

P.O. Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222

December 1999

How to Contact SA

Sexaholics Anonymous,
Incorporated
PO Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222-1910

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

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A New Look at Lust Recovery

The New Jersey Marathon on November 6th in Cranford was a special occasion in SA history. The subject of victory over lust took the spotlight as the speaker challenged the eager gathering of SAs by describing the stages of his own progressive victory over lust. He offered joyous hope to any still wondering if it is actually possible to honestly "stop drinking" or who are unhappy with their own stage of lust recovery. The talk was in two parts: first sharing the stages of his own lust recovery, and then offering a new approach as breakthrough experiment. The talk was privately taped and transcribed for the Essay. Part One, Stages of Lust Recovery, appears below. Part Two, The 1935 Akron Experience as a Program for Lust Recovery, will appear in the

next issue of Essay. The speaker was Roy K., who was asked to condense and edit his talk for publication.

Part One: Stages of Lust Recovery

For me to talk about the stages of my lust recovery is to lead with my weakness. Because stages of my lust recovery aren't over yet. I have not arrived to where I want to be in lust recovery. But I'm not where I used to be.

I want a fellowship where people want what I want. I'm very selfish; I'm part of this Fellowship here. I'm in your group right now, and as in the groups I attend regularly, I'm here for me, just another sex drunk.

(Continued on page 4)

IN THIS ISSUE:

- ◆ "Safe Haven" Feedback
- ◆ Program Tools
- ◆ Doing the Steps
- ◆ Committee Reports

Calendar of Events

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

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.

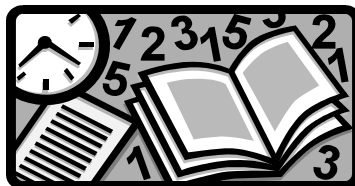
March 11, 2000, Spring Marathon, Glen Ellyn, IL, sponsored by Chicago Intergroup. Theme: One Day at a Time. For information, call SA Chicago at 630/415-0341.

April 2000, SA Marathon, Philadelphia, PA. Details to be announced. Contact Philadelphia Intergroup at 215/564-3272

April 28—30, 2000, SA / S-Anon Northwest Spring Retreat, St. Mary's Conference Center, Toledo, WA. Details to be announced. For information, call 206/548-9538.

May 2000, SA / S-Anon Marathon, Richmond, VA. Details to be announced. For information, please call 804/254-9939.

May 12—14, 2000, South Midwest Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS. For more information, call SA Wichita at 316/942-9041.



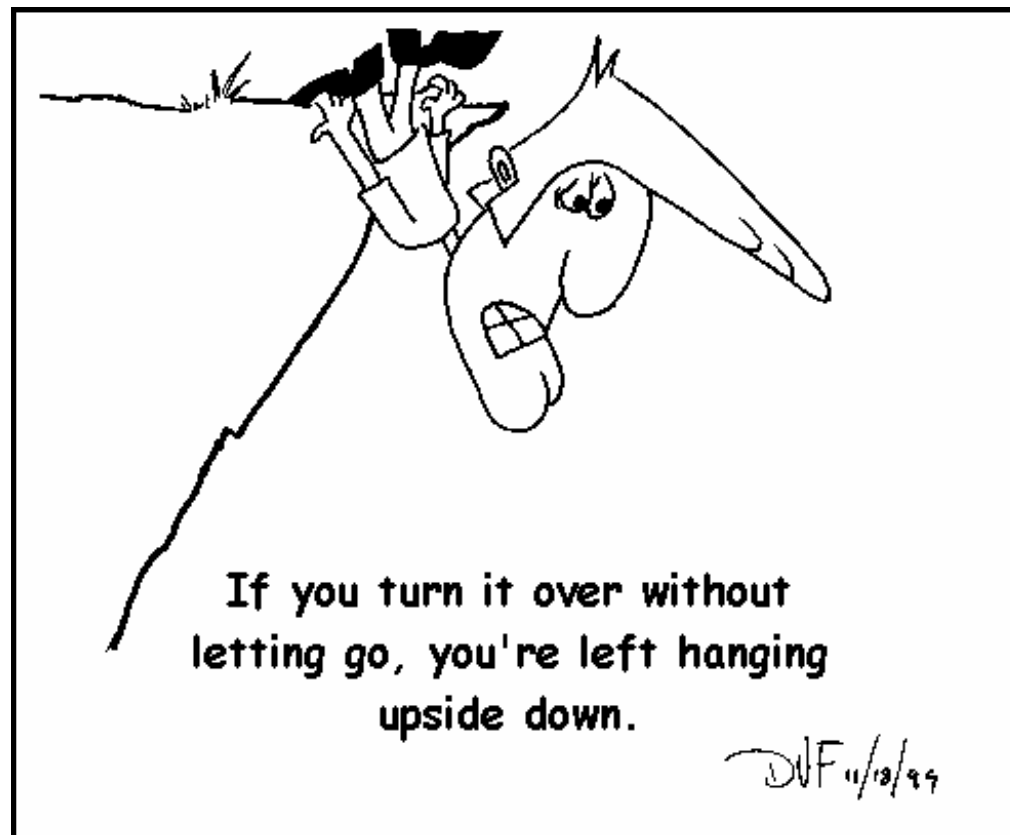
How to improve *Essay* circulation

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.



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.

May 12—14, 2000, German speaking Convention, Bochum, Germany, sponsored by AS Bochum and Essen. Theme: Gensung leben in der Gemeinschaft. Contact Derk at 0201 712577.

May 27, 2000, SA S-Anon Retreat, Wheeling, WV, sponsored by the Wheeling/ Stuebenville Intergroup For information, call 740/342-0828.

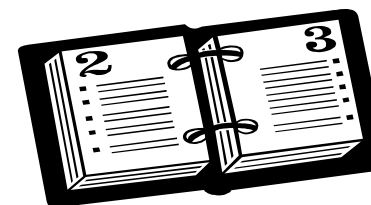
July 7 – 9, 2000, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Detroit, MI, sponsored by Detroit area SA / S-Anon groups. Theme: Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs. Contact for SA, Gary at 810/756-4793 or SA Detroit at 810/997-7518.

November 3—5, 2000, Family reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS. For information, call 316/942-9041.

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

July 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Washington DC, sponsored by MD/DC/VA. Contact Intergroup at 703/866-6929.

[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.]



(“New Look” continued from page 1)

My most recent lust experience happened on the airplane coming in. One of the flight attendants would have been someone I was attracted to in the early years. When I saw her I felt a pull. I didn’t want to drink, but I felt a pull which got my attention, unusually so as it goes today. And as I go through the stages of my recovery, I’ll be trying to figure out where this experience fits, because I’ve got to be honest with you and I want to take you with me on this journey. And you know as well as I that I can’t do it alone. For me to get farther in my recovery, I need others. It’s never been any other way.

In my inventory I noted 12 stages in my lust recovery, but I know that as soon as I get through with stage 12 you guys will figure out stage 13, or zero, or whatever. What I’m saying is that there are stages of lust recovery for *me*. If you identify fine, but look at your own stages of lust recovery as I share mine, for this is really a dialogue, an experiment. Because what we’re after in this great endeavor in SA is absolute honesty. In this program, for true lust recovery, if we can’t get honest in the “thoughts and intents of the heart,” it won’t be enough. So let’s try our best, together.

One. The first stage was, **I discovered the presence and power of lust.**

For me, that happened once I got sexually sober in AA. Some of us may discover the power of lust while still not sober. I stopped acting out and was doing substitute teaching when I entered recovery. Every skirt on campus— I discovered a force in me I couldn’t control. I had never recognized lust before. Why? Because when I took a hit off of a trigger, I’d eventually act out. So lust never got my attention. But it sure did once I wanted sobriety.

Two. I started trying to limit and control lust. I’m sure most everyone here identifies with that. [Audience reaction indicates they agree].

Three. I discovered I could not eliminate lust. It wouldn’t go away. I began to be bothered by that; it got my attention. But I still didn’t do much about it until after I slipped after a year and a half.

Four. After discovering I couldn’t eliminate lust, **I started surrendering it.** How we surrender I’m not sure is that important. But we start trying to stop lusting.

Five. The lust problem appears to get better. Bouts with lust are less

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.
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- 12) Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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.)

often and less intense. Anyone identify here? [audience identifies]. If not, isn't that what you're in this program for—"to stop lusting"? [Tradition Three]

Six. We begin to discover lust in different forms. With me, one of the first other forms I discovered was the presence of lust in my marriage bed. After that terrible separation, when my wife took me back and we had sex for the first time, and when she was so accepting of my disclosure, I discovered something absolutely new: I had *sex* for the very first time in my entire life. A spiritual connection, a oneness coming out of love. There's no way I can describe the difference. It's like the difference between mere ecstatic sensation and real love; they're poles apart, in different universes. For the first time, I did not have a memory, a picture, or fantasy juicing up the sexual system to maintain arousal. Experiencing the reality of sex was so dramatic an experience that putting all the other lifetime sex together, including the most ecstatic, wouldn't hold a candle to this one solitary experience. It was different, real. And it needed no repetition. But it didn't last; I discovered I couldn't maintain arousal without conjuring up lust. And I'm sure you've read in the White Book of that long slow process I had to go

through to overcome that (a year of abstinence and more work on the Steps), one of the most marvelous breakthroughs in my lust recovery.

A word of caution: Never tell your spouse what I just told you. Tell it to sponsor, group, and God. They may never be able to overcome that thought you've planted in their minds when you're having sex with them. It's *your* problem; don't make it theirs. It's too much to expect of a woman to erase that from her mind, even if you've overcome that problem.

Another form in which lust showed up was erotic images in dreams. Sex is optional, even in dreams. We can learn the same surrender in our dreams that we can in the waking state. But it takes work. In this stage I came to very serious surrender when it came to both waking and dream lust. *"I ask that you keep me sober from every lust in any form, active or passive, conscious or subconscious."* That was my daily prayer.

In Southern California, when sex in dreams comes up for a member, we suggest tying in with a team of a few people who are willing to be called at any hour of the night. The member calls as soon as they have the dream and are aware of it, telling explicitly what it was, bringing it to

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the light. By doing this, they can intervene earlier and earlier on subsequent dreams. And this tells us where we really are with lust. Pretty soon, they’re making a surrender as soon as the image hits in their dream, and lust is nipped in the bud. Try it. This works, believe me. If it doesn’t work, something’s wrong, and more work is indicated for your waking program. Continued erotic or sexual dreams is telling us, “Stop, Look, and Listen!” Something’s going on in your waking life that needs fixing.

Sex and lust in dreams is probably the best-kept secret in SA—dishonesty. It doesn’t have to be. We need to share more about this one-on-one and in groups and in our *Essay* newsletter and other writings. Let it tell us our real condition and how absolutely powerless we really are with lust, and let it drive us to finding what our lust was really looking for. I could never have victory over lust in dreams without His presence.

Another form of lust I discovered was the *mis*-connection. This is *spiritual* misconnection, and may have nothing to do with sex or lust as commonly perceived. Some of our members relate more to romance/relationship addiction than to lust, whether in or out of marriage. Well, I think the *mis*-connection is at the very heart of our spiritual illness.

“‘Connect with me and make me whole,’ we cried with outstretched arms.” For me, it’s another form of lust. And if we had a show of hands here on stage Six, we’d find many other forms lust can take, which lead us to a deeper stage of surrender and reliance on the presence, love, and power of God.

Seven. Deeper surrender. Once we discover these other forms and strategies of lust *progressively*, once we are able to see, then we come to deeper surrender. This legitimate use of the word “progressive” is the very process of discovery we’ve been talking about in these various stages. I’ve got to keep progressing; there’s no fulfillment of the promise otherwise. The *misuse* of our expression “progressive victory over lust” is when we confuse it with our encounter in the moment of temptation, seeing the image in the corner of our eye, for example. In that instant, there is no such thing as progressive victory. We either drink or don’t drink. Think about it. Man, can we ever let our “progressive victory” wording cover a multitude of sins!

Eight. So, after deeper surrender what do we find? It’s all gone; we’re never tempted? [audience reaction] Nooo! We find **Something is still there.**

tions from intergroups to cover literature costs for prisoners.” No one knew at that time exactly how we would go about doing this or what the response would be. By the end of the year, however, members had contributed \$5,342.99 to the fund.

At the January 1999 International Conference in Sacramento, California, the Trustees and delegates decided to divide contributions to the fund equally between the cost of sending literature to inmates and the expenses of the committee. They raised the budgeted goal for donations to \$7,000. Once again our Fellowship has risen to the occasion. As of November 30th, members have given \$7,245.61!

Since the fund was started, individual members have sent in donations, local groups have begun passing a monthly SACC basket, and regional and international conferences have incorporated the SACC into their practice of the Seventh Tradition. Our committee wishes to thank all of you for your generous support of our efforts to carry the SA message to the sexaholic in prison who still suffers. So far this year, we have sent out 202 SA handbooks and brochures to inmates around the country!

Other SACC News

Our committee is looking forward to meeting with the Director of Mental Health Services for the Department of Corrections of the state of Tennessee on Friday, January 7th. This is the first time our committee has met with this level of

state official. We are excited about this opportunity and ask for your prayers. What a way to begin the new millennium!

Members in Pennsylvania have successfully arranged with prison officials to start SA meetings in two new prisons. So far this year, five new prisons are offering SA meetings to inmates! We cannot emphasize enough that the most convincing evidence for prison officials that our program works, are sober members that approach them and ask if they can start a meeting on the “inside.”

If you are interested in contacting prison officials and would like information about how other members have approached them, please contact our committee. You may write to us at P.O. Box 283, Bellevue, WA, 98009-0283, E-mail us at SACC@sa.org, or call us at (U.S.) 425-653-1613. Please note this is a new telephone number!

Our committee has sent out an audiotape to Intergroups of two SACC speakers at the recent Unity Conference in Southern California. One of the speakers tells the story of his incarceration. The other tells how his recovery led to corresponding with inmates. We hope local groups will take the time to listen to these tapes. We believe in the years ahead, if we are faithful to our primary purpose, we will receive many more inmates who want recovery into our Fellowship.



(“Steps” continued from page 21)

cape from her pain. However, I was happy to be back on the road of recovery and this time I wanted to really work the Steps, mature and not hide behind my sobriety date.

Recovery meant working a daily program and not a weekly program. Going to meetings on a consistent basis, being apart of the group through service work, going to conferences and being available for sponsorship keep me connected to the Fellowship. Likewise equal work and effort

goes into maintaining a conscious contact with my Higher Power. Daily prayer and meditation, participating in my Church, reading scripture, SA literature and other good books, are things I do on a daily and regular basis to help stay in tune with the God of my understanding. By practicing the Steps in all my affairs, I incorporate the program into my daily life. I am sure I learn more from my failures than I do from my victories. Within the last two days I had to make direct amends to my wife, my oldest daughter and one of my sisters. In each case I had to go to each of them and say I was wrong and that I was sorry for what I'd done. When I do this, it restores my relationship with them. It also restores my relationship with my Higher Power, and once again I'm a free man. It's this type of freedom that helps keep me clean and sober.

In doing Steps Four, Five and Six I finally saw my role in becoming a sexaholic. Over the years and into adulthood I held on to my childish ways. It's time to set them aside and become a responsible

man. A responsible person doesn't fall into self-pity if things don't go their way. Through God's help and bringing the inside out, I try to surrender the temptation to go into resentment and blaming, self-pity, fear of failure or dreams of winning a lottery. Responsible, mature fathers learn how to save and spend money properly for the benefit of the family rather than rely on pipedreams.

Again in Step Eight I saw how I harmed and contributed to the poor relationships with family members due to years of isolation with lust, resentment and self-pity. Today I try to take the actions of love to improve relations with others, especially my father, who I probably hurt the most. The measure we give is truly the measure we get back.

Without sobriety I would not have the quality of life I have today. I would never know what I was missing or what is yet to come. SA has given me the direction and hope to stay sober today and I am very grateful. I am not only a part of this wonderful program but I am very much in the lives of my wife, our four children and the community.

(This story has been submitted for consideration for Member Stories 2000.

Other member may still submit stories, with intergroup approval until 5/31/00.

SACC Literature Fund

At the January 1998 International Conference in Daytona Beach, Florida, the Trustees and Delegates of Sexaholics Anonymous created the SACC Literature Fund. The SACC was directed to "implement a plan to encourage dona-

Some of us experience some of these progressive stages of lust recovery we've been describing above and think that's all there is, without ever getting better, or even wanting to. That's what I did. Tempted to lust and then surrender; lust and surrender; lust and surrender . . . And then we wonder why we're still having erotic and sexual dreams! We get stuck on our own almighty length of sobriety and current degree of "surrender."

There are those with many years of sobriety who work a good program—confessing lust, calling during sexual dreams at all hours, writing inventories, working with others, service, you name it. Yet they're stuck at one stage of lust recovery and begin to see they're unhappy and unfulfilled, and they know it. *Something's still there*, and it dawns on them that they're really not free. Not free not to lust.

Later in the talk we'll be looking at what was happening in Akron and Cleveland in the late 1930s, to discover the kind of surrender hopeless drunks were making, where they *stopped drinking*. If we in SA can't *stop drinking*, then this Twelve Step spiritual program doesn't work for us, and we should stop saying that it does and close the doors. I'm here to challenge you to believe that there's

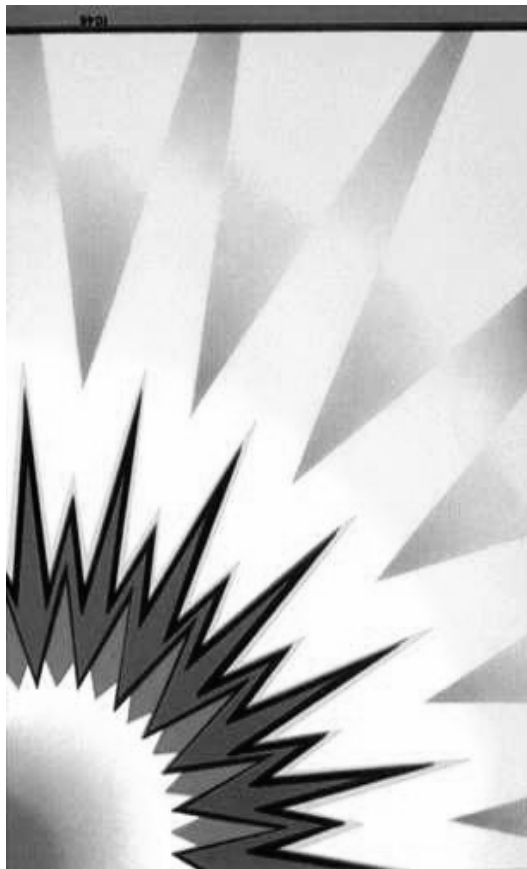
something beyond even this stage, beyond what we might settle for as "successful" recovery. It's a promised land we could never have imagined, were it not actually becoming true in our experience. And it is!

Nine. When I got to this place of seeing something was still there and that maybe there was a deeper surrender and deeper victory waiting for me, one day I just got tired enough of it to do a deeper Six and Seven on it: "Lord, I don't want *any* of this!" In that prayer I was thinking, "I don't want any of these *temptations*." I didn't get what I asked for, but I got what I needed. What I really needed was that I don't want any of the FEAR when it hits, or subterfuge, or taking a look to see if it's something I shouldn't be looking at—the bloody uncomfortableness of it all! That got tiresome after awhile—and too threatening. *Fear-driven sobriety is doomed to failure*. We can be free of the fear of lust! Don't settle for less. I wanted more, so I did a deeper Third and Seventh on it. I asked for more. And that brought me to stage Nine: Recovery from lust is **not having to take the first look**. Can you believe that? Yes!

Does that mean that I never took the first look after that? What do you think? Noooo [laughter]. But the joy

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of that breakthrough—not having to take the first glance—pulled me on, didn’t it? “A man’s reach must exceed his grasp/ or what’s a Heaven for?” (Robert Browning). I had to have more. And you know what? We really can have it, or the promise of this Program is a lie. There’s incredible hope here—if we can just be absolutely honest about where we really are, today, right now, with our lust,



and believe in the 1935 miracle. **It’s Not Wrong to be Temptable or Tempted.** I want to digress to a very important subject. *Temptation to lust doesn’t have to be a fearful or drudge experience; because it can bring great joy.* That’s our “Joy Response,” isn’t it? Most of us are religious people in this program or come from a religious background, like I did. Somehow, many of us feel it was wrong to be tempted, or that we shouldn’t be tempted any more. I don’t know about you; I can only speak for myself, but man, I felt I should never be tempted any more, since I’d turned my life over to God. I discovered that’s not true. It’s not wrong to be *tempted*. What made me *feel* like it was wrong was that in that temptation I was really *drinking*, even though it was “only” teeny-weenie slightly, conning myself.

Today it’s okay for me to be tempted by the images, by whatever it is out there or in here. *Why* is it okay? Because I have a remedy today, and that remedy is not me. If that remedy were my strength or my religious conviction or the strength of my Program or endeavors, you know where I’d be. But guys, I don’t have it. I’m 23 years sober today in stage after stage of victory over lust, but I still do not have it. But I’ll tell you what I do have. There’s the shield of his Presence within that shields me from my lust,

me I wasn’t alone and there was a solution. The SA meeting was truly a safe haven. Eventually I started to bring the inside out and told the SA members I was married and my acting out thinking and behavior was with the same sex. I deceived my wife into marriage and now my marriage was falling apart. I wanted at last to get honest with my wife and with myself. My concern over my acting out behaviors or of having an orientation subsided as SA members told me that sex was optional. This was fantastic news and I believed them. The problem had to do with lust and if I didn’t lust and if I stayed sober the relationship with my wife would improve and more answers would come. It made sense to me. I was excited and grateful to God for this gift. It was like a second chance at life and I wanted to make amends to my wife and for the past.

Of course at this time we were a very small SA group. We needed each other and if two couldn’t go to the meeting, there was a good chance I would be there alone with my Higher Power. I feared lust and was active in keeping in contact with my sponsor, going to meetings and trying to work the SA program. Things seemed to be going relatively well with my family and me. I was sober for about five years when my wife went through a terrible personal ordeal. Her boss, who was a father figure, betrayed her. She naturally went to me for support.

Rather than comfort her I wanted to run from it. Throughout the next several days I would escape from what was happening by going into fantasy and getting lust hits by looking and gawking. This was the beginning of me going in and out of lust mode. The next several months I would go to meetings and share, discuss the situation with my sponsor, and surrender to my higher power. Before long I was white knuckling sobriety and wanting to be off the wagon.

The straw that broke the camel’s back was one business trip when I was alone in a hotel. That first night I had a desperate fight of will power. I was losing ground trying to hold on to my sobriety when I finally got on my knees and cried out for help to my Higher Power. I admitted I was a lustaholic and asked if he would get me through the temptations and help me to stay sober. When I woke up the next day I was free from the lust obsession and I was anxious to get back to the group and the SA program.

Lust being baffling, cunning, powerful and patient had a new meaning for me. Likewise the progressiveness of this disease was obvious and I knew I never wanted to go back to the old thinking and behaviors. I was disappointed in myself that I could not comfort my wife in her time of need. It seemed I had not grown emotionally since I came into the program. Instead I chose to run to my addiction and es-

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(“Steps” continued from page 19)

interests and then go in secret where I acted out with masturbation, pornography, anonymous sex, sexual encounters in public places, frequenting bathhouses, cruising the streets, voyeurism and fantasy. By now I was boozing and using drugs. I knew I could get money, drugs or friendship by doing sexual favors for others.

Several years went by and my drive to make the lust connection continued. It got worse despite my efforts to find out why my life was out of control, going nowhere, miserable and depressed. In the back of my mind I always pictured myself settled down in a comfortable home with a loving wife, children and a successful job. If truth were known I was incapable of having a relationship.

A friend of my youth got in contact with me and helped me see my alcoholism. I'm still amazed at this revelation. What a gift! At 24, I was anxious to start my new life. I was sure if I got clean and sober, my dreams would be fulfilled. Within a year I had a girlfriend, I went back to university and I had a good part time job. However, the double life prevailed. Despite the positive appearance, my life was overwhelmed trying to maintain the facade. I would get a real scare whenever I contracted a STD or body lice, which goes with a promiscuous lifestyle. The pressures of deadlines, working and having a

girlfriend were taking its toll. I was very relieved to have university over and behind me.

My girlfriend and I decided to get married and we both had hopes for a wonderful marriage together. I was so much in denial and fear that I was incapable of being honest. I did not want to see or accept my behaviors and how they could affect someone else. The following year we had our first child. On the surface everything seemed okay but I was still lusting and looking for the big fix. After I acted out I felt ashamed and disgusted and swore that time would be the last. I had been saying that to myself for years but I didn't recognize the famous last words of an addict.

The depressions were getting worse. I would come home from work and flop on the couch with little or no energy. My gut feeling was that I could no longer maintain the pretense. My wife was expecting our second child and I was dying inside. My wife was devastated for she realized her dreams for a happy marriage were not going to be fulfilled. She was married to a sexaholic. I remember my desperate plea to God for help. I hit bottom and I was willing to do anything to get out of my situation, including suicide. It wasn't long before I read the Dear Abby column in May 1989 and for the first time I got a glimpse of the problem. I identified with the message and quickly contacted SA Central Office.

They sent me SA literature and told

both from within and without. Ask for something better and do a deeper surrender. “*Expect great things from God.*”

This kind of surrender doesn't mean we're never going to be tempted, does it? We're going to be; that's the glory of God—the fact that I was tempted yesterday on the plane and made the saving Connection. I don't want the pill that will protect me from being tempted; I want to be alive and sexual as a normal human being. I'm more sexual now in my abstinence and victory over lust than I ever was in my acting out. I *love* women! I'm even beginning to love my wife a little bit [laughter]. The fear of woman is almost gone!

Along with entering deeper stages of lust recovery, we should be experiencing stirrings of healthy natural sexuality. Don't be afraid of it. Our sexuality is God-given, not our diseased perversion of sex, which was subverted so long by our lust and sex addiction. So *if we're recovering from lust*, we should also be recovering from our perverted sexuality into the healthy progressive awakening of our real sexuality and mature maleness, manhood, husbandhood, and fatherhood, our femaleness, womanhood, wifehood, and motherhood. This is the promise of our recovery; don't settle for anything less! But are you willing to pay the price?

The danger in discussing the stages of lust recovery is we can let it become more striving in the flesh, ratcheting up our resolve all the more in trying. Piling on more “thou shalt nots.” Don't let yourself get into that mode; it's like the old “salvation by works” instead of grace. It's miserable!

Ten. If you think stage Nine is impossible, wait till you hear what's coming up next. When you heard me talk in those early years, I'd be saying something like this: “Well, I'm tempted, and I wanted to drink today, but I didn't have to drink, and that's good enough for me if I die and go right now.” And I meant it; that's all I had, and it was marvelous. To be tempted, to know it's my drink out there beckoning, but not having to take that first sip-drink. Not only good enough, it's a miracle! But that's not good enough for me today. Because lust recovery can be not only not *having* to take the first look, **it's not wanting to take the first look.** Real freedom. Not freedom from being tempted or being temptable, but freedom from *wanting* to look. This is crossing over into the Promised Land.

I'll tell you what that takes. If I get to the place where I don't *want* to take the first drink, that means I have

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(“New Look” continued from page 9)
experienced something better. I don’t know about you, but this Program can’t do it for me. It merely gives us the tools. What gives this new freedom to me is what one of my spiritual sponsors said, “*the expulsive power of a new affection.*” A real affection, the love of God. And all I knew and believed *about* the love of God didn’t help me one single bit. But when I began to ask and make the daily surrender—“*I don’t want to take that first drink and I ask you to keep me sober from wanting or taking it today. And I ask that you give me what my lust was really looking for*”—that’s when I discovered the love and power of God and impossible joy. And that’s my prayer today: “*I want to know you more.*” And knowing him more for me comes through the temptations! The fear and uncomfortableness go! How incredible.

Eleven. And that’s the next stage in lust recovery—**finding what our lust is really looking for.** Look at it logically: How could *recovery* from lust as you and I know it today be possible without finding what it was really looking for? Isn’t finding that what gives us the freedom and joy—fulfillment? Isn’t that what pulls us into that next stage? But unless we get honest in our groups and meetings and in ourselves, as to where we are *not*, we’re never going to get any fur-

ther. Stuck in No Man’s Land. My lust heart, my sexaholic heart, was crying out for the connection with Woman, “*I need you, I want you.* . . .” The cultural air is full of these songs and images, yet the desire and lack and emptiness are still there. The songs are testimony to our collective LACK, our unfulfillment. You know what I do today? I want Him, and I say so, “*I want You. Come in. I come to you.*” Right while being tempted! Yes! And He comes in and takes it, and I’m not only free—in that very temptation!—I’ve Connected with my very own Source.

Twelve. That prayer is a joy for me today, and I’m just beginning to taste a little bit of stage Eleven. Practically nothing on stage Twelve. And I don’t even know for sure what Twelve is, because I’m not there yet. But so far it’s going something like this: **Instead of withdrawing in fear, to look her in the eyes and take her *in*, giving outward in love.**

There she is, walking down the street, and my brain knows it’s trigger material. I want to get to the place where, instead of being in fear—I can’t look; it’s wrong to look; I’m not gonna look; I’ll get into the darkness; I’m gonna lose God; (all the while stealing a microsecond glance)—I’ll look her in the eyes and take her *in*. Not the snatch or steal or sip or the will-powered turnaway, but she’s a

and watch TV. My mother called me a TV hawk. When I was about 10 my father seemed to have more time on his hands and he would ask me to play catch with him. I would decline his request because I wanted to hurt him and reject him as I felt rejection by him. I also felt inadequate. I felt intimidated by the guys in my hometown. I just didn’t measure up to them. I felt inept in performing some key sports although I excelled in others. I feared being put into a position where I would humiliate myself, especially when it came to knowledge about sex. For years I cringed when someone told an off-color joke or used a slang term about sex for fear they would discover my ignorance. I never felt worthy that a girl would be attracted to me. Confident, mature girls scared me, despite my desire to be friends with them or at least be in their company. I could never think of something to say. My mind just went blank. At this young age I was alone, inadequate and afraid.

We had many relatives visit and stay with us. On several occasions a few older cousins and a neighbor touched and fondled me sexually between the ages of 5 and 10. Although I can’t recall being bothered by these experiences, I knew to keep them secret and they were the start of boundaries being broken. At 13, I was sleeping with a male cousin when he touched me in the groin area. This time I felt the excitement of lust as I waited

for him to touch me again. When he did I responded and had a sexual encounter with him. Right after that experience, I was an active sexaholic looking for a fix. I was truly powerless over the plan my addiction had for me.

My lust fix became my primary focus. Even when I was with others, I was taking in lust looks or planning ways of acting out. I was lost inside myself, keeping the lust a secret and keeping a distance from those I loved. Even if my father did start to shower me with love and attention, I would go for the fix because the damage was done - I was a sexaholic.

In my search for the lust connection, the reality of right or wrong got lost. Lines and boundaries got crossed and broken. I started acting out with the animals on the farm. In keeping the lust alive, I made obscene phone calls in search of connections. I started peeping late at night at some hotels. Eventually I got caught by the police and was firmly warned not to peep again. Within a week I was back peeping in hotel windows. At 18, I had no choice but to leave.

I left for another province to get away from the farm and from the peeping. I began falling behind in my grades at the new university and within a couple of years I dropped out. My double life became even more evident. I tried to show a normal lifestyle of friends and common

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(“S-Anon Corner” continued from page 17) that is supported by both SA and S-Anon is mutual abstinence: 1) it ensures a drying out period for the sexaholic; 2) it allows a period of time to focus on our own recovery and regain other aspects of intimacy and friendship in our lives that were lost or never before experienced. It is a time to learn that, in fact, sex is "optional" (see SA Solution in the "White Book").

About four months ago, my husband and I ended a 20-month period of mutual abstinence that we are both extremely grateful for. During this time we learned how to experience true and innocent intimacy unlike anything we had experienced before. We learned about things like emotional, spiritual, and physical non-sexual intimacy, and we both learned how to be "fully present" when we are together sexually.

During our abstinence, someone in S-Anon sadly suggested that either my husband or myself were perhaps "sexually anorexic." We were both hurt by this unsolicited comment. Today, neither of us have any shame about our abstinence, as it has freed us from the false thought that sex was a mandatory (the most important) expression of love. I have learned that I am certainly a sexual being with healthy sexual desires like any other, but I also know that it is okay for me to honor my body if I do not feel safe in any way. Therefore, I choose not to "beat myself up" with therapy terminology, but focus on the solutions

found in the S-Anon program.

I ask that we avoid the use of professional terms like "sexual anorexia" because "the precise meaning of these terms is still uncertain and because they may perpetuate the tendency to focus on the sexaholic." (See S-Anon Group Handbook, p. 9., sections C and D.) In order to keep our focus clear, let's continue to speak about and from the S-Anon point of view. (*This article first appeared in S-Anews, September 1999. Reprinted with permission.*)

In Doing the Steps, I Saw My Part

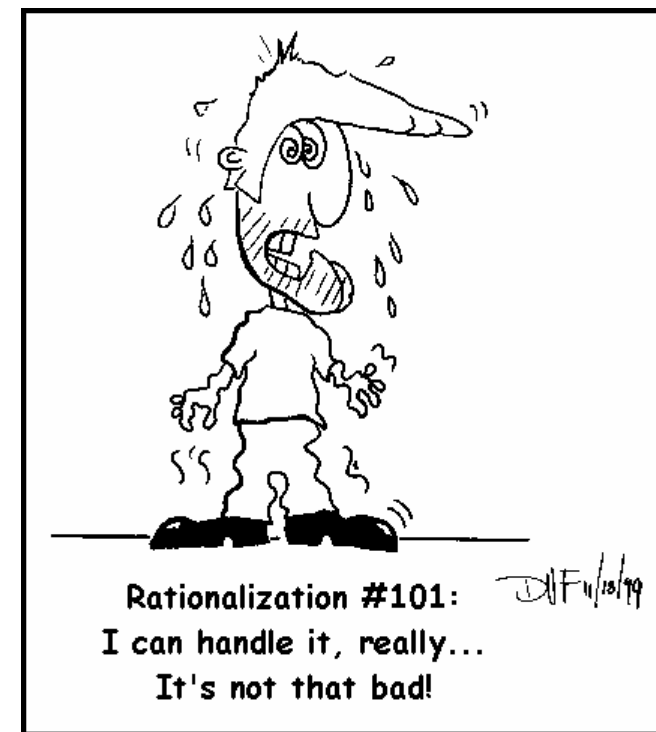
I was born into a large extended family in eastern Canada. My father held down two jobs and operated a mixed farm with his father. My mother was young and overwhelmed with responsibility. When my father was home I would try to talk to him and do things with him but I had little or no success. I realize today he was trying to recapture some much needed sleep. My mother, grandmother and aunts looked after the infants and children. My father soon began to rely on my uncle and older brother for help. They were given much responsibility around the farm. I often felt angry and resentful towards them as they became adept in operating the tractors and other farm equipment. The self-pity grew as I rejected their invitations to play hockey and ball.

I started to isolate to the living room

human being in the image of God. Look her in the eyes, smile, and say, "Hi, how are you?" And *give out* in love. I don't have that. I'm not that person. But "*Perfect love casts out fear.*" I can only do that with the love of God. And I want his love shed abroad in my heart.

I believe with all of my heart that we can have the real personal love of God for our sex object, and for anybody. And if I can't have it with *her*, I'm sorry, I don't have it with my wife or children, or with you. But man, do you know the promise this holds, if

this *is* recovery from lust? Do you know what this means? How lucky we are to have even this prospect of such recovery? We're just at the beginning of discovering what SA recovery is. That recovery from lust is possible. That we can "*stop drinking.*" Yes. Together we can, stage after stage, enjoy deeper awareness and surrender and freedom. Don't despair, and don't settle for less. "*Ask, and you shall receive.*" God answers prayer. **Roy K.** *The next issue of Essay will have Part Two: The 1935 Akron Experience as a Program for Lust Recovery.*





SA Around the Globe



Yey! 

- Anchorage, AK
- Beacon, NY
- Cathedral City, CA
- Chico, CA
- Cincinnati, OH
- Colorado Springs, CO
- Fairbanks, AK
- Livonia, MI
- London, ON
- Manorville, NY
- Ojai, CA
- Owensboro, KY
- New Haven, CT
- New Rochelle, NY
- Petoskey, MI
- Rio Rancho, NM
- Ronkonkoma, NY
- Texarkana, TX
- Tiffin, OH
- Barcelona, Spain
- SA Philippines
- SA Singapore
- SA Trinidad-Tobago

Group News

Through the help of the SA International Central Office, I am in contact with an SA member here in Tanzania. Your work in serving the fellowship is saving lives. The translator of the AA Big Book into Ki-Swahili lives in Tanzania. He took me to the Ki-Swahili AA meeting. On the shelf of the room was a book describing sexual addiction! Soon our SA White Book will be on that shelf.

Jim E., Africa

Greetings from the Philippines! I came home here in September after making trips to Toronto, New York and Los Angeles, after I finished my two-year stay in Italy. I am happy to inform you that I immediately contacted those who still want to recover from sex and lust addiction and tried to work with newcomers. Hopefully a new SA group will start among us, one that each one can call his/her home group and each one can be accountable to. **Bobby S., Philippines.**

Feedback Corner

I just finished reading the Essay article entitled A Safe Haven? (p.12, Fall 1999). I was reminded of similar experiences I

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day, I realize I could go back. And the phrase another way does not just refer to lust. It means any action or attitude away from God. Recovery is never automatic; it's a perpetual choice. With each new challenge I face (and lately, I've faced some tough ones), I can choose to go another way. My desire is to choose to do the "next right thing."

5) Do you understand that this renewal does not keep you sober (God does), but it does make you aware of yourself and accountable to others?

This renewal does not: There are some things that program doesn't take care of. I've used my church, counseling, and other resources to get the fullest healing I can. God does: the program has tools but is useless without the power of almighty God. I've had to seek for solutions not readily found in the 12-step model and they've come from God's heart to mine.

Aware of Self: I am constantly self-evaluating with weekly calls to my sponsor, the dailies, the renewal, journaling.

Accountable to Others: Some months ago, I was facing some temptation with the Internet. Following another member's lead, I have since made it a practice to tell someone when I'm going on-line in a risky environment and check in with them afterwards. In stating my desire to be sober to others like this, I can either be diligently clean, contritely honest, or lie. I like the first choice.

6) And, just for today, are you willing with me to hand over your will and the care of your life to the One Who kept you sober yesterday and has protected you from the full consequences of your lust in the past? The bottom line: Step Three.

With me: I am not doing this alone; there are many footprints on the road to happy destiny.

Hand over: I am not qualified to manage my own life; the opposite of the American spirit of independence and self-reliance. The One Who: By acknowledging God, I am in constant reflective gratitude. Kept you: Grace = getting what I don't deserve. Protected you from: Mercy = not getting what I do deserve. In being grateful for where I am and recalling where I was and admitting where I could be now, I'm less inclined to "go another way." As with all the tools of the program, God has used the renewal to not just keep me sober, but to guide me as I seek to live a joyous and free life. Thanks be to God. **Bill, Boston, MA**

S-Anon Corner

The whole concept of "sexual anorexia" is an issue for me. Some therapists seem to use the term to describe someone who is sexually shut down from their partner. However, "sexual anorexia" is not an S-Anon approved term. One thing we do know for sure

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(“Member News” continued from page 15)
(sharing my defects with my sponsor)
and shame is dissolved in that sponsor's continued acceptance of me.

Now check out the question's first phrase: "Do you desire," not, "Do you think it's a good idea to..." Is this really what I want today? In choosing the freedoms, I have to abandon the false benefits of lust and the big four. With lust, the ecstasy of acting out is traded for a truer contentment. This is costly and not always easy. I've even been led to completely give up the expectation of marital sex. My wife and I enjoy intimacy regularly, but I no longer count days or become anxious and demanding. My agenda has changed.

Freedom from the big four is done through Step Six, choosing to let God free me from my defects. Resentment: I chose to forgive all who have hurt me. Period. Fear: I continually have to renounce my right to be pitied and helpless, and instead trust and rely on a powerful, loving God. Shame: I am learning to abandon the perverse pleasure of beating myself up. Isolation: I can no longer be so arrogant as to think that I have unique problems that are not shared by any one else in the world.

3) Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to protect this desire, including spiritual reading, reaching out and calling others, prayer and meditation, physical care of your body, setting appropriate boundaries, going to meet-

ings, and refusing all lust hits as toxic?

The first two renewal questions are around discovery and desire. Now on to decision. Here, I still have plenty of growing to do. Spiritual reading: I do this most mornings briefly, but feel called to find times for extended reading and study.

Prayer/Meditation: sometimes this means choosing to pray instead of mindless TV or daydreaming.

Physical Care: I find this a tough challenge and I fall short. I must see exercise, eating right, getting enough sleep as part of "program".

Reaching Out: We are as sick as our secrets. I try to connect with someone within 24 hours if I experience anything significantly troubling or take a major lust hit. This derails the accumulation of "stuff" that leads to...

Refusing All Hits: no hit is a safe hit. I have finally, after years of wondering, found out how much lust I can afford: None.

Setting Boundaries: I'm learning to do this at work, church, life. This even applies to program.

Going to meetings: where I am motivated by others' success and sobered by those deep in the struggle. I would add, though it's not in the renewal as I've learned it, "Admitting when I'm wrong" (Step 10).

4) Do you realize that at the end of this 24 hours, you are free to continue with sobriety or to go another way? Or: the key word. Relapse (subtle or full-blown) is never impossible. Every

had at an AA meeting a few years ago. At my home group we had a member who suffered from grave emotional and mental difficulties, and who didn't seem to be benefiting much from not drinking. I no longer recall whether he was on or needed to be taking medication for his condition, but I remember his rage and threatening comments.

One evening he made direct threats against a member who had not yet arrived at the meeting, saying the man was the devil and should be killed. When I attempted to diffuse his anger, he threatened me. I immediately left the meeting room and called the police, telling them we were having a "function" at the church to protect the anonymity of the AA meeting, and a man there was threatening our members. When I went back to the meeting, I told the man the police were on their way. He had more to say, but did so as he was leaving the room.

At our next group conscience meeting, we voted to ban the member from our meeting. This was in keeping with our First Tradition, which states: "Our common welfare should come first..." Mindful of Tradition three, we agreed we were not banning him from AA. He was free to take his "desire to stop drinking" to any of the other AA meetings in the area, or start his own meeting.

The word was passed to him by one of our "bigger" members that if he returned to our group, the police would be called and charges of harassment

and intimidation would be filed against him by an individual member, not the AA group. This would keep the AA name out of public controversy and protect everyone's anonymity at the level of press, radio and TV, in keeping with Tradition 11.

Months later I met the member at a neighboring meeting. He acknowledged me and came over and shook my hand in a friendly manner. I almost didn't recognize him, given his pleasant demeanor. But I suspect his quieter manner had less to do with his experiences at my home group and more to do with the men at his new group, who let it be known the only call they would make for him if he got out of line at their meeting would be a call to the hospital.

Buddy S., Philadelphia, PA.

Member News

Program Tools:

The Daily Sobriety Renewal

My name is Bill; I'm a sexaholic, sober for four years and two months.

One of the most effective tools in my recovery has been the daily renewal. The renewal is a daily ritual in which two people in the program ask each other six challenging questions. By thoughtfully answering "yes" to each question, one is making a truly active choice to stay sober.

Four years ago, a veteran SA asked me to be his renewal partner. At first, it seemed to me to be a meaningless rit-

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Seventh Tradition

Akron, OH	150.31	Franklin, TN	73.00	San Diego IG, CA	41.25
Albuquerque, NM	26.60	Ft. Collins, CO	8.00	San Diego SACC	200.00
Alhambra, CA	25.00	Germany	530.00	Santa Barbara, CA	11.00
Ann Arbor, MI	25.00	Glen Ellyn, IL	49.00	Seattle, WA	81.48
Annapolis, MD	80.00	Glen Ellyn SACC	215.00	Savannah, GA	3.75
Atlanta, GA	105.00	Grand Rapids, MI	25.00	Seattle, WA	371.50
Beaver, PA	50.00	Greeley, CO	4.00	Seattle SACC	30.00
Beltsville, MD	130.00	Idaho Falls, ID	68.00	Silver Spring, MD	1,155.71
Binghamton, NY	30.00	Jersey Shore, NJ	5.00	So Barrington, IL	100.00
Birmingham, AL	70.00	Jerusalem, Israel	20.00	So Barrington SACC	80.00
Boston, MA	12.00	Kansas City, KS	107.67	Springfield, VA	68.00
Bozeman, MT	77.50	Knoxville, TN	30.00	Springfield SACC	30.00
Bryn Athyn, PA	222.00	Laguna Niguel, CA	10.00	St Louis, MO	50.00
Bryn Athyn SACC	100.00	Lemoore, CA	30.00	St Louis SACC	50.00
Camarillo, CA	215.00	Longwood, FL	25.00	Steubenville, OH	24.00
Canoga Park, CA	50.00	Manchester, NH	25.00	Syracuse IG, NY	150.00
Central VA IG	75.00	Mansfield, OH	162.50	Syracuse IG SACC	150.00
Centreville, VA	160.00	McLean, VA	150.00	Tacoma, WA	15.00
Champaign, IL	50.00	McLean SACC	20.00	Timonium, MD	117.00
Chicago IG	500.00	Midlothian, IL	30.00	Titusville, FL	37.84
Chicago IG SACC	500.00	Mill Creek, WA	24.00	Troy, MI	200.00
Chicago groups	440.00	Mt Clemens, MI	94.46	Vancouver, WA	43.00
Chicago grp SACC	175.00	Mountain View, CA	80.00	Vienna, VA	200.00
Chino, CA	100.00	Nashville IG, TN	1183.00	Villa Park, IL SACC	55.00
Chula Vista, CA	88.53	New England IG	53.76	Waldorf, MD	4.00
Cleveland July '99	1,154.60	North Hollywood, CA	50.00	Washington, DC	617.96
Cleveland '99 SACC	850.47	NYC	420.00	Washington DC SACC	57.75
Cochise, AZ	18.00	Painesville, OH	50.00	West LA, CA	280.84
Colorado Spgs, CO	716.75	Pasadena, CA	25.00	Wheeling, WV	31.00
Corona, CA	20.00	Penn Hills, PA	85.00	Wheeling/Steubenville IG	82.00
Crystal City VA	285.45	Phoenix, AZ	50.00	Wichita, KS	100.00
Daytona Beach, FL	45.00	Pittsburgh IG SACC	25.00	Willow Creek, IL	350.00
Daytona SACC	65.00	Pittsburgh Southside PA	90.00	Willow Creek SACC	159.00
Deaton, MD	20.00	Pittsburgh '98 Conference	80.05	Woodbridge, VA	128.00
Denver, CO	115.00	Portland, OR	45.00	Yardley, PA	260.00
Downers Grove, IL	80.00	Redondo Beach, CA	46.25	Yorba Linda, CA	50.00
Elk Grove Village, IL	284.00	Riverside, CA	25.00		
Elk Grove Village SACC	133.00	Rochester, NY	588.06	Group Total	14,558.11
Erie, PA	32.00	Rockford, IL	30.00	SACC Total	3,040.22
Essington, PA	49.00	Roswell, GA	40.00	SA Internet Total	130.00
Fairfax, VA	119.00	Salem, OR	32.50	Individual Total	780.00
Fairfax SACC	20.00	Salem SACC	30.00		
Falls Church SACC	10.00	Salt Lake City, UT	80.77	Grand Total	18,503.33

Donations for Third Quarter

(“Member News” continued from page 13)

ual, but I have found it helps me each day to decide whether or not I am serious about being lust-free and following God. I am still doing this "meaningless ritual" with this person each weekday.

I have recently realized that the six questions also progressively parallel my journey in recovery. Here are my thoughts on these crucial, honesty-provoking, uncomfortable questions.

1) Are you willing to admit you are powerless over lust and sexual acting out, just for today? The phrase just for today is good news and bad news. It means that I need to focus just on today, not tomorrow, next week, the rest of the year. However, it also means that tomorrow, I must choose again to trudge the path; today's determination does not carry over. That's why it's a daily renewal.

Are you willing? My process of recognition of powerlessness was not immediate. At first it was "Are you willing to consider that...." I did this by coming to meetings. Then it was "Are you willing to take others' word that?" (by starting the program). Next it was "Are you willing to find out if...." This was done by a written formal first step which showed irrefutable evidence of a pervasive, extensive problem.

After this, admission of powerlessness was and continues to be undeniable. Finally this question recognizes that I have two problems: lust and sex-

ual actions. It's not just a behavioral (doing) problem, but a mental one as well. The mental/physical connection is critical. All day sexual fantasies had to go in order to prevent acting out. By not fueling the fire with my mind, I was less inclined to take steps to engage in lustful activities. Likewise, by ruling out masturbation as an acceptable option, I was less inclined to lose myself in fantasy. Why bother if I wasn't going to act on it?

2) Do you desire sobriety for the next 24 hours: freedom from the actions or obsessions of lust, freedom from fear, resentment, shame, and isolation?

Sobriety is defined as a two-fold freedom. a) From actions and obsession: Before true recovery, I sometimes could control some physical behaviors but would have to desperately fight the obsession. The "victories" were barely worth it; I was still obsessed and lust-filled. I had to raise the bar of expectation from near misses and close escapes to true freedom as described in the promises of AA's Big Book. b) Underlying passions and emotions: fear, resentment, shame, and isolation. I call them the big four. They both fuel the addiction and are caused by it (a vicious cycle).

Through Step work, I dealt with these four problems. In Step Four, as laid out in the AA Big Book, I explicitly reveal resentment and fear. Isolation gets blatantly rejected by doing Step Five

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