



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 Four

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

## A New Freedom

### What It Was Like

I acted out. I practiced hard at it. I started at a young age. I lived my life in fear and fantasy. I did not know how to live in the real world. I wanted to be any place but “here.” Fantasy would take me over “there.” I acted out to feel better; I liked it, and I pursued it to the gates of insanity and death.

I did not come to my first SA meeting to get sober. I came because I wanted to feel better. My sponsor later told me, “You were scared to death. You were done.” When I came to my first meeting, I was given the pamphlets and phone numbers and told to use them. It was a Fourth Step meeting. I just sat down and started reading.

I started with a meeting a week for four weeks. That was fine with me. I acted out every day, but one meeting a

week was enough for me. At 28 days sober, I couldn’t comprehend how to get up in the morning, go to work, make a living, pay the bills, and act like a normal person. But I thought I could give my wife advice. That’s how sick I was.

I went to a meeting and thanked the group. “I’m on my Fourth Step; I found God through the Third Step, and I’m grateful to be here.” After the meeting, one of the members came up to me and said, “You’ve got to stop patting yourself on the back so hard. You’re going to die.” Who did this guy think he was? He didn’t know who he was talking to!

I killed that guy 15 times in my head on the way home that night. I got home and had a huge fight with my wife. When she left, I went straight for pornography. It was my favorite delusion, that this would make me feel better

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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, some thoughtful short essays by members, some samples of Meditations, and a little humor.

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, December 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 January - September 2005

Budget		Actual	\$ Variance
Contributions	80,250.00	Contributions	66,368.08
SACFC	6,750.00	SACFC	5,508.43
Conventions	12,000.00	Conventions	6,975.66
Literature Sales	24,750.00	Literature Sales	19,156.41
Interest	750.00	Interest	503.25
<i>Essay</i>	<u>3,750.00</u>	<i>Essay</i>	<u>5,342.00</u>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>128,250.00</u></b>	<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b><u>103,853.83</u></b>
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	50.00
Credit Card Fees	1,125.00	Credit Card Fees	1,097.65
Conference Fees	1,050.00	Conference Fees	1,341.52
Depreciation	1,350.00	Depreciation	1,323.82
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00
Liability Insurance	2,000.00	Liability Insurance	1,734.00
Legal	1,500.00	Legal	.00
Accounting	2,625.00	Accounting	4,143.00
Literature expense	9,000.00	Literature Expense	7,909.04
Payroll	60,525.00	Payroll	57,864.34
Payroll Tax	5,400.00	Payroll Tax	5,348.46
Pension	5,100.00	Pension	.00
Postage & Freight	3,750.00	Postage & Freight	5,935.36
Office Expense	1,200.00	Office Expense	1,422.26
Printing	3,150.00	Printing	1,807.07
Professional Fees	1,500.00	Professional Fees	500.00
Rent	7,275.00	Rent	6,646.29
Maintenance	825.00	Maintenance	722.65
Supplies	600.00	Supplies	1,125.56
Sales Tax	75.00	Sales Tax	208.54
Taxes & Licenses	75.00	Taxes & Licenses	473.19
Telephone	6,375.00	Telephone	7,163.77
<u>Travel</u>	<u>14,250.00</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>17,700.48</u>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>128,750.00</u></b>	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b><u>124,517.00</u></b>
		<b>Deficit</b>	<b>&lt;20,663.17&gt;</b>

*(Continued from page 1)*

when all else failed. I could feel the madness all around me. There has never been a time that I could start acting out and then stop, including that night.

### What Happened

I called the next day and asked for help. I found a sponsor. Withdrawal was awful. My whole body went crazy. No one told me about the tunnel vision, the humming in my ears, the nausea, and the cold sweats. I felt like I was going crazy. That was the last day I found it necessary to act out.

My sponsor suggested that if one meeting a week didn't work for me, I should try two meetings a week. He didn't yell at me about doing lots of meetings. I couldn't do ninety meetings in ninety days, seven days a week, but I could do two meetings a week. Sometimes I did four or five. Sometimes I skipped meetings. I had a lot of different reasons why I couldn't go to meetings: my wife didn't want me to go, the kids wanted me home, it was raining, or I was tired. Funny, none of those reasons ever kept me from acting out. Never. Would anything keep me from going to see my favorite porn queen?

I was hanging on to four months sobriety and thought I was doing okay. I thought I was the one holding the group together. Then a member named Lloyd pointed out that I couldn't string two coherent sentences together. He offered

to be my sponsor. I started working the Steps with him. I told him it was his responsibility to keep me sober. He said I had it backwards, that I would keep him sober because Higher Power would be with the two of us.

I worked with Lloyd for four years. I watched this deadly disease kill him. If not for him, it would have killed me, too. I still think about him a lot.

My sponsor now is a beauty. He taught me how to love. He helped me learn to love my wife. I thought I could change things somehow. I stayed with her because she was my drug. I had to learn to love her so that she could leave me. My wife served me with divorce papers and my first thought was, "Wow, no more sex in my life, ever." My sponsor had told me that everything I did revolved around, came down to, and eventually ended up being about sex. He thought I might get somewhere if I could realize that. That, and to stop complaining about everything. "You want some cheese with that whine?" he would ask.

### What It's Like Now

I get up in the morning and go to work. I'm a bass fishing guide. Yeah, that's right, I fish every day—and get paid to do it! My sponsor helped me to become self-supporting through my own efforts.

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

I made changes in my life. I can talk and relate to people. I can do that without making up fantasies in my head. My head was full of lies. I could not comprehend the truth. If I am alone, I hurt people. I am a liar, a cheat, a thief. Alone, that is who I am. With the help of other SAs, I have learned love, how to give and receive love. I did not know I was capable of that.

My sponsor taught me how to love and raise my kids. My daughter gave me a seashell the day I left the house. I carry that around to remind me where I have come from and where I am today. For me it represents the physical aspect of the Eleventh Step. My sponsor taught me about the Eleventh Step. My disease is threefold; my meditation has to be the same—physical, mental, and spiritual.

I was dying. Now I go to meetings, I go to work, I raise my kids. I don't have to focus all my attention on myself. I have a bunch of crazy people I sponsor. I can focus on them. God sends me just the right people at just the right time. Sobriety is about responsibility. I have a role. I have to carry a message for my Creator's purpose.

I do what I do every day, God, for your grace and glory alone. That is why I am here. I am sober today and very grateful. Thank you.

## What If?

What if you never had to act out sexually again?

What if you could be shown a way of living that relieves all the discomforts you experience?

What would it be like if you could be with people who knew all your secrets and accepted you anyway?

How would it feel to know that no matter what you had done, or were doing, you have friends who want to hug you, shake your hand, and encourage you?

What if you began changing, and gradually, over time, found peace and contentment, regardless of what was happening around you?

What if you were at peace with yourself, living honestly, and not acting out?

What if you could then show others, who feel just like you once did, how this change came about in your life, and guide them along the path you've taken?

What if you could pass that gift on to the next suffering person?

What if this was your last option? Would you take it?

There is a solution.

Welcome to Sexaholics Anonymous!

**Gerard P.**

## 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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 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.*

## It's a Gift



I've learned in recovery that sexual sobriety is a gift, granted by God *as I understand him*. Sobriety is not something I can control, any more than I can control lust.

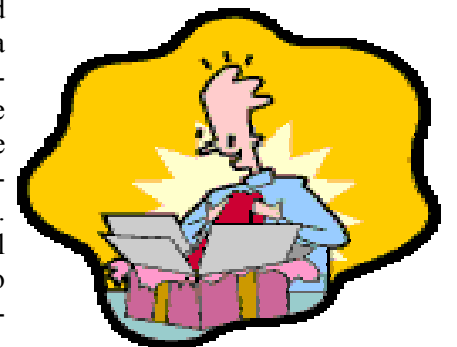
I'm reminded of this every day when talking to my Daily Renewal partner. One of the lines in the script that we use is, "Do you realize that this renewal doesn't keep us sober – God does...?" An earlier line asks, "Are you willing to do whatever is necessary to protect this sobriety?" That's really all I can do—try to protect my chances of receiving the gift. Of course, I can also take actions which cause me to throw sobriety away, or at least severely jeopardize my chances of receiving it.

I think of sobriety as being like a Christmas present, waiting for me under the tree. When I wake up and remember this gift, I'm faced with a choice. I can calmly arise, go to the bathroom and shower and brush my teeth and hair, get dressed, carefully walk down the stairs (some call them Steps), go into the living room, open that precious gift and enjoy it all day. Or I can try to take a short cut by jumping out of my bedroom window, hope I land safely and that the front door isn't locked, and try to race to the tree. I've tried both methods, and strongly recommend the former.

Of course, the morning ritual described above is just a metaphor for working (or not) a solid recovery program. I can do Daily Renewals, Daily Sobriety Contracts, work the Steps, go to meetings, do service work, make phone calls, follow my sponsor's recommendations, and use all of the other available tools. That won't guarantee me sobriety, but it will certainly improve my chances of making it to the tree and enjoying that blessed gift for another 24 hours.

### Anonymous

[For more information about Daily Renewals and Contracts, see pp 70 - 78 in *Practical Recovery Tools, 1994 - 2003*.]



## Easy Does It, Even on the Porch

I was sitting on my front porch yesterday, enjoying the beauty of God's world around me. There are lots of trees, birds, squirrels, and even an occasional deer to help me focus on the serenity of nature.

I was distracted, however, by something very close to me, which prevented me from focusing on anything beyond it. Before, I had successfully overlooked it and pretended it wasn't even there. This time I realized I couldn't ignore it any longer.

It was the peeling paint on the banister just in front of me. No matter what else I tried to look at, it was constantly there in my peripheral vision. A flaw – no, a defect. And getting worse all the time.

Since I could no longer ignore it, I thought about my options for dealing with it. One extreme would be to strip all the paint off, prime it, and give it a totally new paint job. Another extreme would be to tear it off, buy a piece to replace it, and throw out a perfectly good piece of wood. Neither of those options seemed appealing or even necessary.

I thought about the slogan Easy Does It, and wondered how I could apply that to my dilemma. One way would be to open a can of paint, slap some on to make it look better, and hope that would take care of it for awhile. But when I applied rigorous honesty to that solution, I realized it would just be a shortcut that would end up being even more work later on. Eventually the cracked area would reopen, and the mildew that was present would soon eat its way to the surface again. It might do in the short run, but it would still look bad and wouldn't really solve the problem.

The best way, I knew, to make that slogan work for me, was to scrape only the dead paint off, wash it down to kill all the mildew, and put a fresh coat or two of good paint on it. In the



## Third Quarter Donations July - September 2005

Twin Cities IG	200.00	San Diego, CA	25.00	<b>TOTALS</b>
Twin Cities CFC	20.00	San Diego Wed	50.00	
		San Diego F	100.00	<b>Philadelphia Convention</b>
		San Diego IG	500.00	<b>SACFC</b>
		San Jose, CA M	43.00	<b>1649.00</b>
		Sandy, UT	50.00	
<b>South Midwest Region</b>		Santa Clarita, CA	35.00	<b>Group Total</b>
Albuquerque, NM	100.00	West LA CA Sat	200.00	<b>16,267.94</b>
Albuquerque IG	27.00	West LA Tues	50.00	<b>Individual</b>
Denver, CO	56.00	Yorba Linda, CA	240.00	<b>1,325.96</b>
Glenwood Spg, CO	100.00			<b>International</b>
Parachute, CO	100.00			<b>205.00</b>
Springfield, MO	100.00			
St Louis, MO Tu	75.00			<b>International</b>
Topeka, KS	200.00			<b>205.00</b>
		<b>International</b>		<b>SACFC Total</b>
				<b>1,347.36</b>
		<b>Northwest Region</b>		
		Ireland	225.75	<b>SA Net</b>
		Jerusalem, Israel	25.00	<b>70.00</b>
Bothell, WA	15.00			<b>Quarterly Appeal</b>
Inland NW IG	217.80			<b>1,424.82</b>
Kirkland, WA Sat	75.00			
Mill Creek, WA Th	50.00	<b>Quarterly Appeal</b>		
Renton, WA	57.00			
Renton CFC	7.00	Akron, OH Tu	113.82	
Seattle, WA Rav	300.00	Chicago St T M	65.00	Remember as the end of 2005
Tukwila, WA	45.00	Chicago St T Sat	73.00	approaches that donations to SA
Tukwila CFC	45.00	Chicago St T W	123.00	are tax deductible because we
Yakima, WA	20.00	Chicago Sw Cov	48.00	are a 501(C)3 organization
		Columbus, OH	60.00	Contributions for 2005 need to
		Ferndale, MI	123.00	be postmarked by December 31
		Oakland, CA Fr	72.00	to be counted as part of this year.
		St Louis, MO F	50.00	Every donation will be acknowl-
		San Jose, CA Sat	100.00	edged with a Donations Receipt.
Costa Mesa, CA	40.00	Twin Cities, MN	200.00	Please make your check out to
Fresno, CA	150.00	Twin Falls, ID	25.00	SA. Send a note with it so that
Los Altos, CA	67.50	Vancouver, WA	24.00	we can give proper credit to your
No Cal SA IG	100.00			group.
N Hollywood F	63.00			Thank you many times over for
N Hollywood Tu	100.00	<b>Individual</b>	176.00	your generosity.
Orem, UT	30.00		<b>1,424.82</b>	SA International Central Office
Phoenix, AZ	6.00			
Salt Lk City, UT	400.00			

## Third Quarter Donations July - September 2005

<b>CANADA</b>	Norfolk, VA	50.00	Jacksonville #2	33.00	
	No Canton, OH	30.00	Knoxville, TN	150.00	
Calgary, AB	326.72	Northeast OH IG	50.00	Murfreesboro, TN	50.00
Edmonton, AB	159.92	Penn Hills Fri, PA	53.37	Nashville, TN Sat	301.14
		Penn Hills Weds, PA	27.00	Nashville IG	1,400.00
<b>Northeast Region</b>		Pittsburgh IG CFC	25.00	Norcross, GA	97.55
		Pittsburgh SS, PA	90.00	Orlando, FL	150.00
NE Region	100.00	Reston, VA	100.00	Ormond Beach, FL	50.00
Norwood, MA	400.00	Springfield, VA M	56.00	Pensacola, FL	1,475.00
Rochester, NY CE	100.00	Springfield Sat	61.95	Roswell, GA	174.34
Rochester into Action	18.39	Springfield Sat CFC	26.55	Savannah, GA	150.00
Rochester IG	120.50	Springfield TH	100.00		
Seaford, NY	194.00	Timonium, MD M	154.00	<b>North Midwest Region</b>	
Seaford CFC	40.00	Timonium, MD Sat	20.00		
Somerville, MA Tu	50.00	Timonium TU	77.43	Chi St T Mon	104.00
		Walkersville, MD	60.00	Chi St T M CFC	30.00
<b>Mid-Atlantic Region</b>		Washington CHUM	277.25	Chi St T Sat	225.50
		Wash CHUM CFC	77.76	Chi St T Sat CFC	112.75
Akron, OH Sat	93.75	Washington DC M	92.00	Chi St T Weds	140.00
Annapolis, MD	60.00	Washington Noon	342.25	Chi St T W CFC	110.00
Baltimore, MD	30.00	Wheeling WV IG	52.00	Chi Sw Cov	60.00
Columbus, OH Mon	100.00	Woodbridge, VA	21.00	Chi Sw Cov CFC	58.00
Cranberry Twp, PA	114.00			Davenport, IA	50.00
Crystal City, VA	208.50	<b>Southeast Region</b>		Detroit, MI	300.00
Erie, PA	19.60			Downers Grove, IL	75.00
Falls Church, VA	143.00	Asheville NC IG	200.00	Evanston, IL	42.00
Falls Church CFC	50.00	Clermont, FL	20.00	Glen Ellyn, IL Fr	210.00
Fredericksburg CFC	153.00	Columbia, SC	50.00	Glen Ellyn CFC	110.00
Herndon, VA	62.00	FL SA IG	40.00	Glen Ellyn Th	329.11
Lansdale, PA	40.00	FL SA IG CFC	40.00	Grand Rapids, MI	100.00
Little Falls, NJ Sat	150.00	Franklin, TN	90.00	Lincoln, NE	100.00
Mansfield, OH	303.00	Georgia IG	482.60	Milwaukee, WI M	100.00
Mars, PA	60.00	Georgia IG CFC	100.00	Milwaukee Tu&F	200.00
McLean, VA TH	137.70	Greensboro, NC	121.25	Munster, IN	100.00
McLean TH CFC	15.30	Greensboro CFC	29.00	Naperville, IL Tu	100.00
McLean TU	126.00	Greenville, SC	20.00	Nebraska CFC	34.00
McLean TU CFC	14.00	Hendersonville, TN	100.00	Peoria, IL	300.00
MD/DC/NoVA IG	1,053.50	Hermitage, TN	50.00	Rockford, IL	50.00
MD/DC/NoVA CFC	250.00	Jacksonville, FL #1	70.00	St Cloud, MN	85.00

long run, that would be the easiest thing I could do for myself. And while it wouldn't be perfect, I would at least feel that I had done a good job on it. It would no longer be a distraction to keep me from reveling in the beauty beyond it.

One dilemma remained, however, which probably had a lot to do with my tardiness in fixing the problem before now. If I repaired the top banister which was peeling badly, the rest of the railing would look dingy; indeed, some of its paint was beginning to crack in other places. The "perfect" solution would be to scrape, clean, and repaint the whole thing at once, but that task felt overwhelming to tackle in an already busy weekend.

Once again, Easy Does It came to my rescue. I realized I didn't have to do the whole job at one time. I could do the worst part this weekend, the not-as-bad part next weekend, and paint the rest of it to match on another weekend. That way I could do the job right and end up with a nice looking and well-repaired front porch!

While waiting for the paint to dry today, I've been wondering how all this applies to my recovery as a whole....

### *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 short essays for 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](mailto:saico@sa.org)  
With anticipation and thanks, The *Essay* Committee

# MEDITATIONS

## Sometimes Slowly

Before recovery I would go to any lengths to get my way. I would lie, cheat, steal and manipulate to get what I thought I needed. I was even willing to work hard to get my desired outcome. But once I got what I wanted, I soon began to want something else. If I bought a new car, I would soon want a different one. If I had a sexual relationship with someone, I would soon want a different one. Often I would put a lot of effort into getting a certain result only to be unhappy and feel tortured by the new situation. What I thought I wanted just didn't turn out to be as great as I had expected.

As I worked the Steps and began to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, I thought I knew what would be best for me, but I soon learned that God had other ideas. I wanted sobriety so that life would be smooth. I got withdrawal, and life was anything but smooth. Gradually, I saw some value in withdrawal, in that it made going back out less attractive and let me see more of my insanity. I wanted the lawsuits to be quickly dismissed, because, after all, I was living clean now. Instead I got two-and-a-half years of court proceedings and legal bills. Eventually I saw that this potential disaster had kept me working the program with determination instead of grabbing for the quick fix and leaving. I wanted my new business to be an instant success, but experienced a slow, hard road with many frustrations and eventual success. I learned that success comes with hard work, faith and perseverance, and I value hard earned success differently than I would value an "easy" jackpot.

All of these experiences build my character and give me more to offer the next suffering sexaholic I meet. I am learning to accept God's will for me with equanimity and anticipation. I find that even though it doesn't always agree with my expectations of how a gift should be wrapped, God's will for me is always a gift. My job is to learn how to see God's will as a gift and to be grateful.

Help me to see the value in all your gifts. Help me to remember that "pain is the touchstone of all spiritual progress." (*Twelve and Twelve*, p. 93-94)

## Calendar of Events

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

**May 26 - 28, 2006**, SA Ontario Steps Retreat 2006, sponsored by SA Ontario IG. Theme: The Pathway to Freedom. Contact SA Sudbury at 705.693.0021, or send email to [sasudbury@unitz.ca](mailto:sasudbury@unitz.ca)

## Upcoming International Conventions

**January 6 - 8, 2006**, SA International Convention, Nashville, TN  
Theme: Carrying the Message. Contact Brad M. at 615/782-2237  
Online registration available at [www.carrythemessage.net](http://www.carrythemessage.net)

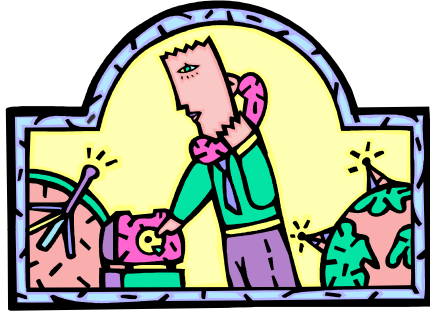
**July 7 - 9, 2006**, SA International Convention, St. Louis, MO  
Theme: Happy, Joyous, and Free. For more details, check Convention web site at <http://stlgatewayrecovery.com>

By all means, please send in your event to be listed in *Essay*. Events taking place from April 2006 and onward will be listed in the next edition. Deadline for sending information to SAICO is March 1, 2006. Please submit the following information: dates, theme, place, cost, and points of contact. A flyer for your event is not necessary, but very helpful when someone calls in and asks what events are available. Send that information to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org).

PS. Directions are helpful, but please do not email maps. They tend to be very large files.

*[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.]*





### Meetings by Phone

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



## 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](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.

# MEDITATIONS

## Living in the Answer

When I stopped living in the problem and began living in the answer, the problem went away. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 417)

In early recovery I was terrified of my lust. It led me to cause great harm in my life, destroyed my career, nearly destroyed my family, caused a great deal of public shame and embarrassment for my wife and me, and cost a lot of money. I found that when lust came up, my fear made me fight lust, and that made the lust stronger.

Even if I tried not to lust, I was still focused on it, just in a negative way. I was doing “anti-lust”, and it didn’t work; my lust still grew. When I focused on the solution, which is my relationship with my Higher Power, lust decreased. While I’m not in the problem, its not the same as being in the solution. The “anti-problem” does not create serenity for me, and when I’m in the anti-problem, the problem does not go away.

For me, the purpose of maintaining my spiritual condition must be so that I have something to give away. My program has to be about you. In the anti-problem, I lose track of that attitude and go back to thinking that it’s all about me. When I am helpful to others, when I am of service, when I give freely from the heart without resentment, fear, or expectation, I am practicing these principles in all my affairs. Then I truly have the solution and, as it grows, I gain serenity, joy and freedom from the bondage of self. I like it. It feels good.

Help me to remember that You are the solution and that what I do for others, I do for You.

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

# MEDITATIONS

## No Matter How Far Down

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 84)

Before recovery, I tried to appear squeaky clean. I tried to hide my mistakes and my whole shadow side. Nothing was ever my fault. I would point out someone else's weaknesses as a smokescreen, but I never admitted my own. I was alternately in denial or in despair about my character defects and the hopelessness of my life.

When I entered recovery at my emotional bottom, I found something in meetings which sustained me and I felt good. It was only later that I identified this as honesty. People were actually leading with their weakness and it was a healing force. I discovered that I identify and bond with people much more over common weaknesses than over common strengths. This has been shown to me repeatedly in Fifth Steps, in newcomer meetings, and in Twelfth Step calls. I am much more useful in this world as a broken human being, than I ever was as "perfect" one.

God, help me to see and believe that my faults do not make me worthless.

### Wanted

Members who meditate and write about it. Here are some suggested Topics needed for the SA Meditation Book:

anger, depression, easy does it, ego, fear, powerlessness, principles vs. personalities, the promises, amends, selfishness, self-pity, guilt, remorse, honesty, live and let live, open-mindedness, service, tolerance, willingness.

Take care, Jerry L., Sponsoring Editor

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All Trustees can be reached at SAICO,  
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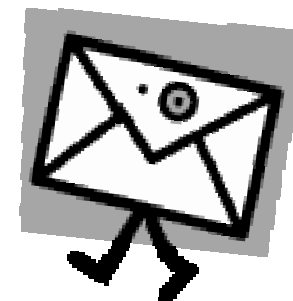
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All General Assembly Delegates can be reached at SAICO,  
or email can be sent to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org).



## Letters, We Get Letters

*Essay* is an essential and vital link to the fellowship for a loner, like me, without meetings available and very limited contact with other members of SA.

Keep up the good work! I only wish *Essay* were a weekly.

Please find my renewal for another year of *Essay* and a little extra as Seventh Tradition support of the work done by SAICO.

Dear *Essay*:

It is 4:30 AM and I am reading the *Essay* cover to cover, not for the first time. The words in your 'Dear Reader' column caught my eye.

"You have something you can contribute. Will you please send it in?"

I've only been to my first meeting with coffee after. It's such a great fellowship. I feel really blessed, and I will let you know from time to time how things go. Thanks to everyone at *Essay* & SA.

## New Groups

### USA

Brooklyn, NY  
Denton, TX  
Georgetown, IN  
Las Vegas, NV  
Manhattan, KS  
Masontown, PA  
Newport News, VA  
Richmond, CA  
York, NE

### KOREA

Seoul

*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](mailto:saico@sa.org)  
615/370-6062  
866/424-8777

## The Driving Force Behind the Addiction

Lust is the driving force behind my addiction, and if I allow myself to lust, then I will act out, sooner or later. When I consciously harbor lust, even in small amounts, it's the same as an alcoholic taking a drink.

To stay sober, I must constantly be on the lookout for any occurrences of lust within myself. There are ways to deal with situations when lust, or the temptation to lust, arises. The most effective one I've found is to pray for the object of my lust. Lust is about taking. Prayer is a form of giving, thus reversing the spiritual flow. It doesn't have to be a long or complex prayer—my version is, "God, give that woman peace, prosperity, happiness, and health."

**Anonymous**

## Lust Unclothed

The other night I had a dream which stripped my lust of its pastel pink and purple euphemisms. I have avoided the word lust in my litany—preferring to tell myself that I crave "an affair of the heart"—further dressed up by such phrases as "out of my deep loneliness and chronic disconnection from others, I have sought soul mates, persons to join me in (at worst) the warmth of romantic fervor."

Lust is not soft and gentle and vulnerable. It is a tool of power, acquisitive and harsh; a taking of power and control from another, as much by seduction as by brute force.

I enter the arena of battle with my very unsweet lust, to be free of its bondage. I see the enemy more clearly and seek to unseat it, or at least to live more conscious of its danger in my untrustworthy hands.

**Diane R., Rochester NY**

## Terminal Uniqueness

I can now see how my sexaholism isolated me from family, friends, workers, and employers in the past. I found fault with them in my "terminal uniqueness." Nobody had a story like mine; therefore, I could not relate to anyone else. In the end, all I had was my sexaholism.

Today, I value diversity, the differences in people and in myself. It is a uniqueness of a different sort; the polarity has changed. When I place principles before personalities, I can listen to everyone at the meeting. I need to relate to others, not compare myself to them.

Seeing the dignity of each SA member helps me fulfill my primary purpose for being a member—to stay sexually sober and to help other sexaholics achieve sexual sobriety.

**Glenn J., St Louis, MO**

# Rule 62

## The Old Light Bulb Joke

How many sexaholics does it take to change a light bulb?

One, but it takes 12 Steps.

No doubt you have heard a variation of this joke.  
*Groan.* Go ahead and send it in.

## Who's Helping Whom?

In more than one place in the AA big book it says "...and when all else fails, work with another alcoholic."

In the beginning when I would call up my sponsor and start whining, he would say, "Why don't you call \_\_\_\_\_." Usually this was some new, wide-eyed crazy guy we saw at his first meeting, or someone who just went back out.

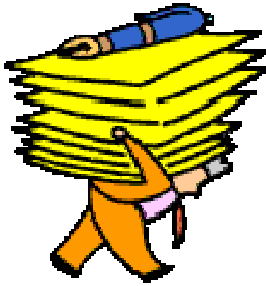
Something I would do, since I saw my sponsor doing it, would be to take newcomers aside after meetings and talk to them for a while, maybe thirty minutes. My sponsor would stand over to the side and smile. One time, after one of these newcomers stopped coming, I asked him, "Am I doing it right?"

He said, "Naw, but it doesn't matter. They're not listening, anyway. But you are getting something—you're still coming."

**Paul B.**

## Suggestions for Working the Steps

### My Little Ten Minute Trick



The hardest part of any Step work for me is starting my writing sessions. Once I get started, I usually have the momentum to continue because I know I'm doing a good thing for myself—like someone with a heart condition cutting down on salt. So to help myself get started, I often work for just ten minutes, since that's a reasonably short amount of time. I sit in front of the blank sheet of paper with all the tools I need (pens, books, papers), set my wristwatch timer, and begin.

When the ten-minute alarm sounds, I stop writing and the session is over.

If I feel motivated to continue writing, I do so. The only requirement for me is to spend the ten minutes.



If I haven't been able to write anything at all during the time, that's okay. If all I've been able to do is just think about what to write, or remember where I left off in my previous session, that's okay too. At least I'm actively engaged in doing some work, versus none. Sometimes I'll start reading something (like "Bill's Story") to get motivated and then, if I get inspired by it, put it down and start writing. I still use this little trick and it has worked well for me.



## God Is my Pilot



Recently I became acquainted with a new sponsee. I realized early on that he had serious problems: unfaithfulness to his spouse, involvement with prostitutes, and other faults which I too had experienced before entering recovery and working the Steps.

While I was away from home, I got a call from him saying he was experiencing a tragedy. His spouse was having an affair and he didn't know what to do.

As I thought about his situation, I recalled a metaphor from my own personal experience as a pilot and flight instructor. I thought, "He is in a tailspin with his life right now—his aircraft is out of control, spinning earthward, and he is going to crash!" I wondered how I could help him. Higher Power reminded me that the easiest way to recover from a spin (if the plane has been trimmed for normal straight-and-level flight) is to take my hands and my feet off the controls, and the plane will come out of the spin by itself. In other words, Let Go and Let God!

### Step Three

Made a decision  
to turn our will and our lives over  
to the care of God  
*as we understood Him.*



Let Go and Let God

## PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

### Suggestions for Working the Steps

#### Step Nine Amends

My Ninth Step amends were about changing behaviors on a regular basis for years.

One of the things I do when making amends is to write on an index card:

1. How I've harmed the person. This is different than a confession. For instance, my acting out behaviors endangered my spouse physically and wrecked her emotional security. My lying compounded this and caused her to question her sanity. This is what I tell her.
2. I ask her if there are any other ways I've harmed her that I may not know of (she usually has several). And I listen until she is done talking.
3. I ask her what I can do to right these wrongs. I write down what she tells me. This has nothing to do with forgiveness.
4. I discuss this list with my sponsor, and we work on a plan to put these into action. Some are not possible, and some I am not yet willing to do. There are small actions I can take on a daily basis. They demonstrate that I have changed, that I'm not just the same person going through the motions to get off the hook, but someone who is willing to live life on a different plane.

It's not easy, but this, more than anything, is where my life and attitude began to change.

**Gerard P.**

## Group Inventory

1. Does the meeting start and end on time?
2. Are all attendees, including newcomers, made to feel welcome and accepted?
3. Does the meeting focus on SA recovery through the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions?
4. Do we share the problem and the solution?
5. Are sponsors available, and are sponsors encouraging their sponsees to become sponsors?
6. Do the members respect all Twelve Traditions?
7. Is recovery seen and heard at the meeting?
8. Are service positions filled, and is rotation of service practiced?
9. Do we speak up for SA principles, no matter who might be displeased?
10. Does our group always inform newcomers about the meaning and importance of anonymity in SA?
11. Do we try to make the SA Fellowship known to people outside who need help? In what ways do we support our Intergroup, region, and SA International in their efforts to reach out?
12. Do we make a point to welcome new members, talk with them, and offer phone numbers?
13. Can new members find sponsors in our group?
14. Does anybody in our group make a point to call newcomers, or members who have been missing from the meeting?
15. Does our group concentrate on SA's primary purpose? Do we focus our discussions on the Twelve Steps, the Twelve Traditions, the tools, and recovery?
16. Does our group take time to discuss the Traditions? Do we take all Twelve Traditions into consideration when making group conscience decisions?
17. Do we consider that our group's attitudes and actions will mold many newcomers' first impressions of SA as a whole?
18. Does our group encourage members to speak briefly, or do we allow some to dominate discussions by speaking so much that others don't get their turns?
19. Do we encourage members to use the telephone to help ourselves and each other?
20. Do we refrain from complaints and gossip?
21. Do we criticize other SA members or groups whose approaches to working the program are different from ours?