

Essay®

A Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

P.O. Box 111910
Nashville, TN 37222

2000, Issue One

How to Contact SA

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Rest in peace

Jesse L. of Bozeman, Montana, died February 24, 2000. Although noted in many fields, he is remembered in SA for his devotion to the SA fellowship.

With many years experience in Twelve Step programs, he took the first step on the road home the day he heard about SA. He spent the next 17+ sober years writing, speaking, sponsoring, and sharing the message in his own inimitable style. He had a gentle way of conveying the harshest truths in a way that made them easier to bear.

He dodged numerous opportunities to die younger from complicated health problems. He tackled each new day and the hardest projects with relish — even the final one, of learning how to die well.

He was speaking on the phone to a member from New Jersey when he died. Rest in peace, Jesse. We will miss you.

In This Issue

Three articles in memory of the late Jesse L., recapturing the experience, strength and hope he shared with this fellowship --
“It Was All in My Head,” Why Stop Lusting?,” and “Freedom from Lust.”

A letter from a member -- “Goodbye, Addiction.”

Part 1 of a report to the fellowship from SA’s General Delegate Assembly.

How to contact SA's trusted servants.

On SA service work in a correction facility -- “Just Like Me.”

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

Part 2 of Roy K.’s experience, strength and hope entitled “A New Look at Lust Recovery.”

Part 2 of a report to the fellowship from SA’s General Delegate Assembly

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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]

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

July 22, 2000, Speaker Jam, Cranford, NJ, sponsored by NJ Intergroup. Ten SA speakers. Contact Tom A. at 908/3513870 or Leon M. at 908/756-4827.

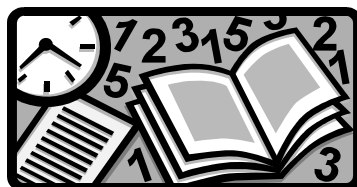
September 9, 2000, SA One Day Workshop, Pittsburgh PA, sponsored by Tri States Intergroup. Theme: Victory Through Surrender, One Day At A Time. Contact Pittsburgh at 724/224-0877.

September 29 - 30, 2000, SA / S-Anon Marathon, Scarborough, ON, Canada. sponsored by SA Toronto. Theme: And the Healing Began. Contact Joe at 416/696-0239.

September 29 - October 1, 2000, SA Retreat, White Rock, BC, sponsored by SA Vancouver. Contact SA Vancouver at 604/290-9643.

October 20 - 22, 2000, 2000 Chicago, LaSalle Manor Retreat Center, Plano, IL, sponsored by Chicago Intergroup. Contact Chicago at 630/415-0341.

October 27 - 29, 2000, SA / S-Anon Convention, Waterford, Ireland, sponsored by SA Eire. Theme: Program of Action. Contact Dara at 42 9667958.



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.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

LAWRENCE M., *Essay* Editor

Lawrence M., *Essay* editor for the last ten years, has decided to turn to other projects.

We would like to express appreciation for his time, talents, and dedication. He has seen the *Essay* through many changes, turbulent times and smooth sailing, with a gentle wit, a sure eye for the misplaced comma, and a gift for the well-made phrase.

Thank you, Lawrence, for your service to SA and *Essay*.

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.

November 3 - 5, 2000, Family Reunion Retreat, Wichita, KS. Also the South Midwest Regional Meeting. For information, call 316/942-9041.

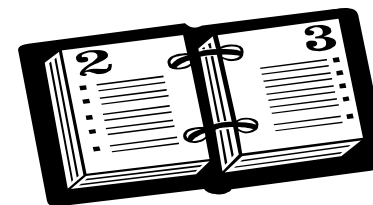
November 3 - 5, 2000, German speaking convention SA / S-Anon, sponsored by AS Deutschland. Contact Thomas at 07243 719928.

January 19 - 21, 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Los Angeles, CA, sponsored by SCAI. Contact Ted P. at 310/454-1516 or Gary W. at 909/865-1645.

****Please note that this is a change of dates for the International Conference.****

July 13 - 15, 2001, SA / S-Anon International Conference, Washington DC, sponsored by MD/DC/VA. Contact MD?DC?VA 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.]



What it was like, what happened, and what it's like now -- the story of the late Jesse L. [Reprinted from MEMBER STORIES--1989.]

It Was All in My Head

Sex was the dominant thing in my mind from my earliest memory. I was deeply obsessed about what was under my cousins' dresses from the time I was in first or second grade. Lots of kids tried to play doctor, but for me it was an intense preoccupation. When an older boy taught me to masturbate at eleven or twelve, I really got into that and into the fantasies I needed for my masturbation.

It soon got so the high point of each day would be when night would come. Then I could get into bed, parade my sex fantasy through my head, and masturbate. I had slept in a bedroom with my younger brother. When the masturbation started, I moved into another bedroom to be free to masturbate. This left my youngest brother deserted and alone.

Masturbation stepped up in frequency to three to five times a day. I kept trying to stop, but there was no stopping. I found a piece of pornography and hid it up in the haymow of our small barn in that little town. I would disappear from my friends and my brother and sneak off to the haymow to masturbate.

I didn't dare ask the girls in our small

town for dates and asked girls from other towns. But the minute I would catch someone, I lost interest in her and chased another one. And I would often be chasing two or more at the same time.

This pattern continued through high school, the Air Force, on into college, and up to the time I got married. I was very attentive to my wife during courtship. I wooed her with flowers, cultural events, plays, symphonies, and hockey and basketball games. But the minute we got married, my attentions to her stopped. I switched addictions and became a workaholic. I lost myself in my work, my hunting, and other hobbies for twenty years. There were only brief times when my sexual addiction flared up.

I had a heart attack so I changed careers and became a college teacher. Then I had another heart attack and faced heart surgery. Everything started to change. I lay in the hospital waiting to be strong enough for surgery. In my fear I reached out to the young nurses for comfort, just as I had done five years earlier in the hospital after my heart attack. There were long, intense discussions. Sometimes there would be three or four nurses in the room at one time. There would be wine parties late in the evening. The nursing supervisor became suspicious that something sexual was going on, but there wasn't, on the surface. I was outraged at her suspicions of me.

After surgery, things settled down for

*It's lust,
it's what's inside
your head that is
killing you*

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.

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.)

about two years before erupting again. I was putting out sexual stuff, and my women students started coming to my office and responding to it. I got more and more sexual with more and more students. A few months after that, I had surgery for what was thought to be cancer and was told that I would be dead in three weeks. The fear was overwhelming, my skin felt like it was burning with the waves of fear. It turned out the doctors were wrong and the “inoperable” tumor went away. I came home and immediately sought my comfort in sexual contact with students. I told myself that, because there was no intercourse, what I was doing wasn't wrong. But I would wake up in the middle of the night with a terrible fear. I prayed for the strength to stop but couldn't.

There is a deep love and closeness in our SA group and in the fellowship. Here, I'm home.

I got so out of control with my students that I found a way to resign my teaching job. But in my business travels I got into a number of affairs. An intense affair, coupled with sex with other women at the same time, finally forced me to see how powerless and out of control I was. I gave up the affair and all sexual relationships and gradually reduced the flirtations and coming-on to women I met. But I still used the mental videotapes of those past experiences as tranquilizers to put me to sleep at night or as a comfort when I was troubled. And I didn't see anything wrong with what I was doing even though I had been in another Twelve Step program for 17 years.

Finally, my wife got enough recovery

to be able to see she couldn't stand it any more and told me to get in SA or get out. I called the number she gave me. The man said, “It's lust, it's what's in your head that is killing you.” That was the greatest relief in my life. I had had a sponsor with many years experience, yet he and I couldn't figure out what was wrong. He used to tell me that people couldn't get that program if they were on another mood-altering chemical, like tranquilizers or marijuana.

Here I was using the strongest drug for me, sexual excitement, and I didn't even know it. My lust had been my dependable friend for so long, I hadn't had the slightest suspicion it was my problem.

Because I had the Twelve Step program, I knew I never needed

to lust again with God's help, one moment at a time. I was so sick of what lusting had cost me, I immediately did everything I could think of. Every time lust came, I asked God to take it away. If it didn't go away, I would recite a prayer. I would keep reciting that prayer until the lust was gone. I did my First Step to the group right away and felt an overwhelming relief. Immediately my wife saw a change in me. She said, “You aren't stiff and guarded anymore. You're finally the man I married, but couldn't find after our marriage.” Just a month later, a son and a daughter who were counselors both said, “Dad, you're different.”

I found that because of my sexual

(Continued on page 6)

("In My Head" continued from page 5)

thinking, I was never able to be a husband to my wife, a father to my children, or a friend to my brother and other men and women.

My time in recovery has been spent going to meetings, working the Steps, reaching out to others, and practicing these principles in all my affairs. Close and loving relationships developed with men first and much later with a few women. I'm gradually coming out of my isolation into intimacy. There is a growing love and intimacy in our marriage. The years of abuse have severely impaired my sexual functioning, but that's all right. The growing strengths in other aspects of the marriage help make up for that.

I love this program. I put it ahead of everything else because it saved my life by helping guide me towards the real connection. There is a deep love and closeness in our SA group and in the fellowship. Here I'm home.

Good-bye, Addiction

Dear Addiction,

Thank you for being there for all these years, and for being a friend to me when I felt alone. Thank you for being a coping mechanism and a safe place I could go when I felt bad, lonely, upset, or depressed. You always delivered and made things better.

Thank you for helping me deal with the pain of my father dying, and the loneliness I felt as a child. You were a friend in the truest sense of the word.

But you didn't tell me about the guilt and shame. You didn't tell me about the isolation and more pain. You didn't tell me you were going to put me in bondage. You didn't tell me that the pain you would create would be worse than any I could feel from life's difficulties. You didn't warn me that you wanted to take over and own me. You didn't tell me this would cause destruction in my marriage. You didn't tell me this would harm my relationship with God, and make me feel far from Him. You wanted to be God, didn't you? You didn't tell me this would ruin my view of women and healthy sexuality.

So, now it is time to say good-bye. I'm through with depending on you, only to be let down even more when you didn't come through. I'm ready to move on with my life, and learn how to have healthy activities and relationships that are real. I'm ready for a full relationship with the real God—not you. I want to build a real relationship with my wife and begin to heal some of the pain we've caused her.

You don't own me, and I will not be a slave to you anymore.

Good-bye, Addiction.

George L., Chicago, IL

From the simple kit of spiritual tools -- the

Seventh Tradition Donations from Fourth Quarter

Albuquerque, NM	21.00	Geneva, NY	33.00	Rochester Intergroup	60.06
Anaheim, CA	26.90	Glen Ellyn, IL	391.00	Roswell, GA	41.00
Anaheim SACC	100.00	Herndon, VA	222.00	Salem, OR	10.00
Ann Arbor, MI	25.00	Homestead, FL	15.00	Salem SACC	10.00
Ashland, VA	33.39	Idaho Falls, ID	32.00	Salt Lake City, UT	86.32
Atlanta, GA	442.62	Ithaca, NY	10.00	San Diego IG, CA	195.00
Atlanta SACC	21.00	Jacksonville, FL	100.00	Seattle, WA	626.50
Baltimore, MD	45.00	Jersey City, NJ	35.00	Seattle SACC	340.00
Bannockburn, IL	150.00	Jerusalem, Israel	45.00	Seattle Conference	30.00
Barrington, IL	100.00	Kirkland, WA	138.15	Seattle Conf. SACC	22.00
Barrington SACC	200.00	Kirkland SACC	138.15	Silver Spring, MD	389.50
Beaver, PA	47.00	Knoxville, TN	45.00	Springfield, VA	323.80
Beltsville, MD	60.00	LA Olympic, CA	50.00	Springfield SACC	70.20
Binghamton, NY	16.75	Laguna Niguel, CA	10.00	St Louis, MO	75.00
Birmingham, AL	109.00	Leesburg, VA	107.00	Stafford, VA	40.30
Camarillo, CA	110.00	Lomita, CA SACC	50.00	Steubenville / Wheeling IG	60.00
Cambridge, MA	15.00	Long Beach, CA	200.00	Syracuse IG, NY	100.00
Canoga Park, CA	169.00	Long Beach SACC	142.00	Syracuse IG SACC	250.00
Central VA IG	25.00	Long Island IG	491.00	Timonium, MD	173.00
Centreville, VA	84.00	Manchester, NH	28.00	Toledo, OH	50.00
Centreville SACC	104.00	McLean, VA	52.00	Troy, MI	550.00
Cerritos SACC	87.00	McLean SACC	9.00	Tucson, AZ	250.00
Champaign, IL	36.75	Mid Hudson Valley, NY	25.00	Twin Cities IG, MN	177.00
Chicago IG	360.00	Mill Creek, WA	60.00	Twin Falls, ID	15.00
Chicago IG SACC	105.00	Milwaukee, WI	199.06	Vancouver, WA	25.00
Chino, CA	50.00	Montreal, Canada	179.34	Vienna, VA	100.00
Chino SACC	173.00	Nashville, TN	900.00	Vienna SACC	40.00
Cochise, AZ	20.00	Northeast Ohio	150.00	Villa Park, IL SACC	18.00
Colorado Spgs, CO	248.75	Northeast Ohio SACC	500.00	Washington, DC	1091.75
Columbus, OH	200.00	New York City	26.50	Washington DC SACC	45.00
Concord, MA	24.00	NYC Intergroup	200.00	Wheeling, WV	58.00
Cork, Ireland	110.86	New York Metro IG	350.00	Wichita, KS	16.00
Corona, CA	60.00	Ogden, UT	50.00	Willow Creek, IL	139.00
Crystal City VA	285.45	Omaha, NE	25.00	Willow Creek SACC	131.00
Dallas, TX	120.00	Orlando, FL	25.00	Woodbridge, VA	119.00
Davenport, IA	50.00	Painesville, OH	50.00	Woodbridge SACC	21.00
Daytona Beach, FL	44.40	Palm Desert, CA	50.00	Woodstock, IL	75.00
Denver, CO	322.00	Pasadena, CA SACC	108.00	Yardley, PA	214.00
Downers Grove, IL	70.00	Penn Hills, PA	352.00	Yorba Linda, CA	70.00
Eastern PA IG	200.00	Philadelphia IG	56.00		
Elk Grove Village, IL	45.00	Philadelphia SACC	56.00	Group Total	15,639.77
Elk Grove Village SACC	30.00	Phoenix, AZ	229.00	SACC Total	4044.85
Erie, PA	77.53	Pittsburgh IG SACC	25.00	Individual Total	3348.45
Essington, PA	96.00	Pittsburgh Autumn Conf.	95.00		
Euclid, OH	125.00	Portland, OR	184.00	Grand Total	23,033.07
Fairfax, VA	86.00	Portland IG	340.50		
Falls Church SACC	100.00	Portland SACC	209.50		
Federal Way, WA	25.00	Redmond, WA	25.00		
Federal Way SACC	25.00	Regina, Canada	28.00		
Fresno, CA	100.00	Rochester, NY	434.04		

SA Financial Snapshot

1999 Year End		2000 Budget	
Contributions	71,731.56	Contributions	75,000.00
SACC	8732.81	SACC	11,300.00
Literature Sales	95,481.08	Literature Sales	100,000.00
Discounts	-13,131.17	Discounts	-14,000.00
Refunds	-146.55	Refunds	-200.00
Interest	829.94	Interest	900.00
Essay	6,639.20	Essay	6,780.00
Total Revenues	170,136.87	Total Revenues	179,780.00
Bank Charges	786.78	Bank Charges	900.00
Credit Card Fees	978.73	Credit Card Fees	1200.00
Depreciation	1,613.10	Depreciation	1800.00
Conference Fees	855.00	Conference Fees	1530.00
Interest Expense	1.04	Interest Expense	100.00
Liability Insurance	373.00	Liability Insurance	400.00
Legal	902.67	Legal	2000.00
Accounting	2,800.00	Accounting	2000.00
Literature expense	18,768.04	Literature Expense	20,000.00
Payroll	55,911.43	Payroll	61,300.00
Payroll Tax	4,224.05	Payroll Tax	5,550.00
Pension	5,591.15	Pension	6,130.00
Postage & Freight	14,565.80	Postage & Freight	14,000.00
Prudent Reserve	12,000.00	Prudent Reserve	2,100.00
Office Expense	3,309.39	Office Expense	3,000.00
Printing	1,344.97	Printing	500.00
Rent	6,820.00	Rent	7200.00
Maintenance	307.52	Maintenance	800.00
Supplies	1,885.89	Supplies	3,300.00
Tapes	773.83	Tapes	1,800.00
Sales Tax	984.92	Sales Tax	1,200.00
Taxes & Licenses	61.46	Taxes & Licenses	100.00
Telephone	11,480.58	Telephone	17,000.00
Travel	21,962.03	Travel	27,720.00
Total Expenses	167,581.38	Total Expenses	179,780.00

message of the late Jesse L.

[From his pamphlet to the newcomer.]

Why Stop Lusting?

Most of us in Sexaholics Anonymous (SA) were driven to total despair by our destructive sexual behavior. We found as soon as we came here that our lust was the problem. It was hard to believe. How could it be the problem? And, how could we live without its comfort? It didn't make sense. But we had no choice.

Our despair made us turn to recovering sexaholics, the first people we had ever met who had been able to stop acting out. Their gut level honesty told us that. Their shining faces, free of guilt, backed it up. They had the answer we had to find.

Why can't I lust, at least a little?

We quickly learned that we were like the alcoholic. We couldn't take that first drink of lust, no matter how small it seemed. The first drink of lust always led to the next drink. Quickly we became drunk with lust. Then we had to act out! Nothing could stop us.

Finally we came to SA and learned it was lust that was the real source of our problems. We thought we could lust and still be able to stop acting out our destructive sexual behavior. We saw that lusting and acting out were connected.

We had tried to stop acting out. But, we were already so deep into lust we couldn't stop. We had already gone too far. We found that stopping our lust was where we had to start. If we stopped lusting, it wouldn't be nearly as hard to stop acting out.

Lusting was like being on a toboggan run. Once we were too far down the run we couldn't stop. The only way to be sure we could stop acting out was to go right to the start of the process, our first drink of lust. But we knew we were totally powerless over lust. It controlled our whole lives. How could we possibly stop? We had tried thousands and thousands of times.

How can I stop lusting if I am totally powerless?

That's where some power greater than ourselves comes in. We call it our Higher Power or God, as we understand Him. Our addiction proves to us that we lack the power to stop. Then we see that we have to give up our right to lust. We accept that others may be able to handle lust. We have to admit finally that we can't handle it.

Lust kept taking us deeper and deeper into things we promised ourselves we would never do. We said if we did those things we would finally do something to stop. But we found we were hooked and couldn't stop. So we had to give up our right to lust just as the alcoholic gives up

(Continued on page 8)

(*“Why Stop Lusting” continued from page 7*)
the right to drink. For us one drink is too many and a thousand aren't enough. We stop fighting lust. We give up. We surrender. Only with our Higher Power's or God's help can we stop lusting-- one day at a time.

How do I get that help?

One way is the instant we see ourselves lusting, we ask for God's help to stop. We keep asking for that help until our obsession with lust goes away. We find that not giving lust our full attention keeps lust from turning us on internally and becoming our first drink.

It is as if the front door of our house has a glass panel. We see lust come to the door. But there is no handle on lust's side of the door. We have to open the door to lust or it can't come in. Lust comes to us so often and we are so vulnerable to it because we are addicted. We pray to some power greater than ourselves to help us not go to the door. As long as we pray for help, lust can't get in. Eventually, at the end of some prayer, we look up and see lust has gone. We found we could always pray longer than our lust would last. If lust comes back quickly again as it does so much at first, we pray again. At first we need to pray a lot.

Another way is to pray for the person we are lusting for. We pray that God will bless them with all the good things we want for ourselves. We stop making them an object for our lust and start pray-

ing for them. This takes them away from our fantasy and makes them real human beings like us.

A third way is the prayer used by one of our early members: God, may I find in you what I am looking for in that other person.

We know these methods work because most sexaholics get sober using them. But there are other solutions you will find from others or be inspired to come up with on your own, as you come to have the firm desire to stop lusting and seek help from one more powerful than you.

We have to give up our right to lust.

Why is it so important to stop lusting?

From our earliest days, we thought lust was our friend. We used it as a refuge to escape from our pain. Once we start lusting we keep on lusting and then act out. We can't stop ourselves. Our internal body chemistry is totally turned on. Our body is screaming for more of our drug.

Because we are so powerless over lust, and because our system is so sensitized to lust, we must not take that first drink. We must immediately ask for help. A simple prayer is "God, help me!" That works even if we don't believe in God. When lust doesn't go away right away, we go to a longer prayer like the Our Father or the Serenity Prayer.

It doesn't matter that lust doesn't leave

Report of the General Delegate Assembly

January 7, 2000 in Nashville, Tennessee

Morning Session

The morning session of the General Delegate Assembly was a workshop on AA's Twelve Concepts for World Service, presented by AA old-timer and trusted servant, George D. The following notes are adapted for SA from materials handed out at this workshop.

- 1) SA groups have final responsibility and authority for SA services as a whole.
- 2) The groups meet this responsibility and maintain their final authority by delegating responsibility and authority to representatives to a General Delegate Assembly.

3) The (delegates) members of the General Delegate Assembly will establish general policy, but will delegate responsibility for doing the work to the Board of Trustees, to Committees, and to their SA Central Office workers.

4) When we delegate responsibility (ask someone to do some work in SA), we give them authority to make decisions about how to do the job. Bill W of AA often asked, "If you don't trust someone to do the job right, why do you give them the job?"

Group representatives or General Assembly delegates are trusted servants. That means that they are trusted to use their best SA conscience to make decisions affecting all of SA; they are not simply messengers obeying instructions.

5) In SA service we should always take special care to be certain that the rights of the minority receive not just protection, but unusual (special) protection. But, we must also be careful not to allow what Bill W. called the "tyranny of the minority" to forever prevent us from doing what we need to do.

6) A General Delegate Assembly should be willing to work very hard to achieve substantial unanimity in all important matters.

7) A group conscience is not just a vote. It is a process by which SA members, working together, seek knowledge of God's will for us to better carry the SA message--just as in the Eleventh Step we seek knowledge of God's will for us as individuals. No one wins; no one loses, if we have honestly sought the authority of a loving God in reaching our decision.

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New Groups

Durham, NC	Philadelphia, PA
Frederick, MD	Princeton, NJ
Friendship, NY	Tacoma WA
Jackson, MS	Trenton, MI
Naples, FL	Windsor, ON

How to Contact Your Delegate

Delegates

Mitch A. North Midwest Region
 CANADA: Saskatchewan, Manitoba
 USA: IA, IL, MI, MN, ND, NE, SD, WI, WY

Art B. Southeast Region
 USA: AL, FL, GA, IN, KY, MS, NC, PR, SC, TN

Erich L. Mid-Atlantic Region
 USA: DC, DE, MD, NJ, OH, PA, VA, WV

Michael O. Northeast Region
 CANADA: NB, NS, PN, ON, PEI, PQ
 USA: CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT

Peter T. Southwest Region
 USA: AZ, CA, HI, NV, UT

Tony VV Northwest Region
 CANADA: ALTA, BC, NWT, Yukon, NWT
 USA: AK, ID, MT, OR

Joe W. South Midwest Region
 USA: AR, CO, KS, LA, MO, NM, OK, TX

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 German speaking countries

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 SA
 PO Box 111910
 Nashville TN 37222-1910
 Phone: 615/331-6230

right away. Lust can't turn us on internally without our full attention. When we are praying, lust isn't getting our full attention and turning us on so that we feel we have to act out. We aren't building up the pressure any more. Through the help of our honesty with our fellow sexaholics and the help of God, we can be free of lust today.

What if lust comes right back? It's not a problem. The God of our program is everything or is nothing. We keep praying until lust is gone again. In times of serious lust attacks, we might have to pray almost unceasingly. That seems strange to us at first, but it works.

What do we do after we stop?

That's a good question. At a deeper level we come to see that lust blocks us from life. Lust is the wall we built that kept God and others outside. That's why we were caught in our isolation and loneliness. But that is an issue we can't fully understand or appreciate yet. First, we have to break the endless cycle of lusting and acting out. Until that cycle is broken we are so hopelessly drunk and caught up in lust that we can't see anything else.

First we need to get sober from lust. Then we can start picking up the pieces of our broken life and putting them back together again.

But there are some big rewards that we get right away. The first day we stop lusting we start having integrity. We become a part of the fellowship of Sexaholics Anonymous. We discover we don't have to hide our dirty secret any longer. Our shame diminishes as we share with others what we really think and do. Now we can lift our heads and look the world in the eye. We have freedom from lust, something we never had before because we did not know what an enemy of life lust is.

Lust is the wall we built that kept God and others outside.

In the first thirty days of being lust-free, we see something radical happen to many people's faces. Some members called it the "SA shine." You will be able to see it in the faces of your fellow sober sexaholics. It will be especially apparent when you compare their faces with the troubled faces of the newcomers who walk through the door.

After thirty days in the program, an early member was told by one of his adult children, "Dad, you're different!" We begin to see that what we thought was such a secret about us was plainly written all over our faces for the whole world to see. That dark face was your face and mine when we were lost in lust again. We can keep praying it away. Our disease is patient, so lust keeps coming back. Our prayers can be more powerful.

Our increasing freedom from lust is that we are more ready to pray each time,

(Continued on page 10)

("Why stop Lusting" continued from page 9) and lust comes back less frequently than it did in our early days. We have to start where we are, at the beginning. We start praying away lust. You must never forget that you aren't alone any more. All of us in SA are with you. All of us started where you are and succeeded through the help of this program and our fellow members. You need never be alone again.

He trudged the Road of Happy Destiny -- the experience, strength and hope of the late Jesse L.

[Reprinted excerpts from Jesse's talk at the International SA Conference at Nashville in July 1993. For information on how to obtain the entire talk, contact SA International Central Office at (615) 331-6230.]

Freedom from Lust

Thank you very much. It is beautiful to be with you. I have looked for this opportunity for some time and now it is here.

I am Jesse L, a grateful sexaholic. I did not lust yesterday. I have been lust-free for a goodly number of days. These days add up to 3,886 lust-free days. For that freedom from lust I am never sufficiently grateful. Because of 17 years of Twelve-Step life before I got to SA, my years in SA have been focused primarily on the Twelfth Step. I reworked the first nine Steps on SA in my first three months. Since then, as Chuck C. and Clancy have recommended, I have spent my life on the last three Steps, principally searching only for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry that out. This work has shown me that lust is the central issue in my life.

All sexual sobriety is what happens when you are lust-free. You can get sexual sobriety and still be lusting but it isn't worth much. The most extreme example was the guy who, long ago in our group with a very generous IQ, convinced himself that not masturbating meant that he was sexually sober. So he would masturbate to the point of ejaculation and stop so that he could be sexually sober. That was his technical sexual sobriety and it is the most extreme example of technical sexual sobriety I have ever found. But he kept slipping for some reason.

His exaggerated use of lust while staying technically sober by his interpretation of our program shows us our real enemy, which is lust. If you play with any lust, it is playing with the tiger and that tiger will kill you. If you stay lust-free and stop lusting instantly when it comes, then sexual sobriety is inevitable for you.

So the minute we are ready for the prayer "God help us," God works perfectly and lust is powerless before that prayer of "God help us."

I believe the spiritual sickness of lust is wanting sexual stimulation at that moment instead of what God is offering us. Later we come to see that lust is wanting anything other than what God is offering us each moment. My story tells how lust killed my life. And my story tells how stopping all lust instantly and seeing lust for what it really is has led me to a new life that I didn't even know existed, to say nothing of knowing it was possible for me.

To me this program is only about one thing--lust. All the rest is just details.

Some of you may be thinking about corresponding with a sexaholic in prison or starting an SA meeting in a correctional facility. We hope this member's story will give you confidence that such work can benefit your recovery in unexpected ways.

Just Like Me

In January of 2000, our group helped initiate a group at a State Correctional Institution. It has become my weekly meeting, because it is closer than other outside meetings I could attend.

The meeting was requested by a few inmates who are taking responsibility for keeping the meeting going. They are doing a great job leading the meetings, planning topics, confronting issues that arise, and inviting new guests. There are three of us from the outside that attend on a weekly basis – two others and myself.

We meet on a Sexual Offenders wing (Unit D) of the prison, so right now those are the only ones who can attend. We average 12 inmates, and each one is taking this very seriously. Others have come to check us out. And because of the sobriety definition, many of the on staff counselors are taking note, and seeing changes in these inmates' lives.

We just finished reading and discussing the Sobriety Definition -- a huge eye opener! Our current readings have focused on First Step work. Next week one of our men from the outside is going to give his First Step as an example of how it's done (imperfectly).

As we were leaving the meeting last week, one of my fellow members asked, "So how do you feel?" I told him, "I feel both content and scared to death." Many of the inmates are in for long-term sentences, rape, incest, etc. I feel that we are on the cutting edge of life, and my seriousness in my own sobriety has never been so high. This has all been a blessing. I feel outside meetings will never be the same. My co-dependent side wants me to go to meetings to change them. But as I've sat in meetings behind six locked doors, with men who are just like me, I realize that "but for the grace of God go I." I am not changing them -- God, through them, is changing me!

When these inmates, many of whom are facing ten plus years in lock down, talk sobriety, they are dead serious. For them to get 30 days is amazing; 60 days astounding; and longer is incredible.

I just wanted to give a report of the exciting things that are happening in this neck of the woods, and to encourage others to find a meeting in a prison if possible.

My life will never be the same.

Joe K., PA

NOTE: If you would like to explore this avenue of service, you may contact the SA Corrections Committee (SACC) at
Address: SACC, P.O. Box 283,
Bellevue, WA 98009-0283
E-mail: SACC@sa.org
Phone: 425/653-1613

("Freedom" continued from page 17)

God is offering me at this moment. That's life at its highest. There isn't anything greater than that. Now, you are all used to it. You all experience it regularly, you just didn't understand quite how radical it was. And you experience it, each of you, in your meetings. When you are in that meeting there isn't hardly a wandering thought in that meeting. And then we gradually take that moment-by-moment awareness we practice in our meetings and we carry it on in all the rest of our life outside the meetings.

There is a line in The Problem that says, "we went for the connection that had the magic because it bypassed intimacy and true union." But we were looking for the magic. Do you remember any of you, looking for that magic? I've got good news for you; I've got great news for you. One of the most beautiful lines in the Big Book of AA says, just ahead of the promises, "Before we are half way through . . ." Well, I must be at that time it talks about because by now I've found the real connection and the real magic. In the last three days, and I mention them most specifically because we have shared them together, I have been experiencing that magic. As I have been moving among you these three days I have had the watchful eye of the hawk for those of you who are carrying God's gifts for me. As we caught each other's eye, almost all the time I was able to receive the gift you

had for me. It could have been a loving glance, an appreciative smile, a recognition of another of God's children. It could have been some gift you had to give me. It could have been you giving me the gift of allowing me to serve you in some way. So that is the real magic. It is the real gold, not the fool's gold that you and I spent our lifetime chasing. As one great spiritual man said, the world is its own magic.

I have come to believe that way deep inside us is the ego and a razor's edge away from it is that whole total life of the spirit there in us waiting to be discovered. And the way I found it was by pursuing a lust-free life. With your help and in your company I came to this new land.

Now, all of a sudden I wake up to find myself at the place I had asked the Reverend about at age 17, fifty years ago: The place where the something more is. I believe now that there is something more and I have found it and I know where it is and it is right here with you.

So this is what I have been doing as I have been walking among you here is living this new life that you gave me. I've been receiving all your gifts and now there is a new bunch of golden threads between me and each of you that will last forever more.

**Jesse L.
Bozeman, MT**

Lust is the only issue, sexual sobriety is the inevitable result. Lust robbed me of real life from age seven to age fifty-seven. Lust cost me fifty years of life. No wonder I wanted to stop all lusting the minute you told me that what I thought was my life-long friend was really my enemy. No one had told me that before and only your special ability and knowledge as a fellow man or woman sexaholic could reveal the enemy that was lurking beneath the guise of a friend. It's like a spy novel. Your most special agent is a spy for the enemy and you must kill him immediately.

I had never suspected him, lust, so no wonder I was immediately grateful to you for the good news. And I am never sufficiently grateful. And most important of all, since you came to me ten years ago and told me who the enemy was, this fellowship has given me the safe haven where I could seek a lust-free life.

As I have progressed down your path, I have found that a lust-free path has led me to a life of beauty and joy I had sought since a young man. When I was seventeen I went to our young Baptist minister. I had been baptized at twelve and became more and more aware of the contradictions of church life. Our minister was a very religious young man and I loved being in his church. But I said to that pastor, "Reverend, there's got to be something more." Now I know what that something more is.

Our program is one of attraction rather than promotion. It is so significant that

you asked me to speak on the Twelfth Step because in my Twelfth Step work in Bozeman, my life was an almost complete failure in attracting people to that other Twelve Step program. I couldn't attract anybody. I couldn't carry the message in my own town through my own life. My words in my books were beautiful and powerful. My life wasn't beautiful and powerful. The people who read my books were attracted to the program in droves but the people who read the big book of my life didn't want it. I watched people my books had attracted start meetings that grew astronomically. Yet, when my wife dropped out of the flourishing Bozeman group, the membership dropped way down and it just barely stayed alive for the next five years when I was in that program. So I had five years of failure in my life in Twelve Stepping in another program. That was one thing that was making me ready.

The other thing was a volcano of sexual addiction that blew up in my face in 1969 and 1970. And my addiction blew up while I was still trying to practice that other Twelve Step program. I would ask God to help me each morning and slip again. I would wake up each night with fire in my belly wondering why I couldn't stop and seeing that my whole life was on the line each day. I got into affairs. As I slipped down that toboggan slide into hell, I violated every canon and every honor and everything about me. I had no integrity in the beginning of the addiction and I

(Continued on page 12)

*Those who don't
lust, stay sober.
Those who lust,
don't stay sober.*

*If you play
with lust, it is
playing with
the tiger and
that tiger will
kill you.*

(“Freedom from Lust” continued from pg. 11)
had nothing but shame and horror at the end.

In July of 1976 in a Westwood, California bookstore I had a deep awakening that paved the way to the real awakening that was to come seven long years later. I had gone to spend three days with a woman I had been having an affair with. But in that early evening insight, I saw all of a sudden that I loved my wife more than anyone in the world. I saw that she was the person I most wanted to be with. I saw that I had to break off the affair with this woman a day early and go back home and try to learn how to be a man and how to be responsible. That was in late July of 1976. So I had white-knuckle sobriety without you and without the secret.

My wife thought I was trying to torture her to death. She had recovery in another program and a new way of life. I knew there was something wrong in my marriage and with women but I didn't know what it was. In March of 1983, we were in Phoenix for the winter. There was a sex addict minister in some kind of recovery going around telling from the pulpit his wild tales about his descent into hell as a sexual addict. And boy was that a spectacular tale! At the end of his addiction he had progressed to the point where he was looking out over his congregation deciding what woman in that congregation he was going to have sex with that night. He would go to a motel in his little town and check in with her, so he

was just screaming to be caught. That shows how the path to idiocy goes.

Well, that story was the talk of the town. "Wow, did you hear about him?" The story was all over Phoenix. So, of course my wife heard about this story and saw the parallels to what she had earlier suspected about me. As for me, I didn't see that the story applied to me at all, because I wasn't acting out as I saw it. I would just walk into a restaurant and make sure that our waitress knew what I was and who I was. I thought it was kidding and joking. Hah! I was coming on to every woman I saw. I would lie in bed fantasizing sex with another woman. My wife would call me a jerk and I would use as a tranquilizer some sexual fantasy about one of those women I thought loved me. Now one of them did try to blackmail me but in my twisted mind I thought she really loved me. She wanted to, she just had these little problems like needing money, otherwise she would never have needed to blackmail me. So to my mind, it was true love.

So, my wife in a great moment of clarity and a growing recovery, got hold of an SA folder with two telephone numbers and handed it to me. "Get in SA or get out!" Thirty-four years of marriage, seven years after I had quit my acting out, and that's my reward for being a good guy? Here I was being the best guy I could be and I got zapped. But I took the folder

God works perfectly and lust is powerless before that prayer of "God help us."

God and they are all the same, life, love, God. Sexual sobriety isn't the issue; lust is the issue. I've seen lots of sexual sobriety and some of it isn't worth much. And who are the long term people in sexual sobriety who slip? They are the ones who are lusting, sometimes even in its subtlest forms of romantic and other kinds of stuff. Those romance novels in the supermarket are just as pornographic as the hardest core stuff because the readers of both are lost in lust. But in a way the romance novels are more dangerous because people think that romantic lust is harmless. It sure isn't harmless for a sexaholic, it is as dangerous to us as dynamite.

On the other hand, I've never seen freedom from lust that wasn't staggeringly beautiful. I've seen that it has always planted those people's feet firmly on sobriety's pathway. So lust-free seems to me to be the total answer. Those who don't lust, stay sober. Those who lust, don't stay sober. I'll repeat that. Those who don't lust, stay sober. Those who lust, don't stay sober.

Occasions of lust are in our society constantly. It's like matches dropping on a pavement. When a lighted match falls on a pavement, there is no fire. But say I'm lusting. That's like throwing a little kindling wood down, dropping little pieces of paper and spilling a little gasoline on the pile. Still no problem, there won't be a fire. But then look what happens when an occasion of lust comes along and the match drops on that pile of lust. What lust is, is going halfway

Sexual sobriety isn't the issue; lust is the issue.

down the waterslide and trying to stop. What lust is, is like the guy who masturbated to the point of ejaculation and tried to stop. So all wanting things that God isn't offering us in this moment is lust and will kill us.

My wife recently said to me that in spiritual life we first must face the fact that we are going to die. I thought I had because I had a heart attack thirty years ago and that threat of death has been hanging over our heads for most of our marriage. But I saw that I wasn't ready to die and that lust and sex with young women was a way of hanging onto life for me and a way to steal somebody else's life and vitality. So thanks to SA, I did a couple of things. I stopped using sex to hang onto life and drive away death. And because of the peace and joy and love that you have given me and a whole bunch of things that I don't understand, I have finally accepted that I am going to die. It's so beautiful to accept that because until I accept that I can't do anything. Now, thanks to you, I can see so clearly that, until I die, I'm going to live, or turning it around, I'm going to live until I die.

Now I'm planting trees. And I'm not frantically grabbing at projects that I want to do before I die. There is no hurry. I've got all the time in the world.

Freedom from lust of all kinds has led me to the moment by moment awareness and appreciation of what

(Continued on page 18)

like I was. It took me years to see that each of us comes in from different situations. In my case I had gone through all these things I told you about. Lust nearly cost me my marriage. Lust smashed every value I had. Lust made a mockery of my life. Lust robbed me of my integrity. Lust made it impossible for me to really practice my other program. Lust made it impossible for me to attract others to that program. So I had many reasons for giving up lust that others didn't have. That's why I said I was a grateful sexaholic in the first meetings I came to. I was grateful for it because that's what it took for me to break out of my prison and to smash a hole in the wall of my monstrous ego.

So I had two adventures in this program, one was my adventure in fellowship where I reached out to others in every way I could. For years it was hard to reach out with the phone or letter. But as AA says, I acted my way to right thinking.

My second adventure was with lust. That adventure has carried me home. My wife has always been teaching me and a special place was when I came into this program. By reading the spiritual books and their definitions of what lust was, she started teaching me that lust wasn't just wanting sexual things. Lust is wanting anything that God doesn't have for you in this moment, anything God doesn't have for you right now.

I believe we sexaholics have a special talent for holding pictures in our minds. Just as alcoholics can't handle the chemical alcohol, I think we have a special problem because of our ability to retain pictures. I don't want any more pictures in my head.

We live up a mountain valley outside Bozeman and I love to watch the Boston Celtics. My wife and son started a Serenity Shop a few years ago. She comes home tired needing to watch Jeopardy to relax. Well guess what time Jeopardy is on? Boston Celtics time. It was an uneasy peace for a few seasons, "Honey, you watch the game tonight and I'll do something else." So we got a second dish out back. That's the Boston Celtics dish. Each fall I return with new hope. But when the beer commercial comes on in the Boston Celtics game, I just hit the mute button and turn away.

My wife sees that and says, "What's wrong with you? You don't have any freedom. Are you going to act out because you see some gals playing on a beach with some guys?" Well, I'm not going to try to teach her all about sexaholism, nobody can understand this but a sexaholic. The reason I mute those commercials and turn away is that I just don't want those pictures.

So I think being as lust-free as we can be is the heart of sexaholism. I think lust is the shield we put up to keep away life, to keep away love, to keep away

So I think being as lust-free as we can be is the heart of sexaholism.

and made the call. I got Kent on the phone, a guy who came in from the first Dear Abby letter. He said, "Jesse, it's lust. It's what's in your head that is killing you." That was the greatest relief that I have ever felt. Nothing in my life has been more important than that.

So I had a ton of lust thinking to stop and that's why my story in the little blue book says, "It Was All in My Head." So like some of you who have spoken at this conference earlier, I too have to apologize for my poor acting out story when I came in because it is so feeble compared to the wonderful acting out stories some of you have to tell. Phooey! I think our situation is just like in AA. We can play one-upmanship with the horrible details of our stories that give us so much concern. By focusing on the "I drank worse than you did" aspect of our stories, we are continuing our isolation and separation. And we risk missing the central point of our stories. The details of our stories are not to be hung on to gleefully. I think we need to see to the heart of our stories and that the details are possibly totally inconsequential. Because lust is the issue, not those details.

When I came into SA, I had some advantages that helped me. All the years of sponsorship and teaching by those old AA's in that other program were ready go to work for me now that I was off my last big drug, lust.

I came in here knowing that the pro-

gram was all God. So I said, "God help me" the instant any lust came to my mind. I took every measure I could to avoid lust. I stayed out of malls, stayed away from the television and movies. I might be walking down the street and see a woman coming towards me, I'd walk over to the other side of the street if I had to avoid lust. The people at my meetings in those early days couldn't believe what I was doing. "You are giving up the best part of life," they said to me. I thought, "Well, maybe I am. I'm a maniac." But it's no problem. Sometimes taking things to extremes serves me to good advantage and that was one, I'll tell you, where I believe it really served me.

To me this program is only about one thing—lust. All the rest is just details.

Now, if the prayer "God help me" wasn't enough to stop lust from continuing, I found myself a bigger weapon. Sometimes I would just be driving along in the car and all of a sudden, bang, my ego had slipped a videotape in my head of the most intense sex possible and I'm watching it play. Where did that come from? Well my ego knows where the lust tapes are and it pops them on there for its amusement. So I would say, God, help me." But the videotape keeps on playing, it won't shut off. So then I go to the heavyweight stuff, a long prayer. For me it is the Our Father, a long prayer. "Our Father . . .," and I'm saying that prayer and see to my horror that I'm still lusting in a part of my head while I'm praying. Lust just won't shut off. But it is no problem, I found, because of two things.

(Continued on page 14)

("Freedom from Lust" continued from pg 13)
When I'm praying, lust can't really get hold of me because lust needs my undivided attention. And I will never give lust my undivided attention. That videotape can play and play. And then I found another secret, and that is I can always pray longer than my lust attack can last. So always at the end of one of those Our Fathers would be a time when the tape had stopped playing and the screen was blank.

Now it might come back on five minutes later. No sweat. Here we go again boys, "God help me, God help me, God help me, Our Father . . ." Or, there have been other times when that tape will come on and I'm just a little lethargic about snapping into the "God help me," for a few seconds or so. I hear people with these ten second lust rules. Not for me. You can do enough lusting in ten seconds to slip good. And even three seconds, that isn't fast enough for me. I need the second thought rule. That is, that the first thought is on God because I'm an insane sexaholic and God knew what he was doing when he made me that way. But the second thought, that's on me, and I don't want it. Sometimes I'm not as sharply aware of my sexaholic nature as I should be. Sometimes I lose some of my vigilance, the eye of the hawk. So I come to awareness in my third or fourth lust thought before I'm aware of where I'm at. But then, bang, "God help me." I've said that "God help me" prayer so many times that a lot of times now I'll see something that's an occasion of lust and I've automatically gone

to "God help me" before I'm even aware of what's going on. That prayer and that vigilance for lust is now built into me like patch pockets in a suit.

So, from the start I had a ton of lusting. But I saw that I got the same relief from stopping lusting that all the others got from stopping lots of acting out and lusting. So being a scientist, a PhD psychologist, I'm impressed by the fact that those who mostly just stopped lusting when we came in got the same results as the person who stopped lusting and acting out. That

And then I found another secret, and that is I can always pray longer than my lust attack can last.

says to me that acting out isn't the real problem. Acting out is just the eventual and inevitable result of lusting.

So I knew the program was all God and believed it totally so I knew I just had to stop. I stopped lusting that sharply for thirty days and went to Oklahoma City to be with two of our sons in treatment. Two other kids were living there who were drug and alcohol counselors and they both looked at me and said, "Dad, you're different." Those were such beautiful words to hear. They were the first external signs I got that I was making progress. And those words came after just thirty days. Those words made me look at other things and I saw the shame and guilt, most of it, had gone.

So, I gave a talk when I first came to Oklahoma with only thirty days of sobriety, and my little friend Sylvia came trotting in and she heard my talk and knew that was her problem, too. Now I had a

meeting to go to. And then I went to Provo, Utah, to talk to the Overeaters because they had read my books. I told them I didn't know that much about overeating so I talked to them about my sexual addiction. I passed a sheet of paper around and a whole bunch of women signed up. Now I had some new friends in Salt Lake to talk to, to help me with my program. Then I went to Minneapolis to make a talk and a group started up there, the one Jim E. was talking about. I went to Bozeman for my School of Life and a guy from Edmonton was there. He went home and started a group in Edmonton. Bill from Livingston needed a group and found me, so the Bozeman group started up. And the guy from Edmonton became my sponsor.

I went to Seattle and gave a talk to alcoholics there and talked to the sexaholics alone in the evening. The SA group there had died out so the AAs who were sexaholics started a new group. Wherever I went, it seemed like a group popped up. My son said, "Dad, you're just like Johnny Appleseed." And all that message-carrying was done with only three to six months of sobriety. How could I carry the message so well with so little sobriety and still so crazy from the old lust? Ordinarily that's impossible, especially when I had to face that I couldn't carry any message for years in my other program.

Was it me and my charisma? No, obviously not. Me and my charisma didn't work before, did it? It didn't work worth

a dang. No, charisma wasn't the secret. What was the secret? Near as I can figure out it was some combination of God's grace and a lust-free spirit. God couldn't work through me before because all the lust clogged up the channels. So the message-carrying I did in those earliest days is another reason I think a lust-free spirit is so vital.

One of the things God handed me when I walked into this program was a lot of celibacy. So I ended up with more celibacy time than all but one priest in this program. That was one of the gifts

Lust is wanting anything that God doesn't have for you in this moment, anything God doesn't have for you right now.

God had for me. But the program tells us that. It says sex is optional. Isn't that beautiful? And it is proof that you can build a beautiful marriage despite that. It doesn't make my wife totally happy that that was taken away. But there are little obstacles in the road that a car will drive over, but it is the great big obstacles like the boulders that the car won't drive over. So it seems to me now that it might have been the lust-free spirit that was the only difference, and the big difference, that let me carry a new message. Now people wanted what I had. If you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it, then you are ready to take certain Steps. And they wanted what I had.

But all these early times in my groups, I couldn't figure out why others would play with lust and weren't willing to stop

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