



*God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

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# Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

## LESSONS LEARNED

From my earliest recollections at age four, I obsessed over nude women. Any woman I encountered was automatically visualized in the nude. This was true for strangers, relatives, and even the nuns who taught me in elementary school.

At puberty, I discovered masturbation, and my nude visualizations were transformed into sex fantasies. Masturbation and sex fantasy were compulsive from the start, and my two-part illness—obsession and compulsion—was complete.

I continued to masturbate and fantasize throughout my adolescence. Then, at age twenty-one, I got married, thinking that I would be cured with sex built into my life. But, of course, that didn't work.

My obsession and compulsion continued for the fifteen years of that marriage. The marriage ended when I decided that I had the wrong wife; that if only I had the right wife, I would be cured. So I left my wife and seven children, got a divorce, and married a second wife, who would fix me. But, again, that didn't work.

The problem was me, not my wives, but it would be many more years until I came to that understanding. So, after thirteen years in my second marriage, I decided that I made the same mistake twice. If I really had the right wife, I would be okay. Again, I left my second wife and two more children, got another divorce, and married a third wife.

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### IN THIS ISSUE:

Sexual Nurturing?  
Fourth Step Revisited  
Suggested Thought Process

This is SA's meeting in print. We need your group news, articles, and personal stories.

## Sexaholics Anonymous...

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.\*

Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and received permission from AA to use its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in 1979.

*\*Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine, Inc.*

## Share the Message Share your Story

Dear *Essay* Reader,

We keep working on improving our “meeting in print” with your help. Subscriptions to the *Essay* are now available through the SAICO web site store, Publications page, at ([www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org)) Our intention is to make copies of the *Essay* available on-line soon for reproduction in other formats such as the international A4 paper size. Check the SAICO on-line store for availability.

Have you found something helpful in this issue of the *Essay*? Do you have something you can contribute to our quarterly? Would you urge another sexaholic or a local group to subscribe?

Please contact us at [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org) or by mail at

Essay  
PO Box 3565  
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565  
U.S.A.

Sincerely,

*Essay* Editorial Committee

## Essay Editorial Guidelines

The *Essay* is answerable to the fellowship as a whole. 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 SA International 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 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. We like to receive articles electronically for ease of editing. Send articles to the SA International Central Office, attention of the *Essay* editor. E-mail should be addressed to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org). All articles need to be in English. All articles must contain an address, telephone number, or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential. 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.

Not only was I not cured, but I was getting progressively worse. What had been mostly kept secret from my first two wives became more and more apparent. My third wife took me to counselors, therapists, and psychiatrists, but to no avail. These professionals could not cut through my wall of denial.

After two years of this third marriage, my wife conducted a one-person intervention on my alcoholism, which had started at age thirty as I fought to avoid the guilt of my sexaholism. I spent a month at a treatment center, got very active in AA, and have not had a drink years since then. ut I didn't get well!

In fact, I got a lot worse. Without alcohol to mask my guilt, I had to face my sexual addiction alone. Quite a number of suicidal episodes ensued, and I was hospitalized twice for this extreme depression. My wife confronted me over my sexaholism, and I started to attend SA meetings on a regular basis. But that didn't work, and I didn't stay sober. At the time I felt that the program wasn't right for me, but now I believe that I wasn't ready for the program.

Throughout my extreme depression, I had been unable to work. It was almost impossible for me to get out of bed most of the time, and I was certified for long-term disability benefits. No one knew whether I would ever be able to work again.

Eventually, after two years of deep depression, and after the loss of my

professional career and related medical insurance, I was forced to change psychiatrists. This new professional decided very quickly that I was manic-depressive and needed lithium carbonate. His diagnosis, based on the ups and downs of my addictive cycle, was wrong, but the medication did level out my life to the point where I believed I could get some kind of job. As I searched for work, it seemed that everyone felt that I was over-qualified for any job I thought I could handle. After several months, I decided to go to California for a fresh start. After arriving in California, I soon found nonprofessional work by not disclosing my education or work history.

My addiction worsened progressively. Although I attended AA meetings with some regularity, I didn't make any SA contacts there. I drifted steadily into pornography—porno shops and porno flicks.

Eventually, my third wife gave up all hope of helping me. I found myself living alone in a flophouse hotel in downtown San Diego, frequenting the porno places, losing my job, and really going crazy. Desperation drove me once again to the brink of suicide.

In powerless hopelessness, in this darkest night of my soul, I looked up the SA number and phoned for help. I got to an SA meeting, got a sponsor right away, worked the Steps diligently, stayed sober, and got to Step Nine within a few months.

(Continued on page 4)

*(Continued from page 3)*

With one year of sobriety, and a lot of work on Steps Nine, Ten, and Eleven, I returned to the Southwest, to my second wife and family. After a second year of sobriety and total abstinence, we were remarried. I continue to go to SA meetings and to work the Steps. I do extensive Twelfth Step work with prisoners. Life has never been better.

With over fifteen years of continuous sobriety and recovery, I have been relieved almost completely of my obsession and compulsion. My spiritual development has been enhanced through prayer and meditation, through a steady diet of spiritual reading, and through the inspiration of several very caring and inspiring ministers.

Every aspect of my life has changed nearly 180 degrees. Love has replaced lust to a very great extent. The avoidance of acting out has been replaced largely by a more positive sobriety and the actions of love. While my first wife is deceased, I enjoy a good friendship with my third wife. I am pursuing healing relationships with my nine children, 24 grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. If I live long enough, I am determined to have my family know and love the new father, grandfather, and great-grandfather they never knew.

There are a number of lessons that I have learned at various stages of my recovery:

- When I lived alone in my first year of sobriety, I learned that life without sex is infinitely better than life with compulsive sex.
- When I lived with my second wife for a year before we were remarried, I learned that love without sex is infinitely better than sex without love.
- Since our remarriage, I have learned that making love is infinitely better than having sex.
- In recovery, I continue to be surprised that there are no limits to the development of positive sobriety, spiritual life, and love in action.

Through telling parts of my story and sharing my experience, strength, and hope with prisoners in some 500 letters over the last 10 years, I have observed that the more I give to others, the more comes back to me.

My life is manageable today, but I have to remember who the manager is. God is truly doing for me what I could not do for myself. I have experienced all of the promises of the program to a very significant degree.

I continue to work the SA program on a daily basis. I attend meetings regularly. I continue to make amends as opportunities occur. I take inventory continuously, and try to correct my thoughts, words, and actions in mid-stream. I pray and meditate daily, and continue to discover and pursue God's

*(Continued on page 5)*

## The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

## The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SA unity.   | 1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. 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.            | 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.   | 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.   |
| 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.   | 4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.  |
| 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.  | 5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic 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 purpose. | 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. |
| 7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.   | 7. Every A.A. 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.   | 8. Alcoholics 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.  | 9. A.A., 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.  | 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. 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, films, and television.                     | 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.                                     |
| 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.  | 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.  |

## The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.  | 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.  | 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 <i>as we understood Him</i> .   | 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him</i> .   |
| 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.  | 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.  | 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.   | 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.   |
| 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.   | 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.   | 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.   | 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.   | 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 <i>as we understood Him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. | 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God <i>as we understood Him</i> , 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.                            | 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. ("A.A.W.S.") Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWWS 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, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.*

will for me. I continue to serve as a local SA Contact, to sponsor those who ask, and to sponsor prisoners by mail.

I thank God every day for my new life, my growing love, and SA. Truly, my life has never been better, and it continues to improve beyond all of my hopes. Thank you, SA!

### Future Issues of the Essay:

Thank you! We have had great response to our request for meditations and information on same sex recovery issues. We also have received several helpful samples of Newcomer meetings.

We would love to have more meditations and articles on Steps 8 and 9. Please send any writings and thoughts you have to:

SAICO – ESSAY,  
PO Box 3565,  
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565  
U.S.A.

or by e-mail to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org).

The Editors

## Gui-dance

When I meditated on the word "guidance," I kept seeing "dance" at the end of the word. I remember reading that doing God's will is a lot like dancing. When two people try to lead, nothing feels right. The movement doesn't flow with the music, and everything is quite uncomfortable and jerky. When one person realizes this and lets the other lead, both bodies begin to flow with the music. One gives gentle cues, perhaps with a nudge or by pressing lightly in one direction or another. It's as if the two become one body, moving beautifully. The dance takes surrender, willingness, and attentiveness from one person and gentle guidance and skill from the other.

My eyes went back to the word "guidance." When I saw "G," I thought of God, followed by "U" and "I." "God, "U" and "I" dance! God, you, and I dance. This statement is what guidance means to me. As I bowed my head, I became willing to trust that I would get guidance about my life. Once again, I became willing to let God lead.

My prayer for you today is that God's blessings and mercies be upon you and your family on this day and everyday. May you abide in Him as He abides in you. Dance together with God, trusting Him to lead and to guide you through each season of your life.

Robert M.

# MEDITATIONS

“In a difficult struggle, people have to have victories. Even if they are not major.”  
*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

I can meet hardship and sorrow with prayer and the willingness to feel the pain while in recovery. In this way God can emphasize the needed growth in my life today. With this growth God can show me how to help others. It is a legitimate way to help build His Kingdom.

I can surrender my struggles to the wisdom of the fellowship.

Higher Power, help me stay focused. My staying in the moment is crucial, as is your unconditional love. Amen

**Tom C.**

My top three surrenders today are self-neglect, care-taking of others, and spiritual misconnections.

As a lustaholic, I am insatiable. I can never be satisfied with lust no matter how much I drink in through my eyes. It is a no-win situation. No amount of anything satisfies me for long. I soon need more. I have the disease of more. The only rest I can find is in a Higher Power. Laughter helps us live our lives in a lighthearted manner. Keeping a lighthearted, joyful, happy outlook is my goal today. All things are possible through God’s strength. I implement prospering ideas that bring a flow of abundance into my life. Today I focus on the freedom the program of SA gives me. Lust takes away my freedom. I can never take SA for granted. It is the lifeblood of my recovery. If SA goes down, we all go down. Today I seek divine guidance. I try to get myself in position for God’s plan. God help me.

*God*, help me to remember I am your child and that things of this world will never satisfy me.

**Will L.**

## SA Financial Snapshot

March YTD Budget 2003		2003 March YTD	
Contributions	20,000.00	Contributions	20,619.63
SACFC	2,500.00	SACFC	1,585.89
Conventions	3500.00	Conventions	3,960.00
Literature Sales	2,500.00	Literature Sales	2,602.67
Discounts	.00	Discounts	.00
Refunds	.00	Refunds	.00
Interest	125.00	Interest	1,080.83
<i>Essay</i>	1,000.00	<i>Essay</i>	1,203.00
Total Revenues	29,625.00	Total Revenues	31,052.02
Prudent Reserve	3,550.00	Prudent Reserve	1,019.55
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	15.00
Credit Card Fees	150.00	Credit Card Fees	173.53
Conference Fees	425.00	Conference Fees	.00
Depreciation	450.00	Depreciation	431.72
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	625.00	Liability Insurance	444.00
Legal	350.00	Legal	79.50
Accounting	950.00	Accounting	1,137.00
Literature expense	500.00	Literature Expense	250.15
Payroll	15,675.00	Payroll	15,976.20
Payroll Tax	1,400.00	Payroll Tax	1,192.48
Pension	1,150.00	Pension	1,177.00
Postage & Freight	1,125.00	Postage & Freight	404.11
Office Expense	375.00	Office Expense	1,146.82
Printing	3,000.00	Printing	1,697.94
Professional Fees	25.00	Professional Fees	.00
Rent	2,250.00	Rent	3,193.74
Maintenance	275.00	Maintenance	214.01
Supplies	125.00	Supplies	4.36
Sales Tax	50.00	Sales Tax	11.51
Taxes & Licenses	25.00	Taxes & Licenses	55.60
Telephone	2,125.00	Telephone	1,430.13
Travel	2,125.00	Travel	3,036.77
Total Expenses	33,175.00	Total Expenses	32,071.57

## First Quarter Donations January - March 2003

Akron, OH	20.00	Grand Rapids, MI	100.00	Salt Lake City, UT	275.00
Albuquerque, NM	33.24	Hermosa Bch, CA	100.00	San Diego, CA	424.00
Alexandria, VA	16.66	Hermosa Bch CFC	50.00	Seattle, WA	47.00
Alexandria CFC	7.14	High Point, NC	22.50	Seattle CFC	47.00
Annapolis, MD	10.00	Jacksonville, FL	75.00	Sierra Madre, CA	135.00
Arlington Hgts, IL	625.00	Jerusalem, Israel	83.33	Somerville, MA	14.00
Atlanta, GA	280.22	Kansas City, KS CFC	250.00	Springfield, VA	11.90
Beaver, PA	60.00	Kent, WA	29.55	Springfield CFC	5.10
Bellevue, WA	100.00	Kirkland, WA	200.00	St Charles, IL	50.00
Bethesda, MD	159.00	Knoxville, TN	200.00	St Charles, MO	150.00
Birmingham, AL	70.31	Lakeland, FL	110.00	St Louis, MO	210.00
Bowie, MD	101.00	Lexington, KY	36.69	St Louis CFC	75.00
Buffalo, NY	40.00	Lincoln, NE	20.00	Tacoma, WA	100.00
Calgary AB Canada	188.68	Lincroft, NJ	20.00	Timonium, MD	160.00
Camarillo, CA	60.00	Long Beach, CA	175.00	Tokyo, Japan	40.00
Centreville, VA	250.00	Los Angeles, CA	54.00	Topeka, KS	50.00
Chatsworth, CA CFC	100.00	Madrid, Spain	60.00	Toronto ON Canada	322.85
Chicago, IL	364.00	Manchester, NH	100.00	Trenton, MI	60.00
Chicago CFC	198.00	McLean, VA	212.10	Tucson, AZ	300.00
Cincinnati, OH	125.00	McLean CFC	8.90	Twin Cities, MN	357.50
Colorado Springs, CO	80.00	Milwaukee, WI	199.00	Twin Cities CFC	25.00
Colorado Spgs CFC	50.00	Mt Clemens, MI	65.00	Vancouver, WA	130.00
Columbus, NE	50.00	Munster, IN	100.00	Warrenton, VA	50.00
Columbus, OH	100.00	Naperville, IL	100.00	Washington DC	190.65
Crystal City, VA	503.50	Nashville, TN	481.79	Whatever It Takes	3,037.00
Dallas, TX	150.00	Neptune, NJ	240.00	Whatever It Takes CFC	923.00
Darien, IL	100.00	New England IG	83.00	Wheeling, WV	252.00
Darien CFC	50.00	New England IG CFC	16.00	Woodbridge, VA	140.00
Daytona Beach, FL	18.00	New York City, NY	300.00	Woodbridge, CFC	10.00
Daytona Beach CFC	18.00	New York City CFC	100.00	Yorba Linda, CA	77.35
Denver, CO	57.40	NY Metro IG	650.00		
Downers Grove, IL	100.00	North Hollywood, CA	72.00		
Eastern PA IG	614.46	Ottawa ON Canada	100.68		
Edmonton AB Can	60.34	Pasadena, CA	250.00	<b>Group Total</b>	<b>19,704.29</b>
Erie, PA (Solutions)	23.40	Pearl River, NY	80.00	<b>Individual</b>	<b>1,402.00</b>
Erie (Work & Study Grp)	14.00	Penn Hills, PA (Fri)	347.00	<b>SACFC Total</b>	<b>1,911.14</b>
Euclid, OH	140.00	Penn Hills, PA (Weds)	425.25		
Fairfax, VA	83.00	Pittsburgh, PA (SS)	19.00	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>23,013.43</b>
Fairfax CFC	28.00	Portland, OR	280.00		
Fargo, ND	25.00	Redondo Beach, CA	100.00		
Ferndale, MI	245.00	Reston, VA	510.00		
Franklin, TN	83.00	Riverton, WA	40.00		
Ft Collins, CO	20.00	Rockford, IL	50.00		
Georgia IG	264.94	Roswell, GA	90.00		
Glen Ellyn, IL CFC	200.00	Sacramento, CA	1,500.00		

## Sexual Nurturing?

*[an excerpt from a personal letter]*

What has stuck in my mind and simply won't let go since our last phone call is the term "sexual nurturing" as something being supplied by your spouse. I'd like to share my thoughts and maybe learn some things when we talk further on the subject.

For me, these two words, "sexual nurturing," are an oxymoron; they are inoperative together. Is there such a thing as sexual nurturing for me the sexaholic? Sex may serve a lot of different things, including propagation of the species, but do we call that nurturing?

I as a human being need air, water, food, others, and God; I am nourished by these and am malnourished without them. I as a (married) recovering sexaholic don't have to have sex, and yet I can, in that abstinent condition, be as fully nourished as any human ever has or can be. My experience and our growing SA experience is telling us that being single and abstinent or married and abstinent in no way leaves one deprived or abnormal. Sex as "nurturing" was for me another of those expressions like "committed relationship."

"What is sex for?" is one of the great unanswered questions of our time. In SA we're just beginning to know what sex is not for. Let's give ourselves time to see where true recovery will lead us in seeing what sex is for. The place of

sex in our lives may turn out to be something different than what we've been programmed to imagine.

Sex is what everything from worms to woolly mammoths do—as the procreative mechanism. When I see the pair of mated ravens sitting on the telephone pole nuzzling and talking to each other, I see what may be construed as nurturing in the animal kingdom. But when I see them nesting and having sex, I see them concerned with something larger than themselves, for which they will forgo not only nurturing but their own self-preservation, that is, the destiny of their own kind! If anything, both of them in that sex act are nurturing their species, not each other in the current narcissistic self-indulgent sense of the term.

What I thought was sexual nurturing in my marriage turned out to be support for my addiction. I was addicted to marital sex. I simply wanted sex and thought I had to have it; but it was a demand based on my programming and self-will. Through sexual abstinence I am only now beginning to find how the true bases of love and nurturing have escaped me. Growing into these is the tough work of recovery and program.

Here's to all the blessed ravens, worms, and woolly mammoths! And to our loving wives and husbands!

**Roy K., Simi Valley, CA**

## You Taught Me

This is the best day of my life! Not because I am here sharing my story with you, not because of any anniversary or birthday. It is the best day of my life, because this is all I have... *TODAY.*

When I turned 13, I was introduced to masturbation. A school friend taught me to voyeur my sister through the bathroom keyhole and to masturbate. I only did that once; it made me feel sick. Masturbation, on the other hand (no pun intended) became my most intimate friend. Immediately, I was hooked and began to use fantasy to fuel my masturbation. But this was not the problem. The real problem began when I became obsessed with stopping and was unable to stop. Commitments, deals with God, responding to altar calls, swearing off, threatening myself, punishing myself—I tried them all.

During summer school, we were watching a movie in class, and while fantasizing about a girl in front of me, I slipped my hand in my pocket and began masturbating myself. When some of the guys found me out, I tried to ignore them and act nonchalant, although my beaming red face made it very difficult. Also while a teen, I sexually abused my younger cousin for about two years.

So I knew I had a problem. I also believed that God was the answer to all my problems. My solution: I'll handcuff myself to his ankle and God *has to* help me. So I went to school to

study Theology and become a pastor. I thought I could blackmail God into removing my obsession and cleanse me of my sin.

After years of Theological studies, I had two fantastic job offers in the ministry. Yet, I found myself in my pastor's office, faced with letters from a few women I had abused during college and who feared I was not fit for the ministry. I was forced to turn down any ministerial job offers and go into counseling for sex addiction. I was angry at God. "I gave myself to you and this is what I get?" I demanded.

After that humiliating experience, I went home. For the next two years I became heavily involved in the local church while going to counseling and taking my acting out to newer heights. I explored every dancing club and bar I knew of, every strip club, adult book store and cruised every major street for prostitutes. Living the two lives was exhausting and demoralizing.

I was suicidal, but I wanted to make one last deal with God. I wanted Him to give me one last awesome acting out experience and then kill me. Soon I met this gorgeous grad student. This woman was God's answer to my prayers. She was everything I was looking for. While acting out with this incredible woman, I found myself hitting on my 40-year-old art instructor. And that's when it dawned on me. No woman will ever be enough, no matter how incredible she may be. That's when desperation took me again to the very edge of suicide.

## Calendar of Events

*[Events listed here are presented solely as a service and are not endorsed by Essay or SAICO]*

**June 6 - 9, 2003**, Fifth Minnie Water Retreat, Yuraygir National Park, Australia, sponsored by SE Queensland and Norther NSW Intergroups, Australia. Contact Wayne at 0408 184 123 or Patrick at 0409173 115.

**June 6 - 8, 2003**, Annual Spring Retreat, Edmonton, AB, Canada. Theme: And the Healing Began. Contact Edmonton at 780/988-4411.

**July 18 - 20, 2003**, SA/ S-Anon Westcountry Convention, sponsored by SAUK. Theme: The Gifts of Recovery. Contact Alan at 07944 923875.

**September 20, 2003**, Emotional Sobriety Workshop, Port Orange, FL, sponsored by Florida SA Intergroup. Contact Jim at 386/676-3954.

**September 26 - 28, 2003**, SA / S-Anon Northwest Regional Retreat, sponsored by Vancouver Intergroup. Theme: I'm the Key. Contact Vancouver IG at 604/290-9643.

**October 24 - 26, 2003**, SA / S-Anon Convention, Waterford, Ireland, sponsored by SA Ireland. Contact them at 051 317388.

**December 5 - 7, 2003**, Third Annual NorCal Unity Men's Retreat, Sonora, CA. Contact Bill at 925/998-8458.

### Upcoming International Conventions

**July 11— 13, 2003**, SA / S-Anon International Convention, Chicago, IL, sponsored by Chicago Intergroup and Chicago S-Anon. Theme: A Program of Action: Maintaining Our Spiritual Condition. Contact Intergroup at 630/415-0341 or Tom G., 773/274-1088. <http://www.geocities.com/ProgramofAction>

**January 9 - 11, 2004**, SA / S-Anon International Conference, San Diego, CA, sponsored by San Diego Intergroup. Theme: There is a Solution. Contact Mike S. at 619/668-6931 or send email to [unityconf@sasandiego.org](mailto:unityconf@sasandiego.org)

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



Not really expecting to gain much enlightenment from a housefly, I slid the window open. At that point, the irritant was free to annoy me to its heart's content. But an odd thing happened. Instead of taking off to begin paying my karmic debt back, the fly with its miniature brain could not fathom the change in its circumstances. Free to go about its fly business, it perceived that it remained trapped. The dimwit made no effort to fulfill its real destiny, which I'm sure was to bother me.

Then I realized, that was my lesson. Frantically running back and forth right before my eyes, the fly remained trapped because it thought it was trapped. The fly didn't have a clue to the liberation that existed. Then, I knew that I too am barely able to perceive my true freedom. A freedom offered through the spiritual portal of salvation that God has opened for me. Neither Satan nor my addiction have any power to keep me bound or chained any longer. My true emancipation is complete; all I need do is comprehend it fully.

That was it—that was my revelation. How many of us remain trapped in our addictions because of our perceptions? Well, like so many things, we have a choice. We can choose to be a son or daughter of the Eternal Light, or we can be the fly.

**Mark F., Adrian, MI**

## SACFC NEWS

### Prison Meetings

Currently there are a number of prisons across the country that have SA meetings. However, we do not have information on all of them. If you know of any SA meetings in prisons, would you please forward information about them to the SA Central Office so that the SA Correctional Facilities Committee (SACFC) can be brought up to date on this fellowship outreach?

**Keith S., Michigan**

### SA Haiku

This I need to learn.

In acceptance we find peace.

When will I learn?

**Keith S.**

A few hours into my despair, I found myself in the office of my therapist who sent me to a specialist in sex addiction. He gave me a list of SA meetings in my town. The first time I walked into these rooms and met you all, I gave a huge sigh of relief. Finally, I found someone who understands. The format of that first meeting was to begin by listing the nature of our addiction. By the time it came my turn to share, I knew I was not as sick as many of you. But maybe I could just get the formula, get well, and move on.

That began over five years of bargaining. I was not that bad. After a few months in SA, my only problem was masturbation and internet porn. Gone were the endless nights in slimy adult bookstores, or chasing prostitutes, or late nights of bar cruising for sex partners with \$3 glasses of soda in my hand, because I didn't drink alcohol. I bargained with my sponsors, but none of them could help me get sober. I found someone I could marry and I had enough tools to stay out of trouble. But all I did was add to my list of victims.

It was only as I sat in a residential care facility 3000 miles from home that I had to make a decision: Am I going to seek recovery even if my wife left me, if I lost my job and my original family abandoned me? At that point I made a decision that I had to work this program for nobody else but me. This disease WILL claim my life if I don't. From that moment things

began to change.

For me, spirituality means having a relationship with my God, with myself and with others. All my life I prayed to God to remove this addiction from me. He never answered my prayers. Today, I just pray that God's will be done in my life and to relieve me of the obsession of self. The addiction is still there, but as the Big Book says, "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." (AA, pg 85)

I began working the 12 "suggested" Steps. Once I was willing to follow directions and to do the work, small miracles began to take place in me.

Sobriety also brought balance in my life. I was an all or nothing kind of guy. Sobriety helped me find that there is "something" in between the two extremes. For me, it was contentment. No excitement and no depression; just peace. It is true that it's a bit bland, but I would never trade it for the apparent "excitement" and the price I paid for it. Today blessings come in different packages.

There may be more acting out in me and because of that, I desperately need you and God. I have no other choice. Complacency is a killer. That insidious thought, "I can handle it," creeps in and ruins it all. For me, lusting will ALWAYS lead to acting out. My Higher Power allows me to choose between life and death.

**Ervin G., Portland**

## Slip Sliding Away

This line comes from an old Simon and Garfunkel song and it describes what happens to me whenever I have a slip in the program. Each time I slip, I slide further away from my Higher Power. I do believe it is possible to have a program without slips. That was the theme of the Colorado Evergreen conference this year: “Recovery without Relapse.”

Over the years I have had my share of slips and often joked that I could write a book on the subject. I decided to write this article instead.

I want to use the metaphor of a wild horse to describe what the conference speaker shared with us. One of the first things he mentioned is that you choose to stay sober each day even if your ass falls off. So when you get on this bucking horse, which is your addict, he will toss and turn and try to get you off balance. If you get bucked off (have a slip), you experience pain such as guilt and shame. You can even get seriously hurt such as contracting a STD, going to jail, or even dying.

In order to stay on the horse, you must do what it says in the AA Big Book in the chapter on “How It Works.” You have to be painstaking, be willing to go to any lengths, have rigorous honesty, and be fearless from the time you first get on the horse. The

horse is cunning, baffling, and powerful, so unless you hang on for dear life, you will slip again.

As you work the Steps, you will maintain daily contact with your sponsor, pray, meditate, and go to meetings. You will begin to get progressive victory over lust. You will look forward to each new day, to riding the horse, and to seeing the beauty that is in the world.

If you have fantasies, view pornography in any form, make calls to act out, go to strip joints, or even take the second look, you will get bucked off again, even though you may think you are still riding the horse. This would be akin to falling out of the saddle and still having one foot in the stirrup as the horse drags you along. This may not be as painful as getting bucked off, but it will still hurt.

A turning point comes when you will either get bucked off, or the horse will start to lose his fight. Our Higher Power protects us at this point and reveals His love to us.

Your relationship with the horse can become so close that you both look forward to seeing each other every day. The horse knows that all his needs will be met and you know that in return the formerly wild horse will make sure you are happy, joyous and free.

**Willie W.**

# SACFC NEWS

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

## Fly on the Window

As so often happens, some of my most profound revelations originate in the most insignificant things—that is, if I listen to that gentle voice of intuition and wisdom.

One of the good aspects of prison life—and there are many—is that I have time for meditation and quietude. While I laid on my bunk in reflective thought, a buzzing fly circled two inches above my head and landed on the screen of my open window. Since I had no desire to be bothered by the nasty little pestilence, I reached up and slid the glass window closed, trapping the bugger. *Good, you won't be bothering me again—ever.* I figured on picking his carcass off the sill a couple of hours later.

Closing my eyes, I slid back into quiet reverie. Then, a strange thing happened. Those intuitive pangs of gentle prodding began to rise up, and in a voice less-than-a-whisper I heard, *There's something to be learned from that fly.*

*Right, I thought. Is this some kind of a joke?*

*Open your window, and see what you can learn, the whisper prompted softly.*

I debated at great length with myself over the anticipated demise of my tiny nemesis. *Is all life sacred? I pondered. What could a fly possibly teach me?*

Nevertheless, my intuition remained insistent—*open your window.*

Then it occurred to me, this was an opportunity. If God chided me through my intuition, then contrary to anything I could imagine, that winged annoyance would teach me something. If not, I was simply more delusional than usual.

Watching the trapped little irritant march back and forth across the screen in what appeared to be a minor panic, I realized I got some perverse pleasure from its dilemma. The fly certainly realized its predicament. It knew that all it could do was run up and down, back and forth, frantically looking for a way out. And some dark insect-phobic part of me enjoyed that.

Twelve Step warrior like me. Just to be sure, however, I drew out the resentment chart as recommended. In one hour I listed 12 resentments regarding my depressed wife, my demanding boss, an imperfect program friend, and a garrulous lady at church. Just as I suspected, other than a few minor issues, I was largely resentment free.

Okay. The truth is, I started to panic. I quickly ran back to the Big Book and then wrote this down: “God, help me show \_\_\_\_\_ the same tolerance, pity, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. (S)he is sick. How can I be helpful to her/him? God, save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” As I read, wrote, and reflected, I felt the burden of resentment lifting.

The next day, though, I felt the old resentments tugging at me, knocking on the door of my heart, pleading their case. I knew I had more work to do if I wanted to stay free of them, and so that weekend, during the professional football playoff mind you, I jotted down three column headings—Before Marriage, After Marriage, and Today. I began filling in character defects under each heading.

The first two columns were nearly identical, with about 30 entries a piece. The last column, however, had 14 defects, nine of them preceded by the word “somewhat.” This certainly was a pleasant surprise. Apparently, my Higher Power had been working on me over the years. I wanted to know more, so I took this concept to the next level of detail.

Namely, I depicted, in graphic form, the progression of my core defects (and a few assets) over the course of my life. I laid out my life history across the bottom of the paper in about nine chunks of time, from elementary school through today, also noting life-shaping events, such as marriage and finding SA meetings. On the left of the page I treated my inventory items as if they have energy levels: high, medium, low. I then traced out how those levels varied over time for each inventory item – pretty cool, huh?

My graph tells me that I’ve been improving. There’s nothing like a little encouragement to get my current program back in gear. Before finding 12-Step recovery I had given up hope, resigning myself to a life of duplicity, shame and self-loathing; yet, today I can see genuine progress. In addition, my graph clearly illustrates the impact of life-shaping events on my defects and assets, which helps explain a few things and reminds me of a few more things to be grateful for. I also notice a couple of staunch defects which have shown resilience in the face of progressive recovery, such as blaming others and feeling entitled – guess I’ll be moving on to Step 5 shortly.

If you’re stuck in first gear I recommend giving this mini-Fourth a try. It might be just the thing to get you moving again along “the Road of Happy Destiny.”

**Charlie S., Boston**

## What is Sexual Sobriety for the Sexaholic?

We are people who have a problem with our sexual thoughts or behaviors. Our experience is that we are addicted to lust and to compulsive sexual acts. For this reason we call ourselves Sexaholics. Practically none of us accepted at first that we were addicted. However, as we listened to others who said they were sexaholics, we came to believe that we do have a common problem and that we have a solution.

People addicted to alcohol discover that once they take the first drink they do not know how much or for how long they will drink. They also discover that despite negative reactions from society or friends or family, they will continue to seek to drink. They cannot stop. The solution is to not take the first drink.

It is similar for us with our sexual behaviors. Despite negative consequences -- humiliations, lies, diseases, jobs lost, arrests, divorces, or immoral acts -- we cannot predict how much or for how long we will pursue sexual fantasies or contacts. We continue to seek lustful situations. The solution is to become sexually sober.

Sexual sobriety for sexaholics of our type means no sex with ourselves and no sex with any partner other than the spouse. Sexual sobriety also means progressive freedom from the many forms of sexual thinking and lust that enter our lives. Our collective experience is

that sexual sobriety will free us from these compulsions. This freedom is found by remaining sober and by using the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in our daily lives.

If you want what we have found in sobriety and recovery and are willing to take the actions necessary to get it, then we will be useful to you. Sexaholics Anonymous is for every person who has identified their powerlessness over lust and who knows they will need the power of God *as they understand Him* and of our Fellowship to bring sanity back to their lives. Join us as we walk the road of freedom together.

**Anonymous**

## Accountability Circle

Having a sponsor and working the Steps are good; but, for me an accountability circle seems to work the best. I need people who are like me, who I can check in with hourly, daily, and weekly to keep current in my recovery. This helps me through the highs and lows of life.

Some people in SA, myself included, try to adjust the program to our needs. The “easier softer way” is to just work it just the way it is. What works is constant vigilance and surrender of the temptation on a daily basis. Am I willing to surrender my lust today, praying for the willingness, and trying to stay connected with people in the program and out of myself?

**William L., Denver**

## PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

### Practical Suggestions from the Fellowship: What Works For Me

#### A Suggested Thought Process for Newcomers to Consider:

My name is \_\_\_\_\_  
(fill in the blank). I have a disease /dis-  
order/dysfunction/addiction/mental  
illness (whatever you want to call it)  
where my brain tells me I should:

(fill in the blanks and check all that  
apply)

- fantasize
- look at lustful TV
- look at pornography
- go to "adult" establishments
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

This is my brain regularly telling me it  
would be a good idea to do something  
that, if I did, I would be:

(fill in the blanks and check all that  
apply)

- hurting my relation ship with my  
spouse
- risking damage to my reputation
- risking arrest
- risking disease

- risking hurting loved ones
- setting myself up to feel depressed
- risking losing my job
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Based on the above facts, my brain is  
undeniably broken/sick/dysfunctional  
(whatever you want to call it).

To combat this insane obsession and  
compulsion, I am willing to go to any  
lengths. This means I am willing to:

(fill in the blanks and check all that  
apply)

- Stop thinking for myself as to  
what I should do to recover
- Get the advice of someone else  
who has recovered and has the kind of  
life I want. (a sponsor, permanent or  
temporary)
- Follow the advice of a sponsor
- Go to one to three meetings a day  
as recommended by sponsor
- Make a phone call to an SA person  
every waking hour, or as frequently as  
recommended by a sponsor.
- go to in-patient treatment for sex  
addiction if recommended by sponsor  
or counselor.

Take medications as prescribed by  
a doctor

Go to bed at a regular time (as  
recommend by a sponsor)

Exercise (as recommended by a  
sponsor)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Other ideas: give up movies, access to  
computers, TV, malls or being at work  
alone, or traveling, or whatever a spon-  
sor thinks will be helpful.)

Now, many of these actions are unap-  
pealing and inconvenient. I don't want  
to do them all. I don't like having this  
disease. I didn't ask to have this dis-  
ease. I wish I didn't have to do all this  
stuff to recover. However, (now go  
back to the top and start again: " My  
name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I have a disease/  
disorder/dysfunction/addiction/mental  
illness where sometimes, or often, my  
brain tells me it would be a good idea  
to..."

**Judson R., Seattle**

#### Fourth Step Revisited

Have you been in recovery for a  
while and find you're facing new, baf-  
fling difficulties that your current pro-  
gram isn't adequately addressing? Or  
do you feel like your recovery has  
slowed down and you can't shift out of  
first gear? If so, perhaps it's time to  
revisit the Fourth Step.

Hi, my name is C. and I'm a sexa-  
holic. I've been sober since September  
2000. I recently did my Fourth Step in  
a new and refreshing way, and I'd like  
to share my experience with you.

Like many folks in program, I get  
spiritually stuck from time to time. I  
try everything in my "recovery tool  
bag" but nothing seems to fit the cur-  
rent (and pressing) need. My recourse  
is to keep talking about it until some-  
one either hands me a new tool or, at  
least, points me in a new direction.  
Recently a friend in program pointed  
me toward doing a "mini" Fourth Step.

To be candid with you, I thought it  
was a stupid idea: "Been there, done  
that." However, I've learned to listen  
to those who are sober. Leaning not on  
my own understanding, I sat down to  
revisit the Fourth Step (sigh).

I rather carelessly listed some fears  
that came to mind: fear of financial  
insecurity, fear of relapse, fear of liv-  
ing a dilatory existence, and my  
strongest, most palpable fear, that of  
losing my wife.

This quick fear inventory clued me  
in that I might actually benefit from  
taking a closer look at myself, and so I  
picked up the AA Big Book and re-  
read the section on the Fourth Step. I  
noticed the Big Book wastes a lot of  
time on resentments, which might be  
good for someone new, but not for a