



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

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ESSAY®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

Second Time Around

I stood in disbelief. The computer screen had three emails from women at work that I was acting out with. My wife was crying, asking me, "Why?" I was in shock. I stood there physically present, but emotionally far, far away. I was numb to my feelings, to my life, and to myself.

I was discovered, found out, wrong, bad. The worst thing I could have done to my second wife was to repeat what I had done to my first. There it was in black and white. I was deep in my addiction once again. This time I had been found out and was being asked why? I had no answer, no understanding of this situation. It seemed like it was someone else, not me, who was responsible.

My life was great. My wife was loving and kind. I had no need to look for sex outside my marriage, as there was plenty inside. I could not understand

what had such a strong hold on me and how powerless I was in its grip. I had no answer to give my wife or myself. I had no choice but to admit it. It was right in front of me. I had to admit to what I'd been doing.

I was asked to leave. I was dropped off at the bus station with a few dollars in my wallet and sent on my way to a friend's house, not sure of what was happening. I was numb, operating on autopilot. I was on the brink of suicide, in total desperation, my second marriage in ruins. As I saw it, the second chance I had been given was struck down and damaged beyond repair.

I felt my life was over. Powerlessness over the addiction had once again beaten me. It had won. I had lost. I acknowledged I was powerless over my addiction by myself.

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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 a member used the recovery program of SA to change his life, some thoughtful short essays by members, and a list of topics for the Meditations book for SA. 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 or by land mail at *Essay*, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565, U.S.A.

Sincerely,
Essay Editorial Committee
September 2005

Essay Editorial Guidelines

The *Essay* is responsible 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* editors with copies of letters and other materials of potential use in the newsletter.
- Submissions, selected by the editors, 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. 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 June YTD 2005

Budget		Actual		\$ Variance
Contributions	53,500.00	Contributions	47,265.36	-6235
SACFC	4,500.00	SACFC	4,161.07	-339
Conventions	8,000.00	Conventions	3,586.00	-4414
Literature Sales	16,500.00	Literature Sales	9,039.55	-21126
Interest	500.00	Interest	341.38	-159
<u>Essay</u>	<u>2,500.00</u>	<u>Essay</u>	<u>3,210.00</u>	710
Total Revenues	<u>85,500.00</u>	Total Revenues	<u>67,603.36</u>	-17,897
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	.00	
Credit Card Fees	750.00	Credit Card Fees	645.40	105
Conference Fees	700.00	Conference Fees	858.00	-158
Depreciation	900.00	Depreciation	883.67	16
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00	
Liability Insurance	1,000.00	Liability Insurance	1,734.00	266
Legal	1,000.00	Legal	.00	1000
Accounting	1,750.00	Accounting	2,592.00	-842
Literature expense	6,000.00	Literature Expense	3,415.31	2585
Payroll	40,350.00	Payroll	37,170.85	3179
Payroll Tax	3,600.00	Payroll Tax	3,765.38	-165
Pension	3,400.00	Pension	.00	3400
Postage & Freight	2,500.00	Postage & Freight	4339.22	-1839
Office Expense	800.00	Office Expense	1,422.26	-622
Professional Fees	500.00	Professional Fees	500.00	500
Rent	4,850.00	Rent	5,220.63	-371
Maintenance	550.00	Maintenance	501.62	48
Supplies	250.00	Supplies	113.11	287
Sales Tax	100.00	Sales Tax	69.79	-20
Taxes & Licenses	300.00	Taxes & Licenses	279.00	-249
Telephone	4,250.00	Telephone	4,714.70	-464
<u>Travel</u>	<u>9,500.00</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>7,697.93</u>	1802
Total Expenses	<u>86,500.00</u>	Total Expenses	<u>77,367.84</u>	9132
		<u>Deficit</u>	<u>-9,764.48</u>	

(Continued from page 1)

During the ensuing weeks I made the SA connection. I was Twelve-Stepped by two kind guys who told me their heart-wrenching stories, and I identified with parts of each. I knew this was where I needed to be. I went to my first meeting and was introduced to the White Book, Recovery Continues, Twelve and Twelve and the AA Daily Reader. I was told by the man who later became my sponsor, "Bill W. was not a book salesman. These were the tools that helped him." I took that guidance as I took so very much from his experience and generosity of spirit.

I came to believe that a Power greater than myself would help me if I asked, and if I wanted to recover.

I had a past riddled with set-ups for addiction. My single-parent mother displayed inappropriate sexual behaviours. Many of the instances were emotionally incestuous and damaging. My upbringing at school was full of psychological, physical and emotional abuse, leaving me with problems with body image, difficulties during puberty, and misinformed values. Objectification of women was seen as the way to be popular and to be considered a man.

During my teenage years, drug abuse calmed me. Pornography, isolation, suicide attempts, loneliness, and despair were my addiction rearing up to give me some relief, some good

feelings. But they only deepened the pain, suffering, and isolation.

I married my first wife after making her sister pregnant. Once married, I swapped pornography openly with my new father-in-law, and this was okay. My addiction was seen as normal. I had a wife for sex and pornography to fill the gaps. Drug abuse continued in social settings and at home.

A few years later, I left England and I came to Canada to be with my father, an emotionally distant man. At the time, this felt okay since I was also emotionally distant. This seemed to be my legacy. I made a few changes in my life: stopped the drugs, changed my diet and lived a healthier physical life. I believed that my sexual addiction was under control, although I frequently used masturbation and over-exercising as ways to stay "on track."

Five years later my father died. My life collapsed. When faced with overwhelming emotional issues, the powerlessness of my addiction reared its ugly head to a level I had never experienced before. Using what had worked in the past, I went back into my addiction to replace the feelings of pain and hurt.

My disease took hold—masturbation, numerous affairs outside my marriage, exhibitionism, voyeurism, self-prostitution, and unprotected sex. I went ever deeper into its grip, trying to ease the pain I felt inside.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

Nothing helped. It only made it worse. I tried more and more of the same with even worse results. I spiralled lower into the insanity of the disease.

I “came to” in a spiritual class I attended. I now see this as a divine intervention. I saw all that was wrong, and I saw it clearly. I changed almost everything in my life. I stopped all the relationships. I got a divorce. I fixed me! I remarried and I assured my new wife I would never do any of that again. Not just because of the betrayal to her, but to myself. I became my own Higher Power, my Ego running rampant.

Three years later, I was staring at a computer screen showing my powerlessness and inability to assume the role of God. I am powerless over lust and I always will be. I tried to do it alone and I thought I was strong enough, but I failed so very badly.

This time, I found the key, the missing piece of the puzzle—Higher Power. I now know I am unable to beat my addiction alone. It has affected so much of my life: in how I talk to people, how I use my words, my body language, the television shows that I watch, the radio I listen to, the music I buy, the magazines and the newspaper flyers I look at. I am lost without my Higher Power.

Each and every day has structure. I start each morning with prayer and end each night with prayer. I pray when

faced with situations that used to baffle me, and now look to my Higher Power for guidance with my actions. To me, this is The Road to Happy Destiny.

My First Step tells me that I have grown in the program of recovery over the last two years. It tells me I had very little chance of being an adult without being an addict of some sort. I now have choices, and one is to work the program presented to me.

I know I am a sexaholic. I will never be cured. I also know my addiction has given me the opportunity to grow into a better person not only for myself, but also for my family and others that touch my life.

My life was unmanageable and out of control. I thought I had it fixed, but I learned I could not do it alone. I not only wanted to stop, I knew I had no other choice. It was all there in front of me. So much pain and suffering, and all the wreckage of my past. I had to take action to become who I truly am.

Recovery for me is meetings, sponsorship, daily reaching-out, reading, and prayers. Not just when I feel like it, but each day. I turn to God each day. I start by thanking God for the day ahead and finish my days by thanking God for the day past. I am now thankful for so much and know that what I was searching for—my Higher Power—was there all along.

Thy will, not mine, be done.

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.
 9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

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|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) We admitted we were powerless over lust —that our lives had become unmanageable. | 1) We admitted we were powerless over alcohol —that our lives had become unmanageable. |
| 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. | 2) Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. |
| 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him</i> . | 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God <i>as we understood Him</i> . |
| 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. | 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. |
| 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. | 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. |
| 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. | 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. |
| 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. | 7) Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. |
| 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. | 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. |
| 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. | 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. |
| 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. | 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. |
| 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God <i>as we understood Him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. | 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God <i>as we understood Him</i> , praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. |
| 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs. | 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. |

The Twelve Steps and Traditions are reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("A.A.W.S.") Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that 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.

Becoming and Staying Sexually Sober

Okay, I understood that part about no sex with anyone other than the spouse. Heck, that's what got me to Sexaholics Anonymous in the first place. But no sex with myself? Who were these guys kidding? Didn't they understand that if I refrained from sex with self, something terrible would happen? I might even die, or explode, or something equally dire.

Okay, I decided. If that's what they said it was going to take, then I figured it was worth a shot. And guess what? Two and a half years of continuous sexual sobriety in S.A., and I haven't died once.

What does it take? Aren't there still tons of internet sites out there? Aren't there still hundreds and thousands and millions of attractive distractions? How can I avoid the triggers that might lead to my acting out again?

The reality is, I cannot avoid every trigger out there. I can refrain from surfing the internet for porn by picking up the phone when I am tempted. I call another member of the fellowship and tell them what's on my mind. The times that I have done that, it has worked and the urges passed. When I am going to the grocery store or a sporting event or a musical performance, and I know I will be among attractive distractions, I call someone from the fellowship and check in on

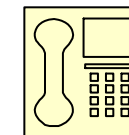
my way there. If I am uncomfortable in any given situation, I can always leave. My recovery is a lot more important to me than anything else.

One other option I have, a gift from Sexaholics Anonymous, is prayer. When I am tempted to take a second look at someone I find attractive, I can always pray "God bless them, and God help me." In two and a half years, I've prayed that an awful lot.

This is the way I look at it: if my acting out led me to Sexaholics Anonymous, why then do I think that it's going to be any better if I do it again? Did my disease of addiction magically go away? Did the very thing that caused me so much personal torment, grief and pain suddenly become my friend? I have to remember the complete and utter devastation that my life had become, that led me to S.A. in the first place, so that I don't go back there again.

Just For Today.

Gary D.



Eradicating Ego

I have found no way of permanently eradicating my ego. For me, living in Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve are not enough. It takes resubmitting to all the Steps formally again and again. It is not really that hard when I can see my current level of unmanageability to do a new First Step. Again I come to believe that God can and will restore me through the actions of the remaining Steps. I make a new decision to turn my life and will over to God.

Each time I do this, God's will for me is revealed not through prayer and meditation, but through the inventories of Step Four, the disclosures in Step Five, and using my inventories to define my defects in Step Six. I ask God to remove them from me in Step Seven. In Steps Eight and Nine, I make amends by paying back money, working the extra hours to make up for all the time I slack off at work, and changing my behavior toward my wife and kids. These are all actions I am in no way capable of under my own power and impossible to do as long as I'm still driven by ego.

So the decision I made in Step Three does not really manifest itself in my life until I have worked Four through Nine. God's will is revealed to me. At Step Three I still don't have a clue. I can lock myself in a room for hours, praying to know God's will, and walk out of the room believing I am doing God's will when in fact I am just doing a new version of my own.

I am a sexaholic, and will be sexaholic until the day I die. I have an ego which resurrects itself. I am usually the last to know it, although many around me see it growing. I have a program, which when practiced as a way of life, guides me to actions which work to deflate this monster, and allow me to once again become an agent for God.

What I have been given through the Twelve Steps is a reprieve from the hopeless condition I was in when God first threw me a lifeline. At that time I thought I had to meet a certain standard before I could get to God. It is from this distortion, from this lie, that I have recovered. I have been shown that through actions of selflessness, using the power of God, and the plan of action outlined in the Twelve Step program, that all of the things which lust did for me are done better, more completely, and with far greater satisfaction by my relationship with my Higher Power.

Gerard F.

Second Quarter Donations April - June 2005

South Midwest Region		Los Altos, CA	20.00
		N Hollywood, CA	120.00
Albuquerque, NM	278.65	Pasadena, CA	50.00
Dallas, TX	300.00	Tempe, AZ	42.00
Denver, CO Tu Th	57.42	Utah SA Sat	208.00
OKC IG	1,000.00	Valencia, CA	25.00
St. Louis, MO F	120.00	Ventura, CA	196.00
St Louis, Sat	40.00	West LA, CA Tu	50.00
St. Louis CFC S	20.00	Yorba Linda, CA	80.00
St Louis Fri	100.00		
Northwest Region			
		Chicago St T Sat	110.00
Billings, MT	15.00	Chicago St T W	189.00
Bothell, WA	10.00	Chicago Sw Cov	52.00
Bothell CFC	20.00	Oakland, CA F	25.00
Fremont, WA M	80.00	Twin Cities IG	285.00
Fremont CFC	80.00	Walkersville, MD	40.00
Inland NW IG	5.00		
Kirkland, WA Sat	100.00		
Marysville, WA	40.00		
Newberg, OR	55.72		
Newberg CFC	40.99		
Olympia, WA	47.00		
Portland IG	500.00		
Portland IG CFC	150.00		
Portland, OR Tu	100.00		
Portland, OR Sat	121.63		
Renton, WA	30.00		
Renton CFC	20.00		
Seattle, WA	150.00		
Yakima, WA	5.00		
Southwest Region			
Chatsworth, CA	200.00		
Chatsworth CFC	200.00		
Costa Mesa, CA	20.00		
Long Bch, CA W	1,660.00		

Quarterly Appeal

Other

TOTALS

'05 FLA Conv

Group Total

Individual

SA Net Group

SACFC Total

Quarterly Appeal

Grand Total

2005

Year to date 2005, donations and other income and expenses are covered on the SA Financial Snapshot on page 30.

Although expenses are still within budget guidelines, we have not received the income we had hoped to receive by this time of year. Your gift or contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Remember that donations to SA are tax deductible because we are a 501(C)3 organization.

Every donation will be acknowledged with a Donations Receipt.

Address your check:

SA.
PO Box 3565
Brentwood TN 37024-3565

Send a note with it so that we can give proper credit to your group.

Donations represent 81.37% of our income.

Thank you many times over for your generosity.
SA International Central Office

Second Quarter Donations April - June 2005

CANADA	Herndon, VA	65.00	Lexington, KY	90.00	
Barrie, ON	200.00	Hyattsville, MD	135.00	Longwood, FL	50.00
Edmonton, AB	50.00	Jersey City, NJ	45.00	Nashville, TN Noon	15.00
Montreal, QC	80.00	Lansdale, PA CFC	20.00	Norcross, GA	107.64
		Lynnwood, PA	21.00	Ormond Bch, FL M	40.00
Northeast Region		Northeast OH IG	50.00	Ormond Bch TH	95.00
		Penn Hills Fr, PA	30.00	Ormond Bch F	39.00
NY Metro IG	400.00	Penn Hills We, PA	121.50	Pensacola	25.00
Norwood, MA	112.00	Pittsburgh IG	25.00	Roswell, GA	196.10
Rochester, NY IA	4.64	Pittsburgh IG CFC	25.00	West Cobb, GA	85.00
Rochester One Step	15.00	Pittsburgh SS, PA	57.00		
Rochester IG	61.85	Reston, VA	100.00	North Midwest Region	
Schenectady, NY	25.00	Silver Spring, MD	299.47		
Seaford, NY	194.00	Silver Spring CFC	177.00	Chicago, IL	40.00
Wallingford, CT	40.00	Silver Sprg St L	245.00	Chi St T Sat	282.50
Yarmouth, ME	300.00	Springfield, VA M	70.00	Chi St T Sat CFC	141.25
		Springfield TH	107.00	Chi St T Weds	240.00
Mid-Atlantic Region		Springfield Sat	128.00	Chi St T W CFC	180.00
		Springfield Sat CFC	56.00	Chi Sw Cov	171.00
Akron, OH Sat	75.00	Stratford, NJ	75.00	Chi Sw Cov CFC	111.00
Akron Tues PM	200.00	Timonium, MD Sat	40.00	Crystal Lake, IL	172.00
Annapolis, MD	60.00	Wash DC CHUM	82.00	Darien, IL	150.00
Baltimore, MD St I	30.00	Wash DC CHUM CFC	18.00	Darien CFC	50.00
Beltsville, MD	100.00	Washington DC M	136.00	Elmhurst, IL	500.00
Bethesda, MD	33.00	Washington Noon	220.17	Ferndale, MI	389.00
Bowie, MD	140.00	Wash DC Noon CFC	38.85	Glen Ellyn, IL Sun	200.00
Centreville, VA	108.00	Westmont, NJ	93.00	Glen Ellyn TH	826.70
Centreville CFC	12.00	Wheeling WV Ret	59.00	Glen Oaks, IL	30.00
Cleveland, OH	67.00	Wheeling/Steubenville	22.00	Glen Oaks CFC	30.00
Columbus, OH Mon	200.00	Woodbridge, VA	81.00	Hyde Park, IL	58.00
Coraopolis, PA	40.00			Milwaukee Tu&F	252.00
Cranberry Twp, PA	93.00	Southeast Region		Rolling Meadows, IL	100.00
Crystal City, VA	371.30			S Barrington, IL W	100.00
Crystal City CFC	60.40	Dunwoody, GA	50.00	S Barrington CFC W	50.00
Eastern PA IG	600.00	Florida IG CFC	40.00	St Charles, IL M	150.00
Fairfax, VA	79.20	Franklin, TN	123.00	St Cloud, MN	60.00
Fairfax CFC	8.80	Greensboro, NC	25.00	Twin Cities IG	426.00
Falls Church, VA	150.00	Greensboro CFC	100.00	Twin Cities CFC	71.00
Falls Church CFC	50.00	Greenville, SC	50.00	Winfield, IL	100.00

Recycling Sobriety Chips

Tonight I had the honor of presenting my SA sponsor with a 19 year chip. It is a brand new chip. He saves his chip and presents it to me each September, fifteen months later. We have been doing this for years. I think that receiving a chip from a member who has carried it for a year makes it even more special. The chip already has a year or more of sobriety associated with it; this gives me additional incentive to keep it clean and pass it on.

One member who practices this form of recycling, getting a chip from his sponsor, was asked by one of his sponsees, "Why an old one? You could have a new one." He replied, "Ah, but this one has sobriety rubbed into it."

Larry H., Pittsburgh, PA

Inexperience, Strength, and Hope

All I can share is my experience, and my experience has been that so many times I have had opinions and given advice to others about matters about which I never had any experience. I was like a man who tried to tell someone how to fix his carburetor when he had never opened the hood to his own car. Even if I had worked on a carburetor before, I have to ask myself—did I actually fix it? Did my experience actually work for me? Only

then do I have any strength or hope to give someone else who is having trouble with his carburetor.

When I was a preteen, my neighbor's riding mower was messed up. Even though I had no experience, I decided that it had to be the carburetor—and I proceeded to start taking it apart. My Dad about flipped when he got home. Gratefully, he *did* have the experience to put it back together and make it work. Since then, I have found it very helpful to talk to my Dad when my lawn mower acts up, and then do what he says. Knowing nothing about fixing a car is not a bad thing. I admit my limitations and tell others, "I don't know what you should do. I have never fixed one before." However, I do have experience changing oil, water pumps, and even timing belts. The car has kept running after I was finished. So I can share that experience.

Often when I call my sponsor when I am frazzled and crazy, he asks me what actions I have taken. Then he says, "So David, how is that working for you?"

David



MEDITATIONS

The Latest News

We are steadily getting nearer to having enough meditations for the proposed *Daily Meditation Book*. We need a few more—less than a hundred.

Here is a list of the suggested topics to inspire your writing for the SA Meditation Book:

Anger
Depression
Easy does it
Ego,
Fear
Powerlessness
Principles vs. personalities
The Promises
Amends
Selfishness
Self-pity
Honesty, Open-mindedness, Willingness
Tolerance
Live and let live
Service

And whatever else inspires you as you study and meditate on the Twelve Step program of SA and how it has helped your recovery.

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

Calendar of Events

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

October 22, 2005, Fall Unity Day, Fair Oaks, CA, sponsored by Sacramento, IG.
Theme: Let It Begin with Me. For information, call 916 491 1772.

November 12, 2005, Step Study Workshop, San Francisco, CA.
Hands on. Bring your White Book, Big Book, 12 & 12, notebook, and a pen. More information call 510-273-9878.

November 11 - 13, 2005, Fifth Annual Northern California Men's Retreat, Ben Lomond, CA. Theme: How to Handle Sobriety. For information, Doug V. (707) 494-6721 or Larry Br. (707) 365-0304

December 10, 2005, Step Study Workshop, Hayward, CA.
Bring materials you need, White Book, Big Book, and 12 & 12.

March 10 - 12, 2006, SA Australia Conference, Bateman's Bay, NSW, Australia, sponsored by SA Canberra. Theme: There is a Solution. For information send email to Jerome at jfsbrown@yahoo.com.au

Upcoming International Conventions

January 6 - 8, 2006, SA International Convention, Nashville, TN
Theme: Carrying the Message. Information at 615/251-7516, or Online registration at www.carrythemessage.net

July 7 - 9, 2006, SA International Convention, St Louis, MO.
Theme: To be announced.
Information at 314/995-2687
Meet us in St. Louis!

[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.]

Calendar of Events

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

September 17, 2005, 13th Annual Northern California Unity Day, Hayward, CA.
Theme: You Don't Have to Walk Alone! Information www.sabayarea.org

September 17, 2005, Autumn Conference, Wexford, PA, sponsored by Pittsburgh Intergroup. Theme: A Vision for You. Contact pghsaig@yahoo.com

September 17, 2005, 2005 Toronto SA Marathon, Scarborough, ON, Canada
Theme: Progress Not Perfection. Contact satoronto@reptiles.org or call 416-410-7622.

October 7 - 9, 2005, SA Fall Retreat, La Salle Manor, Plano, IL, sponsored by Chicago Area SA Intergroup. Theme: Steps Work! For information, contact 630-323-5918.

October 8, 2005, Step Study Workshop, Oakland, CA, sponsored by Oakland Wednesday meeting. Bring your Big Book, a notebook, and a pen.
For information, 510-273-9878 or check events at www.sabayarea.org.

October 14 - 16, 2005, South Midwest Regional Family Retreat, Wichita, KS.
Theme: Getting in Step. Information call Joe at 316-682-8919, or send email to joseph@weberlawoffice.com.

October 14 - 16, 2005, SA & S-Anon Regional Unity Conference, Irvine, CA, sponsored by SCAI. Theme: Happy, Joyous, & Free. For information, call Peter D. at 805-289-9421.

October 15, 2005, Recovery Marathon, Nazareth, PA, sponsored by Eastern PA SA & S-Anon members. Theme: Our Common Welfare. For information, call Dave O. 610-509-7219.

October 21 - 23, 2005, Twelve Step Workshop, Emlenton, PA, sponsored by Northwest PA Intergroup. Information, call 814-720-7928, or send email to recovery22@hotmail.com



SUNRAYS AND STINGRAYS

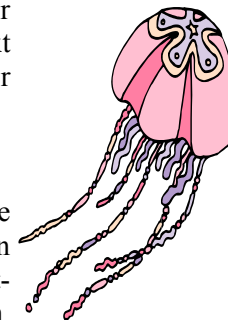
Being born in August and growing up near the ocean, it was natural for my family to celebrate my birthday each year at one of the nearby beaches. After a day of living it up, I would come back burned to a crisp and covered with lesions given me by the local stingrays (well, ok, they were only jellyfish, but being an addict I tend toward the dramatic). The next day, I would scream and holler that I *never* wanted to go back to the beach for my birthday ever again! Predictably, the next summer I would plead with my family to do it once more, even after the summer I nearly drowned in the undercurrents. What craziness!

Only recently have I made any connection between my juvenile birthday behavior and my (equally juvenile) addictive behaviors in adult years. Despite being 'burned' and 'stung' repeatedly in my acting out, and almost 'drowning' in the muck created by my addiction, I was always ready to do it again next time. What craziness!

Eventually, as I grew up physically, I began to realize that celebrating my birthday at the beach was not my brightest idea. As an adult, I rarely go to the beach for any occasion, preferring the serene, refreshing lakes of the mountains instead. No blistering sun, no stinging jellyfish, no treacherous undercurrents. That I can handle.

Likewise, as I have begun to grow up emotionally and spiritually, I am realizing that the years spent in my active addiction were fraught with dangers far greater than the sun's rays, the jellyfish venom, or the deadly tides of the ocean. Dangers like the blinding 'rays' of pornographic images, the poisonous 'venom' of diseases, and the deadly 'undertow' of time and energy lost pursuing something that kills the spirit, if not the body. I am learning to value the refreshing serenity of life on 'Recovery Mountain.' I can definitely handle that!

Beach or mountain?
Addiction or recovery?
Death or life?
For me, it's a no-brainer!



I Don't Have to Know

I suffer from a sort of hyper-vigilance. Something in me wants to identify and define every object, every person, every angle and surface in my physical environment. My ears are open; my eyes are taking in the very texture of things around me. This drive to know everything that's going on around me could be a useful trait if I were Batman and dwelt in Gotham City.

But I'm not Batman, I'm a sexaholic. At some point, a long time ago, this hyper-vigilance—wherever it came from—became a tool of my lust. In “insobriety,” I was always looking and listening for triggers: people and images that I could get a hit from. With my eyes and ears, I poked and prodded my environment for hits. I call that one of the habits of insobriety.

With the gift of sobriety, I wanted to leave all that behind. I wanted to control my eyes and ears. I knew that the lust hit not only hurt me immediately, but it would come back to haunt me later that day, or the next week, or a month later. Yet the more I used my will power, the stronger was the desire to look around—or look a second time.

At some point in recovery, it came to me that this exaggerated vigilance was more than a mere inclination; it felt like a need, a compulsion. “Where does this come from?” I asked myself. I didn't have an answer. Another question came to me: “Do I *really* need to know everything going on around me?” I had an answer to that one and the answer was—No! I'm not Batman and I'm not God. I don't have to know every detail about everything around me.

I don't have to know! Telling myself this reminds me that my desire to poke and prod my environment with my senses is not an imperative. There are a lot of things I *want* to know, but I don't *have* to know.

My sponsor once told me that I can't just make a decision not to be compulsive. He's right, of course. Habit is a powerful force, and I can use it to my advantage. I can have bad habits or good habits, habits of insobriety or habits of sobriety. When I practice habits of insobriety, I open myself to lust. When I practice habits of sobriety, I open myself to God's grace. So now I'm in the habit of saying to myself, *I don't have to know*. It's become a mantra for me.

General Delegate Assembly

Region	Delegate	Alternate
Southwest Region	Jerry L.	Mike S.
Southwest Region	David S.	Richard G.
Northwest Region	Bob M.	Judy C.
South Midwest Region	Betty M.	
North Midwest Region	Andrew S..	Bob A.
North Midwest Region	Terry C.	
Southeast Region	David A.	Chuck P.
MidAtlantic Region	Brian S.	Tom A.
MidAtlantic Region	Larry H.	
Northeast Region	Margot C.	Dianne B.
International	Dara M.	SA UK / Eire

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

Current Committee Assignments for Trustees and Delegates

Jerry	Literature, RAC (Regional Alignment Committee), Nominations
Larry	Service structure, <i>Essay</i>
Bob	Finance, Nominations
David A.	Finance, Nominations, COMC
Brian	Service Structure
Margot	Literature
David	Service Structure, Internet
Betty	Literature
Andrew	Nominations
David S.	Internet, Structure
Dorene	Chair, Board of Trustees
Lawrence	International, Literature
Carole	Service Structure, Nominations
Luc	International, Internet
Maria	International, Finance, Site Selection
Jenny	International, RAC, Service Structure

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

(Continued from page 21)

Bylaws

Moved to adopt the Bylaws with minor changes.

Draft SA Service Manual:

Moved that the Service Structure Committee clearly delineate in the Service Manual the distinct and separate roles and duties of the Delegates and Trustees including how they interact and operate. Resolutions proposed by the Regions be decided by the Assembly, and Committee matters be decided by the Trustees

Draft Service Manual to be sent to Delegates for feedback from those in the Service Structure who will be using the manual.

Terms of Office, Elections, and Affirmations

Moved to change term of office for General Assembly Delegate from two to three years.

Vron is elected Chair of the Delegate Assembly.
Jerry is elected Vice Chair of the Delegate Assembly.

All Trustees were affirmed for another year of service.

Board of Trustees	
Luc B.	
Maria Graf	non-sexaholic Trustee
Carole L.	
Jenny M.	
Lawrence M.	
Dorene S.	Chair
All Trustees can be reached at SAICO, or email can be sent to saico@sa.org	

Especially when I leave the house, I utter my mantra. Driving down the street, I notice someone on the sidewalk a block ahead. What gender? What age? Where headed? I don't have to know. As I tell myself that, I find I'm no longer compelled to follow that person with my eyes. At a stoplight, who's in that car idling beside mine? I don't have to glance over to find out. On the highway, who's in that car that is passing me? I don't have to know. I'm free to pay attention to traffic.

Large stores and malls are difficult for me. In a Wal-Mart, if I'm carrying lust in my head, I feel like I'm peering out at a little world populated by strangers, any of whom can be a lust object; when I make eye contact, I often see hunger. If I'm working my mantra, it reminds me that I don't have to know the spiritual state of these people. That's God's job. My job is to find the unwaxed dental floss.

That person in the canned vegetables aisle, how do her clothes fit? I don't have to know. The sound of talking and laughter in the next aisle—are they men, women, adolescents? I don't have to know. The sound of heels clicking on the floor behind me—I don't have to look because I don't have to know. Sometimes I'll see someone and look away while telling myself, *I don't have to know*, and I'll experience surrender from the lust impulse. But it has to be a habit.

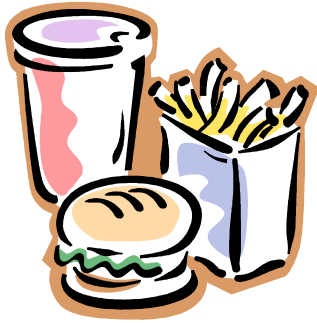
Even when I'm not in a triggering environment, I sometimes recite my mantra. It's a gentle discipline for me. It calms me.

Am I cutting myself off from the beauty and rich variety of God's creation? It doesn't feel that way to me. I feel more at peace with God's world and God's people when I'm not probing and pushing with my senses. I'm more aware of me, where I am, what my feelings are. I'm more able to respond to things in the present. I believe I'm able to relate to other people more comfortably and more directly.

The phrasing of my mantra is not elegant, but that's how it came to me: *I don't have to know*. It's grammatically negative, but it feels positive and spiritual. I think of it as I think of the principle of anonymity, which is (among other things) about letting go of identity and ego. My mantra is about letting go of pretensions to controlling the world around me. It's a Third Step prayer for me, a way of surrendering. It's a reminder that God can handle what's going on in the universe . . . or across the street from me.

Art B., Georgia

Drive - Thru Recovery



Last week a guy who had just moved to the area attended our meeting for the first time. Afterwards he commented, “It is so nice to walk into a group I have never attended and feel immediately at home.” As good as it must have felt to him to say that, it felt even better to us to hear it. What greater compliment could a group receive from a newcomer?

His comment got me thinking about something that happened a few years ago in Hawaii, on vacation with my family. As we were driving down a street in Honolulu, I saw a McDonald’s restaurant. I wasn’t hungry, but I was curious. Would a Big Mac in Hawaii taste the same as one from my home town? As I placed my order, I noticed that although the menu contained one or two items I did not recognize, basically it was like driving through my local McDonald’s. I discovered that a Big Mac is a Big Mac, no matter where you get it. Same patty, same bun, same sauce.

That’s how it should be with our Fellowship! No matter where we go, we should be able to walk into a group anywhere and feel immediately at home. In spite of minor variations in the ‘menu’ (format), we can feel instantly like, “I’ve been to this group before.” The room may be different, the faces may be different, but the message and the solution are the same—recovery! And recovery ‘tastes good,’ no matter where you find it.

So next time you find yourself in a city far from home for a few days, do what I try to do. Drive through a McDonald’s and get yourself a Big Mac (if that’s what you like), and then find a Twelve Step meeting and get a good helping of recovery to keep you going until you get home.



SA Today

General Delegate Assembly Philadelphia, July 2005

Expansion & Utilization of the SA web site:

Moved to task the Internet Committee to strengthen local web site meeting information so that the burden of facilitating contact with newcomers and members becomes more of a local function than a SAICO function.

Moved to put the one sheet SAICO brochures in PDF files freely available online in order to reduce storage, printing, and distribution costs.

Moved to add link to SA convention and regional events, if requested, to the website.

Moved to allow SAICO to process credit card payments for registration fees for the international conventions.

Moved to put a list of fellowship approved literature on the SA web site.

Literature and Essay:

Moved to fellowship approve “Does a Male Have to Have Sex,” pending Trustee confirmation of return to original text.

Moved to direct the Trustees and Literature Committee to obtain the approval of the GDA prior to publishing draft documents for sale to the fellowship.

Moved to direct the Trustees and the Essay Committee to obtain the approval of the GDA prior to publishing collections of Essay for sale to the fellowship.

(Continued on page 22)



Women Helping Women in SA

Women in SA
need your help:

We need women to help newcomer women by becoming phone, mail, & 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

Or call 866-291-0914.

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.

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

Telephone Meetings

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



Eleventh Step Prayer

Yesterday God gave me an Eleventh Step prayer. At the time, I was in my head, fussing over one of my sons, making an inventory of all the things I wanted for him. It was a typical dad-list, including things like a better job, a better education, a better place to live, and a meaningful relationship. I fussed over this list until I was fussed out. I knew there was nothing more to do with it but to turn it over to God.

But even as I came to that determination, it dawned on me that every word of the list ultimately came down to another vain attempt at control. Practically every word was pregnant with expectations born out of my own fears and insecurities. Then God miraculously removed all the insecurity, fear, and vain control from me with a reminder to pray only for knowledge of His will for me and the power to carry it out.

Ned O.

Taking Action

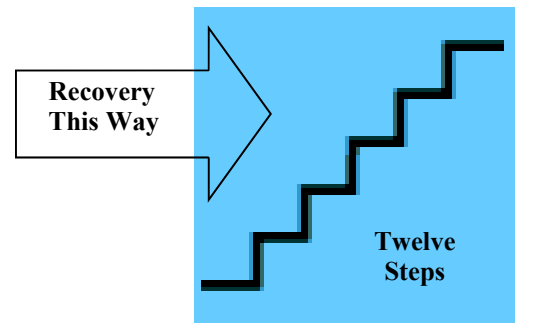
When I sit in meetings listening to others sharing their personal issues, I have a tendency to compare myself to what they are describing. In doing this I miss the point of my recovery. My personal truth is that listening to someone else's difficulties makes me feel comfortable that there is a group where I can express the same frustrations. I really loved that at first.

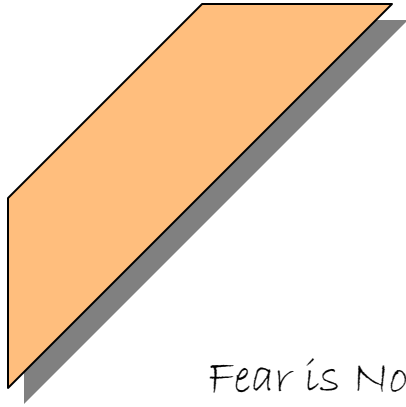
Over time, I came to see that this was not effecting any real change or relief in my addiction. I once heard a saying, "God can move mountains, but it helps if you bring a shovel." In these meetings I wasn't doing anything. Someone also said, "You can't think your way into a new way of living. You have to live your way into a new way of thinking." That means action precedes a change in belief systems. I was just sitting, listening, and thinking in these meetings. I wasn't required to take any action to change the way I was living.

When I finally moved into action, I started experiencing real change and relief from my addiction. Then I started working the Steps in earnest. Working the Steps required that I take action. I began living differently, and understanding followed. I have had a spiritual awakening as the result of working the Steps. I have lived my way into a new belief system.

I recommend working the Steps as a priority for anyone's recovery.

Patrick





Poetry Corner

Fear is Not Enough

It was fear that brought me into recovery,

But fear will not keep me sober.

I can stay sober only by

Admitting my powerlessness and

Surrendering to my Higher Power.

The miracle and the paradox of it all

Is that the same surrender

Will also conquer my fear.

Don P

Remembering Dan

Dan N. was my sponsor. He died on June 22nd at his home in Kimberling City, MO. Having tried unsuccessfully to work the program on my own my first five years in SA, I decided after a terrifying night of acting out that I needed to work the Steps with someone who was successfully staying sober, had a way of solving his problems that worked, and had a peace of mind that I didn't have. Dan had what I wanted, and was willing to share what he had with me. He was very kind and honest with me, got me on track with the Step work, listened to my personal problems, and shared the practical wisdom from his experience of what worked and didn't work. I am very fortunate to have had Dan in my life, especially at the exact moment when I needed someone like him the most.

Dan came into SA in the summer of 1988 in San Diego. He had a quiet strength and presence in the meetings that let us know that this was a safe place to be, and one where we could find the solution to the problem of sexaholism. He was whole-heartedly dedicated to the fellowship and principles of SA. The program had allowed him to find freedom and peace of mind, and to practice these in his daily life. By his actions and attitudes he gave back to the fellowship what it had given him. Dan was very supportive to both the men and women in the program and actively encouraged others to do service, often reassuring them by saying something like: "Don't worry. It'll be fine. Remember, you're not in charge of this service work any more than you are in charge of lust. God is in charge, and you just need to do your job by getting out of the way and letting Him do His job." Dan spent a tremendous amount of time and energy connecting with God. He spent hours copying handouts, putting together Step studies, getting people the literature they needed, working in the intergroup and on the international level, and was the main organizer of the first San Diego International Convention in 1992.

Dan would sometimes say that the people in the fellowship were like "God with skin on" to him, and you could see this by the way he treated them. He helped nurture fellowship opportunities by regularly going out to dinner before his home group meeting with whoever wanted to join in, was available as a temporary sponsor via email for those suddenly left without one, and kept in contact with people who had dropped out of SA or moved away. SA's strength in San Diego is what it is today in large part because of what Dan gave to it. Dan's sobriety, peace of mind, acceptance of himself and other people, and inspiring wisdom came from his constantly asking God what He wanted him to learn or do with the feelings, problems, and joys of his life, and his taking the time to be quiet and listen for the answers. The kind of life that Dan lived in SA has made recovery a possibility and a reality for many people. I feel he is still sponsoring me today.

Alex R., San Diego, CA

Never mind the fact that my first, and very desperate, contact with SA was through the phone hotline, which is maintained by the Intergroup!

A few years later, I had begun to make progress in my recovery but still had many serious holes in the way I was working the program. I knew this because of how easily I became resentful and how recklessly I was playing with my boundaries. I remembered how much I had been helped by volunteering for the orientation service position. I still had no interest in the Intergroup, but that didn't matter anymore. What mattered now was the fact that I was worried enough about the chances I was taking with my recovery that I knew that raising the ante again in my service would be some very good and needed medicine for me. So I jumped at the opportunity and became secretary of Intergroup, taking the minutes of the meetings and volunteering for many of the action items that came up.

It worked. The service helped me to start thinking and caring about people other than myself more than I ever had before, to share myself more with other people, and to see my personal recovery as part of a bigger picture. I also saw that the main purpose of Intergroup was outreach—"to carry the message" to people suffering the same affliction from which I had been rescued. The more I threw myself into Intergroup work, the less I lusted and the less I fed my resentments. I also started becoming more aware and mindful of the principles at the foundation of the SA program: honesty, accountability, hopefulness, trust in God's care, acceptance, making restitution for harms caused, and being of help to fellow sufferers. I also saw how much the work of the group did help people to find meetings, to be strengthened by workshops, conventions, retreats and speaker meetings, and help counselors and clergy find SA for those in their care. Participation in Intergroup has helped me to grow in areas of closeness and cooperation with others that I would have feared and avoided, had my self-centeredness and lust not driven me further into the solution—for which I am very grateful.

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 four areas: The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Concepts for SA, The Twelve SA Traditions, and thoughtful short essays for the work in progress, the Meditation Book for SA.

Please send your writings, experience and thoughts to us at:
SAICO – ESSAY, PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024-3565, U.S.A.
You can email electronic files to saico@sa.org

With anticipation and thanks, The *Essay* Committee

To a Newcomer

I left the ways of the old life behind.

Now I ride with the gulls in the stream,

Among the wayward sirens singing.

To whom do you prefer to turn?

(Adapted from "Reply to Li Huan" by 8th century master Wei Ying-Wu)

The four lines of the poem are saying this:

What I used to do,

what it is like for me now,

freedom from lust,

and the choice of my Higher Power over addiction and powerlessness.'

I left the ways of the old life behind

—from old-timer to newcomer, a biographical statement. It relates the experience of one, and what the other truly wants to get rid of and change himself. The old-timer, through hard experience, expresses the unexpressed hopefulness and desperation of the newcomer. Both understand 'the ways of the old life'.

Now I ride with the gulls in the stream

—implies acceptance of life's terms; the image of the serene old-timer, riding the turbulence in life's 'stream.' (This is a promise I am *slowly* beginning to realize.)

Among the wayward sirens singing

— understanding, how we see lust, in its various guises.

To whom do you prefer to turn?

—a direct question, though slightly moral in tone, is the old-timer's subtle way of relating to the newcomer's lust triggers. Hearing this, from my sponsor and others, articulated what I needed (and still need) to know about me.

Eric S., San Francisco, CA

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

WORKING THE STEPS

I've always had an approach-avoidance relationship with working the Steps. I always feel great after having done some writing on a Step, but it can take quite a long time for me to stop the squirrel cage long enough to actually sit down and start writing. The fact that I took five years to work the first three Steps in the program tells me that I wasn't in any great hurry to recover from my self-destructive behaviors and attitudes.

Over my years in SA, I've become much more motivated and disciplined than I was in my former six-tenths-of-a-Step-per-year mode, but I still often need a kind of jump-start with the writing. I found a simple little ritual (which I must have heard at a meeting) that helps me progress in my Step writing but with relatively little pain involved. Here's what I do.

I get out the materials I normally use (pen, paper, Step guide, Big Book, White Book), set the timer on my watch to ten minutes, sit down, and begin. I work until the alarm goes off and then stop. The main thing for me is to sit in front of the blank page while pondering my question or topic. If I write something, that's great; if I write nothing but get closer to the subject (the truth about me), that's fine too. The main thing is to do *some* Step work as opposed to *zero* work. I figure that sitting in front of a piece of paper for ten minutes is a realistically achievable goal. Since I spend ten minutes several times a day just staring into space, I know that this ten really isn't going to cause too much damage to my day.

After the alarm sounds, I ask myself if I'd like to stop now or continue writing. If I stop, at least I know that I've done something good for my recovery that day. If I continue, so much the better, but either way, I always feel good about having been willing to do something to live in the solution that day.

Another thing I do: if I'm going to be out where I might have to spend time waiting in an office, bank, or shopping center I carry my pocket-sized Step writing book and a photocopy of my Step guide in my pocket. Thus I always have it handy to work on if I "get stuck" somewhere. I'll often do this when my wife and I plan to be out shopping. If she stops into a store to browse for something for herself, I'll just sit on a bench outside and work on my Step. We've both agreed beforehand that this is okay.

SERVICE: MEETING POSITIONS

Although I had finally gotten sober for several months, I was still very disturbed by old resentments and fears, and was dragging my feet on the Step I was supposedly working on. One day, after expressing frustration over my stagnation to my sponsor, he suggested that if I did some sort of service it would raise the ante in my program. I had no interest in this but was exasperated enough to at least give it a try. My sponsor suggested I volunteer to take over his job of doing the orientations for newcomers when the next service rotation came around. This I did. He clearly explained to me the purpose of orientations and how he did them. So with the job description in my head and on paper, I somewhat nervously waited for my first newcomer to show up.

After making sure the newcomer was there for his own sexual issues and not for some other purpose, I described the SA fellowship, the SA Twelve Step program of action, and the tools of the program. I also told him why I was there (the behaviors that brought me to SA) and invited him to share his story. Then we went to the regular meeting, after which I offered him an SA brochure, a meeting schedule, the phone list (including my number), and showed him the literature table.

I did this service for a long time—until someone else volunteered to take over, and it really helped put my recovery into overdrive. Explaining the program to someone else helped me to understand it better and reinforced exactly what it was that I was buying into myself. But telling my story to a fellow sufferer helped me the most, since it reminded me of where I had been, and made me feel grateful that I was no longer there and that I was recovering. Orientations also made me feel that I could use my handicap to help others feel welcomed, not so alone, and more hopeful. Whenever I did an orientation, I was reminded of how broken, frightened, and confused I was when I first walked into my SA orientation. This helps me to remember where I used to be, what I have done and continue to do to work the program's plan of action, and how grateful I am that I can now just feel and share my feelings instead of having to act them out in shameful and self-destructive behaviors.

SERVICE: INTERGROUP

I'm by nature and by preference a loner. I've never been one for serving on committees, taking minutes at meetings, or organizing activities involving other people. In my first five years in SA, I reluctantly attended only about three Intergroup meetings and couldn't see any value in them for me personally. I was so focused on myself and my problems that it seemed to me all Intergroup did was try to find things to talk about just to keep busy.