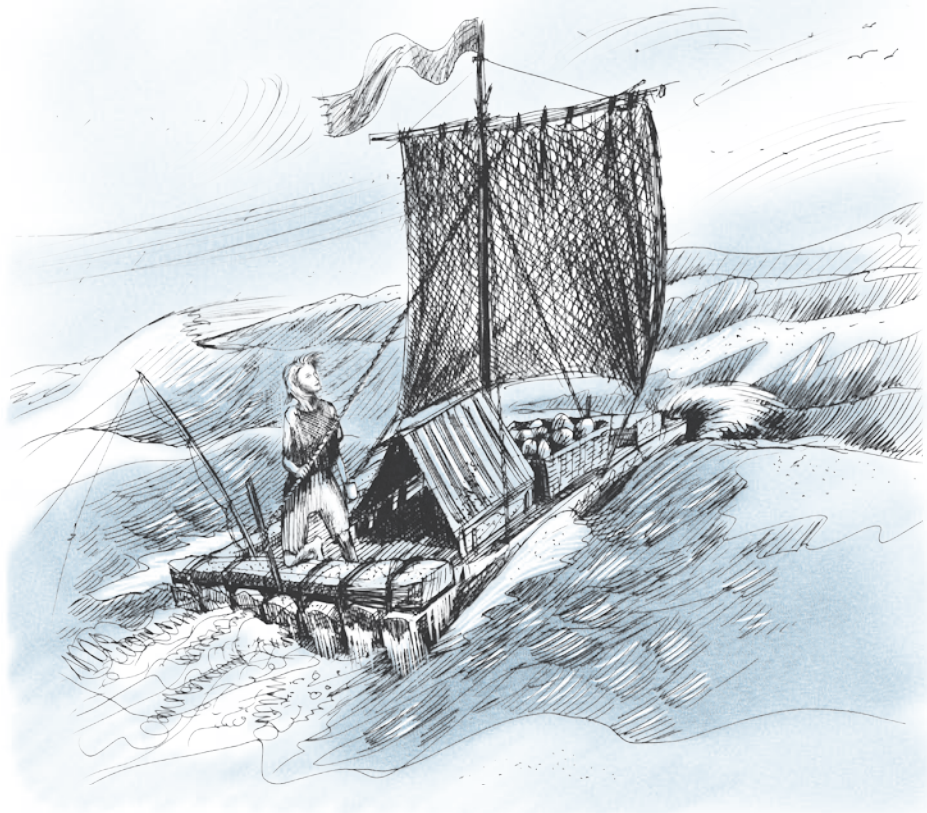


# Essay

*June 2007*



## *A Woman Survivor Finds Hope in SA*

*A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

## The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

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

*Essay is the quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

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June 2007



**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 lust 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.

*—Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine Inc.*

*Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and received permission from AA to use its Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions in 1979.*

## Essay . . .

*SA's meeting in print*

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**Newcomers:** Contact SA by telephone toll-free at 866-424-8777; outside North America call 615-370-6062; e-mail at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org); or SA website at [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org)



## A Woman Survivor Finds Hope in SA

In the 2005 movie *Crash* about race relations in Los Angeles, a cop sexually assaults a woman, while her husband stands by, completely powerless to save her. Husband and wife both fear for their lives. The experience devastates her, and threatens to destroy their marriage. Weeks later the same woman is in a car crash, trapped in a flaming wreck in the middle of a highway. The officer who shows up to rescue her? The same cop who attacked her. In a full blown panic, she screams in terror and tries to get away from him, backing further into the fire. It seems like her choices are to die in the car, or to trust, and rush into the arms of a man who has already proven himself willing and able to harm her. It's an impossible choice.

*This is exactly how I felt when I realized I had to start going to SA.*

When I came to my first meeting, I was fully aware that I “had no other option but to stop.” I’d already spent

two years trying to quit on my own. I was acting out almost every day, at home, at work, in public, in my car. I could not focus on my job, relationships, or recovery from other addictions because I was obsessed with lusting and wanting to be lusted after. I had nowhere permanent to live. I’d spent every cent in my savings account. My entire life felt like a car wreck. I desperately wanted to get out.

But like a lot of us, I’d been treated like a sex object, sexually abused, and brutalized in the past. The idea that in order to save my life, I had to go spend time with men who freely admitted they objectified, used, and sometimes sexually assaulted women and kids seemed like madness. Not just spend time with them—but ask them for help, follow their guidance, turn my will and my life over to a roomful of them??? I was absolutely certain during my first six months of sobriety that, this time, God was asking too much of me.

**Some relevant experiences from my first year in SA, my first year of sobriety:**

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Someone at a meeting shared that he was actively planning to meet a teenager and have sex with her. When I called Child Protective Services to ask for help, the government agent told me that he'd chosen a child who was exactly the age of consent in our state. He was not breaking the law. Adult men have tried to "have sex" with me since I was ten or eleven. Every time he spoke about her at a meeting, I wanted to die. Or to kill him.

A man giving his written Step One to our meeting talked about sexually abusing his daughters. He felt free to talk about this crime because he'd already told his sponsor and a social worker. None of the men in the room pointed out that he'd broken a meeting guideline ("refrain from sharing illegal acts for which you have not been prosecuted"). I sat with a newcomer woman who sobbed uncontrollably throughout his share. I wish I had left the room and invited her to come with me, but I was frozen with fear, despair, and self-hatred.

An SA at a regional gathering shared with an entire open meeting (SAs, S-Anons, and families) his belief that being sexually abused as a kid was actually a pretty good experience for him. Not surprisingly, as he humbly spoke about his disease and his recovery, it turned out that his struggles with this addiction

included years of actively assaulting kids himself.

**Actions that have helped me to stay sober and limit being re-traumatized by SA:**

I got a woman sponsor right away; she had years of both sobriety and therapy and she understood my experiences. If it weren't for her, I would have stopped coming and I might have been dead by now. It was absolutely invaluable to me to have a woman to talk to privately and honestly after attending mixed meetings. I needed to complain, rant, and cry about what I heard there. I needed to share how triggering it was, and how desperately unsafe I felt at meetings. She listened to me, understood me, and helped me to care for myself. And she never lost focus on the fact that, despite my feelings of isolation, SA was for me. She taught me that I was allowed to attend, and that I could claim my space in the fellowship because I am a sexaholic.

When the SA shared his plans to act out with a teen, I met outside the meeting with my sponsor and some experienced, sober men in the program. We talked about different interventions his sponsor could try with him. No one excused this man's behavior, and some agreed that being arrested might be the best thing that ever happened for his recovery. We talked to other SAs around the

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country and asked them how they dealt with disclosures of child abuse. I brought it up at a conference and asked for help and guidance. I will continue to ask. I feel with all my heart that SA is not meant to be a “safe place” for child abusers to hang out and that SA must be a safe place for even the most damaged and damaging of us to be loved so that we can get well.

I stopped going to mixed meetings for quite a while. I started out attending one to three meetings a week, but I needed a break. There were days when simply hearing in a short share “I objectify women” sent me into a panic. I helped start a women’s meeting. I started calling every female newcomer I could find. I offered to sponsor. I located an international women’s weekly phone meeting and attended regularly. I asked to do service locally and nationally. I was terrified that if I skipped the mixed meetings in my town I’d relapse, and terrified that if I didn’t skip them I’d kill myself. I went to 90 meetings in 90 days, filling in with other Twelve Step programs. I talked to my sponsor almost every day, sometimes twice a day, and I worked regularly on my written Step One. I didn’t relapse, I didn’t die, and I eventually became willing to go back to mixed meetings about twice a month.

**If you want to be a safe ally to women sexaholics and sexual assault survivors in SA:**

*Think deeply before you share at meetings that being sexually abused was good for you.* I cannot, of course, speak for the intricacies of your personal experience. But perpetrators of rape throughout time have lied by saying “she loved it,” “it’s no big deal,” and “the kid didn’t even wake up.” SA is not the appropriate place to give voice to these ideas. Denial is one of the defining characteristics of addiction. Consider the possibility that you may be in denial about your own experience. I am certain that being sexually abused was one major factor in turning me into a sexaholic. We need to look deeply into this experience if we want to be free of it.

*Don’t touch me.* Male SAs at meetings have warmly expressed their kindness and acceptance to me in many ways. Some have tried to do so by putting an arm around my shoulder, shaking my hand, or rubbing my back. Don’t do that. No matter what the intention is behind such an action, it feels invasive and inappropriate at an SA meeting. Know that many times during a meeting, women and assault survivors of both genders are in a dissociated state. We often freeze up for awhile, hold our breath, and “space

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out.” We have flashbacks so that while we look like we’re just standing there, we’re actually being flooded with rape memories. I may not be able to say anything, but I don’t want to be touched.

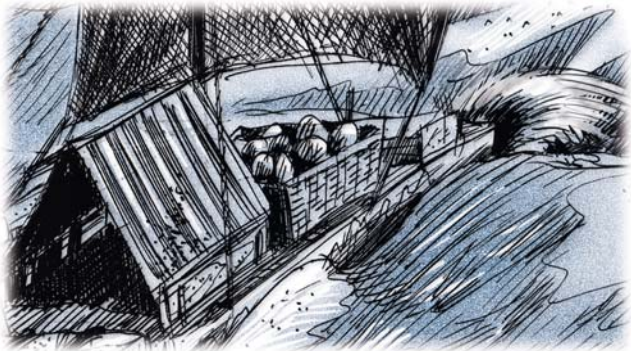
*Take the mess to your sponsor and the message to the meeting.*

This Twelve Step saying is very difficult for me to follow. Many, many times I show up at a meeting and share the “mess”—what I’m resenting, what I’m afraid of, why I think the program won’t work for me, etc. But the longer I’m sober, the more I try to share the message: that sexual sobriety is possible, how I’m working the tools and steps, and why I’m glad I’m sober. For those SAs who are compulsively drawn to sexually act out on children and teenagers—you must share about this if you desire to recover from it. Get a sponsor and share safely one-to-one with people who have recovered from harming others. But if you speak at a

meeting about your actions or plans, some of us are required by law to call the police. Mandated reporters include social workers,

teachers, child care workers, doctors, dental hygienists, and other professionals. We don’t want the cops to show up at the meeting any more than you do. And we don’t want to be torn between the law that says we must report, and the Tradition that says we must protect your anonymity.

*Use the right words.* Words have a deep and transformative effect on us. The statement: “I’m a little unhappy with some of the sexual stuff I’m doing these days” is a world away from the statement “I’m a sexaholic and completely powerless over lust.” I really liked the first sentence better! But when I clung to the first sentence, there was no hope for me. I had to take the first Step, admit who I was and what I was really doing. It felt devastating, but it was then and only then that I began to recover. Now listen to these two sentences: “I guess I sort of went in my daughter’s room and rubbed her a





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little but she was sleeping” vs. “I sexually abused my daughter.” It is only when we begin to call things by their true names that we have a chance to be changed and healed. The words for sexual acting out with a minor are Child Sexual Abuse. Children do not have the power, understanding, social or legal status to consent to sex with adults, ever. Sex without consent is sexual assault.

*Stick up for the meeting guidelines.* The SA meetings I attend have several guidelines in the format that we read every week. These include refraining from crosstalk, “we only list forms of acting out that do not include the infringement of any laws for which we have not been prosecuted,” “refrain from using graphic or coarse language so as not to cause difficulties for others,” and “other than the closing prayer, refrain from touching members of the opposite sex.” Any member can raise his or her hand as an indication that a line has been crossed. Each of us is responsible for maintaining and supporting these guidelines. If I am too shocked or frozen or afraid to raise my hand, please raise yours. This can be done at the moment the boundary has been crossed, or sponsors can intervene with sponsees after the fact by discussing the problem one on one. It may be uncomfortable to speak up, but it’s also uncomfortable for newcomers

and survivors to watch a roomful of silent people ignore the breaking of a guideline that is meant to protect everyone’s safety.

**Why I’m glad I stuck around SA:**

*I couldn’t see clearly in my early sobriety that before SA I was already spending time with men who had proven themselves willing to objectify and harm women—they were the men I was acting out with.* And my disease forced me, against my will, to objectify and harm myself. While terrifying, coming into the SA rooms finally got me into contact with some of the very people who knew exactly what was happening to me and how to stop it.

*I am sexually sober today, and have been one day at a time for a little over a year.* For this I can never be sufficiently grateful. I am alive today because I was Twelve-stepped into SA, because there were sober people at my first meeting; because an SA was willing to take daily phone calls from me; and because others organized conferences, typed up meeting lists, wrote, bought, and sold literature, and returned my calls.

I am beginning to experience a happy, joyous, and free life. I sleep well, I have a great place to live, a job I love, and the willingness and ability every day to help others. I’m beginning to be blessed with physical and emotional stability and safety. I





am free from lusting  
and wanting to be  
lusted after most days,  
and I don't miss it!

*I am indebted to  
and connected with  
everyone in SA,*

*including those in recovery who  
sexually harmed themselves,  
women, and children. This seems  
to me a gift larger and more*

unlikely than I ever believed God  
would give us. If those of us who  
survived our childhoods and this  
disease can listen to each other, speak  
and hear the truth without excuses,  
denial, or recrimination, and even  
with some compassion, then we have  
a power greater than ourselves with  
whom we can do anything.

Thank you.

– Anonymous

## Letter to a Young SA Woman

My dear friend,

I've been masturbating since the 6th grade and found SA in 2003 or 2004; I don't remember exactly when. I went to some meetings and then stopped for several months. I came back in 2005 for good. My sobriety date is March 25, 2005. I am 29 years old. I have worked Steps One through Four and am now working on Step Five

When I was struggling with sex with self I began going to meetings regularly. In San Diego there are mixed meetings offered every morning at 7am. So I forced myself to get out of bed and out of the house and go to the meetings so that I wouldn't masturbate.

Honestly, the number of men in the meetings was intimidating, but my desire for sobriety was greater than my fear of the men. Being the youngest person there made me feel like a piece of meat, but I also saw them as sex objects. I prayed before every meeting for God to protect me from lust and from lusting. This prayer helped. When I was triggered by a man, I prayed for God to bless him and to take him out of my thoughts.

You are brave to have joined the fellowship. I found it takes courage to be open to the honesty and truth found in the meetings. Not everyone is able to be that honest. I hope there are meetings you can attend in your area. I will pray for you to have wisdom, serenity, and courage.

Blessings, Sara



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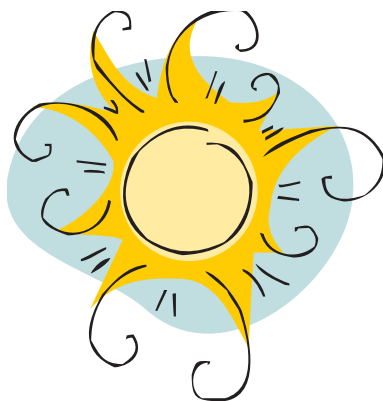
## God Gives us Courage

A member asked, “Do you feel connected to people?” She was feeling uncomfortable in mixed meetings, after one year of sobriety.

My answer was yes, I feel very connected, and honestly, I feel the most connected at our mixed meeting. Approximately 40 people attend the meeting, four of us are women. Occasionally I’m the only woman. I also attend a women-only meeting but it’s small, and I prefer the larger amount of experience, strength, and hope at the mixed meeting.

My husband and I attend the same meeting, which I’m sure is a safety factor, but I’m still nervous when I’m the only woman there. It’s mostly about what other people think, as in “Do they think I’m weird because I’m the only woman here?”

But I’ve become more comfortable as I’ve gotten to know these guys over time. I feel connected to them because when I listen to their shares, I can see that we are all alike, male or female. I feel connected because even when I think my share was stupid or perhaps revealed too much of my own insanity, they treat me just the same afterwards, as if I hadn’t shared about anything other



than the weather. There is great recovery there, and great sharing. I feel like they are my brothers. I love the group. I feel connected.

But I did not have the courage to go to a mixed meeting after one year of sobriety. In fact I didn’t have the courage to go to SA at all my first few years of sobriety; I got sober in another program, using my husband’s *Sexaholics Anonymous* and other materials, and getting my story out very slowly, to only a few trusted women.

This all started about six years ago, when my husband joined a “men’s group” at the insistence of our counselor. After awhile, I asked him what sort of group he was in, and he responded, “It’s for sex addicts”—and it hit me like a lightning bolt: “That is what I am.” I had worried for years that I must be crazy or demon possessed, but I knew immediately in that moment:

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“I am a sex addict.” But I was speechless; I could not respond, could not be vulnerable, and could not share a thing.

The counselor later sent me to a “spouse’s group” which I was determined to get myself kicked out of, since clearly, everything was all my husband’s fault. I had huge pride/guilt/shame/denial issues and I could not get my story out. Not even to the counselor (too embarrassing). I was afraid of being judged, pitied, or rejected. I could not admit what I knew was the truth and go to the correct meeting. I just could not do it. But I knew the sobriety definition, knew I needed some sort of “program,” and I had access to my husband’s materials. So I worked on my sobriety in the other program, working the Steps and sharing only brief bits of my past . . . and avoiding almost all men, at all costs (it was white-knuckle sobriety at first).

Only after several years and my third time working the Steps was I able to do an honest, thorough Step One sexual inventory and share it with my sponsor—and that is when I hit bottom, and it was the first time my sponsor actually believed me when I said “I think I’m a sex addict too.” I had never shared with anyone all of my past behaviors, all at once, all together before. I had never even written it out for myself. It was 20 pages typed; I felt triggered

as I wrote it. I needed help. I wanted to go to an SA meeting. But even then I had to force myself to go to the women-only meeting. I was scared to death to go to the meeting and reveal myself as a “sexaholic,” even among women, and even among other sex addicts.

But I soon became comfortable in the women’s meeting. I was surprised to find other women who shared my same struggles. I felt freedom; I loved the group; I wished I had gone there years before. And then one day, one of the women challenged me to go to a mixed meeting where she said I would learn “to not sexualize men.”

This might have been okay if I could have been anonymous. But my husband was in the group, as well as a bunch of guys who already knew me from being in groups with their wives. How could I suddenly show up after years of never mentioning my SA stuff? This was too humiliating. It was one more thing I felt I could not do. But I went, challenging myself to go “just once” so as not to be controlled by fear. But I was scared to death.

I spent the first several weeks staring at the floor in front of me and not sharing at all. My fear was much more about shame than about being



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triggered (which was a concern). It has really been very hard for me to honestly, openly share my shame. I want to be loved, admired. I don't want to show weakness. I fear being rejected or attacked. However, as I listened to the guys share, I came to the amazing conclusion that really, we are all alike. I decided I could share at this meeting because they are all just like me.

So today I can honestly say that I feel “part of” the mixed meeting, and I feel connected. But it has been a very long road, with a lot of humility lessons for me along the way. I have

learned, finally, that I gain the most freedom when I bring all of my weaknesses to the light and feel the acceptance of the group. Today that is what makes me feel truly “happy, joyous, and free.”

One thing I can promise is that it all gets better with time, and that having women to connect with is HUGE. And that we each only need to do what feels safe for us today, and we can trust God to do the rest—and He will do it, in His time.

I love this program; it has given me life.

— *Barbara F.*

## Mixed Meetings



I have heard of problems at mixed meetings, and I have had a few of my own making. But the problems have been valuable lessons in my recovery, and I wouldn't trade those experiences because of the wisdom I've gained from them.

For me, a mixed meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous is a much safer place to be than the grocery store or anywhere else “out there” in the real world. There are sexaholics everywhere who don't want to get

sober. But most of the people attending meetings want sobriety, and if they don't, they're on the fence, watching others get better, and wondering if that could happen for them.

I go to regional retreats and international conventions, which really help me understand the bigger picture of what SA is about. I am so sad when people choose not to go, or don't ask God if He wants them to go. God can

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certainly overcome any financial problem or other excuses a person can conjure up. These people cheat themselves of the synergism of recovery. If you think regular meetings are good, imagine that experience shared with several hundred more people.

I feel the same about women who don't go to mixed meetings and isolate in women's meetings—if they even have that as an option (I know there are situations when it is better for some women to not attend mixed meetings; this isn't all-or-nothing thinking).

At mixed meetings I have a safe place to learn to be intimate with men in the way I think God intended. When I do service—such as serving as treasurer, or being part of a retreat planning committee—I learn to work with men and women for one common purpose. This helps me see that I don't have to live in fear. SAs in recovery are beautiful people; not the beauty that my lust wants to pervert, but rather the beauty of appropriate intimacy.

I thank every sexaholic that I get to share recovery with, for each one of you makes my recovery brighter.

— *Anonymous*

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## Women in SA (WiSA)

Are there only a few SA women in your local area? Would you like to get to know other women in this fellowship? WiSA unites women in fellowship and recovery, helping women to ease into the predominantly male fellowship. We want every woman to find help, support, and encouragement. We offer phone meetings and e-mail support. For more information, call 1-888-802-5376 (toll free), e-mail [womeninsa@yahoo.com](mailto:womeninsa@yahoo.com) or visit our website at [www.womeninsa.org](http://www.womeninsa.org).



## Call for Articles: Women's Stories

*Essay* is seeking articles from women who would like to share their experience, strength, and hope in this program. Your story, your experience working the Steps, or any other aspect of your recovery can be an encouragement to other women and to men in this program. Articles or questions should be submitted to [Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)

# Three Steps to Surrender

## From Excommunication to Reconciliation

I have always been active in my chosen religion since my baptism at the age of 18, even though I was an active sexaholic of varying degrees before and throughout my 35-plus years of church membership. For awhile I even served as a bishop, an unpaid clergyman equivalent to a pastor in other churches. All that changed a little over 27 months ago, when I was excommunicated from the church as a result of my addiction.

My sexaholism began at the age of five, when I was molested several times over a period of a year by an older relative. Being introduced to sexual activity at such an early age created an awareness of feelings and desires I didn't know how to control. As I grew older, my lust grew stronger, but being shy and introverted by nature, I turned it inward, to a world of masturbation and fantasy. I thought that finding God and joining a religion would cure me; it didn't. I thought marrying my high school sweetheart would cure me; it didn't.

In November 2004, I was called in to face the High Council of my church to answer the charges against

me, which had been initiated by my wife. Unfortunately, she had decided that was the only way to get my attention and bring about a change in my destructive behavior.

Knowing I would have to confess, and not trusting myself to be completely honest when facing these men, I wrote an eight-page typed confession, outlining my life as a sex addict. I presented this confession to the President privately. After reading it, he explained the contents to the rest of the Council. I was then given the opportunity to address the council, and I confessed. Knowing they had already heard my confession via the President made it easier for me to be honest. I was reassured that this was a council of love and





concern, but I still remember the expressions of disgust and revulsion on the faces of some of the men sitting before me.

After a period of questioning, I was dismissed while they discussed my case. Although I was quite sure I knew what that decision would be, I wasn't prepared for the shock I felt when I heard the President actually say the words, "It is the decision of this council that you be excommunicated from the Church." I would rather he had said, "You are condemned to death by firing squad at dawn."

At that moment, I finally awakened to the truth. No longer could I delude myself into believing that I was in control, that I could "handle it." I knew then that I was powerless over my addiction, and could not manage my life. The thing I valued above anything else, the one thing I could point to and say, "At least I still have that," had been taken from me. I had reached the bottom and knew the insanity had to stop.

This humbling realization brought me to the fellowship of SA, where I learned that the power-

lessness I had experienced was Step One—the first step in a long, life-changing journey. Today, through accepting this reality in my life, my reaction to my excommunication has changed from one of shock and utter dismay to one of eternal gratitude, for it was the catalyst that brought about a mighty change in my heart.

As I began working Step Two I thought, "Of course I believe in a Power greater than myself; I've been trying to follow His teachings for over 35 years!" Needless to say, I didn't put much effort into Step Two at first. But little by little, through reading the literature, attending meetings, and hearing countless shares about coming to know God, I came to realize that I didn't really know the God I professed to follow. I had been intellectually converted to the Church, and tried to follow its tenets, but I had never become personally acquainted with *my* God. Through a lot of reading, studying, pondering, and praying, my mind and heart were gradually brought to a point where God could make Himself known to me; that is, I became willing to know Him.

As I got to know and understand my God, I began to trust that His will for me was infinitely better for me than my own will. This didn't happen quickly or easily, because my pride



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and self-centeredness were very deeply rooted.

The rule in my Church is that an excommunicated member must wait a year before applying for consideration to be re-admitted. My goal was to be re-admitted on the one-year anniversary of my excommunication. I set about doing everything *I* could to make it happen. But November 30, 2005 came and went with no action on the part of the Council, and my resentment began to build. I felt I wasn't getting the attention I was due. I met with the President and expressed my desire for re-admission (while also indirectly expressing my impatience). My resentment hit an all-time high when he responded, "I feel no urgency in this matter." In spite of my profession of Step Three, my pride and my will were running rampant.

Another year passed with no action from the President or Council, but over that year, I continued to participate in meetings and work the Steps, mainly focusing on Steps One through Three. Very slowly, they began sinking in and having an affect on my heart and mind. As I became better at honestly and consistently surrendering my will and my life over to the care of God, the resentment and impatience gradually wore away, and I began to feel peace. Though I still wanted very much to

be reconciled with the church, I could accept God's will and timing.

In early February, I met again with the President, letting him know I would accept God's timing. He commented that I looked different. I wondered whether the peace and contentment I was feeling in my newfound relationship with God was showing. He agreed to re-convene the Council and the date was set.

On February 27, I again met with the High Council. This time, instead of a confession of guilt, I expressed "what was different, what had changed" in my life. I explained how my acceptance of the first three Steps had brought about a major change in my heart, how the pride, resentment, and self-centeredness of the addict had been replaced with the humility of surrender.

I read them a favorite passage from the spiritual readings of my church; this passage has meant a great deal to me and summarizes, for me, the first three Steps: "Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things . . ."

After expressing my testimony to the Council, and answering their questions, I was excused while they conferred and came to a decision. While waiting I realized I had no way of knowing which way the

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decision would go, but I was at peace because I was ready and willing to submit to *God's* will, and I was confident that His will would be expressed in their decision.

When I was brought back into the room, the President said that he had gone into the meeting with the intention of recommending a decision of "No," but had been prompted to keep an open mind to what I had to say. He then uttered the words I had longed to hear for over two years, "It is the decision of this Council that you be re-admitted into the Church." He said it was the humility in my words and demeanor that had swayed the decision in my favor. As a matter of formality, he asked if I was willing to accept the decision of the Council. When I responded in the affirmative, he

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### *Prayer for My Fellow SA Members*

*Lord God, I pray for all the fellows in SA;  
For everyone who gathers and begins with  
a prayer for serenity,*

*For everyone who introduces themselves as "I am a sexaholic,"*

*For everyone who joins hands and says The Lord's Prayer,*

*Help us, guide us, and protect us.*

*Our lives are unmanageable when we try to live them by ourselves,  
please help us.*

*Our eyes cannot see the way we should go, please guide us.*

*Our own will is powerless against our addiction and the evil it brings,  
please protect us.*

*— Anonymous*

asked if I had anything to say. I responded, "Only that, had the decision been in the negative, my response would have been the same." "That," he said, "is why we decided as we did."

This has been a long journey of only three Steps, but those steps have taken me to a place of peace and serenity I've never known. I know I haven't arrived at my final destination; I am by no means perfect, but I still have at least nine more Steps to take on my journey. Judging by the change God has wrought in me with the three Steps I have taken thus far, I can only imagine where the rest of the Steps will lead me.

*— Gary C.*



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# Prison Story

I grew up as an only child in what I believed to be a normal family. To this day I question what “normal” is. Not many kids lived on my street; it was mostly older people—until my friend “Ron” moved in. Ron and I were the same age (13) and we went to the same school, so I had a new friend. Ron introduced me to pornography. Between books, magazines, and movies he seemed to have it all. I’d never seen anything like it. He didn’t hide it from his mom and it almost seemed okay because his mom was so lax.

I found myself almost instantly addicted. I was constantly at his house looking at porn. I began stealing it from him so I could have it at home. It felt wrong at the time, but I just needed to have it. My mom found my stash once and left a note saying that the world really wasn’t like that, but that was all she did about it.

Looking back, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. Throughout junior high, I was the kind of kid who always got picked on. I would lust after girls in school and then go home and masturbate. I never showed my true feelings. I seemed to be teaching myself that



masturbating would cover up all my problems. Boy was I wrong!

This pattern continued through adolescence until I was 17 and started dating. I continued to masturbate several times a day, but now I was also acting out with girls. I began the pursuit of the girl that would be the perfect one for me. With her, I wouldn’t have to do all this other stuff to feel better. But she never came.

Throughout all this I maintained good grades. I went to a two-year college. I got a job that was perfect for me. All the while I was acting out. In my career I was a public servant who should have known better, but I didn’t care.

I found the Internet, and that was the beginning of the end for me. It started with chat rooms, then meeting girls, then pictures, and on to child pornography. I was walking down a path I thought I’d never take. It got so easy to get on the computer and hide from my feelings. I was out of control. I knew I would eventually

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get caught. I wanted to stop so badly but couldn't. I used to shut off the computer and cry or pray and promise my God that I would never do it again. Sometimes this respite would last days, sometimes just a few hours—then I'd be back at it. I lost my faith in God. I thought: How can I keep promising this and keep going back on my word?

When I was 27, I married the girl of my dreams. She was the one who was going to cure me. The problem was she had no idea of my struggle since I never shared it or my feelings with her. When she suspected something, I would lie to her. I cheated on her as well.

My healing process began in 2004. While I was at work, the FBI called and told me to come home. I knew exactly what it was about and actually felt relieved, believe it or not. My whole world came crashing in on me. Two days later, after 11 years, I was unemployed.

My wife, along with her family and mine, supported me. I started seeing a counselor; he recommended I attend SA. I put it off for several months and then I finally called. The next day, I met an SA member who took me to a meeting. I felt very strange, but I went to another meeting the next day. When I came home I told my wife that I didn't belong there! She said I should give it more time, so I did.

At my third meeting, I asked someone to be my sponsor. He was a temporary sponsor, and I never really used him. He started me on Step One, and I started feeling like I belonged. I went to two or three meetings a week. I shared during the meetings and felt I had a connection with the people there.

I reached one year of sobriety and got the funny feeling in my head that this was easy. I started getting lax, and guess what? I didn't stay sober long. I had to admit my powerlessness once again and start over. My first sponsor passed away, and I was searching for a new one. I waited for a month or two, then I called someone at least once a day until I asked someone to be my current sponsor.

I do not have daily contact with my sponsor now. I write him often and speak to him once or twice a month. I am currently serving 63 months in Federal Prison, stemming from the original FBI charges in my home. We all have heard the rumors of how sex offenders are treated in prison. Some of the rumors are true, but not all of them.

As best I can, I keep the reasons I'm here anonymous, but I do share with people I trust. I had literature donated to me from SA and my sponsor (*Sexaholics Anonymous, Recovery Continues*, etc.). I gave these to a friend who was getting out.

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He related to my story and was going to find a meeting. I needed to keep my level of safety, so I felt it was better to not have materials around. I am still sober, just for today though.

My sobriety date is November 13, 2005. I attend several self-help groups here and I'm working on expressing my feelings.



I came into SA hoping it would save my marriage. I thought it was going well, but my wife said she needed some space, that my just being in the house was a constant reminder, and that our children didn't see that I was having any consequences for my misbehavior. I left, but we still met at church on Sundays, and I continued doing the house maintenance. Neither of us could afford to keep the house on our own, so I paid the mortgage and insurance, and she paid the utilities. And I kept coming back.

I frequently rode my bicycle to meetings twice a week, and while I

My wife divorced me while I was here. I don't know what my future holds, but I continue to live one day at a time. The best parts are that I am sober, I can look the world in the eye, and stand free.

Yours in sobriety,  
— *Anonymous*

## Keep Coming Back

*"Keep coming back, works if you work it." I did, and it did!*

was riding back to my apartment on Wednesday night, February 5, 1990, a motorist sent me flying. She said she didn't see me until I went past her windshield. My wife came to the hospital to pick me up. But my leg got worse, so I went back to the hospital. I was on an IV drip for 10 days for a blood clot. I was off work for three months. My wife put me in my son's room and took care of me until I could return to my apartment. I worked part-time for three months, then got laid off effective the day the doctor said I could return to work full-time.

But I kept coming back to meetings and being active in the program, leading meetings and participating in our local Intergroup and Marathons. While my wife and I were separated, we went to counseling programs and both attended the Philadelphia International Convention.

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I had told her that sex was optional, and two-and-a-half years after separating, my wife said, “I haven’t had sex the whole time you have been gone, I didn’t miss it, and I don’t care if I never have it again. If you can accept that, I would like to have you come back.” I accepted, and came back—on April Fool’s Day. I remind myself what a fool I had been.

She has supported my work in SA. I shared my story with my family of origin (parents, sister, brothers and their wives) at a family meeting in my parent’s home. I wrote the 10-year history of SA in the Pittsburgh/TriState area, have a good long-term relationship with my sponsor, hosted a Regional Meeting in our house, set up a tape lending library for our groups, sponsored many members, wrote a draft of the

SA Service Manual section on the Twelve Concepts, and serve as Intergroup Rep to the Region and Regional Delegate to the General Assembly. I kept coming back, and kept working. Service work has been both good for me and to me.

When my wife said, “I thought you said sex was optional.” I replied, “It is; that doesn’t mean that it is my preference.” However, we both listen better, give each other space and support; enjoy our time together, and do things for one another.

I kept coming back and kept working. I have received the rewards and seen the promises come true; that is why I keep coming back and keep working.

Last October, my wife and I celebrated our 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in Hawaii. And I’m still coming back.

– *Larry H.*

## My Experience with Sober Dating

I have been an SA member for 14 years. I came to my local area SA in its infancy. I have served in Intergroup, and, with the help of some dedicated members, helped to start three groups in my area.

My experience with dating in SA started after my divorce in 1995. The model I followed for dating in SA was taken directly from my AA experience, where I have been sober

since 1989. My SA sponsor agreed that this plan would be suitable for me, and I followed these principles:



- ◆ I could make no major changes for one year (I was now single after divorce).
- ◆ Since I slipped in SA after my divorce, I had to get sober and work the Twelve Steps again.
- ◆ I had to develop a relationship with myself and with God. This would take at least one year.
- ◆ I had to learn about humility and demonstrate by my actions that I was learning to follow God’s will, not mine.
- ◆ I had to earn the right to date by working on myself. I agreed!

I also had some other insights: Although I had been sober for three years or more before my slip, during my divorce (a painful time), a very

close SA member told me that I had nothing to offer a dating partner until I had a least one year of sobriety again and had reworked the Twelve Steps. So I began working on my relationships with God, myself, and others in this program. I did all of this and dated a few women soberly until I met the woman who is now my wife. My wife and I dated for 18 months and have been married for nine years. I was sober throughout this whole process.

I have also sponsored several others who have had good experiences following this model, which I gratefully received from AA, and from my AA sponsor.

— Bob K., *Yonkers*

## Sharing Recovery With My Son

*Tradition One. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity.*

After years in a dark place, God has given me the gift of recovery. One of the fruits has been the blossoming of my relationship with my son. It has been my privilege to be with him in his recovery.

At a recent SA convention, my son and I shared a room. One morning we were processing the excitement of hearing a speaker who



had shared on Tradition One: Personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity. My son had an epiphany, one of those “Aha” moments.

“Dad, I’ve been practicing the Traditions with my band! I wondered why things had been going so



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well for us. There is no divisiveness, and people have commented to me how they can feel the love in our music and words. Our harmony is tighter, closer than I'd ever hoped it would be. The amazing thing is that I didn't even know I was doing this Traditions thing, but we were all feeling the benefits."

## Dream Job



I have watched my parents working their Twelve Step programs for years. They watched me with sorrow as I walked through some very dark places with the same addiction. After losing that last bout with lust, I attended an SA meeting with Dad. I got a sponsor of my own and started working those same Steps and learning those principles.

I'm a musician. For a long time I had been living on air, hope, and bad promises. Suddenly, my dream gig came open. A tour of the world,

My experience with the Traditions has been the same. They work on me until they become integral to my way of being. That is what others find attractive about me. For that I'm thankful.

— *Dave M.*

(the following article was written by my son)



the glamour, the money, the fame. What an opportunity! I passed it up. It seemed important to me to put my new principles before "stage" personalities.

Instead, I took a job at a camp for teenagers as a cook. I began to feel a strong pull to continue working with these kids. Mysteriously, a job became available. No world tour—just my home group, my friends, and satisfying work. I believe that this was because I turned down something good, and God gave me something better.

— *Dan M.*

### Call for Articles: Young People and Singles in SA

Please share your experience, strength, and hope in this program. Submit articles to  
[Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)

## What is Sponsorship?

In *Alcoholics Anonymous*, Bill W. and Dr. Bob speak of their need to seek out other alcoholics or they could not stay sober. This need was not based on a desire to fix other drunks, but rather to share with others their truths regarding alcohol in their lives, and their need for a relationship with God, the One who could help them live without alcohol. Over the years, as the AA fellowship has grown, the focus seems to have slowly shifted from a need for relationships to a focus on doing the “work” of recovery, with a sponsor’s help.

But sponsor/sponsee relationships become strained by sponsors who want their sponsees to do the work and “get it.” These sponsors see sponsees who don’t follow directions as “not ready,” and the sponsor may even fire a sponsee.

As an addict, forming healthy relationships is not one of my strong points. I’m not by nature an asset to any relationship because the relationship quickly becomes all about me: my need for control, my need to feel power, my need to “fix”



others, my need to avoid speaking of my own powerlessness, my need to judge, and mostly, my fear of the sponsee “failing,” because that would mean I had failed as a sponsor. What a mess!

Some of us look for sponsors who will “make” us sober by telling us what to do. These sponsors gather non-sober SAs and poke, prod, or carry them into their Step work and their sobriety. I think the major pitfall here is for the sponsor, who can easily forget his or her own powerlessness by attempting to carry so many others.

What then is the role of a sponsor, if not to impart to the sponsee the experience of what it takes to be sober? Here is my experience:

Because of who I am, my concept of being connected to other human beings is distorted. People are not in my life to share myself with, but to hide from, lie to, or manipulate to get what I need. A newcomer who has just arrived at SA will continue to show these ways of relating to others at meetings and in sponsor/

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sponsee relationships. The beginning of the word “relationship” is the word “real,” as in REAL-ationship. A sponsee is not capable of being in a REAL-ationship with a sponsor until he or she is first shown what being real is. The sponsor/sponsee relationship is about practicing honesty—something that has not been practiced before.

The REAL-ationship grows, not because the sponsor tells the sponsee what to do, but because the sponsor is real, setting the stage for the sponsee to risk being real also. This is the way to experience healing. This also gives sponsees the opportunity to share with another human being for the first time their powerlessness over sexual obsession. Here we must be careful, because if I think I’m not as powerless as my sponsee, perhaps I’m uncomfortable seeing myself as equal with him or her. I’m more comfortable thinking of myself as a guide, leading the way to sobriety.

The REAL-ationship of sponsor and sponsee affords two people an opportunity to practice a new way of living. Here they can practice new life skills that were never a part of their lives before. These include:

- ◆ Honesty—living in the realities of who we are
- ◆ Tolerance—for another’s imperfections
- ◆ Acceptance—finding we are all equals in our powerlessness
- ◆ Empathy—relating to each other’s humanness

In being real with each other, two powerless sex addicts can walk together on a path of accepting each other, and eventually, they will learn to accept themselves. Then they can begin practicing the life-giving REAL-ationship with God they will so desperately need after looking in the mirror of sponsorship together.

– Ric K.

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## 2007 SA International Convention

*“Live and Let Go”*

June 6 - 8, Adelphi, Maryland

[www.liveandletgo2007.com](http://www.liveandletgo2007.com)

### Call for Articles: Convention attendees

Please describe how attending the Convention has been helpful to your recovery. *Articles should be submitted to [Essay.sa.org](http://Essay.sa.org)*



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## Stepping Back



This sponsor/friend thing has been emotional for both of us. I have so much life stuff going on that I haven't been dealing with my feelings around our relationship. Part of me doesn't know how. I've never been in this situation before. To be a sponsor is one thing, it's more cut and dried. A friend is another thing completely; it takes the "conditions" out. But being both has turned out quite confusing for me. I think I need time to separate that out.

I have to fully surrender you to God. I have to step away to see if you will stay in SA without me in the immediate picture. If you don't, it would be an injustice to both of us to try to force the relationship. I want to share with you the clear, cold, refreshing water of recovery. But, you see, it is quite a hike up the mountain to reach the glacier. If you need a rest, take it. I'm sorry I can't wait for you, but my dear, I have had a taste, and I can't/won't settle for less. It is muddy sludge in fact where you have settled (in the Twelve Step recovery program, not life). This is where the line of friend/sponsor got so confusing.

I accept you where you are—although it makes me sad to see what you are missing. As a sponsor, I

would be cheating you and draining myself to hold your hand through this. I am talking strictly from a Twelve Step program reference. I am so deeply immersed in the lifestyle that it is difficult for me to separate it out, especially with our background.

I believe God can completely heal you, or me. He may have freed you forever—but (warning, this will be blunt) I see a huge lesson in humility coming for you when it comes to being powerless over this addiction. At any point it could knock you (or me) over the head and take us down a swirling river with a waterfall looming in the distance. I am preparing with the life vest, raft, friends, lessons, etc. And having the time of my life doing it. Learning about the river, learning to recognize danger before I'm in it, not being alone in the boat, and—most important—how to have God as the guide in this journey. I can't sit as your only lifeline in the boat, when you aren't even paddling. I wouldn't be much of a mentor if I did. I don't think that highly of myself, and I know you have your paddle in the

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water some. But darlin' you have taken the life vest off. Throughout the duration of our time I have often wondered if you see the danger. This disease is deadly. Go to a Step One meeting if you can.

I will always love you and be your friend to the best of my ability. I am willing to sponsor you *when* you are desperate for that clear water. When you're willing to climb. When you are ready to put your recovery before all other things (except God of course).



Please don't be the victim that pushes me away. My mother does that and it's something I have deep troubles dealing with. Maybe it's some sort of mirror that I must come across on the trail of the mountain.

I was glad to hear that you have gotten a temporary sponsor. There's nothing more I would like to see than for you to immerse yourself in this program—with or without me. I have put you and me together in God's loving capable hands. That is where we can both be, where we belong.

— Anonymous Woman

## Tenth Step Dailies

*Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.*

One recovery tool that I've used for many years is what we used to call "the Dailies." Years ago, it would involve a phone call, sharing with each other our Gratuities, Fears, Things to Practice, and Things to

Avoid. With the advent of e-mail, I started sending mine to one or two partners first thing in the morning, and I would look for their answers, generally before work. Then, one of my sponsees made it even easier by providing an Excel format.

The process takes about five or ten minutes for writing, plus two or three to read a shared daily. Sometimes, we follow up on what we've seen in each other's spreadsheets. I've been doing this with the same two men for eight years. Those relationships have grown very deep.

Here's how it works: Under Gratuities, I name things for which I'm thankful on that particular day. I try to be specific and to come up with a

fresh list each day. Under Fears, I list things that are bothering me. These might include unresolved feelings or anxieties, difficulties I need God to take away, or areas where I'm falling short. Things To Practice is a "to do" list, including principles and patterns I want to establish, or adjustments I need to make in my life. Things To Avoid is where I document behaviors that aren't healthy.



The cool thing about this practice is that when I exchange Dailies with others, three things happen:

- ◆ In writing the Daily, I become more aware of myself; I know what's troubling me, what to watch out for, and have documented evidence that God loves me.
- ◆ In sending the Daily, someone else is now involved and aware of what's happening with me; goodbye isolation.
- ◆ In receiving a Daily, I become involved with and concerned for another person; my self-absorption diminishes.

Following are a few examples from a recent Daily:

**Gratitudes**

1. Roof estimate lower than I thought
2. My daughter aced her science test
3. Finally got to bed on time
4. Excited about the retreat next week
5. A break in the heat wave
6. Heard a great song on the radio

**Fears**

1. My son's asthma is getting serious
2. Behind on balancing the checkbook
3. Owe more taxes than I expected
4. Best friends' marriage is in trouble
5. Embarrassed about missing important deadline at work

**To Practice**

1. Take time to meditate
2. Work on my 4th step
3. Notice nature and thank God for it
4. Take my dad out to lunch
5. Really listen to my wife
6. Apologize sooner when I need to

**To Avoid**

1. Toxic internet surfing
2. Eating too much after dinner
3. Talking about boss behind her back
4. Wasting time on unnecessary tasks

– Bill M., Boston

## Letter to My Higher Power

My loving Father,

How did I “come to believe” that You could restore me to sanity? Actually, you know that I’ve known that for a long time. I came to believe that You wanted my healing even more than I did. It was part of the faith I was taught, but it was hidden until it became real to me in a moment of insight years ago; You know how it happened. I can still picture the place that it happened, and I have known it ever since.

Even after obtaining this understanding, I was frustrated that You hadn’t yet healed me. Remember how I prayed last year in anguish, “When are you going to SAVE ME? Have you forgotten about ME?” You didn’t answer right away, but I knew in my heart You had heard.

Then you began a new work of grace in me this year. I didn’t see it coming. Your ways are mysterious, but I am accepting them. I am also coming to accept myself as I am and to appreciate my own needs, my desires and limitations, and how you work in me. I honestly have fewer expectations in life apart from what You Yourself will for me.

That brings me to “the decision” to turn over my will and my life. Why wouldn’t I do that? Your will is gracious and loving; and You only want what is for my benefit and the benefit of all other people in my life. Fighting against your will has brought me frustration and evil - even when I had deluded myself into thinking I was right. Surrendering to Your will brings me peace; it is the easiest and best path.

*My Father, I love you and I surrender myself to you. Take away all my delusions and my self-will. I have no fear as long as You are with me. Keep me sober just for today and help me to work “the steps” every day. I am trusting in you to heal me and set me free.*

*Love, Your son, Jon*







# SAICO Announcements

## Nominations Requested

### New Groups

#### USA

Cape Coral, FL  
Corpus Christi, TX  
Dubuque, IA  
Lewiston, ID  
Wilmington, DE

#### CANADA

Quebec City, QC  
Additional meeting  
in Sudbury, ON

#### RUSSIA

Moscow

Please send info re  
new groups or  
additional locations  
in your areas to  
saico@sa.org,  
615.370.6062

### Sponsoring Editor for Meditations Book.

The Literature Committee is seeking an editor for SA's 'Daily Meditation Book.' If interested, please contact SAICO@sa.org, or SAICO, P.O. Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565

**Additional SA Trustee.** SA's Nominations Committee is seeking nominations for Trustees to serve the Fellowship. We are currently operating with only five Trustees (the minimum allowable under SA Bylaws), which could present a problem if one of the Trustees should need to discontinue service. It also means more work for current Trustees ("many hands make light work"). Please let us know of qualified members in your Region who are willing to do service. Please submit nominations to SAICO@sa.org.

**Qualifications:** Minimum five years of sobriety; knowledge of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts; prior SA service experience; and availability and willingness to serve. See pages 26-27 of the SA Service Manual for details.



### *Are You Interested in Serving on an International Committee?*



From time to time, the Committees make their needs known in *Essay*. If you have questions about any of the committees, or if you would like to serve on a committee, please contact saico@sa.org, or by mail SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024-3565. Some committees have special requirements or need expertise. Some committees just need a caring heart and the willingness to serve.

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# Give the Gift of Experience, Strength, and Hope to a Friend or Newcomer

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### ***New SA Step Study Books Now Available at SAICO***

*Step Into Action Four, Five, Six, Seven* is now available from SAICO for \$8 per copy. *Step into Action One, Two, Three* is also available for \$8 per copy.

Order by mail at SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood TN 37024-3565; call toll-free at 866-424-8777, outside North America 615-370-6062; fax 615-370-0882; or order online at sa.org, "Publications," "SAICO online store."

***Both books are considered "works in progress;" member feedback is needed to complete them. Please provide comments to saico@sa.org.***

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# Calendar of Events



Events listed are presented solely as a service and are not endorsed by Essay or SAICO.

**September 7 - 9, 2007,**  
Unity Conference, Irvine, CA, sponsored by San Diego and Southern California Intergroups. Theme: A Design for Living. Information available at the websites: [www.sasocal.org](http://www.sasocal.org) and [www.sasandiego.org](http://www.sasandiego.org)

**October 13, 2007,**  
Writing Workshop on the Steps, La Habra, CA, sponsored by Southern California Area Intergroup. Information at [www.sasocal.org](http://www.sasocal.org)

**October 19 - 21, 2007,**  
Northwest SA / S-Anon Fall Retreat, Ross Point, Post Falls, ID, sponsored by Inland Northwest Intergroup. For information check the local website at [www.sanorthwest.org](http://www.sanorthwest.org).

**November 9 - 11, 2007,**  
Northern California SA Men's Retreat, Ben Lomond, CA, sponsored by Northern California SA Intergroup. More info will be posted on the web site at [www.sabayarea.org](http://www.sabayarea.org)

**March 7 - 9, 2008, SA / S-Anon Australia National Conference,** sponsored by SA Canberra. More details to be announced.

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

Events taking place after August 2007 will be listed in September 2007 *Essay*. Deadline for sending info to SAICO is August 15, 2007. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact. A flyer for your event is helpful; members often call in to ask about upcoming events.

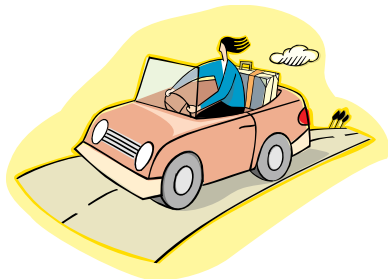
**Please send events to be listed in *Essay* to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)**

## Upcoming International Conventions

- 2008 -

**January 2008, Newark, NJ** More info soon.

**July 2008, Akron, OH** come to home of Dr. Bob



**July 6 - 8, 2007**  
**SA International Convention**  
**Adelphi, Maryland**

Theme: "*Live and Let Go*"  
[www.liveandletgo2007.com](http://www.liveandletgo2007.com)  
703/866-6929

Sponsored by MD/DC/NoVA Intergroup

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## Trustees and Delegates, and their Committee Assignments

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Trustees 2007	Committee Assignment	
Luc B.	<b>Chair, Board of Trustees,</b> Internet Literature, International COMC, CFC Finance Finance	
Lawrence M.		
John C.		
Sean R.		
Gene J., Non-SA		
Delegates 2007	Committee Assignment	Alternate
<b>Southwest Region</b>		
<b>Jerry L.</b>	<b>Chair Delegate Assembly</b>	Richard G.
Mike S.	Site Selection	Tom K.
<b>Northwest Region</b>		
Judy C.	Loners [or any committee where phone meetings & women in SA are assigned]	
<b>South Midwest Region</b>		
Betty M.	Literature	Andy P.
<b>North Midwest Region</b>		
Andrew S.	Vice Chair, Delegate Assembly, H&I, Nominations	
Bob. A.	Finance, CFC	
<b>Southeast Region</b>		
Chuck P.	H&I, COMC, Site Selection	Steve S.
Mike J.	Finance, Literature	Dave Mc.
<b>MidAtlantic Region</b>		
Larry H.	Structure, RAC	Brian S.
Tom A.	CFC, Site Selection	
<b>Northeast Region</b>		
Mike F.	RAC	Tom V.
International Delegates	Committee Assignment	Country
Nicholas S.	Loners, Internet	SA UK, Ireland
Hans-Friedrich L.	International	AS Deutschland

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Trustees and Delegates can be reached at [Saico@sa.org](mailto:Saico@sa.org)

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# Essay's Editorial Guidelines

*Essay* is the international publication of Sexaholics Anonymous. It is known as SA's "Meeting in Print," and submissions reflect the experience, strength, and hope of our members. Opinions expressed in this publication are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by *Essay*. Articles are invited from SA members and SA groups, although no payment is made and material may not be returned. All articles submitted become the property of *Essay* and are subject to editing.

The principles of SA's Twelve Traditions guide editorial philosophy. In submitting articles, please remember that 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. *Essay* is not a fund-raising mechanism, although from time to time SA's needs may be made known.

**General Guidelines for Submissions:** We prefer to receive articles electronically. *Articles should be submitted to [Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)*. Articles sent by regular mail must be typed. All articles must 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, except as those topics relate specifically to an individual member's share, are discouraged.



## We are Always Looking for Member Stories

When you share your story, you provide encouragement to other members, to newcomers, and to the addict who still suffers. We are grateful for your contributions. Types of articles include:

- .. Your recovery story describing your life before recovery, what happened, and your life today
- .. Your experience working the Steps or Traditions, and how this has helped your recovery
- .. Your thoughts on a particular topic (serenity, sponsorship, etc.)

Topics of special interest today include women's stories, internet addiction, and young people and singles in SA; but all types of stories are welcome.

***Please submit articles or questions to [Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org).***

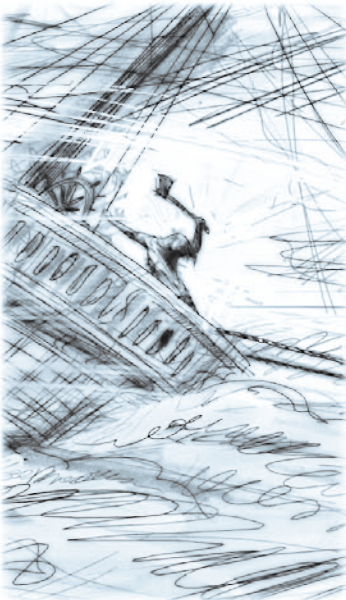
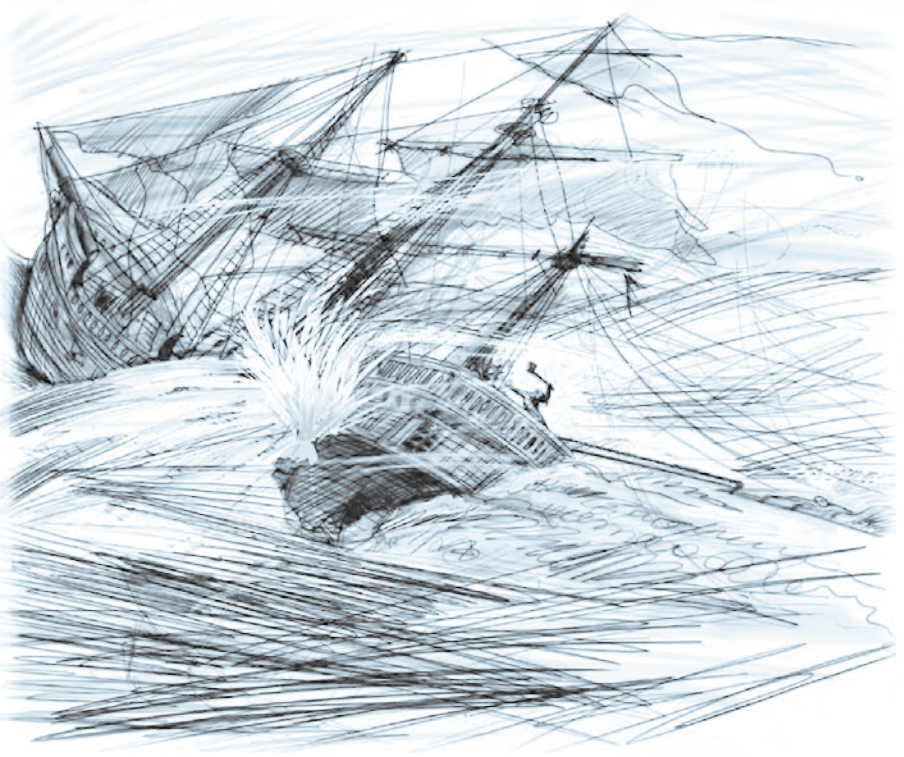


## The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on 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 SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or SA 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. SA 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. SA 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 TV.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.

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*God,  
Grant me the serenity  
To accept the things I  
cannot change,  
The courage to change  
the things I can,  
And  
The wisdom to know the  
difference...*