovery. The program works.

When I first came into the Fellowship, I was in a depressive state, and a few days later was hospitalized for the fifth time. In the hospital, I learned about the illness of alcoholism: the mental obsession and the physical compulsion. When I was released from the hospital a month later, I began attending AA meetings in earnest.

At first, staying sober was not as difficult as I had envisioned. The physical compulsion had left me while I was in the hospital, and though I was left with an occasional thought or desire for a drink, there was nothing upon which I had to act. Within a short time, I began to notice some benefits of sobriety that were special to me and became self-reinforcing. Without ingesting alcohol, which was a depressant, my depression finally had a chance to improve. It wasn't over yet, but through the grace of God, I could see change. More than that, sobriety seemed to coincide with freedom from the hospital. I had stopped attempting suicide (something I'd only done while drinking). And now, thirty-seven months into sobriety, I haven't been back in the hospital.

Taking the First Step was easy. Hospitalizations and drunk driving citations had clearly made my life unmanageable, and I knew I was powerless: that the first drink would get me drunk.

It was the Second Step that I eyed with intense interest: “Came to believe that a

Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Did that mean that my Higher Power would eradicate my mental illness? That was what I believed and prayed for. If the God of my understanding could offer me recovery from alcoholism, could he not offer me recovery from this other illness as well?

As I continued to attend AA meetings and listen carefully, I heard experiences with the Second Step that didn't quite apply to me. One common definition of insanity was “doing the same thing (i.e., drinking) over and over, expecting different results.” That definition fit me as far as my alcoholism went, but was too narrow to help with my mental illness. I resigned myself to a continuing mental illness.

However, I also continued my journey with the Steps. Doing each to the best of my ability, with painstaking care, I completed all twelve, until in the end I found a new definition of sanity. It was bigger than any definition I had heard concerning Step Two, but it was also bigger and better than my wildest



imaginings. This sanity offered serenity, a feeling of wellness or well-being, possession of a center of balance from which to operate, and a feeling that my place in this world was just right. The sanity I've received through work on the Steps is far more than I could have hoped for.

Now I'm not only a recovering alcoholic but have truly been “restored to sanity,” and am forever grateful.

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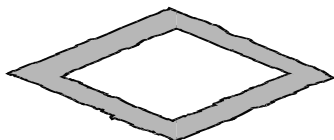
Members Share On the Third Step

Step Three: Made a Decision to Turn Our Will and Our Lives Over to the Care of God as We Understood Him.

The Third Step prayer reads: “God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!” (*Alcoholics Anonymous, P. 63.*)

As in all the Steps, this one works if I work it. I can get so wrapped up in myself sometimes, and this Step is a terrific way to counteract those selfish attitudes. If I can think in terms of what he wants, if I can keep my focus on him, I can keep out of that craziness that's inside my head a lot of the time.

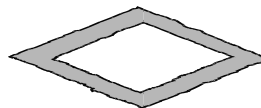
“... to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.” That's such an important senti-



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“How
may I

serve Thee?” “What can I do for you, God?” “I want to do —, but I want to make sure it is ok with you—is it?” When I'm centered on my spiritual life and not practicing lust in any of its forms, these questions arise easily and frequently. It's the best guide for all those thousands of miniature decisions I make throughout my day.

My sponsor reminded me several times of an important quote from our literature: “In fact, the effectiveness of the whole... program will rest upon how well and earnestly we have tried to come to a ‘decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.’” (*Twelve and Twelve, pp. 34-35.*)



Sometimes I say that doing the Third Step just means going on with Steps Four through Twelve. But these days I find that doing the Third Step is just, well, doing the Third Step. Sound complicated? I ask God to let me open my heart to the willingness to do his will, open my heart to his love and his grace, open my heart to the solution. I remind myself in prayer throughout the day that the solution is right under my nose, and I beg God to let me see and accept it. As a rule, my pride stands in the way of these wonderful gifts—grace, love, the solution. So I beg God to let me open my heart despite my pride and my fear. And it works.

The members leading the SA conference at Sacramento made an interesting choice of closing every meeting with the Third Step prayer. It helped me to surrender some things that could have made the conference an unpleasant experience. I was able to let go of the notion that anything I believed, thought or said was going to change anyone's mind about the meaning of our sobriety definition. Subsequently I was able to let go of the fear that only one particular outcome of

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 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 Steps and Traditions are reprinted 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.)

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.

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.



SA Around the Globe



At the SA International Conference in Sacramento in January, the SA General Delegate Assembly reported on the results of a survey of SA groups on the question of whether the SA sobriety definition needed clarification [See "Newark Motions Implemented" in Dec. 1998 *Essay*, p. 12, for background].

Seven of 11 regions around the world used the same ballot in the survey; four used a ballot that was "very similar." Of 11 regions, only four were asked what form clarification should take. Among groups in the U.S., participation ranged between 50 percent and 85 percent. Germany, a region with the largest SA membership outside the U.S., declined to participate. German members interpret the words "marriage" and "spouse" in the traditional way, i.e., a vowed and legal union between a man and a woman, and no poll was required to establish that, the German delegate reported.

The fundamental issue that prompted the survey—the interpretation of the words "marriage" and "spouse"—continues to be a topic of discussion among delegates and groups. Members disagree on the interpretation of the survey results, the Chair of the General Delegate Assembly reported. The Assembly decided to increase its teleconference meetings to every two months to address whether and how unity can be improved in the Fellowship, in addition to other business. "Unity will be a continuing topic of discussion until we have some sort of resolution," the Delegate Chair said.

Delegate Resolution Regarding Mailing and Phone Lists

At the Sacramento conference, the General Delegate Assembly warned members of possible abuses of SA phone and mailing lists, which they said "are for recovery, making contact, and encouragement." The assembly therefore passed the following resolution:

"Be it resolved that the General Delegate Assembly of Sexaholics Anonymous urges members who advocate positions or initiatives in the Fellowship to keep in mind the Twelfth Tradition admonition: principles before personalities.

"Please refrain from using membership address and phone lists to breach others' privacy or to take others' inventories. Rather, we urge members to use the service structure to express their views."

Seventh Tradition

Donations for Fourth Quarter

Akron, OH	160.00	Little Falls, NJ	100.00	San Diego, CA	489.00
Anaheim, CA	30.00	Livingston, MT	2.00	Seaford, NY	5.00
Ann Arbor, MI	40.00	Long Beach, CA	426.00	Seattle, WA	140.00
Annapolis, MD	70.00	Los Altos, CA	60.00	Seattle SACC WA	71.74
Arlington Hgts, IL	30.00	Los Angeles, CA	225.00	Silver Spring, MD	400.00
Atlanta, GA	204.03	Manhattan Bch, CA	40.00	Somerville, MA	20.00
Atlanta, GA SACC	100.00	Mansfield, OH	271.45	South Barrington, IL	150.00
Barrie, ON, Canada	100.00	McLean, VA	165.50	Springfield, VA	114.50
Beaver, PA	30.00	Mid-Hudson Valley, NY	5.00	St Louis, MO	75.00
Boston, MA	57.00	Midlothian, IL	40.00	St Louis SACC	50.00
Bozeman, MT	46.50	Millvale, PEI Canada	100.00	Steubenville, OH	17.80
Bryn Athyn, PA	205.00	Milwaukee, WI	315.25	Syracuse, NY	120.50
Camarillo, CA	80.00	Minneapolis, MN	16.40	Syracuse SACC	120.50
Cambridge, MA	30.00	Mississippi IG	25.00	Toledo, OH	48.00
Central VA IG	100.00	Montreal, PQ, Canada	63.35	Titusville, FL	19.00
Centreville, VA	98.00	Mt Clemens, MI	70.00	Torrance, CA	125.00
Chicago IG	666.50	Nashville IG, TN	1,065.10	Tri County SA, IL	25.00
Chicago, IL	30.00	New England IG	40.00	Twin Falls ID	15.00
Colorado Spgs, CO	428.00	New York Metro NY	75.00	UK Intergroup	315.00
Columbus, OH	125.00	Newark Intl Conference	3,307.81	Washington, DC	421.20
Corona, CA	20.00	NJ East PA IG	4,000.00	Washington DC SACC	145.00
Crystal City VA	313.54	North Hollywood, CA	80.00	W LA, CA	191.46
Dallas, TX	80.00	NE Ohio IG	10.00	Wheeling, WV	90.00
Daytona Beach, FL	135.00	NW Indiana	20.00	White Plains, NY	25.00
Denver, CO	250.00	NYC IG, NY	200.00	Willow Creek, IL	125.00
Downers Grove, IL	50.00	Oakland, CA	101.54	Woodbridge, VA	50.00
East, PA	170.00	Oakland SACC	78.40	Yorba Linda, CA	50.00
Edmonton, AB, Canada	14.91	Olympic, CA	114.00		
Elk Grove Village, IL	3,000.00	Omaha, NE	148.20	Group Total	20,377.24
Erie, PA	81.99	Painesville, OH	50.00	Individual Total	4,138.22
Essington, PA	84.00	Palatine, IL	100.00	Grand Total	24,515.46
Falls Church, VA	100.00	Penn Hills, PA	85.00		
Grand Rapids, MI	30.00	Philadelphia, PA	30.00		
Greeley, CO	50.00	Portland, OR	60.00		
Greensboro, NC	20.00	QCSA Davenport, IA	50.00		
Hacienda Hgts, CA	90.00	Ravenswood, IL	30.00		
High Point, NC	20.00	Rochester, NY	185.07		
Japan	40.00	Sacramento, CA	150.00		
Jersey City, NJ	25.00	Salem, OR	28.00		
Jerusalem, Israel	20.00	Salem SACC	28.00		
Lancaster, OH	25.00	Salt Lake City, UT	206.00		

SA Corrections Committee Progress Report

We want to thank all members who have helped us to carry the SA message to sexaholics in correctional institutions. Progress is being made, as comparisons of the last two years demonstrate:

- In 1998, the prison literature fund was created so that members and groups could earmark contributions for our work. Contributions to the fund amounted to \$5,343 by the end of 1998.
- In 1997, we received letters from 89 inmates in 20 states. In 1998, we received letters from 132 inmates in 34 states. As inmates hear about our Fellowship, they are requesting our literature and wanting to correspond with other sexaholics.
- In 1997, the SACC filled 97 requests from inmates for our White Book. In 1998, this figure jumped to 180 requests. Filling these orders was made possible by Fellowship support for the literature fund and by establishing better contacts with prison officials.
- From 1997 to 1998, the number of inmates attending SA meetings and using SA literature increased from one meeting of 19 inmates to 13 meetings in 13 correctional facilities with a total of 148 inmates using our literature.
- In the same time period, SACC outreach increased from contact with eight members in eight states to contact with 59 members from 23 states and four countries.

We are “planting seeds” in our prison service work. It will take time for them to grow. Yet we can already see where willingness, patience and labor are beginning to bear fruit because of the Higher Power.

Looking Ahead

We would like to see sexaholics who suffer in prison have the same opportunities to recover as those we have already contacted. You can help.

- We are looking for SACC representatives from around the country and internationally who will coordinate prison service work in their area.
- We need members who will correspond with and sponsor inmates.
- We need members who will contact prison officials and take SA meetings into prisons and county jails.
- We need financial support for our work from individual members, local groups and Intergroups. Your contributions will be split equally between literature and other SACC expenses incurred in carrying the message into prisons.

If you would like more information about our work, please write to us at: SACC, P.O. Box 283, Bellevue, WA, 98004. You may e-mail us at: sacc@sa.org, or call us at (U.S.) (425) 644-1597. **William R.**, SACC chair.

Site Selection

The Site Selection Committee reports it is looking for a group or Intergroup to volunteer to host International conferences. Sites chosen to date are:

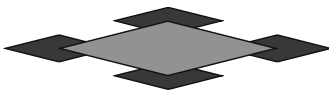
- Jul. 1999: Cleveland.
- Jan. 2000: Nashville.
- Jul. 2000: Detroit:
- Jan. 2001 Los Angeles.

The committee does not ask certain areas of the country to hold a conference, but selects a site from groups or Intergroups that submit a bid. Weather and travel conditions are special factors in the choice of a January site. Interested regions are asked to contact the committee c/o the SAICO.

At the beginning of every year, the Nominations Committee presents the General Delegate Assembly with a slate of candidates for the positions of sexaholic and non-sexaholic Trustee. Then the Committee reviews the applications, conducts teleconferences, and interviews candidates when necessary.

Fellowship input in the nominations process is desired. Sexaholic Trustees must have at least five years continuous sobriety and progressive victory over lust for consideration. Candidates are nominated by their Intergroup; applicants are asked to submit a resume of their service record in SA; all service will be considered.

A non-sexaholic Trustee must be nominated by an SA member and must be a friend of SA. A non-sexaholic Trustee also must be able to communicate SA's stand on sexual sobriety clearly and unequivocally to non-sexaholics when necessary. A service resume, stressing areas in which knowledge of SA's principles and program is demonstrated, should accompany the nomination letter. Service in any area will be considered. There are openings for both sexaholic and non-sexaholic Trustees every year.



***Essay* Editorial Guidelines**

The *Essay* editorial function is answerable to the fellowship as a whole. Just as our SA group meetings follow guidelines designed to keep meetings on track, the following guidelines apply to the *Essay*.

- Articles from SA members and SA groups or intergroups are invited, although no payment is made, and material is not returned.
- The Central Office provides *Essay* editor with copies of letters and other materials of potential use in the newsletter.
- Submissions, selected by the editor, are subject to correction of spelling and grammar (*The Chicago Manual of Style* is the standard) and may be condensed to accommodate space limitations. Selections may be edited for style and clarity.
- The principles of SA's Twelve Traditions guide editorial philosophy.
- Articles are not intended to serve as statements of SA policy, nor does publication imply endorsement by either SA or the *Essay*.
- 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 and non-SA principles.
- The *Essay* is not a fund-raising mechanism, although from time to time SA's needs may be made known.

General Guidelines for Submissions: Where possible, articles submitted for publication should be typed and double-spaced. If articles are submitted on disk, check with Central Office for software compatibility. Send articles to the SA Central Office, attention of the *Essay* editor. When an article speaks for a group or intergroup, it should have the prior approval of that group or intergroup. Articles should observe common standards of friendliness and good taste. Discussions involving therapy or religion are discouraged.

How to improve *Essay* circulation

Every group should have a subscription to *Essay* for the members to read, share and pass around. Also, consider group donations of *Essay* subscriptions to members celebrating SA sobriety anniversaries.

Subscribe to *Essay*

A one year subscription costs \$10.00. Group subscriptions of 10 or more sent to the same address are \$8.00 each. Payment can be by check, money order, or credit card, MasterCard or Visa. Send subscription requests to SAICO, PO Box 111910, Nashville, TN 37222-1910.

How to Contact SA

Sexaholics Anonymous
PO Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222-1910

Phone: 615/331-6230
Fax: 615/331-6901
Web Site: <http://www.sa.org>
E-mail Address: saico@sa.org

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