

ESSAY®

A Quarterly Publication of Sexaholics Anonymous, Incorporated

From Guru to Grateful

As a teenager, I was pushed into treatment. I learned about Twelve Step programs there and worked my way through Step Five, but it was only the barest of beginnings and I really didn't understand how the Steps worked. I loved the program, the history, the meetings, the instant friends everywhere, and the fellowship. I took on many service jobs. My understanding of recovery was to go to lots of meetings, participate in the fellowship, and have fun. "Sober and Crazy" was one of my favorite slogans.

I thought that good sobriety was measured in years of abstinence. I thought it was cool to be a recovering addict. I thought after so many years of sobriety, I would be a sage or a guru, God's right-hand man. Other members would flock to seek my wisdom. So I went to lots of meetings, tried to sound wise, and craved approval. For me, the

most important things were looking good and getting attention. I stayed sober largely to fulfill those needs and wants.

Throughout this time, I never really gave a concerted effort to working the Steps. I wanted to be a sponsor, but I had great difficulty asking for help and being a sponsee. After all, I argued to myself, I was staying sober and going to meetings. I read the literature and the Steps. I was involved in the fellowship. I knew it all. I didn't need a sponsor.

I was also spending a lot of time pursuing my education and career. My desire for recognition and applause to overcome my low self-esteem underscored these pursuits. It was another priority in my life that I placed ahead of working the Steps. But after six years of experience in AA, my sex addiction was

(Continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE:

God's Gift to Me
Actions of Love
A Simple Glance

5
6
10

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 one member's experience with "progressive victory over lust," 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 or by land mail at *Essay*, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565, U.S.A.

Sincerely,
Essay Editorial Committee, March 2006

(Continued from page 1)

out of control. I had a load of pornography. I got my girlfriend (now my wife) pregnant, and this pregnancy resulted in an abortion. I was always looking, lust-ing, fantasizing, and masturbating. I was exposing myself frequently; I got arrested for exposure. The law scared me straight and I found SA.

I fell in love with SA. I loved being able to share and identify with other sexaholics. I loved having a safe place to talk about these shameful secrets. I felt the purging power of the group. My desire to be the best kicked in. I started to stay sober. I became an SA teacher and leader right away. I loved the approval I received. SA was still in its beginnings. It was a romantic idea to me that I was part of this noble fellowship at that time. I loved the idea that perhaps one day, I would become an SA guru.

I bought into the SA sobriety definition. It was important to me to be faithful to my wife and not masturbate, expose myself or be a voyeur. However, the part that states “true sobriety includes progressive victory over lust” sort of went over my head. It’s not that I disagreed with it. I just didn’t think it was a priority. If I went to an R-rated movie and was ‘surprised’ by a nude image, I would look at it, and then go talk about it at a meeting. I thought it was okay to touch myself occasionally or maybe even masturbate a little, as long as I didn’t masturbate to climax—and talked about it at a meeting. With

these half-measures, I maintained my sobriety (such as it was) for fifteen years. Today, I don’t recommend following this model.

Things began happening which helped to tarnish the badge of my sobriety date. My family life was stressful. I began to get more and more resentful toward my wife. For years I had the on and off fantasy that someday my wife would die and then I could have sex with another woman. I was looking at other women on the streets or in the malls—looking for my next mate.

I wanted to be an SA guru, but members weren’t worshipping the ground I walked on. I began to realize my insanity in this area. By this time I had a SA sponsor, but I hadn’t been rigorously honest with him. I began to reveal to him how I allowed lust in my life. He confronted me about my lack of honesty and integrity; he even questioned my sobriety. I hated being called dishonest because I really thought I was being honest. I hated the thought of having to consider re-setting my sobriety date, because it was a real status symbol for me. I based a lot of my self-esteem on it. At the same time, I began to ever so slowly accept the truth of my sponsor’s words. I was just astonished that I had been deluding myself all these years. I was going to need all the help I could get if I was going to grow in continuous, progressive victory over lust.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

In the last five years, my sponsors have helped me re-work the Twelve Steps, or perhaps to work them for the very first time. I contacted them on a weekly basis for direction on how to work the Steps. I did everything that they asked me to do. Usually the different actions they prescribed were complementary of each other, and every action they told me to do was good for me and helped my recovery. With their help, I stopped looking at women. If I were tempted to look, I would turn my head and pray "God, whatever I'm looking for in lust, let me find it in you. Grant her a joyful, peaceful life." If I saw a woman in the distance walking toward me, I would avert my eyes and pray. Then I would look her directly in the eyes, smile and say "Hi," and move on. In this way, I acknowledged her humanity while at the same time surrendering temptation. With strict boundaries, discernment and help from my sponsors, I view movies, TV and the Internet. I do not touch myself, with the exception of hygiene, or in the context of sexual intimacy with my wife. I consider any other touching a slip.

These tighter boundaries have freed me to regard women with greater respect, and myself with less shame. My wife and I have survived. She has told me that she appreciates me listening to her rants without judging her. Both she and I know that I'm devoted to her and our kids no matter what.

Acquiring the Solution

I believe that Steps One and Two are by far the hardest Steps, because they require no work - only belief and conviction born out of suffering. I was deluded about my understanding of Steps One and Two for many years. I hadn't suffered enough, I hadn't believed enough, and my conviction to change was weak. I have learned that the evidence of solid Steps One and Two is a profound mistrust of my own ideas, emotions, and attitudes when it comes to dealing with lust and determining the course of my life. Further evidence is a profound willingness to think and do what God would have me think and do as stated in Step Three.

I cannot afford to be restless, irritable, discontent, or filled with shame, fear, guilt, or remorse. Otherwise, I will probably lust. In order to avoid this, I have to work Steps Four through Nine.

I have discovered that Steps Four through Nine are the easiest Steps because I'm finally solidly grounded in Steps One, Two and Three, one day at a time. In Steps Four through Nine, I acquire the solution, and I want the solution. Steps Four through Nine require me to follow directions and take action based on those directions. So, I follow directions as my sponsors taught me to do, with relish and in anticipation of God's promises.

Sobriety is God's Gift To Me

“Sobriety is God’s gift to me, and I have to do something with it.” I spoke those words in a dream. Upon waking, my entire mind was focused on that one statement. With that one thought, my entire view of recovery has changed. Now I see that each day God offers me a gift of sobriety. He wants me to be sober. All I have to do is chose to accept it.

This is an entirely new perspective on the Steps and on the Prayer “Thy will, not mine be done in my life today.” I used to think of this as somehow God forcing His will into my life—overriding my will. God would forcibly remove all my defects from me, like some cosmic tug of war that God would eventually win. Wrong! God does not force His will upon me. God offers His will—sobriety—as a gift; all I have to do is accept.

Sobriety used to be my accomplishment; something I achieved and in which I took pride (“*my* sobriety date.”) Now I see my error. Sobriety is not something I have accomplished; it is something God has given me. Rather than being proud, I am humbled that God would love me so much to give me this gift.

God’s gift is different every day. When I wake and start a day, I have no way of knowing what the day holds for me. Sure, I can try and plan my day, make schedules and to-do lists, but the world is a very big and complex place, and even my little corner of it has millions of people, places and things awaiting me each day. While I cannot ever know what awaits me, God knows exactly what my day holds. God knows where, when and how I will be challenged. He also knows exactly what I will need to maintain sobriety and the gift He gives me each day is perfectly suited to those needs.

This gift does require work on my part. There is “God work” and there is “Bill work.” God’s love for me is manifest in His willingness to do the “God work” each and every day. Some days the gift is perfect and complete all by itself, pure and simple. Just as if I were given a beautiful sculpture or a flower in bloom. On those days my job is to leave perfection alone. Other days God’s gift comes with a label “some assembly required.” With those gifts, God also gives me the tools I need to do the work. If I am willing to do the “Bill work,” then nothing will happen that together we cannot handle.

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

When I try to control and maintain my sobriety myself, my hands are full, clutching tightly to my anxieties, my fears and my defects. With my hands full, I cannot reach out and accept God's gift. I must first let go of all my "stuff." Once holding God's gift, I am unable to pick up my stuff again without letting go of God's gift. Why would I ever do that?

When I am challenged in the day, I must trust that God knew of this challenge before I did and that His gift today is amply suited to the challenge. My role is simple—don't try to out-think God! Just hold onto the gift. Ask God, how may I best use His gift today, right now? The answer will come. Often the answer is simply in the asking.

Bill B, Herndon, Virginia



Enough

I've been grappling with the word *enough*. My mind wrestles with expectations around this concept. If I just do *enough* of the right things, then my wife will be kind to me; the internet won't bother me; I won't have to call my sponsor as much; I won't feel so fearful, resentful, or angry. If I just read *enough* program material, make *enough* phone

calls, journal *enough*, listen to *enough* tapes, amend *enough* relationships, go to *enough* conventions, and take care of myself *enough*. Then I will be granted permanent immunity from my character defects. Inwardly, I believe *enough* is the magic pill to cure my disease.

Recently, I recognized a situation where I behaved dishonestly with my wife. Within 48 hours (an improvement for me) I recognized this as a source of disturbance. I called my sponsor and wrote a note of explanation and amends for my wife to find while I was at work. She called and left a supportive and encouraging message on my phone. I thought, "Yes! I did something hard and it's turned out much better than my fears."

Meanwhile, in my secret place, I expected that to be *enough*, and expected to go home a wonderful scene of reunion and intimacy. Instead, I came home to cautious affection and warmth, things for which I am generally grateful. But I could feel the silent seed of resentment growling in my soul. My wife needed to talk some more about the situation, and determine for herself how safe and sane I was about this. "Come on," I thought, "Haven't I done *enough*?!"



Taking the Actions of Love



My neighbors have a large, angry dog which used to threaten my family as we walked by their house. I would raise my voice, stamp my feet and loudly command the dog, “No, go home!” The first couple of times it seemed to work, if only because the neighbor heard me, came to the door and called the dog home. The dog listened to her immediately. The third time the dog threatened, it looked like I was going to get bit, until at the last minute the owner called her dog away.

I went home afraid that my peaceful walks were over. The neighbors didn’t seem like they were going to tie or pen the dog and we live out in the country where there is no leash law. I thought about carrying a baseball bat or golf club, and thought I might get lucky and get in a good whack before one of us got bit.

Talking with my son, I wondered aloud what I could do. As soon as I asked, an answer came. “Humans are smarter than dogs,” the voice said. “Maybe I can befriend the dog.” I cooked some chicken, cut it up, put it in a bag, and went for a walk. The dog was my best friend within minutes.



I was quite pleased with myself and my solution and then the light went on in my head. “If I’m so smart,” the voice said, “why haven’t I been using this method on the important people in my life?”

With my wife and children I was more likely to use the “No, go home” method. Higher Power showed me that I needed to be kinder, gentler and more nurturing to the people in my life, including myself. Rather than reacting, judging and punishing, I need to model myself after my Higher Power: benevolent, patient, loving unconditionally.

I get it. Instead of trying to make my wife not cry, I need to try to make her smile. I need to practice preemptive kindness. I immediately called my wife, who was out of town and having a hard time, to offer her encouragement. I began taking loving action. Just like with the neighbor’s dog, I began to get immediate results.

Jim M.



MEDITATIONS

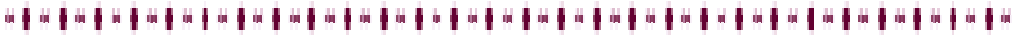
A Genuine Relationship with God

When I first came into the program, I had been a part of a prayer community. I thought I had a relationship with God. How surprised I was to learn the opposite! Not only did I not have a genuine relationship with God, I tried to manipulate Him in my everyday circumstances. I wanted to be God!

Only recently have I found that acceptance of His will for me is the surest way to find God in my life. Whenever I am unsure of what to do, uncomfortable, or afraid—that's when I see God working great things in me. I used to think that I needed to be in control of every situation in order to find God. God, however, wants me to turn over every facet of my life to Him. The good with the bad, the easy with the hard.

It was very scary to begin the day by praying, "God, whatever you want to show me this day, I accept." But whenever I pray like that nothing is a surprise to me. And God equips me with all I need to handle every situation. Because I've embraced His will in my life, everything that happens now is a great adventure. I need not be afraid. Because His hand is upon me, showing me which way to go.

God, whatever you want to show me this day, I accept.



MEDITATIONS

The Reality Check

As I progress in the discovery of my true self, I often come upon the “Reality Check.” This is the time when I recognize the truth of who I really am on the inside. I may catch myself thinking, “I snapped at a moment’s notice! I flew off the handle.”

When I recognize that truth, it is time to humbly ask God to remove another defect of character. This is a lifelong process. Failing means another opportunity to humbly seek God’s help.

God, may I be attentive to the Reality Checks placed on this blessed road of recovery, day by day.

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.

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, or by land mail to SAICO, P.O. Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565

Thank you,
Jerry L., Sponsoring Editor
SA Literature Committee

A Simple Glance

During the summer of 2005, I took a week's vacation with my wife. While there, I experienced some difficulty in dealing with the mass of bodies, often partially dressed or dressed in a way which I found provocative. Coming home to a normal way of life was a relief, a liberation.

I subsequently thought about what had happened during the week's vacation. My eight years of recovery in S.A. has taught me that lust resides deep within me and not in what I see. So just what happened during my vacation? Of course, I had looked—enough to become unsettled spiritually, even though I hadn't let myself slide into obsessive fantasies. I decided to reflect on what happens to me deep inside when I look at a woman.

Why can't I simply look and enjoy the beauty which God created, just as long as it goes no further? Why? Because I'm a sexaholic, and I am powerless over lust! Because it's painful at the time, but I must accept my condition as a sexaholic. Just as with the alcoholic, I can't do things which others can. Because the image which I seize contains the potential for lust, and that's precisely what my illness drive me to seek so desperately. Because if I open the door to lust, be it just a little, lust will invade me—always. Because the image I have seized has the power to spring up again without my calling for it, probably in a moment when I'm

most vulnerable or tired.

My spiritual preparation must already be in place, be ever present, and be renewed daily. It's my inner attitude and the level of my spiritual condition at the time of temptation which will dictate the choice I will make.

When temptation arrives during the day, the following miracle occurs, though I might not even be aware of it at the time: God becomes present, I spontaneously surrender to Him and I don't have to fight lust as I would have expected to. God does it for me.

If I neglect my daily spiritual exercise:

- (a) I expose myself to being caught by a surprise lust attack,
- (b) I am less able to spot lust in its many disguises, and
- (c) I probably won't feel like turning away from 'just a little lust'.

I now realise that that's precisely what happened during my vacation. I had taken a break not only from work, but also from my spiritual program. And I was suffering the consequences.

I know that I am totally powerless over lust and that I can't win by my own power. All I can do is welcome God into my life every morning and decide to surrender to His will completely, and in every aspect of my life.

Louis S., Montreal

Opportunities to Pray

I work in an office building, and there are many members of the opposite sex that I find attractive. That is God's handiwork. It is not their fault that I am sexaholic, neither is it mine. But it is my responsibility to practice recovery. At times I can cross paths with these strangers in the building and meet them eye-to-eye, say hello, and keep right on walking with absolutely no thoughts about them. At other times, fantasy and objectification is alive and well. The frustration is this: there are times that I just cannot tell the difference between the 'normal' and the sick. I do not want to be sick—but I am.

My sponsor and I agree that Higher Power must really like us, because we are presented with so many opportunities to pray the prayer that we were taught: "God bless her and God help me." It works. The thoughts that I once so reveled in, that now cause me so much discomfort, are relieved. I can walk through the building or anywhere else, without living in the problem. I can choose to live in the solution.

I may never be able to separate the normal interactions with members of the opposite sex from the interactions that will trigger me. But I will always have the tools of recovery that Sexaholics Anonymous has given me. For that, I am eternally grateful.

Gary D.

New Groups

CANADA

Nanaimo, BC
North Bay, ON

USA

Branson, MO
Charlottesville, VA
Elgin, IL
Ft Lauderdale, FL
Ft Myers, FL
Manteca, CA
Rochester Hills, MI
Surprise, AZ
Sylva, NC
Wilmington, DE

Additional meetings

Asheville, NC
Atlanta, GA
Manhattan, KS
Norcross, GA

Please let us know about your new groups and additional meetings in your local area.

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Women Helping Women in SA



Hi, I am Judy, a sexaholic.

I live in a small town in North Idaho. When I was six months sober, God and I started a meeting. It was small, but it lasted for three and a half years, and was instrumental in my sobriety. Then the meeting folded, and I was without a face-to-face meeting.

Someone then asked me if I would be interested in chairing a committee for loner women. I said, "Nah, I am already doing a lot of service work as it is." But you know, a nagging feeling kept tugging at my heart, and God pumped up my vision much bigger than a women's loner committee. I called back and said "Yes, but it will include much more." So WISA (Women in SA) was born.

There is such a need. But getting into the door is difficult. It can be so daunting! Many women walk into a room full of men and get so scared they don't want to come back. We hope to share recovery with women and show them how to ease into the fellowship. SA is truly a safe place for them, too.

We have many inquiries, and I hope we are able to help women get connected not only to other women, but to the fellowship of SA. That is the main theme of WISA.

We have a weekly phone meeting. We have a Yahoo group LOOP (one person shares and it emails to everyone on the list). We try to run these just like a face-to-face meeting. There are many other ideas we are working on; it just takes time.

We are carrying the message. Please pray for us.

For information, call toll free 866-291-0914
or send email to sasandpoint@yahoo.com.



Bent

Yielding to lust
warped my mind
tainted my vision
tore my heart
bent my soul.

My injuries render me unable to consistently distinguish
natural from perverted
selfless from selfish
light from dark
love from lust.

Unable
unqualified
incapable
of making healthy sexual decisions for myself.
I am forever a child in need of parental guidance.

I seek the wisdom of sponsor, fellowship, and trusted friends.
I subordinate my sexual appetite to that of my spouse.
I surrender my right to have sex with myself,
and in periods of unwanted abstinence, I today ask
for God to succor the unmet natural desires He gave me.

In doing so, I choose daily a bent toward the light.
The light of our fellowship and of hope.
The light of God as I know it.

PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR RECOVERY

Read It, Write It, Say It, and Listen to It

Here is a practical tool which helps me turn my eyes, my thoughts, my mouth, and my ears in the right direction in the morning, pointing towards my recovery rather than my relapse.

The basic idea is to complete a quartet of related recovery disciplines: reading, writing, listening to a recording and calling my sponsor. It might seem time-consuming to do all four, but just a few minutes on each seems to make a difference.

Read It

Use my eyes to strengthen my recovery

I read something to remind me that unless I change my attitude before I leave the house, I will soon encounter something that is not to my liking, get a resentment, and begin down a poisonous path. My reading options in the morning include sections from the White Book, AA literature, recent inventories, and daily meditation books along with lists of affirmations.

Reading is done through the eyes. As a sexaholic, my eyes can be a bit problematic to say the least. Once I leave the house I will need all the help I can get to keep them pointed in the right direction. The hope, faith and recovery I find in these texts are *surely* the right direction

Write it

Use my thoughts to strengthen my recovery

I have various writing options in the morning. A gratitude list reminds me that whatever I think my problems are, they are insignificant compared to the waking reality of the active sexaholic experiencing “the hideous Four Horsemen—Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair” (*Alcoholics Anonymous* p. 172).

Journaling can help me to get in touch with lingering feelings of distress or fear that my very clever brain might interpret as justification for a resentment or a lustful attitude. The disease seeks to resolve a crisis that probably does not exist by tilting its balance in the direction of addiction. Writing puts a hedge around this choice, and a sign on it saying: “Don’t do that!”

Listen to it

Use my ears to strengthen my recovery

I have an MP3 player loaded with a series of voice recordings such as extracts from the Big Book, the White Book, summaries of Step work, as well as AA and SA tapes. This gadget is fun, but a cassette recorder is an equally powerful tool.

In addition to my eyes, my ears are also directly connected with my brain—the place where I sift good ideas from bad ones. These recordings contain a lot of good ideas that have originated outside of my own thoughts—a set of recovery ear-muffs, if you will, that help me filter out toxic ideas before they become the rationalization for destructive actions.

Say it

Use my mouth to strengthen my recovery

I will have many opportunities to offend others and hurt my reputation with my mouth later in the day, so I may as well begin the day with a low-risk use of my vocal chords; i.e., call my sponsor. Having a good sponsor is a sound foundation for recovery. Actually calling him is even better.

Upon receiving a two-year sobriety chip, a London member was asked: “How did you do it?” He replied: “I called my sponsor every day.” I thought, “His program is unnecessarily simple. Even an idiot could do it.” About eighteen months later I started doing it. It took me a while to graduate to idiot status!

The Elevator's Broke



I work in a building with three elevators. Because it's an older facility, sometimes one of the elevators isn't working. Usually that's not a big deal; it just means waiting a few minutes longer to get upstairs to my work area. The other day, however, I came to work to find that two elevators were down. There was already a sizable group waiting their turn for a ride. It reminded me of a three lane interstate limited to one lane during rush hour.

To complicate things, I come into the building from the first floor parking garage, while many employees enter from the basement parking areas. Every time the one working elevator stopped at the first floor, it was already full. Now it felt like being in the far left lane of an interstate when only the far right lane was moving!

Being somewhat compulsive, my mind immediately went into gear to figure out all my options. I could stand in place waiting for the crowd downstairs to thin out so I could squeeze onto the elevator. But somehow that felt too much like "accepting" my dilemma. Or I could walk downstairs and wait in line to get a place on the empty elevator. But that felt too ordinary for someone as special as me. Or I could walk up to the second floor and jump on the elevator when someone got off. But I might get a disdainful look from someone who had waited their turn patiently below. Or I could just walk up to the fourth floor to my office and get the exercise I needed anyway. But then I would be admitting my powerlessness over the stupid elevator!

Chuckling to myself, I remembered the old AA saying: "The elevator's broke; you'll have to take the Steps." In fact, I said that phrase out loud to those standing around me, wondering if any of them would make the connection with that program-related theme. (A few people did follow me—maybe they're in recovery too!) I made it to the third floor, but began to puff a little as I "trudged" up the last few steps to my destination.

By the time I plopped down in the chair at my desk, I was already thinking about the corollary between what I had just done, and the process of working the Twelve Steps. My trip from the first floor to the second had been like working Steps One, Two, and Three, in that I had made a good beginning on the journey and was

pumped up about going the rest of the way. By the time I went from floor two to three, it began to feel like working Steps Four through Seven: a little more vigorous work, but still a worthwhile venture. It was only when I got to the last two flights between floors three and four that I began to get seriously winded. I was tempted to stop and rest on the landing before the last few steps.

Hmmm—sort of like my current process of working the Eighth and Ninth Steps. I was able to start my list for Step Eight because I had my Fourth Step inventory to work from. When it came to starting Step Nine, the distance between where I was and where I wanted to be began to look like a long steep staircase. Maybe I'd better stop and rest awhile. Maybe I'll just go back to a lower level and try to catch the elevator to bypass this part of the journey. After all, I've worked awfully hard at this and I still have plenty of time.

I realized that what had kept me going up the steps at work was the satisfaction that I had come so far and was almost at the place I needed to be. Similarly, in recovery I have begun to experience some of those wonderful promises that seemed so elusive early on. I am starting to feel the amazement of knowing a new freedom and a new happiness. I am discovering how to learn from the past without trying to obliterate it through addictive behaviors. I am more serene and at peace now than I can ever remember being in my sixty-one years.

And I am “finding what none of the substitutes had ever supplied. I am “making the real Connection.” I am on the way home. That's more than enough to keep me working Step Nine!

Rule 62



The Old Light Bulb Joke

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

One, he holds the light bulb and the world revolves around him.

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Larry	Structure
Chuck P.	H & I
Tom A	CFC
Dorene	Chair, Board of Trustees, Literature
Maria	International, Finance, Site Selection
Carole	Service Structure, Nominations
Jenny	International, Service Structure
Luc	Internet, Structure, COMC
Lawrence	Literature, International

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

Calendar of Events

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

- April 1, 2006**, Fifth Annual SA / S-Anon Spring Marathon, Greensburg, OH, sponsored by Akron / Canton groups. Theme: The True Share. Contact Rich at 330/620-6742.
- April 21 - 23, 2006**, SA / S-Anon Spring Retreat, Carnation, WA, sponsored by Puget Sound IG and Great NW IG. Theme: Becoming Entirely Ready. Contact Ned O. at 206/465-1331 or check web site at pugetsoundsa.org. Or send email to springretreat@pugetsoundsa.org
- April 22, 2006**, Mountain Spring, SA / S-Anon Marathon, Asheville, NC, sponsored by Asheville, NC. Theme: Renewing Our Recovery. Call John B. at 828/749-9537 or send email saasheville@gmail.com
- April 22, 2006**, Seventh Annual SA / S-Anon Marathon, Langhorne, PA, sponsored by Philadelphia Intergroup. Theme: Moving Toward God's Will. Contact Philadelphia Intergroup at 215/564-3272.
- April 29, 2006**, Thirteenth Annual Retreat SA / S-Anon, Wheeling WV, sponsored by Wheeling / Steubenville IG. Theme: Sharing of the Fellowship. Contact Intergroup for information at 740/342-0828.
- May 5 - 7, 2006**, SA / S-Anon Convention, Galway, Ireland, Europe, sponsored by Irish SAIG. Theme: There Is a Solution. Contact mccarthycp@eircom.net or call Cathal at 353 87 6699142.
- May 20, 2006**, Annual Marathon, Rochester, NY, sponsored by Rochester groups. Theme: Sponsor / Spouse—To Be or Not To Be. Contact 585/234-0359.
- May 26 - 28, 2006**, SA / S-Anon Spring Retreat, Battle Lake, Alberta, sponsored by Edmonton area SA and S-Anon. Theme: A Daily Reprieve. Contact IG At 780/988-4411 or send email to essayedmonton@yahoo.ca.

Calendar of Events

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

June 9 - June 11, 2006, Eighth Annual State Conference, Sedalia, CO,
sponsored by Denver Intergroup. Theme: Going to Any Lengths.
Contact Denver IG at 303/292-3376 or send email to
contact@denversa.org.

September 15 -16, 2006, Toronto SA / S-Anon Marathon, Toronto, ON,
Theme: The Promises of Recovery. Contact IG at 416/410-7622
Or send email to satoronto@reptiles.org.

Upcoming International Conventions

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> or
Call Malcolm at 314/570-5307.

January 2007, SA International Convention, Greensboro, NC.
Details TBA. More information at 336/333-1565.

July 2007, SA International Convention, Northern VA, MD, DC area
Details TBA. More information at 703/866-6929.

*[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.]*

Please send in your event to be listed in *Essay*. Events taking place from July 2006 and onward will be
listed in the next edition. Deadline for sending information to SAICO is June 1, 2006.

Please submit the following information: dates, theme, place, cost, and points of contact.

A flyer for your event is very helpful when someone calls in and asks what events are available.

Send that information to saico@sa.org.

Fourth Quarter Donations October - December 2005

CANADA		Eastern PA IG	1,700.00	Lexington, KY	150.00
		Erie, PA	12.00	Nashville, TN Sat	120.63
Edmonton, AB	50.00	Essington, PA	45.90	Nashville 5 PM	330.56
Edmonton Wed	200.00	Euclid, OH	100.00	Norcross, GA	84.14
Pr George, BC	58.00	Falling Waters, WV	50.00	Pensacola, FL	175.00
Toronto IG	335.20	Frederick Co, MD	200.11	Roswell, GA	103.00
Vancouver, BC	450.52	Hampton Rd IG, VA	40.00	Savannah, GA	240.00
		Herndon, VA	79.00		
		Hyattsville, MD	74.00	North Midwest Region	
Northeast Region		Langhorne, PA	450.00	Ann Arbor, MI Sun	300.00
Concord, MA M	358.00	Lansdale, PA	37.00	Arlington Heights IL	200.00
New England IG	360.00	Little Falls, NJ Sat	150.00	Chicago, IL	150.00
New England CFC	72.00	Mars, PA	30.50	Chi St T Mon	88.00
NYC Intergroup	100.00	MD/DC/NoVA	250.00	Chi St T M CFC	66.00
NY Metro IG	100.00	No Canton, OH	50.00	Chi St T Wed	264.00
Norwood, MA	186.00	Penn Hills Fri, PA	35.00	Chi St T W CFC	184.00
Providence, RI	10.00	Penn Hills Weds, PA	75.20	Chi Sw Cov	120.00
Rochester IG	110.00	Pittsburgh SS, PA	53.00	Chi Sw Cov CFC	53.00
Schenectady, NY	25.00	Silver Spring, MD	388.00	Detroit, MI, Sun	60.00
Seaford, NY	75.00	Silver Spring CFC	117.00	Elmhurst, IL Wed	70.00
Somerville, MA Tu	90.00	Springfield, VA M	35.00	Garden City, MI	40.00
Troy, NY	10.00	Springfield Sat	62.30	Glen Ellyn, IL Fr	50.00
		Springfield Sat CFC	26.70	Glen Ellyn Sun	250.00
Mid-Atlantic Region		Timonium, MD M	25.00	Glen Ellyn Th	272.00
		Timonium, MD Sat	30.00	Glendale Hgts IL Sat	60.00
Akron, OH Tu	101.50	Walkersville, MD	100.00	Glendale Hgts CFC	60.00
Annapolis, MD Fr	30.00	Washington CHUM	73.00	Green Bay, WI	75.00
Bethesda, MD Tu N	60.00	Washington Noon	212.50	Milwaukee Tu&F	150.00
Brecksville, OH Th	60.00	Washington N CFC	37.50	Naperville, IL Tu	100.00
Bryn Athyn, PA CFC	51.50			QCSA Courage IA	50.00
Centerville, VA F	90.00	Southeast Region		Twin Cities IG	795.00
Centerville, VA CFC	10.00	Atlanta, GA Bck	200.00	Twin Cities CFC	87.50
Cleveland, OH Fri	30.00	Atlanta Marathon	86.25	Winfield, IL Sat	100.00
Cleveland, OH Mon	30.00	Birmingham, AL	67.00		
Cleveland, OH Wed	60.00	Daytona Bch, FL	30.00		
Columbus, OH Mon	150.00	Daytona Bch, FL	30.00		
Columbus, OH Wed	50.00	Jacksonville, FL #1	75.00		
Cranberry Twp, PA	148.00	Jacksonville #2	29.00		
Crystal City, VA M+F	50.00				

Fourth Quarter Donations October - December 2005

South Midwest Region	San Diego IG	519.00	TOTALS	
	San Fran Mission	102.00		
Albuquerque IG	445.00	SF CFC Tu noon	50.00	Daytona Convention
Arvada, CO	27.00	SF Tu noon, CA	50.00	SAICO
Clayton, MO	100.00	San Jose, CA M	50.00	2,000.00
Colorado Spgs, CO	200.00	Sierra Madre, CA	100.00	Philadelphia Convention
Dallas, TX	150.00	Tucson, AZ	75.00	SAICO
Denver, CO	35.00	Tucson CFC	60.00	5,400.00
Oklahoma, OK	2,500.00	Unity Conf	368.00	Group Total
Springfield, MO NL	100.00	Utah Sat SA	201.00	19,179.12
Springfield, MO NF	50.00	Westlake, CA	150.00	Individual
Slidell, LA & Biloxi, MS	200.00	Yorba Linda, CA	125.00	1,925.52
				SACFC Total
				1,668.70

Quarterly Appeal

Northwest Region

	Chatsworth, CA	100.00	Quarterly Appeal	
Anchorage, AK	100.00	Chicago St T Sat	249.00	1,745.00
Bellevue, WA	39.00	Chicago St T W	264.00	Grand Total
E WA IG	62.00	Chicago Sw Cov	30.00	31,918.34
Fremont, WA Mon	23.50	Daytona Bch M	30.00	
Fremont CFC	23.50	Fremont, CA	11.00	
Inland NW IG	35.00	Manchester, NH	50.00	
McMinnville, OR	50.00	Olympia, WA Sat	30.00	
McMinnville CFC	40.00	Peoria, IL	188.00	
Seattle, WA Rav	200.00	San Diego, CA IG	519.00	
Twin Falls, ID	25.00	San Jose, CA M	42.00	
Vancouver, WA	60.00	San Jose, CA Sat	33.00	
		Toledo, OH	60.00	
		Valparaiso, IN	100.00	

Southwest Region

Chatsworth, CFC	700.00
Hermosa Bch, CA	100.00
Irvine, CA	200.00
Manteca, CA	50.00
Mountain View, CA	145.00
N Hollywood F	60.00
Phoenix, AZ	55.00
San Diego, CA F	103.31

Remember that donations are tax deductible because SA is a 501(C)3 organization. Every donation will be acknowledged with a Donations Receipt.

Please make your check out to SA. Send a note with it so that we can give proper credit to your group.

Thank you many times over for your generosity.

SA International Central Office SAICO

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.

The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics 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.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

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.

SA Financial Snapshot

January - September 2005

	Budget		Actual	\$ Variance
Contributions	107,000.00	Contributions	89,814.24	-17,186
SACFC	9,000.00	SACFC	7,177.13	-1,823
Conventions	16,000.00	Conventions	13,472.24	-2,528
Literature Sales	33,000.00	Literature Sales	21,060.38	-11,940
Interest	1,000.00	Interest	657.02	-343
<i>Essay</i>	<u>5,000.00</u>	<i>Essay</i>	<u>6,798.00</u>	<u>1,798</u>
Total Revenues	<u>171,000.00</u>	Total Revenues	<u>138,979.01</u>	<u>-32,021</u>
Bank Charges	.00	Bank Charges	94.77	-95
Credit Card Fees	1,500.00	Credit Card Fees	1,568.93	-69
Conference Fees	1,400.00	Conference Fees	2,111.52	-712
Depreciation	1,800.00	Depreciation	1,763.97	36
Interest Expense	.00	Interest Expense	0.00	
Liability Insurance	2,000.00	Liability Insurance	2,653.00	-653
Legal	2,000.00	Legal	1,218.75	781
Accounting	3,500.00	Accounting	4,720.50	-1,221
Literature expense	12,000.00	Literature Expense	8,547.60	3,452
Payroll	80,700.00	Payroll	77,617.85	3,082
Payroll Tax	7,200.00	Payroll Tax	6,859.64	342
Pension	6,800.00	Pension	.00	6,800
Postage & Freight	5,000.00	Postage & Freight	8,834.98	-3,835
Office Expense	1,600.00	Office Expense	1,422.26	178
Printing	4,200.00	Printing	4200.24	
Professional Fees	2,000.00	Professional Fees	750.00	1,250
Rent	9,700.00	Rent	9,497.61	202
Maintenance	1,100.00	Maintenance	1,045.34	55
Supplies	800.00	Supplies	934.27	-134
Sales Tax	100.00	Sales Tax	263.98	-164
Taxes & Licenses	100.00	Taxes & Licenses	279.00	-179
Telephone	8,500.00	Telephone	9,164.95	-665
<u>Travel</u>	<u>19,000.00</u>	<u>Travel</u>	<u>19,056.05</u>	<u>-56</u>
Total Expenses	<u>171,000.00</u>	Total Expenses	<u>162,605.21</u>	<u>8,393</u>
		Deficit	<23,626.20>	

***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. All articles need to be in English. All articles must contain an address, telephone number, or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential. When an article speaks for a group or intergroup, it should have the prior approval of that group or intergroup. Articles should observe common standards of friendliness and good taste. Discussions involving therapy or religion are discouraged.



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

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