

Essay®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

SOBRIETY, SA, AND THE PURSUIT OF GOD'S WILL

My name is Ted L., and I'm a gratefully recovering sexaholic. They say that God works in mysterious ways, and for me it's been a doozy! I was 38 years old, and had lived a life of slavery to lust, sex, and myself. I'd been in prison for six years for rape, and was finally beginning to come to terms with the evil I had done in my life. I thought that it would help my parole chances if I could get some kind of program set up at my facility. (The White Book concedes that many of us don't have pure motives for becoming involved with SA – and I'm a case in point there.)

I received a letter and the book from Keith S., indicating a willingness to help us set up an SA meeting here. "Great!" I remember thinking to my-

self, "This will look good on my record. Who knows? Maybe some of these other guys around here can get some help because, boy, do they need it." I began reading it. I felt as if I could have written whole sections of it from my own life experience. "Me, a sex addict?" I thought to myself. Sure I'd raped a woman; sure I'd masturbated five or six times a day; sure I'd seemingly kept the pornography business afloat single-handedly – but a sex addict? I didn't like the idea, but still clung to the hope that I could "benefit" from helping start a program here, so I worked with some surprisingly helpful and compassionate people within the system, and our first SA meeting took place in May of 2001.

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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.*

Dear *Essay* Reader,

This issue of the *Essay* includes some powerful recovery stories, examples of our developing literature and information about SA service work. Do you have something you can contribute to this quarterly? Would you subscribe?

Hopefully you can answer "Yes!" to these questions. Your feedback on the *Essay* is always welcome. The *Essay* is available by individual subscription or through your group.

Please contact us at essay@sa.org or by mail at

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

Sincerely,
Essay Editorial Committee

I began working the Steps with my fellows here, and I came to realize that I'd lived almost entirely in my head for most of my conscious life. I'd objectified and sexualized almost every woman I'd ever met. I used lust as a drug, sex as a sedative, and denial as the catalyst for it all.

I dabbled with the concept of sobriety for a while, sometimes stringing a day or week or two together. Even though I felt I was a lost cause, the volunteers who came into our meeting gave me hope. There was hope for everyone – even me. I began to see that there were others who struggled with similar problems to my own. The healing began.

I asked Keith S. for a sponsor through the mail. Because we had all started at Step 1 together here, it was difficult for anyone here to be a sponsor. Keith matched me up with a tremendously gifted man who helped me as I falteringly made my first pass through the Steps over the course of a year and a half. I know that I could not have made it through Step 4 without my sponsor. He listened, and he cared, and it was a pretty new experience for me. I found that I could, through God's help, make changes in my life. I learned that sobriety was a real possibility, and recently marked my first anniversary of sobriety. For a guy who couldn't go 12 hours before, 12 months is a blessing that I never expected to receive.

My life's not perfect. I'm not perfect. I've got a lot of amends to make. Some amends can never be fully made,

but I believe in God's healing power. I believe that the Twelve Steps have been a gateway for me to a life where the pursuit of God's will is my number one goal. If you'd showed me this letter five years ago, I'd have guaranteed it was a forgery. I hardly believed in God, and definitely spent zero time pursuing or trying to do His will. I've been blessed beyond my ability to list. I still have a marriage, in spite of my best attempts to destroy it, to the woman I love more than anyone on earth. I have a son who's grown into a young man that any father could be proud of. I've got family, friends, and fellow SA members who support me in ways that are as varied as they are appreciated. To quote Lou Gehrig – "I consider myself the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

I can claim credit for none of this. It is the work of God in my life, manifested in my life through (among other means) SA and the Twelve Steps, that has created this miracle. I am now lucky enough to be able to sponsor others, including other prisoners through the Sponsor-by-Mail program.

If I can close with but one request, it would be that every person reading this today take the time to realistically consider becoming a Sponsor-by-Mail to a prisoner somewhere. The impact of my own sponsor is too great to be described. If I can have but 1% of the impact on the lives of those that I sponsor, as he had on me, I will consider myself lucky. There are always more prisoners who need sponsors than

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there are SA members willing to be sponsors. It has made all the difference in my life, and it can be that way for countless others. May God continue to bless all of us who trudge the road of happy destiny. Peace, **Ted L.**

Group News

Thanks for asking us how we are doing. We've had some struggles getting organized, but have a good site, and a solid core of 3-4. Some of the others with no program experience are beginning to put together some sobriety. Their excitement has been a real boost to me as well. I just celebrated a year, and am grateful for the program!

You probably also want to note that we're right near Cooperstown, since a lot of people come to Cooperstown to tour [*the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum*] in the summer. Maybe some SA members would be interested in having a meeting to attend while traveling. Otherwise, the closest meetings in any fellowship are in Albany or Utica, both about an hour away. Blessings,
Mark M., Otsego County, NY group

The Evolution of the Norcross Group

We doubled in size last night, from three guys at the first meeting to six guys last night. No newcomers yet, but maybe that's okay. We need to get a feel for the direction the meetings will

go. Just wanted to let you know we planted the seed, and darn thing has already begun to sprout! Now I suppose we should pray for rain? ○○○○

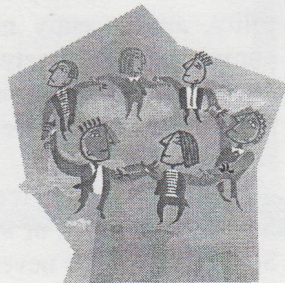
We had another good meeting last night. One of the guys had relapsed on Sunday, and was quite emotionally shaken by the experience. It was a good reminder for us all. ○○○○

Fourth meeting, 11 in attendance, 3 newcomers! Our first female member! Yikes! Would it be too trite for me to say that this is taking off beyond my wildest dreams? We have already scouted out a larger room at the church. This is such a gift; I cannot begin to describe it properly. ○○○○

The Norcross Group had its first Group Conscience meeting last night. Trusted servants were elected, our format was created, and our finances were discussed. In keeping with the Fourth Tradition, right now we are going to pay our rent and purchase chips and literature. Hopefully, it will not be too much longer before we have donations to make to Georgia Intergroup and to the International Central Office.

All in all, we have the makings of a core group of members, and hopefully more people will feel at home in the meeting and continue the road of recovery with us.

**Gary,
Norcross, GA**



MEDITATIONS

The Serenity Prayer

“God, grant me the serenity...”

The Serenity Prayer appeared in 1943 to become part of the foundation of the Alcoholics Anonymous Program. This prayer opens our meetings, graces many sobriety chips, and appears in our literature and periodicals over and over. The Serenity Prayer even commonly appears on wall plaques and in cross-stitch panels. Serenity, courage, and wisdom are virtues sought by me in recovery and by much of the human community.

The first words of the prayer, however, are often glossed over. “God grant” means we acknowledge that this is not a prayer to try harder or to go deeper in our program. Instead, we admit our need for our Higher Power as the source of power to carry us through the next minute, hour, or day. Allowing God’s Spirit to guide our response to everyday life is the safest doorway to serenity, courage, and wisdom available on the other side.

Prayer: God, grant me the willingness to let You guide my life today that I may move closer to the serenity, courage, and wisdom I want to share with others.

“Whatever you send out comes back to you...”

In recovery, I’ve learned something interesting about my telephone: it only rings when I dial numbers. When I stop dialing, it stops ringing.

Before I came to SA, I wondered why I had so few friends. But for the telemarketers and bill-collectors, I wouldn’t know my phone worked. Recovery forced to use my phone. Daily. As time went on, the number of calls I made increased. Then, unexpectedly, the number of incoming calls increased. What a feeling to come home and see messages on my answering machine!

I have found that making calls truly is insurance against a slip. Even when I struggle with wanting to isolate and disconnect, my program friends still call. But if I go too long without calling others, the cycle is broken. I used to get angry at this whole dynamic. Why do people stop calling me when I need them most? In truth, I am the one who disconnects. And I have the choice today to stay in the center of the

MEDITATIONS

program or to disconnect and blame others for my own loneliness.

Today, I choose to be “part of.”

Prayer: *God, help me to take action and reach out to others today. Help me remember that this is a “we” program, not an “I” program. Just for today, help me be “part of” and not “apart from.”*

.....

“If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again.”

Babies are resilient. In their attempts to learn to walk, they fall a thousand times. But they keep trying. They don’t know how to give up; in fact, they have to be restrained from trying too hard.

At some stage in my development, I learned how to give up on life. When I came to SA, sobriety eluded me. I couldn’t stay sober for three days and it took over three years to have my first anniversary. What I learned through this experience (aside from humility!) was what it means to “keep coming back.” People in program told me I didn’t have to give up and label myself a failure because I failed to stay sober.

I have not yet returned to that stage of life where I can keep trying, no matter what the outcome or how much it hurts to fail. But like walking, living in recovery teaches me that, despite all my “slips,” I don’t need to give up on myself.

Prayer: *God, thank You for giving me the desire to keep coming back. Help me put my confidence in You, to do for me what I cannot do for myself. Strengthen my resolve today. Help me remember that recovery is never mastered; it is practiced – one day at a time.*

The work in progress, *A Meditation Book for SA*, needs your thoughts and writings. They do not have to be in "perfect" English. The editor will render them beautiful. Please send any contributions by e-mail to saico@sa.org, or by land mail to SAICO, P.O. Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565

Thank you,
Jerry L., Los Gatos, CA, SA Literature Committee Sponsoring Editor

First Faltering Steps In The Program

I know that the editors discourage essays about religion. My essay certainly has definite religious overtones. However, I focused primarily on the Steps and how I was able to accept the principles embodied in them. I am sure you are aware of the skepticism with which Twelve Step programs are looked upon by the more conservative Christian Churches. However, if you only knew (and you probably do) the silent suffering that goes on in these groups, you would see the need for my kind of essay.

After completing my first four Steps, I wrote this essay describing my first faltering steps in the program. I know that there are others who wrestle with the same kinds of concerns that I had. Therefore, if they read my story, they might be more likely to take advantage of the help that God wants to give them through Sexaholics Anonymous.

STEP ONE: We admitted we were powerless over lust – that our lives had become unmanageable.

As I began my Twelve Step journey, I hesitated. I had to come to terms with the idea that I was even addicted in the first place. Addiction was for those who were not Christians. Addiction was not something that was supposed to happen to a person who was saved, born again, regenerated by the Spirit of God, possessed a new nature, imbued with eternal life, who believed in Jesus. All my Christian life, I had been taught that

salvation freed us from the power of sin over our lives

I told myself that my problem was not addiction. My problem was that I lacked the necessary will power and commitment to Jesus. That was why I could not or, rather, would not stop committing sexual sin. What I needed was revival and a return to my first love of Jesus in order to repent of my attachment to lust. For me to admit to addiction would be like denying everything I believed about Christianity.

Besides, "addiction" was the excuse people used to escape responsibility for their actions. Weak-minded, irresponsible people needed a psychological cover for their sin so they called it an addiction. Or better yet, they called it a disease. What psychobabble.

As I worked in the Church leading congregational singing and music, teaching a youth Sunday school class, and being a deacon, I made a conscious decision to give myself over to my lust. I wanted to burn those images into my mind to such a degree that whenever I closed my eyes (even during prayer!), I wanted to have my sin flash before my eyes.

Understanding the obvious tension between my religious views and my behavior, I forced myself to compartmentalize my life. I gave up trying to live a victorious personal life. However, since I was involved in Christian ministry, I could not let my sin interfere with what I was doing for God. My Christian ministry would be separate

from my personal life. As long as I agreed with God that what I was doing was a sin and confessed and forsook it every time I did it, I believed I could continue as before.

My life got complicated when I was discovered. My wife found out about my sin. In fact, she discovered my sin on several occasions. Each time, she would become angry and express hurt, betrayal, and a loss of trust. I was moved by this and promised her each time that she discovered my sin that I would never do it again. Sound familiar? If I could not keep my promise to God, did I really expect to keep my promise to my wife? To make matters worse, the intensity of my sexual sin increased. I began crossing lines that I swore I would never cross no matter how much I indulged my lust.

In 2002, my wife once again discovered my sin. Finally at the limit of her ability to deal with my sin, she threw me out of the house and said that if I did not seek help, she would divorce me. I went to live with a sympathetic friend. I sought counsel from a trusted pastor friend. He was well-meaning and did help to a degree; however, once I maneuvered my way back home, I was at it again.

Don't get me wrong. I repented, confessed in front of my Church, and had everyone pray for me to finally live the kind of life I was supposed to be living. With tears, I firmly committed to living a life consistent with my religious beliefs. I would finally be a different man. I truly meant it. My wife also told me that if she ever found

out that I was indulging my sin again, she would file for divorce.

I held myself for a time but I soon returned to my sin with a renewed vigor. Unfortunately, this time, instead of my wife discovering my sin, my sixteen-year-old daughter stumbled across it. She was devastated. She told my wife, who went ballistic. It was only when I threatened to force her to split our assets if she carried out her threat to file for divorce that she relented. However, I had to sleep on the couch and act as if I had indeed moved out. The anger that hung in the atmosphere was so thick you could cut it with a knife. My wife said that I was a pathetic addict who needed help.

It was at this time that I thought that perhaps I did have some kind of problem. What that problem was, I wasn't quite sure. I just knew that if I didn't do something quickly, my marriage would dissolve before my very eyes. I remembered a fellow in my Church who had once told me that he had gone through some kind of a Twelve Step program to help him with his cocaine addiction.

With much embarrassment, I approached him and told him about my life and my problem. Much to my surprise, he completely understood my problem and suggested that I attend an informational meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous. I had heard about Twelve Step programs and was intrigued by the invitation. I agreed to go.

In the meeting people freely and openly talked about the very thing that I had held in secret for so long. This

surprised me. It was actually very liberating. However, as we went around the room introducing ourselves, I realized that I would probably be expected to say, "Hi, I'm Mike and I'm a sexaholic." When it was my turn to speak, I feebly mumbled my name and, in a voice that was barely audible, said, "I'm a sexaholic." It was as if a weight that I had been carrying around for years suddenly came off my back. Yes, I was indeed a sexaholic. As the focus continued around the room, I noticed that no one looked at me with disgust. No one called me a pervert or a heretic. I was not struck dead by a bolt of lightning nor did the ground open up and swallow me whole. Had I perhaps been wrong about this whole addiction thing?

As I started attending meetings, I soon learned about the Twelve Steps. It was not enough to simply adopt the title Sexaholic. The word "Sexaholic" means something. It means that I was powerless over my lust and that my life was unmanageable. I certainly had no problem agreeing in principle with this statement. Unfortunately, because of my religious training, I found it hard to embrace the Twelve Steps and believe in a God "*as I understand him.*"

But God is merciful and full of compassion and understanding. One day, as I was praying, a Bible verse from Romans came to mind. "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." God Himself was telling me that I was powerless over my lust and that my

life was unmanageable. When I realized that the First Step was nothing more than acknowledging the simple Bible truth contained in Romans, I embraced the First Step and made it mine.

Now I glory in the fact that I am powerless to overcome my lust and that it is only by surrendering to God and letting Him overcome it for me that I have any hope of gaining control over my life once again. It is only by surrendering my life and all its defects that I have any hope of tapping into His power and "almightiness" that helps me overcome what is wrong with me. And I know that He will carry me each "Step" of the way.

Mike L., Temple City CA

Rage and Anger

I learned rage and anger early on. Why? I was neglected as a child. I was snubbed by all the beauties in high school. I was rejected by the snobs and socialites and laughed at by the affluent. I was bullied by the big jocks and harassed by the smart alecks. I was a loser at all sports and taken advantage of by the losers who were the only ones I was comfortable with. I know what it is to feel like a nobody and a nothing.

I was too timid to stand up to anyone, and just tried harder to please everyone so they would stop hurting me with their cruelty. That is what drove me into an isolated fantasy existence. Nobody understood my pain and my need to be loved, touched, treated with

respect—and my great need for intimacy, to be wanted sexually by nice people (lusted after).

Any time I was treated with disrespect, rejected, or snubbed, even unintentionally, I was driven to anger and rage. If I was denied my needs, expectations or desires, violence was the only way I get even and get attention. Not physical violence, but passive-aggressive, sneaky, and vengeful. My reactions, which I blamed on the perpetrators and abusers, caused me greater pain from guilt and shame rather than from the humiliation and shame, I suffered as the result of abuse (real or imagined). Sometimes I suffered even greater physical retaliation from the bullies. When I think about these things I still get a big knot in the pit of my stomach and I want to go throw up.

As a child my self-esteem and feelings of self worth were severely damaged by the insensitivity of others. I could not see the point in believing in the religious values I was taught as a child. No loving God would have allowed the abuse I suffered to be inflicted on any human being. I was so doped up by the use of fantasy and unreal expectations that I was unable to see the real world around me and could not see that I was just like all the rest and did all of the same things to others.

I don't know exactly what happened to change the rage and anger inside of me, except that after I hit the bottom of my disease and tried to commit suicide to escape that misery, the love of the real living God found me somehow. I began to seek Him to find my self-

esteem and self worth. As I traveled the road of recovery and the Twelve Steps to serenity, a miracle happened. The rage and anger began to leave, in small doses at first and then increasing in later years of sobriety and recovery. I owe it all to a loving God and the SA fellowship.

In these rooms I learned to identify with other sick people and realized that all those perpetrators were just as sick. I became grateful to be among a group of sick people who were finding help and getting better. Today I do not feel inadequate, neglected, less than, or greater than anyone else. I no longer need rage to even the score. God showed me that I was equal in His eyes. I am loved and valued just as I am.

When I started acting like a decent and loving human being, I started being treated like one too. Today I feel loved and respected. I don't need rage, anger, fantasy, or acting-out to cope with the trials and despair in this world.

My recovery walk today is about uncovering faults in my self and correcting them with faith and trust in God to relieve me of all these defects of character. Steps Four through Nine.

My Hope is that everyone in recovery will work a program to the degree that they can find the same recovery and esteem that I am finding here. Keep coming back, get a sponsor, share the rigorous truth about yourself, work the Steps, "and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of happy destiny. May God bless and keep you until then."

Thanks for being here for me.

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[This was sent to me by a former sponsor. Thought you might enjoy it! Bill V.]

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

The *Sexaholics Anonymous* (White Book) material on the 5th Step provides excellent guidance for both the person presenting and the one hearing the Step. The book says, "Ideally, the Fifth Step should be taken with one's sponsor..." I strongly agree. The 5th Step is addressed in Chapter 6 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, "Into Action." I encourage you to read these sections of both books prior to meeting with your sponsor. I even more strongly recommend that the sponsor read this before sitting down with the sponsee. The White Book notes that this is a very special time that should not "be subject to schedules, interruptions, or distractions." Whenever possible, I suggest starting early in the day. Many will choose to take the Step at the home of the sponsor or sponsee. However, I know of 5th Steps successfully taken in churches and quiet parks.

When working with my sponsor, I present my written inventory. We review it together. He can often see a pattern that has previously eluded me. He may point out where I overlooked selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, or (my personal favorite) fear. He may guide me to see the motives that I have hidden from myself. And, he is nearly

always the one to see where I demonstrated love, courage, or some other admirable trait. Remember, these inventories are to identify our assets as well as our liabilities.

I try to provide similarly useful feedback with sponsees. While I am willing to confront denial, dishonesty, or bragging, I also want to affirm willingness, honesty, and courage. I truly believe that in the deepest depths of our disease, each of us tried to choose the least destructive options we saw at the time. As we learn better options, we do better. I need to let go of my shame for not knowing what I had never been taught or shown. I need to support my fellows as they learn to do the same. I frequently share an example of my own poor choices to let my sponsee know he is not unique. When my sponsee is finished, I generally ask if there is anything else that he has been too afraid or ashamed to share. I remind him that we are as sick as our sickest secrets. Once he has taken this Step, *withholding nothing*, we review the 5th Step promises from Alcoholics Anonymous page 75 and I send him to the next page to take the 6th & 7th Steps.

Step Zero

I think for me, the most important Step was Step "0." So, before I attempted to do the SA Twelve Steps, I've been working on Step Zero. Here's a format I wrote, answered and read to my Accountability Partner and my Sponsor.

Compulsion is: having started the process with one fix, one drink, one look, one thought we cannot stop through our own power of will. Because of our physical sensitivity to lust; we are completely in the grip of a destructive power greater than ourselves.

- Have I stopped compulsion in all its forms?
- Have I stopped feeding lust?
—through my eyes? —my fantasies?
—my memories?
- Have I stopped living only and always inside my own head? This means, do I keep my thoughts, battles, and struggles a secret? How do I deal with those outside of myself?
- List and identify my forms of compulsion
- What are my methods of acting out?

- What's my biggest trigger or triggers?
- What do I do to stop the compulsions from happening?
- Do I have an accountability partner? If yes, explain the relationship. If no, why not?
- What am I willing to do to achieve sexual sobriety?
- Am I getting involved in the program of SA ? How? What do I do daily?
- Do I have a sponsor?

Obsession: that fixed idea that takes us back time and time again to our particular drug or some substitute, to recapture the ease and comfort we once knew.

- What do I obsess over?
- Do I talk about the overwhelming that the temptations have on me to my sponsor, accountability partner or group?

I hope this format can help others.
Brad, Ogden, UT

History of the Daily Renewals

At an international conference sometime in the early 1990s, I was standing at the entrance of the hotel restaurant and I noticed some papers lying by the cash register. I picked them up and read: "Desire for Sobriety: daily renewal with sobriety partners." I thought, hmmm, probably this wasn't meant to be left by the cash register. I looked around the almost empty dining room and saw Jim E. (now in Africa) and Harry B. (now in New Mexico). Yes, the papers belonged to them and they kindly gave me a copy, with this history. The first three questions (see below) were written by a newcomer who knew Jim, and were devised because neither he nor Jim had a meeting to go to. They began calling each other every day to commit to sobriety. Later, Harry added the other two questions. I'm not sure which of them wrote the commentary. The newcomer left the program, but he certainly gave us something that has had a significant impact on our fellowship.

I took the renewals back to Boston where eventually they were rewritten and expanded by one or two of our members. I didn't know they'd been rewritten until Peter from California showed them to me at an international conference, saying they had come from Massachusetts! Such is the wonderful "grapevine" of our fellowship. Since

then I've read or heard on tape at least two further revisions that came out of California and there may be others. A current version was printed in the Essay in 2002, Issue 4.

Here is the original renewal (with one omission, where a short phrase from a particular religion was quoted):

Desire for Sobriety: daily renewal with sobriety partners

1. Are you willing to admit you are powerless over lust?
2. Do you desire sobriety for the next 24 hours? (freedom from the obsessions and actions of lust [freedom from fear, resentment, shame, self pity, etc.])
3. Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to protect this desire for the next 24 hours? (setting boundaries, prayer, reading, physical care of your body, reaching out and calling others)
4. Do you understand that at the end of this 24 hours you are free to choose this sobriety for another day or go another way?
5. Just for today, are you willing, with me, to hand over your will and your life to the care of the One who kept you sober yesterday and protected you from the full consequences of your lust in the past?

A Commentary

Keep your renewal simple and brief. Use your own words. In the beginning perhaps the first three questions are enough. Depending on the struggle of the day, some like to include freedom from fear, resentment, or shame.

Desire for sobriety (to stop lusting) is the only requirement for membership in this fellowship. The willingness to claim that desire, share it daily in relationships, protect and nurture it, will assure sobriety. A WE-God, rather than ME-God. God is not present in the shame of the past, God is not present in the fear of the future, God is present in your desire for sobriety at this moment. This is conscious contact with the God of your understanding. Good desires, shared, grow stronger. Conscious contact increases.

Yesterday's spirituality will not keep us sober today. We need a fresh injection of Spirit each new day.

Desire: name it, claim it, share it, live in it. The God of my understanding becomes the God of my good desires. The God of my shame, of my fear, of my resentment withers.

Because this is a program of choice, we can choose sobriety even when we are out of touch with the desire for sobriety. Each new day we renew that choice with others as often as needed. Desire will return and bear fruit, and multiply strength with each sharing. It works.

Margot C., Boston, MA

New Groups USA

Cedar Falls, IA
Dubois, PA
Eugene, OR
Gettysburg, PA
Merrillville, IN
Norcross, GA
Rochester, MN
San Francisco, CA
W. Cobb County, GA

Additional meetings

Denver, CO

CANADA

Black Dome, BC

Thank You for Sharing:

Thank you! We have had a good response to our request for your sharing in writing about the Twelve Steps and the Traditions. Please send any writings, meditations, 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.
Thanks in advance, *Essay* Editors

SACFC NEWS

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Maryland; Washington, DC; Northern VA Correctional Facilities Team Report

In September, three members of the Correctional Facilities Team of our Inter-group completed training to become One-on-One mentors in the County Detention center. Our Team has made two unsuccessful efforts to enter other county jails here in our area. Now, we have been given the opportunity to Twelfth Step some of the prisoners.

In this case, Higher Power worked through our Pass the Message Committee chairperson who secured a meeting with the jail's contact person in early September. At that meeting, it was clear that the staff saw how much our program was needed in their jail. Unsure of the conservative nature of the jail's administration, they looked for alternative ways to bring SA inside. It was decided to run SA members through the jail's volunteer training program. With our members prepared to be One-on-One mentors, the counselors in the jail would then funnel prisoners who expressed a desire for help with their lust issues to our people. Our members will be, in effect, running micro meetings with one

to three prisoners at a time.

Our contact works for Offender Aid and Restoration of Arlington County, Inc. (OAR) which runs programs in three local jails. With this first step inside we will soon have the opportunity to enter the other jails served by OAR.

Thanks for asking us to report our success in the *Essay*. Keep praying.

Davis C.

Reached Behind the Walls

My name is Brad and I'm an addict. A SAD addict. That's not the state of my condition; it's the state of my life. SAD stands for Sex, Alcohol and Drugs. These aren't the only addictions I have.

I've always been addicted. I'm currently serving time in a Utah prison, my third time. There are a lot of things I want to talk about. First, I've always run from myself. Denial was my first, middle and last name. I had nicknames – projector, blamer, justifier, rationalizer, blackmailer, victim, just to name a few. These are all part of my disease. I knew I had a prob-

lem, however, when I went through the process of the prison system. I was given a re-hearing but it was no use. I couldn't advance levels. I was stuck where I was. This would be the greatest thing that ever happened to me.

I remember the last few minutes before I was arrested. I was once again asking God to bail me out so that I could do it again just as I've always done. It was that day that I gave my life over though I did not know it at the time. God was only a word to me. After doing the Twelve Steps of AA, I've come to know God. God has always been there. I'm the one who ignored Him. I'm living proof that God does for me and has done for me what I can't. The Big Book says that God could and would if He were sought. He did things without me even asking. Today I seek and I'm overwhelmed with some of the miracles of recovery. I never knew what recovery was.

Humility helped me stop digging my hole. I hit my bottom. I've always had problems with women and this time I was embarrassed enough to see something. God again. Step Two says, "We Came. We Came to". For me, being embarrassed woke me up. It wasn't until after I did the steps of AA that I really could get to the core.

I'm a sex addict. Alcohol and drugs were only a way to act out in all of my forms. My drinking and drug use was linked to my sexual lifestyle in some form. I thank God for placing a certain person named Kevin B in my life. I heard him talk about being a SAD addict. I heard him talk about his issues.

That gave me the courage to ask him. He gave me the address to SA. I wrote and was given a book and information that has changed my life forever. The book of SA has enhanced my spiritual life. After all, I suffer from a spiritual illness. Drugs and alcohol weren't the problem; they were outside symptoms. The problem is my inner self and me. I'm with myself 24/7.

Working on my sex addiction has helped me finally connect with a female without sex. My wife and I have the best relationship I've ever had. I've also been able to form a wonderful meaningful friendship with another man. I don't feel I need to compete anymore with males.

My belief system was that the more women I slept with, the more of a man I was. I felt I needed to be accepted by my peers so off I went to discover life. I did not realize that I was sick. I'd like to thank all those involved in SA for their experience, strength and hope. You all have reached me behind the walls.

I would like to get involved in any way I can. There isn't an SA meeting here. If anyone out there would like to work on SA material, sharing through the mail, please feel free to write me. I can use all the support, feedback and advice anyone has to offer. So, if anyone needs to practice the Twelfth Step; here's an opportunity.

Brad, Utah



Third Quarter Donations July - September 2003

Northeast Region		Silver Spring CFC, MD	420.00	South Midwest Region	
CANADA		Springfield, VA	38.85	Albuquerque, NM	104.00
Barrie, ON	100.00	Springfield CFC	16.65	Arvada, CO	20.00
Calgary, AB	173.10	Stratford, NJ	50.00	Colorado Springs, CO	653.00
Halifax, NS	17.36	Timonium, MD	85.00	Denver, CO	151.04
Kingston, ON	20.00	Washington DC	258.40	St. Louis, MO	90.00
Millvale, PEI	23.00	Washington DC CFC	74.50	St. Louis CFC	30.00
Montreal, PQ	250.00	Westmont, NJ	63.00		
Toronto, ON	35.43	Wheeling, WV	125.00	Northwest Region	
USA		Woodbridge, VA	170.00	Bellevue, WA	227.00
Concord, MA	161.00	Woodbridge CFC	30.00	Kirkland, WA	225.00
Delmar, NY	25.00			Marysville, WA	45.00
Long Island, NY	480.00	Southeast Region		Mill Creek, WA	75.00
N England IG	72.00	Atlanta, GA	412.88	Pasco, WA	11.00
N England CFC	15.00	Daytona Beach, FL	287.80	Portland, OR	1,131.14
New York Metro IG	516.00	Daytona Bch CFC	42.00	Portland CFC	581.50
Pearl River, NY	110.00	Georgia IG	593.47	Seattle, WA	251.00
Queens, NY	55.00	Gulf Coast Retreat MS	33.00	Tacoma, WA	100.00
Queens CFC	50.00	High Point, NC	37.78	Tukwila, WA	48.00
Rochester, NY	31.28	Orlando, FL	195.00	Tukwila CFC	48.00
Schenectady, NY	50.00	Paducah, KY	74.00	Twin Falls, ID	25.00
Somerville MA	61.00	Savannah, GA	240.00	Vancouver, WA	25.00
White Plains, NY	100.00				
Yonkers, NY	22.00	North Midwest Region		Southwest Region	
Mid-Atlantic Region		Arlington Hgts, IL	200.00	Hermosa Bch, CA	100.00
Akron, OH	25.00	Arlington Hgts CFC	50.00	Lakewood, CA	100.00
Annapolis, MD	30.00	Aurora, IL	100.00	Los Altos, CA	75.00
Baltimore, MD	55.00	Aurora CFC	25.00	Los Angeles, CA	93.00
Beltsville, MD	105.00	Bannockburn, IL	63.00	Manhattan Bch, CA	50.00
Bowie, MD	100.00	Bannockburn CFC	42.00	Midvale, UT	40.00
Centreville, VA	74.70	Barrington, IL	390.00	N Hollywood, CA	183.24
Centreville CFC	8.30	Barrington CFC	210.00	Norwalk, CA	12.50
Cranberry Twp, PA	300.00	Chicago, IL	210.00	Palm Desert, CA	50.00
Crystal City, VA	250.04	Chicago St Th, IL	488.00	Pasadena, CA	50.00
Crystal City CFC	19.38	Chicago St Th CFC	226.00	Salt Lake City, UT	400.00
Eastern PA IG	412.62	Columbus, NE	100.00	San Diego, CA	130.00
Erie, PA	138.57	Crystal Lake, IL	100.00	San Francisco, CA	5.00
Fairfax, VA	423.20	Detroit, MI	50.00	San Jose, CA	20.00
Fairfax CFC	108.63	Downers Grove, IL	100.00	San Jose CFC	10.00
Frederick, MD	25.00	Elmhurst, IL	155.00	Sandy, UT	50.00
Gaithersburg, MD	70.00	Ferndale, MI	200.00	Sierra Madre, CA	200.00
Herndon, VA	84.00	Glen Ellyn, IL	200.00	W Los Angeles, CA	303.00
Hyattsville, MD	40.00	Glendale Hgts, IL	20.00	Yorba Linda, CA	40.00
Mars, PA	30.00	Glendale CFC	20.00		
McLean, VA	263.30	Lincoln, NE	68.00	International	
McLean CFC	13.70	Milwaukee, WI	68.00	United Kingdom	305.82
Mt Rainier, MD	101.00	Minneapolis, MN	55.00		
Mt Rainier CFC	36.00	Omaha, NE	21.00	Group Total	
Penn Hills Friday, PA	118.14	Omaha CFC	36.44		16,338.03
Penn Hills Weds, PA	79.82	Trenton, MI	25.00	Individual	
Pittsburgh Southside, PA	77.55	Twin Cities IG	315.00		2,916.85
Pittsburgh IG	25.00	Twin Cities CFC	25.00	SACFC Total	
		Woodstock, IL	72.00		2,148.10
				Grand Total	
					21,402.98

SA Financial Snapshot

September YTD Budget 2003

Contributions	60,000.00
SACFC	7,500.00
Conventions	10,500.00
Literature Sales	7,500.00
Discounts	.00
Refunds	.00
Interest	375.00
<i>Essay</i>	3,000.00
Total Revenues	88,875.00

Prudent Reserve 10,650.00

Bank Charges	.00
Credit Card Fees	450.00
Conference Fees	1,275.00
Depreciation	1,350.00
Interest Expense	.00
Liability Insurance	1,875.00
Legal	1,050.00
Accounting	2,925.00
Literature expense	1,500.00
Payroll	47,025.00
Payroll Tax	4,200.00
Pension	3,450.00
Postage & Freight	3,375.00
Office Expense	1,125.00
Printing	9,000.00
Professional Fees	50.00
Rent	6,750.00
Maintenance	825.00
Supplies	375.00
Sales Tax	150.00
Taxes & Licenses	75.00
Telephone	6,375.00
Travel	6,375.00

Total Expenses 99,525.00

2003 September YTD

Contributions	58,697.83
SACFC	5,439.93
Conventions	10,544.04
Literature Sales	9,541.09
Discounts	.00
Refunds	.00
Interest	1,465.73
<i>Essay</i>	3,015.50
Total Revenues	88,704.12

Prudent Reserve 6,262.14

Bank Charges	15.00
Credit Card Fees	535.46
Conference Fees	713.00
Depreciation	1,602.82
Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	1,694.00
Legal	79.50
Accounting	2,597.00
Literature Expense	(563.88)
Payroll	44,957.00
Payroll Tax	3,378.74
Pension	2,134.00
Postage & Freight	3,078.07
Office Expense	2,868.33
Printing	7,531.54
Professional Fees	500.00
Rent	7,165.26
Maintenance	834.04
Supplies	41.04
Sales Tax	82.96
Taxes & Licenses	120.60
Telephone	5,089.74
Travel	10,512.04

Total Expenses 94,966.26

Calendar of Events

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

January 8, 2004, Twenty week Step workshop, La Habra, CA.

For more details, call Tim at 714/961-6893.

January 17, 2004, One Day Workshop, Metuchen, NJ, sponsored by

NJ Intergroup. Theme: My Best Thinking Got Me Here.

Contact Tom A. at 908/351-3870

February 27 - 29, 2004, SA Convention, Dublin, Ireland.

For more details, call Tim at 353 87 771 5561.

March 6, 2004, Step Workshop, Palm Springs, CA.

For details, call Matt at 760/408-9426.

April 16 - 18, 2004, Spring Retreat, Carnation Flower, WA, sponsored by

Northwest Region. Contact Bob F. at 206/545-8161.

Upcoming International Conventions

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

July 9 - 11, 2004, SA International Convention, Oklahoma City, OK,

sponsored by Essay Oklahoma, with the participation of S-Anon.

Theme: Spiritual Awakening. Contact OKC at 405/424-1400.

January 2005, SA International Convention, Daytona Beach, FL

For more details, call Florida Intergroup at 386/255-0001

July 2005, SA International Convention, Philadelphia, PA

For more details, call Philadelphia at 215/564-3272.

*[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.]*

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. ("A.A.W.S.") Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWS 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.

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

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.
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 A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
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.
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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. 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.



*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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