



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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www.sa.org

2004, Issue One

ESSAY®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

I Am Insane, Not Evil

I am a grateful recovering sexaholic and an orthodox Jew. I have been obsessed with sex and lust almost as long as I can remember. I can recall at age twelve, sitting in the bathroom in Israel, playing with myself. By age thirteen, I was masturbating compulsively.

My father died when I was eight. As a result, my mother felt she had to be the father in our home. She was strict and held unreasonably high expectations for me, both morally and academically. For example, she taught me that I was a bad person if I slept more than five or six hours a night, so I rarely had adequate rest. The atmosphere in my boyhood home was one of extremely rigorous religious observance. I believed that I was committing an enormous sin by acting out. After each bout, I felt very guilty and promised myself I would stop, but soon I would act out

again, always again. I figured I was sinning anyway, so I could sin a little more.

At age twelve, I was pushed two years ahead of my classmates into high school, a private yeshiva ruled by an iron-fisted uncle. Since my high school was a boarding school I slept in a dorm. One Friday night during the first semester, a much older boy raped me. He did it again the following week. Later, the rapist took me aside and tried to talk to me about what he had done. I denied that anything had happened. Over my denial he told me that if I ever told anyone two things would happen: first, we would be blacklisted, blocking me from attending any good school in the future; second, he would kill himself—and his blood would be on my hands.

(Continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE:

My Palm Tree	7
Courage to Change	8
Olympic Training	12

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 a powerful recovery story, examples of our developing literature and information about SA service work. Do you have something you can contribute to this quarterly? Would you subscribe?

The *Essay* is available by individual subscription or through your group. The new rates are in effect with this issue. Individual subscriptions are \$12.00 annually; group rate, \$10.00. A subscription form is included with this issue.

You can contact *Essay* at saico@sa.org or by mail at

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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. 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.

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.
 7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
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 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

My schoolwork, which had always been excellent, began sinking. By the second semester my grades began to decline and I was skipping classes. I coped with my scholastic failure and my family's shame by retreating even further into lust and fantasy.

At fourteen, having come to New York, I began cruising the streets of Manhattan looking at women, riding the subways for hours at night, sidling up to female strangers. I was skipping school to be out on the streets. Even when I was in class, my mind was elsewhere. I spent hours at the windows of the school looking across campus at women in their homes. Only my mother's frantic string-pulling kept me from being expelled any number of times for not doing the work.

My strict religious upbringing taught me that my acting out was a grievous sin and that God would punish me severely. My intense guilt did not stop me. It pushed me further into fantasy and lust, into myself. I was convinced God hated me. In my self-hate, I acted out in non-sexual ways like stealing money and merchandise. I lost interest in my religious training and became completely disconnected from God as I had once understood Him.

At age sixteen, I confided this secret world of mine—with all its shame and remorse—to some of my religious leaders. The rabbis told me that my acting out was very wrong and that God would punish me severely. They sternly warned me to amend my evil ways. When I heard their words, I hated my-

self even more and lost all hope of ever attaining self-esteem.

One of the rabbis gave me his telephone number to call when I wanted to act out. I called him a few times, but I did not reach out to him consistently when I was tempted. He asked me why. I was too ashamed to admit that hearing him tell me how evil my acts were only drove me deeper into lusting, sexing, and stealing.

Before long, I pursued my lust into homosexual sex. It repelled me, but I did it anyway. I had sex every week or so with a college schoolmate—swearing it off after each episode and avoiding him until the next time we acted out. Of all the ways I acted out, I hated the gay life the worst, but my hatred couldn't bring me to stop. My college sex partner told a rabbi about us. I was referred to a rabbi-counselor who told me that marriage would channel my urges into healthier, saner things. So, at age nineteen I married the second girl I ever dated. It was a marriage arranged according to our traditions. She was my first female sex partner, and she saved me—for about three weeks. We were well matched, and we enjoyed building a home together, but she wasn't enough. I had to have more. Sex with my wife had opened the door to my next step down—prostitutes. I acted out with every kind of prostitute from high-class call girls to strung-out streetwalkers. I loved the danger.

When I was married, I planned to finish my rabbinical studies in four to five

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

years, but my absenteeism got me kicked out of a succession of schools. I bought a car to have easier and faster access to prostitutes. I would disappear from the house for hours, telling my wife later that the car had broken down or something. I was back to cruising city streets, X-rated movies, and peep shows. I went to bath houses. One night while I was cruising in the middle of winter, someone stole my shoes and I had to make my way home in my stocking feet.

During the High Holy Days I left my in-laws' house allegedly to visit a rabbi. That day as I was soliciting prostitutes, a pimp threw me out of my car and stole it. The police recovered the car and notified me. When my father-in-law and I went to the station to reclaim it, the sergeant told us the driver was claiming it as payment for sex.

I started making extreme religious promises to myself like, "If I masturbate, I will fast for the rest of the day." I slept on my bedroom floor to atone for acting out. In a year's time all my attempts at atonement accomplished was to annoy and upset my wife.

My only thought was gratification, never consequences—until afterward. I promised myself I would stop after every encounter. I hoped a psychotherapist would help me find my ideal sexual outlet. I was still convinced that I would be satisfied once I found the perfect match.

And my insanity continued. Somehow I always had a story for my wife. I

had been held up in traffic, had forgotten my license and been stopped by the police; whatever I could think of to cover the truth. My sudden disappearances terrified my wife, yet I yelled at her for rounding up the family to look for me. "Don't you know your own husband already?" I demanded angrily "I was just taking a walk!"

By my mid-twenties, my acting out was so draining that I could not show up for work reliably and soon could not hold a steady job. So I decided to go into business for myself. But here too I flagged. I missed appointments. I did not put in the hours the business required. I was too busy acting out. The only career I pursued with real energy was scheming new ways to escape into sex. My career was lust. I began using household money to act out. I borrowed against my credit cards and spent the money on prostitutes. My credit was ruined.

One night on a trip to the city with my family to obtain medical testing for my son, I left my family in a motel and went cruising. Here was a new city! I had to sample the prostitutes. I was arrested by an undercover policeman and spent half the night in a holding cell with three dozen drunks and vagrants who urinated on the floor. After a few hours I was moved to a small two-man cell. Sitting there, going back over my life, I felt more sober than I had in years. I swore off my sex addiction—for good (again). After my release and another story for my wife, I slept through my son's hospital visiting hours and scored a call girl.

(Continued on page 5)

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

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|---|---|
| 1) We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable. | to sexaholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs. |
| 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. | 1) We admitted we were powerless over alcohol —that our lives had become unmanageable. |
| 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. | 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. |
| 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. | 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. |
| 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. | 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. |
| 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. | 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. |
| 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. | 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. |
| 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. | 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. |
| 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. | 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. |
| 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. | 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. |
| 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. | 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. |
| 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message | 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 |

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.

Calendar of Events

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

April 3, 2004, 2nd annual conference, Out of the Darkness into the Light, Nashville, TN. For information, contact Nashville at 615/251-7516

April 16 - 18, 2004, Spring Retreat, Carnation Flower, WA, sponsored by Northwest Region. Contact Bob F. at 206/545-8161.

April 17, 2004, 5th Annual Marathon, Langhorne, PA, sponsored by Philadelphia Intergroup. Theme: Taking Action: Recovery and Healing Await Us. Contact Philadelphia IG at 215/564-3272.

April 17, 2004, Step Writing Synergy, Sacramento, CA, sponsored by Central Valley fellowship. Contact Sacramento at 916/491-1772.

April 24, 2004, Mountain Spring Marathon, Asheville, NC, Theme: Renewing Our Recovery. Contact John B. at 828/749-9537.

May 14 - 16, 2004, Find God IX Men's Retreat, Big Bear, CA. Theme: The Steps We Took. Contact Richard at 714/915-0364.

May 15, 2004, Sponsorship and Service, a seminar, sponsored by Sacramento, CA. For information, contact Sacramento at 916/491-1772.

May 22, 2004, NCSAI Unity Day, Hayward, CA, sponsored by No CA IG. Theme: Keeping It Simple. Contact NCSAI at 510/273-9878

June 12, 2004, Relapse Prevention Panel, a seminar, sponsored by Central Valley Fellowship. For information, contact Sacramento at 916/491-1772.

August 27 - 29, 2004, Ammerdown Convention, sponsored by SA UK. For details, contact Bill at 44 7753 821520.

Upcoming International Conventions

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 7 - 9, 2005, SA International Convention, Daytona Beach, FL. Theme: The Right Connection. 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.]

Soon lust made me so reckless that I started cruising my own suburban area. People from my congregation saw me with the girls and my rabbi gave me a lecture. Business associates saw me haggling with prostitutes and word got around. I knew I was ruining my reputation as a businessman and a good Jew, but danger was part of my high.

My son was born with severe cerebral palsy. He is a cripple for life. He was born the day after one of my all-night sex binges following a month in Israel in which I spent ten thousand dollars on prostitutes. I believed God punished me for acting out. For a time I stayed home and was abstinent. But soon, I was back out there.

By age thirty I was using alcohol and cocaine to intensify my lust binges with prostitutes; at thirty-three, I was a full-blown crack addict, stealing from my wife's purse, my twelve-year-old daughter, and my business associates to pay for my prostitutes and drugs. I swore on a Bible in shul that I would stop drugging and sexing. It never even slowed me down. My business was failing; fellow businessmen knew what I was and would not deal with me.

I was spending thousands of dollars a month. I passed bad checks throughout my Jewish community, turning friends of many years against me. I became too ashamed to show my face in shul. I skipped daily prayers. I stopped answering the phone.

Nine years ago I took my wife and my son to Delaware for three days while

he underwent surgery. I took no money, hoping that would keep me from prostitutes. Within hours after arriving I had my bookkeeper wire me five hundred dollars, and when that ran out, I cashed another \$125 in bad checks with a rabbi. I spent scant minutes in the hospital with my son. I had lost all semblance of self-respect. I was out of control, and I did not know how to stop. I found Alcoholics Anonymous through a counselor, but still could not stop drinking, drugging, and lusting.

One night, desperate after a binge of lust, sex and alcohol, I called an AA member. I told him what was going on with me. I also told him how as a young boy I was taught that if I slept more than five or six hours a night I was lazy, and that I had to adhere to a strict religious observance. I had to be a yeshiva superstar. If I wasn't a star, I was a failure. I told him about the history of inability to achieve at school, overeating, masturbating, and the progression that had brought me to my present condition. I believed that not only I was a failure at life, but that I was evil.

He responded by saying something that has stayed with me. I am not evil, he said, but sick—insane, in fact. The solution was neither to punish myself nor to resign myself to my active addiction as God's punishment. But God could help me. Something clicked. I am insane, not evil. Since that night I have been sober from alcohol and drugs.

But I was still insane with lust. Celebrating my first AA anniversary, I went to my old cruising haunts. I was terri-

fied. This was the way back to crack and booze in a hurry. When I got up the nerve to tell my AA sponsor about it, he told me to satiate my lust with masturbation and pornography but to stay away from prostitutes

I continued to masturbate and stay sober from alcohol. But my lust did not sit still. With thirteen months of AA sobriety, I found myself cruising to pick up a prostitute again. I knew that acting out with a prostitute would lead me back to alcohol and drugs, and I knew that if I picked up alcohol and drugs again, I would die. Somehow I got home without acting out. It was clear to me then that lust was my drug and that I had to find a support group for my lust, or I would die. I remember the date I contacted SA twelve years ago. It is still my sexual sobriety date. I surrendered completely to God and the SA program. I followed directions from my sponsor a day at a time. I knew, and I know, and I hope I never forget, that I am insane.

I began to comprehend the depths of my insanity when I started working the Fourth through Ninth Steps. The Ninth Step is very painful for me because it reminds me of all the people I have hurt. It has also meant a prison sentence for grand larceny—another of my fundraising schemes for prostitutes and drugs.

I am not able to make direct amends to most of the people I used and hurt through lust, yet I hold myself ready to do so. In God's time I will be given the opportunity to make amends to those people. The Tenth Step reminds me that

I am insane, especially when I trip over my chief character defects—anger, resentment, self-pity, and fear. Today, God makes it possible to find a different, better, and happier way of life.

I have worked the Eleventh Step—prayer and meditation—since the day I got sexually sober. The Twelfth Step—working with others—is the strongest medicine of all, especially when I am caught up in self-pity. The days of miracles are still with us. There is a Power outside myself, greater than myself, which is ready, willing, and able to give me hourly and daily reprieves from my addictions. That One is God. I am also short-tempered, resentful, jealous, and lazy: in all these ways my life is unmanageable. But if I surrender to Him, He has proven to me He will stretch out His arms to me every minute, every hour. Twelve years sober now, I still struggle against the old feeling that I am not a good Jew. But God shows me that I am a good and caring person. I am grateful to be a sober member of SA, knowing that I am only insane, not evil, and that God will take good care of me.



SA Financial Snapshot

Budget 2003		2003 Actual Year End	
Contributions	80,000.00	Contributions	80,602.02
SACFC	10,000.00	SACFC	6,722.23
Conventions	14,000.00	Conventions	10,544.04
Literature Sales	10,000.00	Literature Sales	13,318.27
Discounts	.00	Discounts	.00
Refunds	.00	Refunds	.00
Interest	500.00	Interest	1,649.29
<i>Essay</i>	4,000.00	<i>Essay</i>	4,265.50
Total Revenues	118,500.00	Total Revenues	117,101.35
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	15.00
Credit Card Fees	600.00	Credit Card Fees	757.57
Conference Fees	1,700.00	Conference Fees	1,328.00
Depreciation	1,800.00	Depreciation	2,166.29
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	2,500.00	Liability Insurance	1,694.00
Legal	1,400.00	Legal	79.50
Accounting	3,900.00	Accounting	3,661.00
Literature expense	2,000.00	Literature Expense	343.92
Payroll	62,700.00	Payroll	58,286.60
Payroll Tax	5,600.00	Payroll Tax	4,403.80
Pension	4,600.00	Pension	3,288.12
Postage & Freight	4,500.00	Postage & Freight	5,013.85
Office Expense	1,500.00	Office Expense	3,004.32
Printing	12,000.00	Printing	9,669.99
Professional Fees	1,000.00	Professional Fees	1,000.00
Rent	9,000.00	Rent	9,151.02
Maintenance	1,100.00	Maintenance	1,224.47
Supplies	500.00	Supplies	216.01
Sales Tax	200.00	Sales Tax	82.96
Taxes & Licenses	100.00	Taxes & Licenses	120.60
Telephone	8,500.00	Telephone	7,477.03
Travel	8,500.00	Travel	11,248.32
Total Expenses	132,700.00	Total Expenses	124,232.37
2003 Deficit	(14,200.00)	2003 Deficit	(7,131.02)

Third Quarter Donations October - December 2003

CANADA		Woodbridge, VA	175.00	Santa Fe, NM	25.00
Edmonton, AB	91.08	Southeast Region		St. Louis, MO	410.00
Montreal, PQ	150.00	Daytona Beach, FL	650.28	St. Louis CFC	20.00
Toronto, ON	41.68	Daytona Bch CFC	31.50	Topeka, KS	50.00
Vancouver, BC	1,000.00	Florence, AL	75.00	Northwest Region	
Windsor, ON	50.00	High Point, NC	15.00	Bellevue, WA	140.45
Northeast Region		Huntsville, AL	50.00	Kirkland, WA	100.25
Delmar, NY	25.00	Jonesboro, AR	10.00	Mill Creek, WA	80.00
Manchester, NH	100.00	Lexington, KY	250.00	Portland, OR	670.00
Pearl River, NY	161.00	Nashville, TN	573.58	Portland CFC	300.00
Rochester, NY	40.00	Orlando, FL	120.00	Seattle, WA	697.84
Schenectady, NY	25.00	Owensboro, KY	40.00	Spokane, WA	20.00
Somerville MA	130.00	Pensacola, FL	25.00	Tacoma, WA	100.00
White Plains, NY	100.00	Roswell, GA	115.00	Twin Falls, ID	25.00
Mid-Atlantic Region		Savannah, GA	172.00	Vancouver, WA	60.00
Akron, OH	82.00	North Midwest Region		Southwest Region	
Annapolis, MD	40.00	Arlington Hgts, IL	386.00	Anaheim, CA	100.00
Baltimore, MD	60.00	Barrington, IL	200.00	Camarillo, CA	300.00
Beltsville, MD	88.00	Barrington CFC	100.00	Chatsworth, CA CFC	150.00
Centreville, VA	485.75	Chicago, IL	261.70	Fresno, CA	150.00
Centreville CFC	8.30	Chicago St Th, IL	240.00	Glendora, CA	150.00
Columbus, OH	150.00	Chicago St Th CFC	180.00	Hayward, CA	30.00
Cranberry Twp, PA	200.00	Crystal Lake, IL	135.00	Hermosa Bch, CA	80.00
Crystal City, VA	371.60	Davenport, IA	50.00	Hermosa Beach CFC	80.00
Crystal City CFC	20.00	Deerfield, IL	70.00	Inland Empire IG	300.00
Eastern PA IG	300.00	Deerfield CFC	40.00	Lomita, CA	64.00
Eclid, OH	75.00	Downers Grove, IL	105.00	Los Altos, CA	82.00
Fairfax, VA	90.00	Ferndale, MI	105.00	N Hollywood, CA	50.00
Fairfax CFC	10.00	Glen Ellyn, IL	656.25	Norwalk, CA	31.00
Falls Church, VA	100.00	Grand Rapids, MI	100.00	Palm Desert, CA	100.00
Gaithersburg, MD	150.00	Green Bay, WI	50.00	Pasadena, CA	244.00
Herndon, VA	100.00	Joliet, IL	77.00	Petaluma, CA	300.00
Langhorne, PA	100.00	Lincoln, NE	20.00	Redondo Beach, CA	59.50
Leesburg, MD	215.00	Milwaukee, WI	419.35	Sacramento, CA	470.00
Lincroft, NJ	25.00	Munster, IN	100.00	Salt Lake City, UT	125.00
Mars, PA	30.00	Naperville, IL	100.00	San Diego, CA	15.00
McLean, VA	170.85	Omaha CFC	37.75	San Jose, CA	114.00
McLean CFC	14.40	Peoria, IL	200.00	St. Helena, CA	13.00
N Canton, OH	40.00	Rockford, IL	100.00	Tucson, AZ CFC	70.00
Norfolk / HRIG/ VA	25.00	St. Charles, IL	50.00	Westlake Village, CA	71.00
Penn Hills Friday, PA	58.00	Twin Cities IG	315.00	Yorba Linda, CA	75.80
Penn Hills Weds, PA	46.00	Twin Cities CFC	25.00		
Philadelphia, PA	10.50	Woodstock, IL	155.00	International	
Pikesville, MD	33.93	South Midwest Region		Australia Intergroup	60.00
Pittsburgh Southside, PA	75.00	Abilene, TX	37.55	E Ringwood	206.73
Reston, VA	230.00	Albuquerque, NM	280.00	Kippax, Canberra	300.00
Richmond, VA	70.00	Boulder, CO	10.00		
Springfield, VA	262.38	Clayton, MO	100.00	Group Total	20,240.58
Springfield CFC	13.87	Colorado Springs, CO	150.00	Individual	2,068.70
Stratford, NJ	57.00	Dallas, TX	150.00	SACFC Total	1,471.02
Washington DC	494.50	Denver, CO	387.52	Grand Total	27,729.51
Washington DC CFC	67.50	Ft. Collins, CO	40.00	Special Appeal	11,157.77
Wheeling, WV	160.00	Oklahoma City, OK	1,500.00		

My Palm Tree

Outside my sixth floor motel room at the San Diego Convention, I can look out the glass door to see and “hear” my palm tree—my temporary sponsor during this Convention. The branches explode outside my room, atop 50 feet of straight, strong, and branchless trunk. The palm tree stands tall and carries a program message to all who are prepared to hear.

Amazingly, this majestic tree has no distorted natural instincts and no self-will run riot. Rather, my palm tree waits for prompting from its Higher Power, the wind. I watch the branches sway gracefully, rhythmically, and in harmony with each other. Sometimes the branches appear absolutely motionless, until I look closer to see the almost imperceptible motion at the end of each branch. The rhythm of the tree synchronizes with the movement in my heart as we listen to each other.

The lesson is unmistakable. I, too, can move with the prompting of my Higher Power IF I work the program, especially the openness encouraged by the 11th Step. I don't have to move to my distorted natural instincts, nor my self-will.

God can do for me what I can't do for myself. I can become more like my palm tree and become more in harmony with my Higher Power, my fellow humans, and myself.

Al R., White Plains, NY

New Groups

USA

Ashland, OH
Casper, WY
Destin, FL
Dunwoody, GA
Gettysburg, PA
Maui, HI
Northville, MI
Round Lake Beach, IL

IRAN

Shiraz

JAPAN

Okinawa

Thank you for calling and notifying SAICO about your new group and new meetings of your home group. We love hearing about your new group.

Courage to Change

This topic really challenged me. I have heard people say that one of the things I have to do in this program is change everything about myself. Well, I have changed many things. I have walked through changes with my heart pounding, knees shaking, and feeling physically sick. I desperately clung to a belief that the promise of a Higher Power being there was true for me. And it was! Without making some fundamental changes, I would not have the recovery I have today. But there are a number of old behaviours I am still clinging to; pockets of lust I am unwilling to empty out.

Turn my entire life over to God? I don't think so! I have some stuff I still want to run myself. The good is the enemy of the best. And is my life all that good? It is so different and so much better than it used to be. But compared to what it could be? Most times I live in denial around this, but other times I get a clear vision of what I am cheating myself and others out of. I have had brief periods where I have surrendered absolutely everything up to God, and that is an amazing, indescribable experience.

What am I afraid of? Mostly, I am afraid of how much more will be required of me. Right now my life is manageable and comfortable enough. When I have gone through changes and deeper surrender, God has re-

quired much of me. I get very uncomfortable (heaven forbid!). He has also been there, always right by my side, helping me. But right now, I don't know that I want to go through those sorts of changes again. Even though change brings me a better life and makes me more useful to others.

Seeking comfort is my old addict thinking. I have been stuck in fear of change for some time now. I am feeling very sad about the life I am cheating myself and others out of. I usually get motivated into change by pain, by the current situation being so bad that I can't stand it anymore. It works much better when I am motivated towards something, rather than away from something. If it is away, then as soon as I have some distance, the motivation leaves. When it is towards God, there are no limits, it just keeps getting better.

God, I am in pain today and want to move closer to you. I pray that I will want to continue to move closer and change so that I may be filled with your light and be useful in the world, not so that my self-centered needs are met.

Sylvia G., Australia



The Twelve Concepts for SA

Concept 1: Final responsibility and ultimate authority for SA service should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

Concept 2: The leadership of SA, as represented by the General Delegate Assembly and the Board of Trustees, has become for nearly every practical purpose the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole society in its service matters.

Concept 3: To ensure effective leadership, we should endow each element of SA's service structure, the General Delegate Assembly and the Board of Trustees and its staffs and Committees with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Concept 4: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain the traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge at that level.

Concept 5: Throughout our structure a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Concept 6: The General Delegate Assembly recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility for most service matters should be exercised by the Board of Trustees.

Concept 7: The Bylaws of the Board of Trustees are a legal instrument empowering the Board to manage and conduct service matters. The SA service structure documents are not legal documents. They rely on tradition and the SA purse for final effectiveness.

Concept 8: The Trustees are the principal administrators of overall policy and finance.

Concept 9: Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety.

Concept 10: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with scope of such authority well defined.

Concept 11: The Trustees should always have the assistance of the best possible committees, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

Concept 12: The General Delegate Assembly and the Board of Trustees shall observe the spirit of SA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the set of perilous wealth or power, that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle, that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote and whenever possible by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; and that like the Fellowship it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

SA, as such, would never have an organization in the sense of a "government" that could issue directives by committee or Board to individuals or groups within the fellowship. Our committees and Board could only provide services and we've tried to organize them to function effectively. But SA has no government in the political sense.*

*"The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous (Biographical sketches their last major talks)," Pg 25

The Twelve Concepts for SA approved by the General Delegate Assembly, January 2004
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The Twelve Concepts of A.A. (Short Form)

Concept 1: Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

Concept 2: The General Service Conference of A.A. has become for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.

Concept 3: To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives— with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Concept 4: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Concept 5: Throughout our structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Concept 6: The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

Concept 7: The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

Concept 8: The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

Concept 9: Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.

Concept 10: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with scope of such authority well defined.

Concept 11: The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

Concept 12: The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power, that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle, that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

MEDITATIONS

First Things First

For over thirty years, I was convinced I knew how to put first things first. I had my personal priorities, which usually involved me getting attention or getting ahead in some way. I knew that pleasing other people increased the odds that I would get what I wanted. And I knew, starting at age ten, that I had to be either planning, or having, sex with myself every day. From age twenty, the formula was modified to include sex with others, too. But even that did not replace me as my own best friend.

Getting sober was a big shock. Being sober precluded running the dual set of lives: one centered around pleasing others and the other centered around sex. Being sober presented me daily with gobs of fear, pain, and sadness I'd never felt before. Being sober removed the option of running away, and confronted me with the realities of living and consequences of my actions.

The program encouraged me to change priorities. The program suggested that since my very life was at stake, I had to put staying alive first. That meant surrendering my right to lust and be sexual at all, because I am a self-destructive sexaholic. That meant putting my Higher Power's will for me first, because I cannot see what's best for me.

One day at a time I'm progressing toward a new life, one that is indeed happy, joyous and free. My certainty that I know what's first, or what's best for me, is gone. God takes care of that for me today, except when I forget. Then, "First Things First" reminds me of my real priorities.

God, I now know that today You will put the energy, the people, and the situations in front of me that are the right ones for me today. Grant me the willingness to do Your will today.

MEDITATIONS

Fear

The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear—primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded. (Twelve & Twelve p. 76)

I can't see my self-centered fear. What others recognize as my obvious self-centeredness, to me is just the "real world," or the "facts" of my life.

When I hear in meetings and read in our literature about my self-centeredness and about God's use of humiliation to move me toward humility, I begin to find hope. When I acknowledge my character defects as the manifestation of self-centered fears rather than as real problems, I begin to find a way out of the pit of despair. When I realize that God will provide what I need rather than what I want, I can relax and accept my life as it is. And in that acceptance there is the serenity and wholeness that I really wanted all along. Seeing my self-centered fear for what it really is—just a reminder to turn back to God—gives me the chance to keep moving forward through each day.

Thank you God for each day of serenity and acceptance. Thank you God for a new life based on what you provide for me rather than what I demand or cling to. Thank you God for each wondrous day you give me—and for the chance to grow a bit healthier each day, too.

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

has cut off this work. I have to leave it in the hands of my God and see where He wants me to go next.

Just look at the last nine years! What a true blessing it has been! Instead of sitting here rotting away, I have been able to reach out and contact all these pen pals. That, alone, is almost unbelievable. You need to understand that all I have been able to do these past years has been a gift from God. I am an uneducated person. For some reason, God decided to bless me and give me a reason to stay sober, a reason to keep going on. It is nothing that I could do on my own. I believe deep in my heart that God decided to save me for some reason and that he still has something else for me. All glory goes to God.

Ed N., Texas

[Editor note: Ed N. is no longer allowed to write to other inmates. He can still write to other members.]



Sponsor By Mail

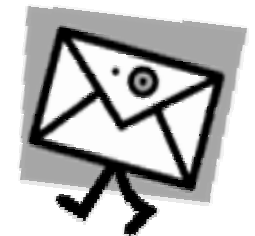
Keith reported that there are 76 members corresponding to 298 inmates in 33 states.

More members, men and women, are needed to write to inmates. If you have worked most of the steps, have been sober for a year or more, and are willing to share your experience, strength, and hope through letter-writing, this may be for you. We have instructions and a Step guide for your use. Every letter is a lot like sharing in a meeting.

Requests to join the list of Sponsors By Mail will be funneled to Keith through SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565.

New Prison Meetings

Davis C. reported a new meeting in the Arlington County Jail, VA.
David K, in Holding, OK
Gary L, San Juan County Jail, Monticello, UT
Tim O, IRC facility in Wiggins, MS
Jim M, in Georgia
Dale A., meeting in Canon City, CO



SACFC NEWS

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Many of you already know that I have been locked up in Texas for the last 23 years. I was well over 50 years old before I even knew what it was to be someone's friend. If I was not trying to drag you off to bed, I did not have the time of day for you. Now that is really sad, but it was also very true! You have to understand just how hard God fought for my soul. I am very much the abused child that became the abuser. I was so completely out of control that it is really remarkable that my loving God did not ever give up on me. God has shared with me every step of my recovery. The only reason I am still alive today is that God reached out and grabbed me. There just was no way that I could go on living my lifestyle without getting AIDS.

By the grace of my Living God, I was able to start the first SA group in prison back in 1984, with the help of a Catholic chaplain who agreed with me that there was a need for such a group. At that time, Texas had no help whatsoever for sex offenders. But God put it on my heart, and Roy K. sent us all the materials that we needed. For the next ten years, we had a very good group going.

Then, at the end of 1994, I was transferred to my present unit. As

soon as I got here, they told me I could not start another SA group. The Chair of the SACFC asked if I would be willing to write letters and share with other inmates. I almost turned it down because I am such a poor letter writer, but God was at work in the next few years. These "12 Steps by Mail" letters became my whole life. It was what I needed and what God saw fit to give to me. As Bill W. said in the Big Book, "The more you give this program away, the more you receive back."

I was writing about 25 other inmates on a steady basis, including three in California, three in Colorado, one in North Carolina, two in New York, four in Missouri, and eight here in Texas. I was really blessed by God in being able to write to so many people who were truly seeking ways to change themselves. Texas does not pay inmates for working. Yet, God always saw to it that I had money for postage and writing materials.

I have had a few who never returned my letters. Overall, a lot of inmates wanted to share their trip on the road of recovery. I thank God for the honor of reaching out to as many people as I was able to. Yes, I am upset by the fact that the State of Texas

12 Steps for Geezers and Geezettes

1. We admitted that we were powerless over whatever it was and that our lives had become confused.
2. We came to believe that a power greater than someone could restore us to something or other.
3. We made a decision to do something and we will as soon as we remember.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, but we can't recall the exact results.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to someone whom we can't recall the exact nature of whatever this is all about.
6. We were entirely ready for something or other.
7. We humbly asked God to help us recall whatever it is we are supposed to do.
8. We made a list of all persons we had harmed, but we lost the list or someone stole it.
9. We will make direct amends to those people if we ever find the list.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we remembered, we made another list which has also disappeared.
11. We sought through prayer and meditation to improve our relationship with someone or other and to try to recall why we were doing all of this.
12. Having had a confusing time of it, we were going to give up, but we forgot what it was we were going to give up, so we started back at Step One.

General Delegate Assembly

Region	Delegate	Alternate
Southwest Region	Jerry L.	David S.
Northwest Region	Rose W.	Steve P.
South Midwest Region	Jack F.	BJ M.
North Midwest Region	Vron J.	Scott S.
Southeast Region	Betty R.	David A.
MidAtlantic Region	TBD	Brian S.
Northeast Region	Margot C.	Dianne B.

All General Assembly Delegates can be reached at SAICO,
or email can be sent to saico@sa.org.

Board of Trustees

Maria Graf	non-sexaholic Trustee
Carole L.	
Jenny M.	
Dorene S.	
Tricia S.	

All Trustees can be reached at SAICO,
or email can be sent to saico@sa.org

Current Committee Assignments for Trustees and Delegates

Jerry	Lit, RAC (Regional Alignment Committee)
BJ	Lit
Dorene	Service Structure, Lit
Jack	Events, Site Selection, Internet,
Maria	International, Finance, Event Guidelines
Carole	Event Guidelines, Service Structure, Nominations
Tricia	Chair, Board of Trustees
Vron	Chair, General Delegate Assembly, Internet
Betty	Finance, Events Guidelines
David	Event Guidelines
Jenny	International, RAC, Service Structure
Margot	Nominations, Essay

Volunteers for service on these Committees may contact SAICO at saico@sa.org.

could be the same person or seven different people. There is a suggested format for renewals in *Practical Recovery Tools*. You can ask others how they do it. At a minimum, admit your powerlessness, turn over your will, get current, and reveal any plans you have to act out today. Renewal calls usually take between five and twenty minutes.

Sixth, make another program call in the evening. Talk about whatever you want to, as long as you make a connection with another teammate.

Finally, here are two less-traditional components you could add to your program—chores and smiles. Create a comprehensive to-do list to keep yourself busy the next three months. Your yard should look great, your dishes should sparkle, your car should shine, and your lenders should smile. You get the idea.

Once a week, deliberately make someone smile. Pick a person whom you want to make smile and then do something thoughtful. (This type of thinking is actually encouraged, but it has to be practiced).

Before long, you will be sober: “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path” (AA Big Book, p. 58). You will complete your training program and finally get to participate. But of course, we are not talking about the Olympics, we are talking about Life.

May God protect you and keep you until then.

Charlie S., Boston, MA

Essay:

Future Issues

The Editors of the Essay would like to devote future issues of the *Essay* to our experience, strength and hope in three areas.

The Twelve Concepts for SA
The Twelve SA Traditions
Thoughtful short essays for the work in progress, the SA Meditation book

We have had some helpful responses, but we need more, lots more. We need a mountain of material for these projects.

We respectfully request that you send your writings, experience and thoughts to us at:

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

Electronic files can be directed to
saico@sa.org

With anticipation and thanks,
The *Essay* Committee

Steps. Inevitably, they despair of the Program: “It just doesn’t work for me!” Oh really? You worked all Twelve Steps with your sponsor and you did not experience sobriety?

Without delay, get to work on the Steps, starting with Step One. It does not matter that you left off on Step Three before your relapse, or you are on Step Eight in AA, or you worked all the steps in SA four years ago. You are not sober; therefore, you think you have power over lust and you can manage your own life. Step One is just right for you. If you do not know how to work Step One, ask your sponsor. You can also read the step in the White Book, the Twelve and Twelve, and the Big Book. Anyway, the “how” really does not matter, the “what” does. It might also be helpful to note that completing a step does not matter, working it does.

Get a journal. Like working a step, the journal you will keep is a process, not an accomplishment. Make at least three entries per week. You can write about literally anything you want. You can also do this whenever you want. Many of us find it effective to journal in the morning.

The morning is a great time to accomplish several other daily tasks you will do for the next 90 days. First, eat breakfast every day. As part of the solution, regular nourishment sustains us throughout the Olympic training regimen and helps us fight withdrawal.

Looking at the problem, hunger is a powerful sexual trigger. If we are irritable by mid-morning, chances are we will act out by evening.

Second, pray at a regular time each day. When you do pray, place significant limits on self-centered prayers. Do not pray for yourself beyond the general sentiment of “Higher Power, please keep me sober today.” Instead, spend the next ninety days praying for other people, leaving your wants unspoken. I realize this suggestion may terrify you. Trust me. You really will be okay.

Third, write a daily list of gratitudes and fears. Begin by doing it your own way, but as soon as possible, learn how to do it from *Best of Essay: Practical Recovery Tools*. Read the whole thing, starting with “Fear to Gratitude Lists.”

Fourth, if you use the internet to act out, eliminate access to the internet for the next three months. If you and your sponsor agree that is not feasible, then get a daily email partner. Send him or her a screen shot of yesterday’s web browsing history and a short summary of how your recovery is going, regardless of yesterday’s internet use. (You can also subscribe to internet services which will automatically email your web history to whomever you designate).

Fifth, no matter how you act out sexually, get phone renewal partners for each morning of the week. This

SA Today Report San Diego 2004

Summary of actions
General Delegate Assembly January 9, 2004

Election of Trustee: Jenny M. elected for a four year term.

There are still vacancies for both sexaholic and non-sexaholic Trustees. A Sexaholic Trustee must have five years of SA sobriety. Trustee candidates need to submit a service resume and a letter of recommendation from their Intergroup to SAICO.

RAC *Regional Alignment Committee* presented and approved.

Number of groups is the foundation for determination of regions.

To form a new region, the minimum number of groups is 30 unless there are geographic or language reasons for smaller numbers.

A region should average between 50 – 75 groups.

Regions with 100 or more groups may elect to create a new region or have two Delegates.

Decisions regarding regional dimensions and number of Delegates will be made by the members of the region.

Four international Regions are recognized and encouraged to select a Delegate to represent their area at the General Delegate assembly in July 2005.

English speaking
Spanish and Portuguese speaking
German speaking
Asian

The Delegates will communicate this information to the Regions so that Regions can decide what action they wish to consider. So that additional expense is not added in 2004, new Delegates will not take office until after July 2004.

The Twelve Concepts of SA were considered individually and approved. The approved Concepts are printed for your review and use on pages 20 - 21. As it is with all *Essay* material, you may copy and use them with your group.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

Olympic Training for Those Who Cannot Stay Sober

If you are in a painful and seemingly endless cycle of relapse, unable to scrape together a few weeks or just a few days of sobriety *AND* you are willing to do whatever it takes, then read on.

The approach you are about to read is not for the faint-of-heart. It is for those whose pain and desperation is so severe they would “climb a mountain of broken glass if it would relieve their sex addiction.” If you have not worked a normal SA program of recovery, then you do not need to try the regimen described here, as this is truly the last stop before in-patient treatment. It is, if you will, a three month Olympic Training Program for sobriety.

Before diving into it, we need to recognize one activity that is positively, absolutely off-limits for the next 90 days—thinking. Intellect is useless in combating sex addiction; in fact, for most of us it is counter-productive. “Where has your best thinking brought you?” as the saying goes. Find the switch in your head labeled “fruitless thought cycles” and turn it off. When you slip back into idle thought, stop right away and do something. Do not worry, there will be plenty of “some-things” to do.

The first something is to get a sponsor. I regret having to remind folks of that, but lack of sponsorship is an epidemic in SA. What athlete expects to compete in the Olympics without a coach? Sometimes we hear claims like “There just isn’t anyone I feel I can work with.” If that describes you, flush your ego. Quit looking for that perfect someone to save you and ask anyone with sobriety to be your sponsor. If you respond that there is not anyone in your area with enough sobriety to sponsor you, please ask yourself if such a minor obstacle would have kept you from acting out. Then ask someone with just a little sobriety, call the SA Central Office (615 370-6062), or widen your meeting attendance. Having a sponsor is not optional. Find a way to make it happen.

Coincident with your sponsor search, begin your “90 in 90.” Put a start date on the calendar—**today**—and attend ninety meetings in ninety days. This is imperative, regardless of your success in staying sober. Get to a meeting every day for the next three months.

By the way, if you are balking at this Olympic training program already, then it is not meant for you (yet). Try

an easier, softer way. Then when your life gets even worse, and you are sufficiently desperate, perhaps you will be ready to accept this rigorous training.

For those who are still reading, you are welcome to be creative with your “90 in 90.” Having done three of my own “90 in 90s,” I have found it useful to count certain alternatives equivalent to SA meetings, such as AA meetings, other “S” meetings, one hour of phone calls, or listening to SA or AA tapes (glennkaudiotapes.com). Plan ahead, and work things out with your sponsor so that you can accomplish this daunting task.

As you travel the local meeting circuit, find a way to do service for at least one SA meeting. This is critical to your recovery, so take the initiative. If nothing is available for a person without sobriety, phone lists need to be maintained, newcomers need to be welcomed, the room often needs to be set up, and it always needs to be put back together. Likewise, find out how your home group attends to service matters. Attend the business meetings of your home SA group, because your “personal recovery depends on SA unity” (Tradition One).

For the same reason, take the initiative to dine with other teammates (SA group members) three or more times over the next 90 days. Find a restaurant where you can eat before or after one of your meetings, and invite others to join

you. You will be amazed at how powerfully this type of fellowship can strengthen your recovery muscles.

When you attend meetings, say very little and listen a lot. Be one of the first people to speak, talk no more than one minute until you exceed 30 days of sobriety, and refrain from dumping your acting-out guilt on your teammates. Just stick to describing how you are working your program. Get current outside of the meeting with program friends and your sponsor. Similarly, if your meeting has the custom of stating how your addiction manifests itself, limit yourself to mentioning one behavior. Keep in mind that these are not guidelines for every one, they are your guidelines.

Now, far more important than what you do and do not say, in every meeting, pay careful attention to the words of the sober members and apply their lessons-learned to your own program. If your mind often wanders during sharing because you are a compulsive thinker, make every effort to focus when old-timers talk. They have what you do not have, so listen to them. Put into practice what you hear.

Assuming your area has one, include an AA Big Book Step Study as one of your weekly meetings so that you can work the Steps. **There is no activity more central to a Twelve Step Program than working the Twelve Steps.** Yet, folks do anything other than the