



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

# ESSAY®

2005, Issue Two

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

## Victory Over Victimhood

My first sexual experience was with my uncle when I was nine years old. This grew into a full-blown homosexual relationship that lasted until I was eighteen. When it began, I was starved for acceptance and love, and I needed to feel wanted. When he chose me, I felt special.

My uncle used alcohol and porn as tools, and I quickly learned to use them myself. By the time I was twelve, I was getting pretty good at slamming back half fifths of tequila. Getting loaded seemed like a reasonable way of dealing with the guilt, shame and fear of what was going on. I had more than my share of pressure that needed to be handled. I added pot, speed and Valium to my routine. I spent more time loaded than straight during my teens. Sex and porn were just ways of feeling good. Who was it hurting, anyway?

Later, there was also an ongoing sexual relationship with a scout leader. Then taking what I was learning about being seduced and molested, I applied it to my younger brother.

I was hiding and I began producing characters to fit each situation. By the time I was thirty, I had disappeared, and my cast of characters took care of all my social interactions. Depending on the circumstance, I could play the father, the technician, the musician, the dope-head, the husband, and just about any other role I thought would make me more acceptable. What I knew for certain was that there was a key to happiness that others had, and for whatever reason, I did not. So in order to fit in, in order to look like I belonged, I had to act.

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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 a story about how changing oneself affects every other relationship and some thoughtful short essays by members about tools of recovery that they find helpful. You have something you can contribute to this quarterly. Would you please send it in?

The *Essay* is available by individual subscription, through your group, or online at the SAICO online store. Individual subscriptions are \$12.00 annually; the group rate is \$10.00. A subscription form is included with this issue.

*Essay* is now available by email subscription in a pdf format.

You can contact *Essay* at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org) or by land mail at *Essay*, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565, U.S.A.

Sincerely,  
*Essay* Editorial Committee  
June 2005

## *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 [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@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.

## SA Financial Snapshot April YTD 2005

	<b>Budget</b>		<b>Actual</b>
Contributions	35,666.67	Contributions	33,561.73
SACFC	3,000.00	SACFC	4,142.98
Conventions	5,333.33	Conventions	00.00
Literature Sales	11,000.00	Literature Sales	8,552.85
Interest	333.33	Interest	178.47
<u>Essay</u>	<u>1,666.67</u>	<u>Essay</u>	<u>1,329.00</u>
 Total Revenues	 <u>57,000.00</u>	 Total Revenues	 <u>47,765.03</u>
 Bank Charges	 .00	 Bank Charges	 .00
Credit Card Fees	500.00	Credit Card Fees	441.62
Conference Fees	466.67	Conference Fees	840.00
Depreciation	600.00	Depreciation	590.23
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	2,000.00	Liability Insurance	1,734.00
Legal	666.67	Legal	.00
Accounting	1,166.67	Accounting	2,335.00
Literature expense	4,000.00	Literature Expense	4,229.63
Payroll	26,900.00	Payroll	24,482.28
Payroll Tax	2,400.00	Payroll Tax	2,794.75
Pension	2,266.67	Pension	.00
Postage & Freight	1,666.67	Postage & Freight	3,152.35
Office Expense	533.33	Office Expense	1,338.52
Professional Fees	666.67	Professional Fees	250.00
Rent	3,233.33	Rent	3,794.97
Maintenance	366.67	Maintenance	358.30
Supplies	266.67	Supplies	.00
Sales Tax	33.33	Sales Tax	69.79
Taxes & Licenses	33.33	Taxes & Licenses	254.00
Telephone	2,833.33	Telephone	3,272.61
<u>Travel</u>	<u>6,333.33</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>5,021.03</u>
 Total Expenses	 <u>53,333.33</u>	 Total Expenses	 <u>54,959.08</u>

*(Continued from page 1)*

Sex and porn were both my escape and what I needed to feel okay. The more detached I got from reality, the more sex and porn I needed. Becoming more desensitized, more isolated from my feelings, it took more and more to get by and to ease my hurts.

When I got sober from lust, I began hurting and didn't know why. I learned that my relationship with my uncle, and my hunger for it, was partly due to the dysfunction of my home and the failure of my parents. I learned that I was the victim of my uncle and my scout leader.

What I also learned was that there were hundreds of times when I was hurt: emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Because of the way I drank, drugged, and lusted, I was never able to experience those hurts. Now they were all coming to the surface. Without my drugs, they hurt really bad.

For the first year of my recovery, I wrapped this hurt around me like a blanket. It felt comfortable, it allowed me to remain different, perhaps special. I didn't want to talk to my parents, and I didn't want to talk to my uncle. They had failed me. I was ABUSED!

It was my parent's fault, my uncle's fault, my scout leader's fault and it was my church's fault. Yes, now I knew why I had become an addict, and I had someone (heck, I had many someones) to blame. But I was still miserable.

Here I was, sober, in recovery, knowing why I was what I was, had made contact with and begun developing a relationship with God, and life still sucked.

Well, I was focusing on others, what they had and hadn't done to or for me. The only time I looked at myself was to see if there were any other wounds I could discover and pick at. I was still measuring my life by the shortcomings of others.

Then I began working the Twelve Steps. Step Four brought me to terms with my own humanity and faults. And the healing began. The more I honestly looked at my own shortcomings, the less I needed to focus on the shortcomings of others, and the more I could see them as human, like me. It was very important that I experience and acknowledge the wounds I received from others. It was even more important that I eventually find forgiveness and love for those same people.

Until I made a sincere effort with Step Four, my perception was distorted. When I was seeing others through my distorted lenses of addiction, resentments, and fears, I was also seeing myself through the same distortions.

So in Steps Four through Nine, I find the tools I need to begin removing the distortions, one by one, from my

*(Continued on page 4)*

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perception. Without getting rid of the distortions, the world is jagged and scary, and I can't find lasting serenity. Without serenity I focus on the negative, look for and usually find things to complain about, inventory other people's shortcomings, and want more than what I have.

Most amazingly, what I find in working Steps Four through Nine is the ability to love. Not the kind of love that says, "I love what you do for me", but the kind of love that allows me to see you as a gentle, fragile, gift to the world. The kind of love that makes me smile when I hear you laugh, hurt when I know you've been harmed, and attempt to make things right when I've been the one who's harmed you.

This is what humbles me most. To honestly look at how limited I am in my ability to love without reciproca-tion. After all, love is a gift, not a transaction. If I'm keeping a ledger in my head and heart of what I do versus what you do, if I'm keeping score, then I can call it many things (bartering, exchanging, trading, dealing), but I can't call it love.

If I could love these people who had hurt me, then perhaps those who I hurt could love me. If I could forgive, then perhaps I could be forgiven.

I used to think that forgiving some-one meant letting them off the hook. I controlled the hook, I gave the permis-

sion to let them off. That's far too much power in the hands of someone as powerless as I am. Today, I find more peace by believing that forgive-ness is about realizing there is no hook.

Work through the ugly stuff. Feel what you need to feel. Be angry at those you need to be angry with. And then.....Forgive.

It is the greatest gift I ever gave my-self.

### ***Requesting Your Help for Future Issues of Essay***

The Editors of the Essay would like to devote future issues of the *Essay* to our experience, strength and hope in one of these areas: The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Concepts for SA, The Twelve SA Traditions, thoughtful short essays for the work in progress, the Meditation Book for SA, and your own member story.

Member stories should answer the questions: What was it like? What brought you to SA? Which tools of the SA program have been helpful to you?

Please send your writings, experi-ence and thoughts to us at:

SAICO – ESSAY,  
PO Box 3565,  
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565,

You can email electronic files to  
saico@sa.org

With anticipation and thanks,  
The *Essay* Committee

## **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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## The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.
  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.
1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol —that our lives had become unmanageable.
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  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.*

## Compassion

For many of us who are new to SA, one of the most important tools in our recovery toolbox may be compassion— for others certainly, but compassion for ourselves most of all.

Why do we need compassion? We are learning many new things about who we really are, and some of this new self-knowledge can be disturbing and difficult to absorb. After so many years believing we were in control, we find that we are powerless. We discover a Higher Power for the first time, or bring a new dimension to the spiritual life we already have. And we hear much about failings, defects, and moral shortcomings; we struggle for the courage required to admit them to ourselves and others, and begin the process of leaving them behind.

In the face of so much change, positive though it is, we may begin to hear a familiar voice inside our heads. "How can I be so screwed up?" or "I've really got to clean up my act or else" —in a tone that is harsh, angry, and criticizing.

Compassion means tuning out this voice, and listening to the smaller, quieter, truer voice that comes to us when we walk in the park, take a long hot shower, play with our kids, pray or meditate. It is this voice—the voice of our conscience, our wise self, our Higher Power—that helps us care for what is wounded, hurting and languishing inside ourselves. It helps us see the many fine qualities we already possess, qualities that are simply waiting for the chance to live, breathe and grow.

That harsh criticizing internal voice taught us how to use our addiction to cover up our pain and suffering. It taught us that true happiness was not possible, that the only way to really kill the pain was self-destruction. So when we decide to ignore that criticizing voice, we are leaving behind oblivion, and choosing life.

And how do we practice compassion? By congratulating ourselves on having had the courage to come this far. By acknowledging how difficult it has been and how much hard work is still ahead. By remembering our many accomplishments and our many strengths, not just our failings and shortcomings.

Most importantly, we practice compassion by realizing that we are not working so hard to change our lives just to keep from getting into really bad trouble with our sponsor, the group, or that angry drill-sergeant voice inside our heads. When we decide not to call that phone number, or cruise down that street, or visit that web site, we're doing it to save ourselves from a lot of unnecessary pain and suffering. We're doing it because walking away from our old habits of lusting and sexual compulsion is one of the most loving, gentle, compassionate things we can do for ourselves: right here, right now.

**Patrick K.**

## Meetings, Meetings, Meetings

If you are a newcomer to SA, you may have the same opinion of the saying "Keep coming back, it works if you work it" that I did when I first started attending meetings. Whenever people got all excited talking about the power of those two simple principles—go to meetings, work the steps—I often felt they were misguided or brain-washed, or maybe even a little crazy. I was a bit frightened by the certainty and the fervor with which they spoke; it reminded me too much of other, less benign influences from my childhood.

Well, I now feel the same clarity and passion about SA as those first few people I talked to. This is a little hard to believe, even for me, since I've carried around a well-honed aversion to Twelve-Step programs for the last 30 years.

What changed my mind? I went to a meeting. About six months before I was finally able to admit my own powerlessness over compulsive sexual thoughts and actions, I attended an AA meeting with a close friend who was struggling with his drinking. It was just to help him, I told myself. I'd been clean and sober from drugs and alcohol for nearly thirty years, and I'd done it on my own. Surely, this wasn't anything I needed.

I was not prepared for what I found in that crowded room in the basement

of that small-town church. All levels of sobriety, all walks of life, all ages from young to old, all attitudes from resentful to blissed-out, but what was clear above all was the strong sense of community, of mutual support.

Of course there was a big difference between that first AA meeting and my first SA meeting. Instead of carrying some long term sobriety and feeling good about myself, during those first few SA meetings I felt ashamed, shy, unsure, and not convinced at all that this group of depressed-looking people had anything to offer.

But each time I went to a meeting, there was always something that seemed to apply directly to my situation in the shared stories and readings. And so I kept coming back. And after a few months of listening to others tell about sorrows and struggles and doubts so much like my own, it became almost impossible not to open my heart. I'd thought that constantly thinking about sex and constantly acting out was just my own secret shame, and yet here were others who understood my situation completely. So I was finally able to treat myself and my failings with compassion, and start working the Steps.

Sometimes newcomers ask me why I go to two or three meetings a week. The answer is that I find it too easy to

## First Quarter Donations January - March 2005

<b>South Midwest Region</b>		Long Beach, CA M	25.00	<b>TOTALS</b>
		Los Altos, CA	14.00	
Albuquerque, NM	290.00	N Hollywood, CA	60.00	<b>'05 FL Conv 1,641.00</b>
Arvada, CO	35.00	Pasadena, CA Sun	150.00	<b>'05 FLCFC Conv 945.00</b>
Clayton, MO	200.00	Pasadena TU	50.00	<b>Chi Convention 3,500.00</b>
Colo. Spgs, CO	1,000.00	Phoenix, AZ	24.00	
Colo. Spgs TU	46.00	Redondo Bch, CA	100.00	<b>Group Total 18,671.53</b>
Colo. Spgs SAT	100.00	Salt Lake City, UT	156.00	
Dallas, TX	150.00	San Diego, CA F	199.00	<b>Individual 2,245.02</b>
Englewood, CO	93.80	San Diego IG	835.00	
Kansas City, KS	250.00	San Jose, CA M	37.47	<b>Quarterly Appeal 776.00</b>
Kansas City CFC	250.00	Sierre Madre, CA	50.00	
St. Louis, MO TU	65.00	Tucson, AZ CFC	100.00	<b>SACFC Total 1,952.78</b>
St. Louis TU CFC	20.00	Valencia, CA	25.00	
St Louis, Wed	200.00	West LA, CA Sat	298.00	<b>SA Net 100.00</b>
		West LA TU	313.00	
		Yorba Linda, CA	50.00	<b>Grand Total 29,831.63</b>
<b>Northwest Region</b>		<b>International</b>		
Anchorage, AK	100.00	Ireland CFC	110.00	
Bellevue, WA	75.00	Jerusalem	50.00	
Bellevue TU	20.00	Madrid, Spain	264.45	
Bozeman, MT	50.00	<b>Quarterly Appeal</b>		
Grants Pass, OR	100.00	Chatsworth, CA	150.00	
INWIG CFC	10.00	Chicago St T Mon	44.00	
Kent, WA	15.00	Chicago St T Wed	145.00	
Mill Creek, WA Th	50.00	Chi Sw Cov Sun	76.00	
Newberg, OR	146.44	Jacksonville, FL	80.00	
Newberg CFC	74.75	San Francisco	81.00	
Portland, OR Sat	147.63	San Jose SAT	75.00	
Seattle, WA	276.00	<b>Individual 125.00</b>		
Vancouver, WA	45.00			
Yakima, WA	10.00			
<b>Southwest Region</b>				
Camarillo, CA	100.00			
Chatsworth, CA	100.00			
Chatsworth CFC	250.00			

*Thank you for your gift.*

Remember that the IRS recognizes SA as a 501(C)3 organization. Donations to SA are tax deductible and can be used as a contribution on your income tax return.

Each gift is acknowledged with a receipt and a thank you for your helping hand reaching out to the sexaholic who still suffers.

The staff of SA International Central Office

## First Quarter Donations January - March 2005

<b>CANADA</b>		Erie, PA Touchstones	15.20	Nashville Noon	75.00
		Essington, PA	82.50	Nashville 5 PM	100.00
Edmonton, AB	48.41	Fairfax, VA	78.30	Nashville Sat AM	1,763.00
Montreal, QC Fri	60.00	Fairfax CFC	8.70	Norcross, GA	100.86
Montreal Wed	80.00	Falling Waters, WV	100.00	Orlando, FL	79.50
Sudbury, ON	105.00	Gaithersburg, MD	200.00	Roswell, GA	125.00
Toronto, ON Sat	200.13	Herndon, VA	68.00	Savannah, GA	200.00
		Lansdale, PA	40.00		
		Lincroft, NJ	20.00	<b>North Midwest Region</b>	
		McLean, VA TH	229.50		
Binghamton, NY	64.00	McLean TH CFC	25.50	Ann Arbor, MI	200.00
Brooklyn, NY Mon	20.00	MD/DC/VA IG	1,000.00	Arlington Hgts TH	40.00
Concord, MA Mon	470.00	MD/DC/VA CFC	250.00	Arlington Hgts Sat	100.00
Jamaica Plains, MA	37.00	Mt Rainier, MD CFC	12.00	Bannockburn, IL	45.00
Manchester, NH	50.00	No Canton, OH	30.00	Bannockburn CFC	30.00
NY Metro IG	340.00	Northeast OH IG	50.00	Chicago, IL	80.00
Queens, NY	25.00	NE OH IG CFC	37.00	Chi St T Mon	80.00
Queens CFC	25.00	Painesville, OH	50.00	Chi St T M CFC	60.00
Rochester, NY 1 Step	20.00	Penn Hills Weds, PA	65.25	Chi St T Weds	300.00
Schenectady, NY	25.00	Penn Hills Fri	94.83	Chi St T W CFC	225.00
Seaford, NY Mon	120.00	Silver Spring, MD	111.00	Chi Sw Cov	111.30
Seaford Thurs	105.00	Springfield, VA TH	105.00	Chi Sw Cov CFC	44.00
Seaford Sat	142.00	Stratford, NJ	45.00	Davenport, IA	100.00
Somerville, MA	52.00	Timonium, MD M	157.00	Elmhurst, IL	50.00
		Timonium TU	40.00	Ferndale, MI	102.00
		Washington CHUM	90.00	Garden City, MI	50.00
<b>Mid-Atlantic Region</b>		Washington DC M	50.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Fri	100.00
Adelphia RD, MD	52.00	Washington Noon	378.70	Glen Ellyn Sun	200.00
Akron, OH Sat	90.00	DC Noon CFC	66.83	Glen Ellyn TH	324.00
Annapolis, MD	65.00	Woodbridge, VA	30.00	Glendale Hgts, IL	75.00
Baltimore, MD St Ig	30.00	Wynwood, PA	21.00	Green Bay, WI	75.00
Beltsville, MD	100.00			Mankato, MN	20.00
Bethesda, MD Tu	44.00	<b>Southeast Region</b>		Milwaukee, WI M	100.00
Bethesda CFC	35.00			Milwaukee Tu&F	200.00
Centerville, VA Fri	144.00	Franklin, TN	114.60	Milwaukee Weds	100.00
Centerville Fri CFC	16.00	Georgia IG	642.59	Nebraska CFC	26.00
Cranberry Twp, PA	159.00	Georgia IG CFC	200.00	St Charles, IL	100.00
Crystal City, VA	231.00	Greenville, SC	50.00	Winfield, IL	100.00
Eastern PA IG	400.00	Lake Mary, FL	50.00	Woodstock, IL	58.00

lose sight of my goal, too easy to forget the importance of this community of people and this program of recovery I've come to rely on. It's too easy to start thinking about sliding back a little towards the old ways. I've found that if I go to one meeting a week, then I can at least hold on to whatever progress I've made so far. But if I go more than one meeting in a week, then I'm automatically refocused on the problem and the solution, and so can make some real headway with my recovery.

There are plenty of days when I really have to drag myself out of the house and go to a meeting. I can think of all sorts of excuses not to go, and some of them even make sense. Regardless of the excuse however, the result is always the same. When I don't go to one of my planned meetings, I always feel a sense of loss and regret. And when I do go, I'm always glad I did. Instead of the isolation and loneliness I always feel when I'm acting out, there is a deep sense of community and support. Instead of harsh self-criticism, there is a feeling of accomplishment and self-worth.

No matter where I am in my recovery—struggling or plodding or flying high—it is quite frankly a little spooky how there is always at least one thing in the readings or in the sharing that speaks directly to me, supports me, clarifies my thinking, and gives me hope.

**Patrick K.**

## Take the Plunge

Yesterday I got a call from one of our members who has struggled with staying sexually sober. He had a business trip scheduled that would take him a couple of hundred miles from home and through some towns where he typically would stop at slippery places. He would set himself up to act out when he arrived at his destination.

This fellow called several times as he drove, noting the areas where he was not stopping, as had been his habit. I tried calling him last night and got his cell phone answering service. I wished him well. This morning his call-back message was expressing joy at having gotten to his destination, not having set himself up, and not having acted out.

Previously, he had not opened himself up during his time in our Fellowship. He had continued to relapse. Yesterday he tried something new, and it worked. He led with his weakness, he exposed his disease, and he stayed in recovery just for the day. This morning we spoke, and he was pleased at his progressive victory over lust.

What a gift when we can get past our false pride and the chains that bind us to the fears of our past, and begin to test the waters of recovery. The message here is simple: come on in, the water's fine!

**Gary D, Norcross, GA**

# MEDITATIONS

## The Gift of Anonymity

In the past, a big part of the reason why I felt that I had little value as a person was because I did not own valuable things. I didn't own a fancy car, live in a dream house, or flaunt a stylish wardrobe; I didn't have an impressive career in which I could rub elbows with the rich and popular. I would fantasize about that day when I would achieve great success. Strangers would recognize me, my opinions would be much sought after, and I would be everything to everybody. Ah, if only I had more, life would be good.

In the Twelve Step program of SA, anonymity pushes aside the material world and asks, "Can you accept yourself right now?" I knew nothing about my fellow recovering addicts except their first names. Anonymity asked, "Can you accept them as they are right now?" When I first came to meetings, I was so full of shame and self-loathing that it was hard for me to see the value in anything, aside from the quick fix. Even as I was admitting to being a powerless sexaholic, I was convinced that status and money were the missing ingredients that would lead me to happiness.

Over time I realized that the outside would never fix the inside. Believing that I needed more had been the problem all along. I was poor because of my hateful self-image and my sad spiritual state, not because I lacked money. Anonymity challenged me to see the value within people. Many times I went to SA meetings believing that I had nothing to share, nothing to give, but I left the meeting with my pockets full. Each member gave whatever he or she had to offer. When sharing ended, I found real richness in the room.

Nowadays when I'm down, it is often because I step back into that place of wanting more. Then I remind myself of the gift of anonymity. All that is needed to feel love is to accept others and myself. We are all humans who hurt, feel lonely, laugh, and cry. Miracles can come about because we share so much. Charity of the heart is the spirit of anonymity.

*God, may I apply the spirit of anonymity to everyone I meet today. They are Your children who crave love and fellowship as I do. Help us to give each other what we need.*

## Calendar of Events

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

### Upcoming International Conventions

**July 8 - 10, 2005**, SA International Convention, Philadelphia, PA  
Theme: A New Freedom and a New Happiness  
For more details, call Philadelphia at 215/564-3272  
or check the convention web site at [www.newfreedomconference.org](http://www.newfreedomconference.org)

**January 6 - 8, 2006**, SA International Convention, Nashville, TN  
Theme: . Carrying the Message  
Information at 615/251-7516.

### Where To? Next?

Would your Intergroup like to consider the joy, wonder, hard work, and general hilarity of hosting an international convention?

The Site Selection Committee would like to hear from you. There are a few guidelines to observe, and the Committee will be happy to offer a lot of past experience for your benefit, if needed.

Please send your offers, concerns, and questions to:

Site Selection Committee  
c/o SAICO  
PO Box 3565  
Brentwood, TN 37024-3565

email to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)  
Please put "Site Selection" in the subject line



## Calendar of Events

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

**July 9, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, Oakland, CA, sponsored by the Wednesday Oakland group. For information, call 510/273-9878.

**August 13, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, San Francisco, CA, sponsored by the Monday San Francisco meeting. Information 510/273-9878.

**September 10, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, Fremont, CA, sponsored by Saturday Hayward meeting. For information, call 510/273-9878.

**September 9 - 11, 2005**, SA & S-Anon Fall Retreat, Ross Point, Post Falls, ID, sponsored by Inland Northwest Intergroup of SA, Yakima, WA. Points of contact: [www.sanorthwest.org](http://www.sanorthwest.org), [nwsa@yakima1.com](mailto:nwsa@yakima1.com), or toll free 866/291-0914.

**October 8, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, Oakland, CA, sponsored by the Wednesday Oakland group. For information, call 510/273-9878.

**November 11 - 13, 2005**, Fifth Annual Northern California SA Men's Retreat Ben Lomond, CA. Theme: How to Handle Sobriety. Point of Contact: [www.sasandiego.org](http://www.sasandiego.org)

**November 12, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, Fremont, CA, sponsored by Saturday Hayward meeting. For information, call 510/273-9878.

**November 12, 2005**, Step Study Workshop, San Francisco, CA, sponsored by the Monday San Francisco meeting. Information 510/273-9878.

**YOUR EVENT HERE. DEADLINE FOR ISSUE 03 IS 09/01/05.  
SEND EMAIL TO SAICO@SA.ORG**

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

## MEDITATIONS

### Rage

Serenity did not come my way very often in recovery. I rationalized that my Higher Power must be withholding it from me because there were special plans in the works for me.

Out of the blue it occurred to me that I was doing my best to give up lust and to resist the temptation to lust, but what about the rest of my defects of character? In particular, what about anger?

Suddenly it was quite clear to me that although I had surrendered in the war to defeat sexaholism, I was still waging war against anger. Anger toward my spouse, in-laws, co-workers, fellow recovering addicts, and anyone or anything that didn't do or see things my way. In fact, I had to admit that I was one of those addicts who switched addictions. With abstinence from sexual acting out, there was no way for me to suppress or control my anger. I had become a full-blown rage-a-holic. I was abusive verbally and physically. I was not the fault of anyone else; it was my fault. Upon admitting this, I realized that I had absolutely no right whatsoever to treat God's children the way I was treating them. I was justifying my anger the same way I had justified acting out sexually.

I needed a rage sobriety date. I needed to become willing to call upon other SA members who identified with this defect so that I wouldn't suffer in isolation. I had to surrender all of my defects of character if I ever wanted serenity. What I had been doing was waving a white flag of surrender for lust in one hand, but waving the fist of rage with the other hand. Surrender had to be across the board, complete and full. Is it any wonder why there was little serenity in my life? God could and would help me to rebuild my life, but only after I ceased fighting.

I have since had to reset my rage sobriety date because I started thinking that I was justified in getting angry. During those times when I was humble enough to admit powerlessness and give up my right to rage, I felt the freedom of serenity.

*God, grant me the courage and wisdom to let go of hateful, violent thoughts and my right to rage, that I may not destroy the dignity of anyone else or myself.*

# MEDITATIONS

## Why Am I Angry?

My addiction has forced me to examine myself. As a result, I have uncovered a part of me that has long been buried: anger. Now that it has been brought to the surface, I'm seeing the reasons for my anger. SA is giving me healthy alternatives to resentment and bitterness.

The primary thing that causes me anger is the fact that I'm not as good as I once thought. My tremendous pride has been exposed. SA has shown me I don't have to be perfect, but that I must be honest.

Another source of anger is knowing others are aware that I'm not as good as I want to appear to be. I blame myself for disappointing my family, friends, and associates. SA teaches me to accept myself as I am and to let go of the desire to obsessively strive to please everyone.

It also angers me that I can't make myself as good as I need to be. I don't have the strength required to overcome my faults. SA has convinced me that if I will surrender my will to God, he will work miracles in me.

Finally, I often experience anger when others aren't as good as I want or expect them to be. This anger is born of stubbornness and intolerance. Having experienced God's grace through SA, I now truly appreciate the power of forgiveness. It liberates me from my anger. Anger is a very destructive force in my life. SA has given me the tools I need to prevent its damaging effects.

*God, keep me free from anger today. Help me subdue my pride with honesty. Reassure me that You love and accept me as I am. Keep me out of the trap of basing my worth on what others think of me. Remind me that I am powerless and that You are all powerful. Give me the strength to forgive others.*

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 repair all flaws.

Please send any contributions by e-mail to [saico@sa.org](mailto: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



## Women Helping Women in SA

Women in SA  
need your help:

We need women to help newcomer women by becoming phone, mail, and email sponsors.

We are trying to develop a FAQ and other tools to help in this process.

If you can help, send an email to [sasandpoint@yahoo.com](mailto:sasandpoint@yahoo.com)

Or call 866-291-0914.

Leave a message with your name, phone number, email or land mail address with city and state. Please include your sobriety date and your home group.

If you know a woman who needs help, give her the phone number and the email address so that she can contact women in SA.



### Meetings by Phone

Meetings by phone are available.  
Call SAICO at 866/424-8777 for information.

## REACHING OUT

“Progressive victory over lust” is often the hurdle that humbles me in my own program. My lust can, in a heartbeat, zero in on just about anything: sexualizing people, overeating, disappearing into TV, lying, pretending to be someone other than who I am, the list goes on and on. The solution has always been the same: reaching out and giving, of my time, my experience, my caring, my love; giving some of the “real” me to someone else. That might be my wife, my children, my co-workers, or the next newcomer who walks into a meeting.

I always find it interesting that as someone who has been relieved of the mental obsession, I still want to put the burden on the newcomer to ask for help. “If he wants a sponsor, he’ll ask.” “If he’s really serious about recovery, then he has to take the first Step.” I place the burden on the one who is weakest.

It wasn’t Dr. Bob who called Bill W. Once together, they didn’t wait for the phone to ring. The AA Big Book doesn’t tell newcomers to find a sponsor; it tells us who have been awakened to work with newcomers. I have found that more than anything else, this has brought me the most peace and the most joy. When I step out of myself and help someone else—anyone else—I am transported.

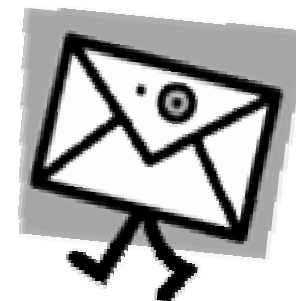


## REGARDING TRIGGERS

My first year in recovery was about avoiding triggers. That was disastrous because what I was really practicing was avoidance. If only I don’t see x, or y, or z, I won’t be tempted. It didn’t work. It only made me more sensitive to triggers.

It is important that I face the world on the world’s terms. If I avoid looking at you, I’ll never see the person inside, and my perspective of you never gets beyond objectification. Objectification is easy; connecting honestly is uncomfortable. When I sit through the uncomfortable part, with an honest desire to move beyond what my eyes judge, I ask my Higher Power to lead me through. Then I get the gift of beginning to know you, which is something I never experience if I avoid you.

**Gerard P.**



## Letters, We Get Letters

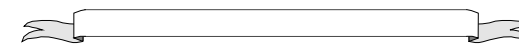
Hi there, Billy here from New Zealand. Just thought I should drop you a note to tell you we are still in existence here in New Zealand.

I and one other are regular attendees at the weekly (Friday night) Auckland meeting, which has been going for nine months now. Two others attend reasonably regular, and we had another newcomer attend on the Friday just gone.

We keep in regular contact with Australia SA, and I attended their national convention in March in Sydney.

We would welcome any visitors who happen to be holidaying here (a Melbourne visitor attended our meeting two weeks ago).

**Billy, New Zealand**



## New Groups

### USA

Duluth, MN  
Falling Waters, VW  
Gladstone, MO  
Hancock, NY  
Hilo, HI

*We love hearing about your new groups and additional meetings in your local area.*

*Please drop a note to:*

SAICO  
PO Box 3565  
Brentwood TN 37024-3565  
USA

saico@sa.org  
615/370-6062  
866/424-8777



# PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

## COMPLACENCY

My name is Bill and I'm a grateful and recovering sexaholic, actively involved in SA for almost ten years. I've been blessed with the grace to maintain sobriety, and by all appearances seemed to be working a solid program. However, somewhere along the path in the last few years, complacency set in. I began tolerating certain lust-based behaviors, particularly toxic web-surfing. Inevitably, the frequency increased, the intervals of being clean decreased, and the content of my viewing got worse. All while going to meetings, regularly checking-in with my sponsor, doing daily renewals, sponsoring, etc, and without violating the bottom line of sex with self or anyone besides my wife.

After some furtive behavior of my part, my wife asked me if I'd gone back to using pornography. I had to admit that I had. With further confrontation, it became clear that I was in full-blown relapse. As a result, and after much turmoil and anguish, I reset my sobriety date and re-assessed my program of recovery. Among other measures, I decided to write a first Step.

The format I used was the one I was taught and gave away in my first year of recovery. There are four sections for each behavior. The first simply identifies it. The second attempts to quantify the behavior's frequency, duration, and intervals between occurrences. The next section describes the perceived benefits: why did I do it? The fourth turns it around and assesses the true cost of the behavior.

As my writing continued, I decided to add a fifth section which I call "Status". In this section, I sought to get current with where I was in the behavior, and how I'd done since my new sobriety date. I also outlined steps I had taken or was taking to deal with that issue. And I mentioned any ongoing questions about the behavior that I had.

After detailing each behavior thusly, I realized that I had written mostly about the cost to me. While the individual behaviors seemed minor in their impact on others, collectively these actions had the subtlety of a train wreck on the lives of those I most love. So I wrote paragraphs on the cost to God, my wife, my kids, my parents,

my church, my employers, my sponsees and fellow SA's, and others. This was painful and convicting.

I found this writing to be an amazing, difficult, revealing and grounding experience. I highly recommend it to anyone who did a first Step long ago and has since been struggling with recurring lust-based behaviors.

### What have I learned about myself and recovery?

- This program works if you work it. By applying the principles and strategies I've learned in SA, God enabled me to almost immediately shut down the majority of my relapse activity.
- My ability to self-deceive is limitless. The condition of my recovery became clear to me in an instant, but only when one of these behaviors was revealed to my wife and I saw it from her perspective.
- I had placed too much stock in my status and accomplishments in recovery. Being an "elder statesman" in the program was way too precious to me.
- If I focus on actions, there will always be wiggle-room, shades of gray and new possibilities. If I put the spotlight on the attitude and posture of my spirit, the behaviors will follow.
- I still have a lot to learn. While the years of experience have value and I've come a long way, I'm back to being a student, with unresolved questions.
- If I act out (by any definition), people get hurt. Yet so often in the moment of decision, I cannot remember this.

I live in a society where technology and media make it inevitable that I will be exposed to images and verbiage that is dangerous for me (even if I do everything in my power to avoid it); that half of the world's adult population has anatomy that intrigues me and that a significant percentage of that group dresses so that I'll notice it; that I have enough memories of erotic or sex-tinged pictures, experiences, literary and verbal input to keep me intoxicated for life; that somewhere deep in my psyche remains the core instinct that all my problems can be solved by some sexual experience. Based on this, I'd say I am powerless over lust and sexual acting out. I need God.