

Essay

March 2009



Illustration of SA, p. 105

Facing the Wild Elephant

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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March 2009



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.

—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.

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Facing the Wild Elephant

“The wild elephant . . . is the self we’re running from, fear of which drives us on our mad flight into that dark hole where we prefer to stay and hide. . . When we come out of hiding and face this terrible beast . . . he disappears (SA 106).

Today a fellow in our group received his eight-month chip. I recalled how desperately upset he’d been when he first came to SA—but today he demonstrated a great peace and calmness. I realized that this is also my story. I’ll

never forget the day I clearly saw the truth about myself and realized I needed to make a change. I’m grateful for the freedom I’ve experienced since turning my will and my life over to the care of God in this program. Meetings, the Steps, a sponsor, and a willingness to do just about everything differently—these are the tools that have changed my life.

During my childhood I struggled with self-pity and resentment. My parents couldn’t give me the love I wanted. My dad was a heavy drinker. My mom was physically, verbally, and emotionally abusive. I felt sorry for myself. I resented playmates who had better bicycles, better grades, or more recognition. I resented boys who received more attention from my father for their athletic abilities.



My ability to play the clarinet didn’t seem to measure up. I was uncomfortable with my appearance. I didn’t feel masculine enough. I was uncomfortable and withdrawn around people.

When I was 14, I discovered masturbation. I kept this behavior a secret because I remembered how my mother reacted to finding my brother’s pornography. Yet she kept stashes of romance novels in our basement.

I spent a lot of time in the basement “practicing” my clarinet, so I could ritualize the experience of getting a magazine and acting out. My ritual soon included dressing in specific types of clothing and watching myself in mirrors while acting out.

Around that time I also had a sexual experience with a neighbor boy. It was adolescent horsing around, pretending to “make it” with a girl, but it became far more powerful for me. I wanted to re-create the experience with the boy but he refused. I learned that my desires were wrong

and shameful.

My first sexual experience with a woman was with a female band member in college. I also became involved with a male roommate. I began stealing his pornography. The ritual of getting the material and putting it back became part of my high.

The summer after my sophomore year, I went to Europe with a fellow I was acting out with. Back home, I wanted to “come out” but was afraid of the reaction. I walked the streets many nights in an effort to cruise, and sometimes desperately hoped to attend a “gay” support group—but I never had the courage to go inside.

Over the years my insanity increased. At one point I was acting out with all three female members of my band. I had a brief encounter with a high school teacher in the area. I took a trip to Colorado with a male college professor for a week one summer. Another summer I had an affair with a male acquaintance who was visiting from Germany. We went crazy in lust and sex for a weekend. My roommate caught us in the act. This was quite shaming but did little to dissuade me from my lust.

Some time later, while playing in an extended performance in a theater group, I became obsessed with one of the male performers. This became a very “out” affair. That same summer I met the woman who would become my wife. I loved being with her. But

I was still acting out with others and myself. I would show interest in her and then back off. I was afraid of commitment. When she left for winter break, I was aloof during phone conversations. When she returned, I was negative and unsupportive. Somehow, we continued as a couple.

The next year I moved to New York City. My girlfriend was to join me in the summer. Before she arrived I was acting out with a woman who lived in my building. That relationship was discovered when my girlfriend arrived. The tension lasted for days, but we worked through it and grew close and decided to get married that summer. The marriage seemed special, but I would turn on her at a moment’s notice.

I was soon back acting out with myself. I went to magazine stands to buy male pornography, took it home and used it, threw it away, and vowed to not do it again. This was repeated often. I was powerless and willing to lose all for my acting out.

Four years later, we moved to the Midwest. I was angry about the move even though I had participated in the decision. I let my wife find an apartment and a car and then resented her choices. My wife got a good job. I didn’t have a job and resented having to start over. Eventually I started teaching clarinet and saxophone and got some music gigs, but I was miserable. I used my practice room for

masturbation.

I tried to make everything look okay, but I felt I didn't have what I deserved. My job was merely adequate. I wasn't getting enough music gigs. I was overwhelmed with resentment and self-pity. I acted out with stashes of pornography.

My son and daughter were born in the late 1980s. I offered to be primary care giver so my wife could pursue her career. I quit my job and got a half-baked part-time sales job. I lived in isolation, loneliness, and self-pity—fertile ground for my addiction. Usually, if the kids were taking a nap, I was acting out. I started teaching part-time as an adjunct clarinet professor. But I was not equipped to handle the schedule along with the responsibilities of raising children and caring for a house. I constantly escaped by acting out.

In 1996, when my kids were six and nine, my wife landed a prestigious job as a professor for a college three hours from home. She was gone four or five days a week. On her weekends at home, she worked all the time. The fact that she was responsible for so much of the financial burden of our family was a direct result of my acting out.

The Internet had come into our home and became my main activity. I got into videos. I developed more rituals to enhance my acting out. I stayed up all hours of the night get-

ting my fix on the Internet. I visited gay sites, personal sites, chat rooms, and video sex. It was never enough.

In 1997, I had an adulterous affair with a guy living in our home. I admitted this to my wife. This is how I punished her. My behavior was destroying our marriage. She was in the major career position of her life and I was creating hell for her.

One night I was online setting up a date with a man, thinking my wife was asleep. I was lost in the haze of acting out and didn't realize she was looking over my shoulder. We argued, and that argument led me to see that I had a problem. I made the call, admitted what I had been doing, and got to my first meeting. About 12 people attended that group

I got a sponsor, went to meetings, and began working the Steps. My life started changing. I found a good job and got involved in service. But I had only embraced physical sobriety, not lust sobriety. My character defects were still at work. Things were better, but something was missing. I was not happy, joyous, or free.

One month shy of my fifth sober anniversary, I lost my sobriety. Lust had gotten the better of me. I got back into the program and meetings and once again achieved one year and five months of sobriety. Then, in August 2004, my wife said I had finally become the man she always hoped I would become. I could almost hear

the rubber stamp come crashing down that screamed, "FIXED." I decided that the rules and definitions of SA no longer applied to me.

I lost interest in meetings, let myself go back on the Internet, and began masturbating again. Yet I was still serving the fellowship as Intergroup representative and as a Regional Delegate. What hypocrisy!

Once I let lust back in, my life moved rapidly into unmanageability. I became drunk on a possible lust encounter at an SA conference. I went further into lusting on Internet dating sites, male clothing sites, and more. I crossed the boundary of not viewing this material at work. I went right back to where I had left off in 1998, but much worse.

My wife's grandmother became ill and was hospitalized. While my wife spent more and more at the hospital, I used her computer—another boundary crossed. One of the last things my wife's grandmother said to me before she died was, "You could get away with anything."

As I drove to pick up our children from school to attend the wake, my wife called. She'd been searching for the obituary and found my trail of pornography on her computer. The weekend was awful. There was

revealing and getting to the bottom of things. My wife accompanied me to work and saw everything. She helped place filters on my work computers.

I was hopeless but still going to meetings. I began doing what my sponsor said. I did a Step One and shared it with the group, then a Step Two and Step Three. But lust still had hold of me. The filters on my work computer had to be removed because they interfered with my job. Once they were gone, I was looking again. I acted out again in January and had to admit it once again to my wife. She has said many times: "It's not the acting out, but the lying that is the most hurtful."

I began to get some relief from lust. Newcomers who came into our meetings were helping me see myself. I increased my meeting attendance. I started praying and making conscious contact with God. A fellow offered to do Tenth Step dailies with me for several weeks. He helped save my life. Then in May, when we were getting ready to move again, I acted out by masturbating and chose not to tell my wife. I lied to my groups about my sobriety date.

Later that summer I acted out once more—and for the first time I clearly saw the extent of my sickness. I'd been engineering resentment



toward my wife prior to her business trip. Resentment toward her gave me a reason to act out. On the last day of her trip I masturbated in front of the mirror—but this time I felt no enjoyment. For once, facing my sickness head-on brought me to despair. This was in August 2005. It was the beginning of freedom for me:

I could never figure out why knowing the truth about God never set me free. Or the truth about psychology or the Twelve Step program. But when I finally came to the place where I saw the truth about me—and despaired. . . Well, that was the beginning (SA, 106).

I did not disclose this acting out to my wife. I thought she'd leave me. I could not be honest. Even so, I was getting relief from lust. I saw that I had been doing recovery for my wife, and I realized that was not enough. A fellow asked me to sponsor him, and we worked the Steps. I started taking better care of my health. My wife and I started doing more things together. I attended more meetings and did more service. *A change of heart*

had occurred “. . . without which no real change in our lives can come about” (SA, 80).

I made a commitment to do Tenth Step dailies with a sponsee. A few of us started an accountability meeting. I started beginning each day with prayer, followed by a written Tenth Step daily, which I later shared with an accountability partner. Before bed I would read a page or two from recovery devotionals. I finished each day thanking God. I made and received more phone calls. I began attending International conventions.

Since August 2005, I've experienced a change in my attitude toward service, family, work, and the SA program. One huge growing experience for me was my participation in helping to plan an SA convention. My sponsor says I've grown in amazing ways since then. He said the attitude change he saw in me was letting go and letting God. I began to recognize that I don't have to control everything. I can trust God to work through me. On many occasions, a need or problem would arise, and God would place the solution in a person or event right in front of me.

Members Please Submit Your Stories!

Sharing your experience, strength, and hope encourages others in their recovery. Please share what you were like before, how you became involved in SA, what happened, and what is working for you today.

Submit articles or ask questions at essay@sa.org.



In August 2006, I began sponsoring a fellow whose acting out was with men. He'd been having trouble getting sober. I decided I had a "mission" in sponsoring him—but I became enmeshed in his recovery. He was my project. My wife knew at least the names of all the other guys I sponsored, but I didn't tell her about this one. Lust was at play. When she found out about him, I knew I needed to end the connection. I cannot handle lust in any way, even in the guise of offering help.

The past three years of my recovery have been significantly better because I've learned to forgive myself and allow myself to be an integrated person, a whole and loving child of God. This has had a lot to do with accepting all parts of me, especially the gay part, which I had tried so hard to suppress. The support and friendship of a wonderful gay man in our fellowship has helped me to see my life as choices. I know now that love is commitment. Commitment has become a beautiful word in my life.

During the summer of 2008, my wife and I took a trip to the Hudson

River area to celebrate our 30th wedding anniversary. It was a wonderful weekend, and was made even better when I disclosed to her that I had had two slips since January, and my real sobriety date was August 22, 2005.

I'm always surprised by her gift of grace and forgiveness. She loves every part of me. She has waited a long time for me to arrive. I'm sorry it took so long, but I'm grateful to finally be here with her now. It's so much easier to receive forgiveness and grace from another person when I am living a life of honesty.

I love my life now. I love the man I have become. I love the fact that I know I could have chosen to become any manner of sexual orientation but that my problem is, always has been, and always will be lust. I love the choices I'm making in my life. I love the

fact that I don't have all the answers. I love the fact that I have a program that works as long as I work it. I love being able to give of myself to others to insure that what I have stays and increases. I love being used by God to do His will. I love the fact that "I know only a little, but that God will constantly disclose more to me."

—Anonymous



The Benefits of Service Work



Members sometimes ask me, “Why should I do service? Won’t someone else do it? I don’t have the time!” But my sponsor always says: “SA was here when I needed it, and it is my responsibility to see that it is here for somebody else!”

Our program literature emphasizes recovery (not just sobriety), attitude adjustment, and changing our habits. We hear a lot about change in our culture, but Twelve Step fellowships have long taught that attitude change is fundamental.

I didn’t want to change at first. Then I thought I might need just a little change. But how could I change? The answer is “practice.” I needed to practice good habits until they became a part of me. I had to practice not acting out, practice clear thinking, and practice being of service to others. And it worked! Indeed, “It is one of the most beautiful compensations in life—that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself” (Ralph Waldo Emerson).

Twenty years ago, my wife asked me to leave our home because of my misbehavior. The pedestal she had put me on had crumbled. She was devastated. I was invited back two and a half years later, with conditions,

which I accepted. My service work had given me plenty of opportunity to practice behaviors that have paid off in our marriage.

With more time (and more practice) my wife and I became better at expressing our feelings, communicating, and respecting and understanding each other. My past resentments have been replaced with admiration for her skills and accomplishments. I’m still working on tolerance in my reactions to a world that doesn’t revolve around me. I have a propensity to blow up.

Two years ago, we celebrated our 45th wedding anniversary with a trip to Hawaii. We flew over acres of hardened lava where forests, flowers, and communities had been. That’s the sort of destruction I had caused in our marriage. Harsh words and a judgmental attitude can cause as much destruction as the lava flowing down the sides of a volcano.

We also drove through a rainforest that had grown up in the ancient lava flows. It was reassuring to see that pain and destruction had been replaced with peace and beauty. Scars can still be found, but the pain of scars can be lessened.

Our program suggests praying

for those we’ve hurt when we cannot make direct amends. I believe that another amends we can make to those we’ve hurt is to serve them. When I freely serve someone, I feel better! I don’t know why this works, but I thank my Higher Power that my program works when I work it—and when I serve someone else, things do get better.

Communication seems to me to be both the easiest and the hardest part of life. I need to practice communication within my family and as well as in service work. Experience not shared is of little value to others. I must carry the message. I must tell others, whether they want to hear it or not. Because the message I carry is not always accepted, I sometimes feel inadequate. But my responsibility is to present the message. The response is not my responsibility.

Some members, when asked to serve, decline and say, “It’s okay, you can do what you want.” But they don’t realize that what I want is for them to serve with me. Sobriety is only the start of recovery. When I short-change myself, I hurt everyone.

I often say: “Recovery means progressing to where my life should have been all along, whereas sobriety is just the cessation of acting out.” Will Rogers said, “Even if you are on

the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.” Sobriety is critical, but declining service is like leaving the table before dessert is passed out.

Victory over lust is our common goal. Before coming to this program, we had no idea how to accomplish that and our efforts were unsuccessful. But help is available in SA. We need to share our recovery tool box with others. Tools include Step work, sponsorship, sharing in meetings, books, pamphlets, the *Essay* newsletter, recordings, phone calls, marathons, and conventions. I keep a collection of literature, tapes, and CDs in our group meeting room available to members as a lending library.

Group inventories are a good service opportunity, if they are carried out without blaming—just open and honest brainstorming, and a willingness to examine where the group as a whole is in recovery. I’m familiar with a group that was concerned about members intentionally watching Internet porn while calling themselves sober. Their discussion during a group inventory resulted in an addition to their meeting agenda:

This group does not support the practice of deliberate exposure to porn of any kind as being consistent with either *progressive* victory over lust or



sexual sobriety. We do wholeheartedly offer, under God, our experience, strength, and hope to any who want to stop lusting.

During the inventory, each member had the opportunity to share his or her experience, strength, and hope while focusing on a specific topic. The consensus provided reinforcement for all. It was a service by the group to all of its members.

The benefits of service include fellowship, friendship, and improved relationships with others, including my Higher Power, family, neighbors, coworkers, other friends, and myself. In my sickness, I was looking for ego boosts and praise from others. But when joining with others in being of service, my need for ego boosts and praise is not so overwhelming. I'm accepted for who I am as others see me, warts and all.

Another benefit of service is that I've learned to be less greedy. I love being of service in my home group, region, and on International committees, especially in my current position as Chair of the General Delegate Assembly. I also participate in service outside the fellowship. I'm committed to the service I do, but when my time is up, I'll get out of the way and make room for others. I want everyone to experience the benefits. There are enough service opportunities for everyone.

All service positions are important. Members can begin service by helping out at home group meetings, and then move on to InterGroup and regional service. The SA fellowship has openings at all levels: Trustees, Delegates, and Regional Representatives, as well as members who participate on all International Committees. However, I believe that the most important service position of all is sponsorship. Whatever experience, strength, and hope I have was obtained with the help of other members. I must give back what I have received!

We all know that sponsorship is a two-way street. Years ago, a young man in our group (whom I did not sponsor) asked at a meeting whether I had been riding my bicycle in a certain place at a certain time. I said I had and asked why. He said, "I was driving out to an adult club when I saw you; then I turned around and went back home, still sober." Fifteen years later, I am still blessed by his encouragement.

Sometimes I feel that my Higher power has given me a bigger burden than I can carry—but God has not asked me to do anything alone. He led me to SA, and He put many caring people in my pathway here. He



will continue to help me. I only have to be willing and take the actions.

A poster in our meeting room says, "Service is the rent we pay for room on this Earth." I like the idea of service being like paying rent. Paying higher rent usually yields nicer living; experience shows more service also yields higher dividends.

In the past, by not choosing to re-

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Service Opportunities: SA's International Committees

- *Central Office Management Committee (COMC)*: Assists SAICO in serving as a resource to the fellowship.
- *Finance Committee*: Ensures integrity, accuracy, and functionality of SA financial affairs. Prepares annual budgets and financial projections.
- *International Committee*: Carries the message to members outside of North America.
- *International Conventions Committee*: Selects future convention sites.
- *Internet Committee*: Designs and maintains SA website.
- *Legal Committee*: Advises Trustees on legal matters that affect the fellowship. Works with law firms retained by SA.
- *Literature*: Develops fellowship literature (e.g., *Step Into Action Series*), as directed by GDA and Board of Trustees.
- *Loners Committee*: Maintains mailing list of members who are geographically isolated.
- *Nominations Committee*: Identifies qualified candidates (SA and non-SA) to serve as Trustees and Committee Chairs.
- *Regional Realignment Committee (RAC)*: Counts SA members and recommends addition of new regions or restructuring of existing region.
- *SA Corrections Facility Committee (SACFC)*: Carries the message to sexaholics in prison by providing literature, sponsorship, and other resources.
- *Service Structure*: Provides feedback regarding SA organizational issues. Updates and revises service manual.



ject temptations, I in effect made the choice to become a sex addict. Today I can make the choice to reject lust and acting out, and I can choose to be sober and of service to others. What do you choose for yourself?

May your Higher Power surround you with His peace and comfort.

—Larry H.

Members interested in serving on an SA committee should contact saico@sa.org for more information.

Serving with Humility¹



Implicit throughout AA's Traditions is the confession that our fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continually. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.

But the Twelve Traditions also point straight at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask each of us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the AA name in any quest for personal power or distinction or money. The Traditions guarantee the equality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. They indicate how we can best function in harmony as a great whole. For the sake of the welfare of our entire society, the Traditions ask that every individual and every group and every area in AA shall lay aside all desires, ambitions, and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous symbolize the sacrificial character of our life together and they are the greatest force for unity that we know.

—*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, pp. 96-97

In my early sobriety, SA service provided many opportunities for spiritual growth. My sponsor continually explained the need for a solid grounding in the Steps as the basis for successful service work. As I matured, so did my idea of “successful service.”

In the beginning, the slant of my approach was to help the fellowship

change in the direction that I knew in my heart it needed to grow. With much excitement, I avidly read all I could about the Traditions. I believed that God was going to use the great education, intellect, and vision He had given me to bring SA to the next level. Also, unlike many SAs, I had service experience in



¹Author's Note: this article was inspired by AA Traditions Checklist, available at www.aa.org/lang/en/en_pdfs/smf-131_en.pdf. Perhaps others will find the checklist useful.

recovery fellowships much older and wiser than SA. My leadership qualities were exceeded only by the great humility with which I expressed the wisdom I imparted! (Yeah, right!). But in spite of my heroic gentleness and tolerance, my frustration grew as my fellow members failed to recognize the virtues of my numerous suggestions for improvement. I found myself challenged to maintain a posture of love and helpfulness when confronted with such unreasonableness! My vision of success in service work eluded me.

Fortunately, I was being sponsored by a member who had worked the Steps with a sponsor. He once explained that he had been 100% successful in sponsorship. Had everyone he had sponsored stayed sober, then? No, he explained, but *he* had. Thus my idea of success in service began to be transformed. Not long afterward I was reminded by members who had relapsed while engaged in service work that if my attitude toward service takes me to a “higher level” than that of my fellows, I am in great peril. If my “primary purpose” becomes to “fix the fellowship” and relate as a consultant to the “less knowledgeable,” I cannot maintain true membership in the spirit of anonymity, and I am likely to lust again.

Today my perspective on be-

ing a trusted servant is much different. I realize that those who came before me gave freely of themselves to keep the doors of SA open during a time when I was trying to control and enjoy lust, rather than seeking to be helpful to others. As a result of their sacrificial actions, recovery was available to me when I became ready to seek it. Today, I am motivated to serve because of deep gratitude for



my sobriety, rather than by any certainty that I know what's best.

Don't get me wrong—I usually believe I'm right—a character defect that has not yet been removed.

I note, hopefully with identification rather than judgment, that many of my SA friends have similar confidence in their own ideas. But I'm beginning to let go of the idea that everything I think I know for sure is necessarily so.

The Traditions, like the Steps, are guides for me to live *my* life. *My* problem is *me*. It's not my job to get others to follow these principles, but rather to make sure I follow them myself. We lead not by mandate, but by example [see 12&12, 135]. If I live according to these principles, my way of life will invite others to join me, without me demanding them to do so. That is the fruit of the principles. If I become obsessed with getting others

to change, then, even though my motives might be good, I'll get sick, and my good motives will end up causing harm. Good motives are my favorite excuse to act outside of principle. The Traditions are designed to protect the fellowship from my very best motives. They can only do this if I choose to follow them.

Recently I received a phone call from a sponsee who had begun attending a different meeting. He was disturbed by some of the group members' actions, which he felt were out of bounds with the Traditions. As he asked for suggestions on what the next right thing was, I heard fear in his voice. While I agreed with most of the specific concerns he had about the Traditions, it was apparent that he was relating to these recent acquaintances solely on the basis of what he perceived was wrong with them.

I have been told that sexaholics have emergencies—but SA does not. So I suggested he set his concerns aside for awhile and begin focusing on things that the members were doing *right*. I also suggested he read *Alcoholics Anonymous* pages 418-420 (4th edition). His attitude quickly began to change, and he was able to begin forming positive relationships with some group members. In time, he felt able to express his original

concerns without any sense of judgment or fear.

Often my idea of what's right blocks me from forming meaningful connections with others. I can only see others through the lens of my own opinion, and I become trapped in the world of self. I believe that in much of the service work we do, the togetherness is more important



than the actual task. The Traditions, I believe, are about relationship.

When I submit to spiritual principles, my arrogance and self-righteousness don't have to harm anyone. I can be present, listen thoughtfully without waiting for my turn to respond, and then at the appropriate time, tell the truth about what I think and feel with love and respect. I trust the group conscience to be guided in the right direction by our loving Higher Power. Even on the odd chance that I'm "right" about a situation and the group can't see it, surrendering my need to be right to the group's ultimate Authority has enabled me to remain a part of this beautiful fellowship even when I disagree. Far more often than not, in my persistent grandiosity, I will once again be surprised at how far God's wisdom exceeds my own.

—Steve S., Memphis, TN

Carrying the Message

Step Twelve: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics . . ."



In November 1971, I had a spiritual experience that changed my life direction. But for some reason God did not take away my bad habits when I asked Him to. My spiritual awakening that happened "as a result of these Steps" changed my life direction again—this time pointing me toward promoting life in myself and others.

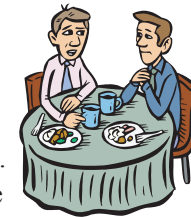
As a result of working the Steps, I've awakened to the reality that there is a God and it is not me, that everything is not all about me, and that every human being is a living soul created by God. My spiritual awakening has allowed me to reconcile the disconnection between God and myself caused by my damaged emotions and addictions.

Today I want to share the message of the SA spiritual awakening—not as a crusader, who spreads the message by the sword, but as a servant who carries food to a hungry person. I need to remember to carry the message of *our program*, not *my message*. I might not succeed at every attempt, but that's okay. I just have to try.

I'm to carry it to sexaholics in the program, sexaholics who have left the

program, and those who do not yet know that they are sexaholics:

Carrying the message to sexaholics in SA. I can do this by showing up on time for meetings, or even early to help set up. I need to leave work in time to eat a meal and drive to the meeting in a state of serenity rather than arriving in a frenzy, so that I can be helpful to others. I need to listen with my full attention as each member shares (without fiddling with my PDA). I can volunteer for service positions. I've held many service positions at the group level and Intergroup level. I served as Intergroup Treasurer for two years and have been elected as Chair for next year. I also serve on an international level as part of the *Essay* committee.



I carry the message by sponsoring others. I have a list of guys who have asked me to sponsor them. Some never came back to meetings. Some started working with me but now are working with a different sponsor. Some left so they could go back "out there." Some I've had to let go. A handful are still plugging away at this program with me as their sponsor.

I've had to learn the proper attitude toward sponsorship. I once attended a few meetings of a recovery group in which everyone was struggling to get sober. After hearing one guy's shares each week, I thought to myself, "If I were his sponsor he could get sober." This wasn't a great attitude, and I'm certainly glad I didn't blurt it out loud. A few years later he started coming to my home group and asked me to be his sponsor. I said "Sure!" and worked with him for a long time, and . . . guess what? He didn't stay sober. I learned a huge lesson: I can't get or keep anyone sober. I can only offer service and leave the results to God.

Carrying the message to sexaholics who have left SA. I can make phone calls to see how guys are doing and tell them I miss them. I once called a guy at the top of the phone list who hadn't been to meetings lately, but I didn't know that. We talked for a while and he came to the next meeting. At the meeting, he shared that he had received a phone call from God which brought him back to the meeting. This just shows that God can use any available person whenever He feels like it.

Carrying the message to those who don't know they are sexaholics. This is risky business. Bill W and Dr. Bob didn't go to bars to find drunks, they went to hospitals. Sexaholics

active in their addiction are having too much "fun" to consider that they need help. At times I speak with a non-program friend about my sex addiction and subsequent recovery, but I usually do this only if the conversation naturally comes around to it. I feel that God is the one who chooses the person who needs my help, and I have to be willing to help that person at the moment it is brought to my attention. When the active sexaholic asks for help, I can be there with the message that there is a way out, and we don't have to keep living like this.

The local SA Hotline is another good way to reach those who are searching for a new way of life. I have volunteered for Hotline duty several times and find it to be a rewarding way to serve.

These are just a few examples of ways to carry the message. SA is not a single-issue recovery. It is a whole life recovery. I can take my SA toolkit and apply it to everything in my life, and to all of my relationships. The God who is my SA Higher Power is also my Higher Power in other programs as well as my Creator. If God unifies all parts of my life, then I can use the program tools everywhere, in order to carry the message of recovery.

As a result of SA:

- I am still alive.
- I received a God upgrade.



- My marriage was saved.
- I have learned what true intimacy is. . . with my spouse and with friends.
- I no longer have to live the way I used to live. I now have a choice.

- God is doing for me what I could not do for myself!

Because this program has changed my life, I want to always be available to share its message with others.

—George F., San Diego

Sponsorship

Sponsorship in SA has been a great blessing for me, and continues to be a (sometimes humbling) learning experience. In fact, I learn as much from the men I sponsor as I have from my sponsors! Today I believe that every person is sent to me by my Higher Power to teach me something. Here's an example of what I mean.

In the past, I would never say, "I love you" to the men I sponsored. After all, a sponsor needs to maintain some emotional distance in order to be helpful! In reality I was fearful of getting too close. And I had used the phrase too many times to manipulate my lust-objects into having sex. For me, "love" was a lead-in to lust, and "intimacy" was a code-word for sex with the spouse.

Then a new young man asked me to sponsor him. He cried too easily, laughed too loud, and called too often. He shouted a greeting when we met, countered my handshakes with a bear-hug, and ended each phone call

with, "I love you, man!" I could see that sponsoring this guy would be a challenge.



I had to let go of my defenses and look at what I really wanted. I had to see the truth of the words in our Sobriety Definition:

We also strive toward the positive sobriety of acting out true union of persons. The great blessing (or curse, as the case may be) of our condition is that unless and until we can give unconditionally and relate with others, the vacuum left inside us from withdrawal will never be filled" (SA, 193).

I had to be humble enough to receive love, and generous enough to give it back. Finally I could say to my friend, "I love you too," and mean it.

—Anonymous

Working Step Ten with My Wife

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

I'm Dave, a grateful recovering sexaholic, sober by God's grace since January 2004.

My wife has been active in recovery

working both Al-Anon and S-Anon for many years. We share "the Real Connection" because we each work our own programs. Our 28-year-old son is a promise of the program.

Due to a lifetime of practicing blame, self-criticism, and an isolating preoccupation with myself, it's fair to say that I still have lots to learn about clear communication. Fortunately, through good sponsorship and learning to communicate with others in the program, I've made some progress in asking for help. Last winter, my wife and I attended a couples workshop at an SA/S-Anon marathon. In the workshop, entitled "Harmony in the House," one couple shared their practice of communicating with each other by doing a daily couple's Tenth Step.

We thought the idea was great so we adopted it. Each day one of us suggests it's time to do our Tenth Step. We take turns sharing. Each



person's shares includes two parts:

1. *I state where I have missed the mark.* I share with my wife any behaviors or attitudes where I have missed the

mark that day in relating with her and/or where I have been wrong or created barriers in our relationship. I try to be rigorously honest in assessing my own behavior. I may need to address several offenses. For example: "I was wrong to be critical of your taking so long to make up your mind about the new easy chair. I felt frustrated and irritated that you were ambivalent about the one I liked (the awesome purple La-z-boy!!!). When you asked me what I thought about your favorite, I demeaned your choice. I realize that I was both selfish and critical."

2. *I state what my partner has done well.* After stating my wrongs, I affirm my wife for what I have appreciated about her attitudes, attributes, or behaviors as well as things she's done in the last 24 hours that inspire me with gratitude, delight, or hope. For example: "I really liked the way that you encouraged me to

call my sponsor when I was feeling perplexed. Sometimes you have a better perspective on when I need to ask for help than I do." [Note that I did not tell her what she had done wrong or what I wish she'd appreciate about me!]

When I finish the affirmations, she thanks me, and then goes through the same admission of her wrongs and affirmations with me. We've found it important to be respectful and not to interrupt each other in this process (in much the same way that we do in program meetings).

This simple ritual has deepened



Sober Dating

From an SA Woman's Perspective

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.

I am powerless over lust. Lust has made my whole life unmanageable. Without this program I could never stop acting out, no matter how hard I tried. I found the SA program in 2003, but left after I decided I could work the program on my own.

I again tried to date without having sex but was unable to do so. In despair I came back to SA. The grace of God through this program has kept me sober since March 25, 2005.

Early in my recovery, I tried to meet men by going to social activities at a community center, but I quickly

my trust and appreciation for my wife and has resulted in a greater level of intimacy in our relationship. It has also impacted my self esteem in positive ways as I become more honest (with myself and with my wife) and more aware of what I am feeling.

I find this ritual consistent with the spirit of Step Ten, in which I continue to take personal inventory, and when I am wrong, promptly admit it. As a recovering couple, this ritual has been a useful tool for each of us.

—Dave Mc.

got stuck in dependency relationships. So I decided to have one year of sobriety before dating again. When I started dating, I found myself ignoring red flags (warning signs), fearing relapse, and definitely not in serenity.

At first, I went ballroom dancing (my hobby) but didn't feel ready to date. Then I met someone in class, went on one date with him, and began obsessing over him that very night. We didn't act out, but I was deep in fantasy about him.

I called my sponsor to tell her the "good news" about this guy but

she saw a lot of red flags (the same red flags that I heard about from my non-program friends). I strongly disagreed. She asked me to write two lists: (1) Red flags from my past that I had ignored, and the consequences I experienced from ignoring them, and (2) Red flags I could see about this new relationship. I filled four pages of past red flags and their consequences, and I had a long list of warning signs about the new relationship. I was surprised to realize that my sponsor and other friends had been right.

Then I met another guy ballroom dancing. We became dance partners and I again fell quickly into obsession. When I told my sponsor I planned to cancel my attendance at my home group so I could dance with this guy every night, she asked me to limit seeing him to once a week until I wrote some boundaries on how to stay sober and have a dance partner.

I reluctantly agreed. But after doing this exercise and some other SA work, I came to my own conclusion within a few months that I needed to end this relationship. I used the dancing boundaries to help me see reality. So I decided to redo the boundaries to apply to dating as well as dance partners.

After three years and ten months of sobriety, I'm now allowing

myself to date again, with my sponsor's guidance and the tools of this program. I feel the boundaries I've written will help my sobriety, but they are no *guarantee* that I'll stay sober. Working the Twelve Step program as described in *AA* Chapter 5, "How it Works" is what keeps me sober one day at a time.

My dating boundaries are based on the assumption that dating is optional for the single sexaholic, just as sex is optional for the married sexaholic. Over the years, this program has given me a deep joy that I never knew existed. I don't want to lose that over a date. I would rather be in serenity, free from lust, single and celibate than lose my serenity because of dating.

My experience writing these boundaries felt similar to writing a Step. I had to face myself and who I am honestly and with courage and face my fear of doing the very thing that has caused me serious problems in the past.

My boundaries are shown on the following pages. The boundaries apply specifically to me and my own recovery issues. Perhaps they will help others develop their own dating boundaries. I'm powerless over lust and will not follow these boundaries perfectly. But I use the SA recovery tools to keep me sober no matter what I'm doing—dating or not.



My Personal Dating Boundaries



1. *I do not sit alone in the same car with my date.* Physical distance helps my sobriety. Feeling powerless is a sign that it's time to go home.

2. *I do not exclusively date the same man after one date.* Even if I enjoy his company, it's good to date others. The purpose of the dating experience

is to enjoy men as people. I don't want to go into obsessing or lusting for a spouse. If I lust, I need to surrender it immediately and let serenity into the experience. I need to keep the relationship in the light, depend on my Higher Power and my recovery group, and spend time with same-sex friends.

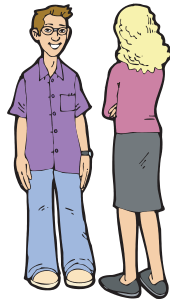
3. *I do not get too Hungry, Angry (Emotional), Lonely, or Tired (HALT).* I need to remember to use HALT one day at a time. I will not date if I'm at a high HALT level on any one issue.

4. *I rate my difficulty with lust triggers from 0-6 before considering a date.* Based on my lust level, I will take the appropriate actions, as shown in the following table:

Lust Level	Actions Required
Level 6 - May cause death. Emergency.	Clear schedule and work the program. Use as many tools as possible until the fever goes down. Increase number of meetings per week. No dating.
Level 5 - Fever. Dangerous level.	Use the tools of the program. Clear stuff off my schedule and make time to get well. No dating.
Level 4 - Sick	Use the tools of the program. Keep it simple. Don't add more to schedule. Dating is optional; proceed with caution.
Levels 3 Getting sick.	Use the tools of the program. Remember: dating is optional.
Level 2 - feeling okay	Use the tools of the program.
Level 1 - feeling some reprieve	Pray to God and thank him for reprieve from lust.
Level 0 - Reprieve	Thank God for reprieve from lust. Enjoy sponsorship. Dating is optional.

5. *If something bothers me, I say it out loud.* For example, I asked a man not to use profanity around me. I let him know I do not like crude humor.

6. *I pause when I need to.* I struggle with knowing what I want to do when a future activity is suggested. My automatic response is, “Yes.” I need to change my automatic response to, “I’ll think about it and get back to you.” Then, when I’m away from the guy, I can check my schedule and lust-level, and speak about it to others in the program if I need to.



7. *I tell my date my boundaries.* At the appropriate time I will clearly state my boundaries. I might say, “If you want to date me . . .” then state the boundaries I want to state. I will use “I” language and not “you” language, and will treat the man with respect throughout the conversation. My boundaries include the following: I do not kiss.

- I go much slower than average.
- I do not fool around or act like I’m going to have sex.
- I drive myself to locations where we date until I decide otherwise.

If my date has a problem with any of my boundaries, we cannot continue to date, but I will remain respectful of him as a person.

8. *I leave if my boundaries are crossed (by me or by him).* For example, if my partner makes a move to kiss me, I might do the following:

- Put my hands out and make physical space (so I can think).
- Say “No.” Don’t smile or laugh. Say it seriously and loud enough to be heard.
- State my boundary clearly and out loud. For example, “I don’t kiss.”
- Say goodbye and go home.

If I’m feeling pressured or if he sneaks in a fast kiss or if I sneak a fast kiss and I cross my own boundary, I will tell him “I need to talk to you at a later time about what happened,” get in my car, and go home.



9. *Actions to take after I leave* (whether boundary violation is by me or him): I use my phone list and try to reach an SA woman to talk. If unable to reach an SA woman, I pray and ask God for His help. If I’m still triggered, I use tools of the program. These tools include: journaling, listening to meetings on CD, working Steps 1-12 on the situation, doing a sobriety renewal, reading AA or SA or other program literature, reading my spiritual book, going to an SA meeting, (or an open AA meeting or any 12-Step meeting I qualify for), or looking at my birthday chips and remembering what

I have received from God through the SA program.

10. *I take action when I’m feeling powerless over my emotions or actions.* If I struggle with lusting after my date(s), I will surrender my date(s) back to God. I will pray for him: “May he be a blessing to others.” Then I take a break from dating for a time until the lust fever leaves.

When I need a break I tell my date something like, “My schedule is crazy. Until I get it under control I cannot commit to seeing you once a week. I will let you know when my schedule is free.”

11. *Before I see the man again I will re-read this article.* I need to remind myself of my needs in recovery, my boundaries, and who the man is, because I forget. I don’t know what plans my Higher Power has for him. My God may have a spouse especially picked out for him and it might not be me. The man belongs to my Higher Power. I may be tempted to try to take what belongs to my Higher Power, but the man belongs to God.

—Anonymous

Attention: Young People and Singles in SA

Please share your experience, strength, and hope as a single or young person in recovery. Articles on all subjects are welcome. We are especially interested in an article about “Sober Dating” from a man’s perspective.



To submit articles or ask questions, please contact essay@sa.org.

Whose Will?

I read this today: “God won’t help me do my will, but He’ll gladly help me do His will.”

So many of my God issues were related to Him not helping me with my problems. I now know that was because He wanted me to focus on my spiritual fitness. So long as I spent my energy doing my will, God stood back and let me have a go at

it (unsuccessfully I might add). When I put my efforts into doing God’s will, things changed. My problems have not all gone away, but I can better deal with them now.



—Chad C., sober 2391 days

Are You a "Thinkaholic"?

My AA sponsor used to say "Thinking, not drinking is your problem." Today I realize that thinking has caused as many problems for me as drinking, drugging, and lusting. Prior to recovery, many people talked to me about my thinking. I've lost jobs in my addiction and in sobriety as a result of my self-centered thinking and ego (easing God out).

Alcoholics Anonymous uses the word "thinking" more than 65 times, usually in a negative light. For example, "Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time" (86), and "His way of thinking and doing are

the habit of years" (118).

Many Twelve Step fellowships use "20 Questions" to help newcomers decide whether they are members. One version of these questions (meant to be humorous) substitutes the word "thinking" for "drinking." I find great truth in it.

Following are some examples of the "thinking" questions. If I don't want to answer "yes" to these questions, I must follow the suggestions of my program and remain God-centered.

—Steve C.

"Thinkaholics" Self-Test

1. Do you lose time from work due to thinking?
2. Is thinking making your home life unhappy?
3. Is thinking affecting your reputation?
4. Have you ever felt remorse after thinking?
5. Have you gotten into financial difficulties as a result of thinking?
6. Do you turn to lower companions when thinking?
7. Does your thinking make you careless of your family's welfare?
8. Does thinking cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
9. Is thinking jeopardizing your job or business?
10. Do you think to escape from worries or trouble?
11. Have you ever been treated for your thinking?
12. Have you ever been hospitalized on account of thinking?

If you answered YES to any one question, that is a warning that you may be an thinkaholic. If you answered YES to any two, the chances are good that you are a thinkaholic. If you answered YES to three or more, you are definitely a thinkaholic.

And finally, Rule 62...don't take yourself so seriously (12&12, 69).

[adapted from <http://home.earthlink.net/~insure/thinkaholic.html>.]



International Corner

Serving the International Community

I'm Brian, a grateful recovering sexaholic and chair of SA's International Committee. Our committee focuses on the still-suffering sexaholics outside of North America, Australia, the UK, and Germany. In those areas, SA is mostly organized and can supply SA materials in both English and Spanish. But outside of those areas, SA recovery is severely limited because of language barriers; we can only supply English-language materials and sponsors. In many parts of the world there are no established SA programs—no organized local group or Intergroup. Members in these countries need direction. Many of them turn to the international phone meetings for support. I've attended many of these international phone meetings, and have observed the desire for lust recovery among loners around the world.

For the past five years, I've been privileged to work with many volunteers, including Delegates and Trustees, who generously serve on our committee. We help as best we can to get groups going and get basic materials translated into the language of the country. Usually members of local groups translate existing



literature into their own language; however, these translations must be approved by the Translations Committee (a sub-committee of the SA Literature Commit-

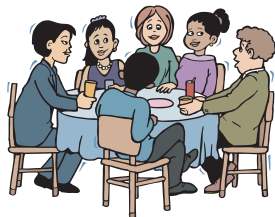
tee) before permission is granted to publish these as authorized translations. The Fellowship, therefore, is constantly looking for members fluent in languages other than English to assist with this invaluable service.

One might wonder what draws a person to the International Committee. In my case, some time into my service work, I began receiving calls from Africa. Early on this was rather difficult as rates were high and connections were bad, but help was so desperately sought that the callers persevered. Today, things have changed dramatically. With the international phone meetings these isolated members in Africa now have a place to come and recover.



For many years I've been privileged to host a number of African students and ministers in my home. I've

heard sad stories of past friends in Africa who died because they did not know where to find help for this disease. Over the years many copies of *Sexaholics Anonymous* have departed my home seeking a greater purpose on a vast continent riddled with the effects of untreated lust addiction. There is much need in Africa and yet there are still no face-to-face meetings. But we continually gain new contacts, and this gives hope to the newcomers. We must surrender and trust God's timing for the program's growth in Africa.



While Africa has been very slow to grow, other locations have embraced SA and many have found the benefits. I'm greatly inspired by the progress that has occurred in countries like Iran. In the past two years, *Recovery Continues*, *Step into Action*, and *Sexaholics Anonymous* have all been translated into Farsi—thus opening the program to many non-English-speaking people. Along with the growth of literature in that area, there has also been an explosion in the number of face-to-face meetings: cur-

rently 10 meetings a week take place in the cities of Ahvaz, Shiraz, Isfahan, and Qulqum! If you ever find yourself traveling in these cities, brush up on your Farsi and know that you will find the SA support you seek. Members of the International Committee help support these fledgling meetings through regular contacts and finding sponsorship.

There are other bright spots in our journey toward recovery. We've had inquiries in recent months from people in Belgium and Holland. Some of these new members have been able to attend marathons in the United Kingdom, and some traveled to the International Convention in Nashville. From these experiences, new meetings are now emerging in both of these countries.

At the October 2008 meeting of the International Committee, we were thrilled to hear direct reports from members in Poland, Russia, and the Ukraine who expressed a deep gratitude to the UK Intergroup, which sponsored the recent translation and publication of *Sexaholics Anonymous*

Translators Needed! All Languages!

SA is seeking native speakers of languages other than English (including Japanese, Polish, Korean, Arabic, and French) to assist in translating literature and to sponsor non-English-speaking members. *If interested, please contact the International Committee via saico@sa.org.*



into Russian. The UK Intergroup has also been asked to translate *Step Into Action* in order to expand the available literature. One might think that the program is just starting in this area because books are just being translated but actually, Moscow SA celebrated its 10-year anniversary meeting in February 2009. Ukraine has three meetings in Odessa and one in Lviv (in Western Ukraine). These meetings are held in Russian or Ukrainian, so if you are visiting one of these meetings you will need to brush up on your language skills or buy a pocket translator. However, *Sexaholics Anonymous* has already been translated into Polish. With a Polish translation in hand, feel free to join the 10 members who attend meetings in Warsaw, Krakow, and Poznan. They welcome everyone who inquires about the program in Poland.

Although we've had many successes, there is still much work to be done. It's a big world out there. If you are interested in doing service in this exciting area of SA, we would love to hear from you. We would



weep for joy if you are fluent in 20 different languages but will be quite happy if you only know English. We have many opportunities to translate, but just as many opportunities to sponsor a fledgling group or individual. If you are feeling really ambitious and a single fledgling doesn't feel like quite enough, you could ask to be assigned a region or country that is near and dear to your heart. Newcomers at home and abroad have a strong desire for support in the form of literature, sponsorship, translations, and recovery tools.

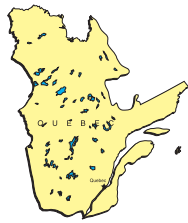
Those of us serving on the International Committee desire to connect with all international members attending the "Serenity in the Rockies" convention coming up in July. Also, any SA members interested in serving on the International Committee are invited to attend our International Committee meeting on Saturday afternoon July 11, 2009.

We look forward to hearing from and seeing many of you in Colorado.

—*Yours in Service, Brian S.*

Attention International Members!

A special meeting of SA's International Committee will be held for International members attending the Denver convention. We would love to meet all of you. Watch for details on the convention website at <http://www.serenityintherockies.org>



French-Canadian Meetings

Over the holidays, I attended a French-speaking meeting in Canada. I enjoyed seeing their black-and-white copies of *Essay*. But I found that the language barrier has kept them from hearing of lot of experience, strength, and hope. They miss out on a lot of program information.

I had not intended to tell my story, but when they noticed that my 7th Tradition contribution was made with US dollars, they asked me where I was working my recovery, and they asked me to talk about my experience. I told them about the various places I attend meetings, including Chicago, Los Angeles, and Nashville, as well as AA in Hong Kong. I described the different types of meeting formats, the sponsors I've had, and what I've learned from them. I also told them of the importance of taking action. For many of them, the latter was almost a revelation.

It seems to me that these non-English-speakers are cut off from

the culture of recovery. They rely on *Sexaholics Anonymous* and the AA literature, but most other publications such as *Essay* and *Step Into Action* are unavailable to them. I left feeling grateful to have all these tools, and grateful for all the sober people around me. I have kept in contact with a few of the guys I met there. It is nice to be connected to them.

But I would love to see an *Essay* article translated into French (as well as other languages). I'm not great in grammar, but I could help with the French. I think it would mean a lot for these people to be spoken to in their own language.

I would also love to see a network of sober sponsors who speak French and who are available for sex addicts around the world. I would like to know of others in the fellowship who are interested in participating with me in this type of service. I would also be interested in feedback from others in the fellowship.

If interested, please contact me through essay@sa.org.

—Anonymous

Now Available! *Ensayo*: Unofficial Spanish Translation of *Essay*

If you know SA members who prefer to read in Spanish, please let them know that *Essay* is now being translated into the Spanish used in most of South and Central America.

If interested please contact your country's SA contact or marjorie24horas@yahoo.com



Greetings from Peru



I am a sexaholic from Peru. For the last eight months, I have regularly attended an SA group in Lima. In our group, we practice writing affirmations as part of our Step Three work. These affirmations help me live the sanity that my Higher Power can give back to me each day. They also are reminders of how I can hand myself over to the care of the God of my understanding. Following are a few of the affirmations I have written:

1. There will be a new happiness that comes from deep within. It is spontaneous; it is a gift; it inspires gratitude.

2. My weakness and my compulsive behavior, both past and present, help me to understand and feel compassion for others with similar problems. If I am in contact with my

own weakness, I feel compassion for others. If I am not in contact with my own weakness, then I feel rejection for others.

3. When I confront my weakness and have control over my compulsive behavior, I feel an inner energy and confidence which motivate me to act with boldness and faith in what is before me.

4. I will enjoy being with others much more.

5. I hear my Higher Power saying: "Have no fear, I will give you the words to say in any situation. I am with you. Allow me to show you what I can do. Are you ready?"

—Jim, Lima, Peru



Upcoming International Convention "Serenity in the Rockies" July 10-12, 2009, Denver, Colorado

Sometimes we need to get away from our day-to-day recovery and take a look at our program from a different point of view. The *Serenity in the Rockies* conference is designed to help members do just that. In Denver—exactly 5280 feet above sea level—you're bound to get a better view of your program.

Mark your calendars now for July 10-12, 2009, then get ready to experience recovery from a whole new perspective! To register visit our website at www.serenityintherockies.org, which also links to the hotel website. Questions? Contact registration Chair John N. at johnntg4mid@gmail.com or SA Co-Chair Tom L. at TomL12S@comcast.net.

We look forward to seeing you in July!

A Note from the Delegate



Dear Fellow SA Members:

I've asked Dave Mc., Finance Committee member, to take my space this month to provide a brief overview of the 2008-2009 budget. We are grateful for the service of all Finance Committee members.

—Larry H.

The Financial Snapshot shown on the opposite page provides comparisons between SA's 2008 *budgeted* versus *actual* revenues and expenses, alongside SA's 2009 budget. This report is meant to be "user-friendly." As you review the Snapshot, you will notice that the fellowship fell short of budget projections for income from contributions—not surprising in light of our current economy. Noticing this trend halfway through 2008, the Finance Committee, Trustees, and SAICO began trimming expenses by postponing SAICO's move to new office space, and by reducing GDA travel expenses through teleconferencing. These and other cost-cutting moves, plus increased literature sales, enabled us to continue to contribute to our prudent reserve.

The Finance committee will review the 2009 budget on April 19th and discuss necessary changes to balance our 5th Tradition mandate to reach the addict who still suffers with the 7th Tradition mandate of being fully self-supporting. Please hold us in your thoughts, and prayerfully consider the level of your personal or group contributions to SA and SAICO.

If you have any questions about individual line items or would like a copy of the current Excel spreadsheet with line item breakouts—or if you are interested in serving on the Finance Committee—contact me at saico@sa.org.

—In service, Dave Mc, Finance Committee Member

SAICO Announcements



Florida
Brandon / Tampa
Clearwater
Ocala
St. George Island
Hawaii
Honolulu



Indiana
W. Lafayette
North Dakota
Fargo

New Groups

Tennessee
Somerville
Texas
Del Rio
Lubbock

Articles for Essay should be submitted to essay@sa.org

Financial Snapshot¹

Budget Item	2008 Budget	2008 Actual	2009 Budget
Revenues			
Contributions	148,400.00	114,260.33	150,000.00
SACFC	8,600.00	8,143.23	9,000.00
Conventions	12,000.00	16,994.10	20,000.00
Literature Sales	50,000.00	52,749.68	71,000.00
Discounts		(- 1,813.30)	-3,000.00
Interest	3,000.00	3,457.88	3,000.00
Essay	6,000.00	6,632.74	7,000.00
Total Revenues	228,000.00	200,424.66	257,000.00
Expenses			
Credit Card Fees	2,500.00	2,519.38	2,000.00
Convention Expenses	1,600.00	1,300.00	7,600.00
Depreciation	1,800.00	1,166.10	1,800.00
Liability Insurance	3,000.00	1,403.00	1,600.00
Legal	500.00	00.00	500.00
Accounting	3,800.00	4,762.00	3,800.00
Literature Expense	15,200.00	15,344.74	20,000.00
Payroll	90,250.00	88,563.68	107,000.00
Payroll Tax	8,200.00	6,775.32	9,600.00
Partial Benefits	800.00	800.00	1,600.00
Pension	8,600.00	8,599.99	7,300.00
Postage & Freight	7,700.00	9,503.24	8,500.00
Professional Fees	2,000.00	1,750.00	2,000.00
Office Expense	2,500.00	2,500.00	3,000.00
Printing	6,800.00	6,583.48	7,000.00
Rent	16,700.00	9,990.50	18,400.00
Repairs & Maint	1,500.00	121.55	1,500.00
Sales Tax	300.00	401.62	400.00
Taxes & Licenses	300.00	103.00	200.00
Telephone	14,300.00	9,178.94	12,800.00
Travel	26,000.00	13,243.07	32,000.00
Total Expenses	214,350.00	184,609.61	248,600.00
Revenues-Expenses	13,650.00	15,815.05	8,400.00

¹ **Note:** The following items are assets that show up on SA's balance sheet (but not on this report): 2008 contribution to prudent reserve, \$6794.45. Total Prudent Reserve as of 12/31/2008, \$157,401.86. Capital improvements of \$4,510.80 were paid from 2008 Total Income - Expenses.

For additional budget info contact SAICO@sa.org

Calendar of Events



March 29, 2009, Speaker Jam. *Making the Real Connection*. Red Bank, NJ. For info contact Stephen P., 609-203-6093 or website: www.njessay.org

April 4, 2009, Sponsorship Workshop. *Sponsors, Sponsees, and Newcomers Welcome*. Swedish Covenant Hospital, Anderson Pavilion Auditorium. Contact 630-415-0341, www.chicagosa.org; or contact@chicagosa.org

April 4, 2009, Eighth Annual Spring Marathon. *A Course of Vigorous Action*. Greensburg, OH. Contact 330-940-8040; www.akronsa.org, or sanortheastohio@gmail.com

April 18, 2009, Seventh Annual Mountain Spring Marathon. Asheville, NC. *Renewing Our Recovery*. For info call 828-681-9250.

April 24 - 26, 2009, Spring 2009 Family Reunion. *Our Blueprint 4 Successful Relationships*. Wichita, KS. Call 405-361-1340 or email anonymous0823@cox.net.

May 8 - 10, 2009, White Rock Spring Retreat. *Living the Journey*. Camp Alexandra, BC, Canada. Call 604-290-9643 or email intergroup@canada.com.

May 15-17, 2009, Find God XV Men's Retreat. *Living in the Now!* Cedar Lake Conference Center, Big Bear, CA. Contact Mark P (626) 893-5440. Convention flyer available at www.sasandiego.org

May 17, 2009, Long Island NY Annual Conference Manhasset, NY. Info at 516-634-0632, <http://www.salongisland.org>; or recovery@salongisland.org.

May 22 - 24, 2009, Edmonton Area Spring Retreat. *A Culture of Sobriety*. Battle Lake, Alberta, Canada. Info at 780-988-4411; www.edmontonsa.org; or essayedmonton@yahoo.ca.

Submit events to be listed in Essay to saico@sa.org

Submit info to be listed in June 2009 Essay by May 15, 2009.

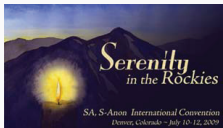
Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact. Event flyers are helpful for responding to questions.

Please contact an international operator for guidance on making international calls.

SA International Convention: Serenity in the Rockies

July 10-12, 2009, Denver, Colorado

This summer's International Convention will be held in the Mile High City of Denver. Register now to guarantee your space at www.serenityintherockies.org. For hotel reservations call Doubletree Hotel Denver reservations at 1-800-222-TREE (8733); ask for special "Serenity in the Rockies" conference discounted rate (\$99/night), which will be available 7/6- through 7/13. Questions? Contact registration Chair John N. at johntg4mid@gmail.com or SA Co-Chair Tom L. at TomL12S@comcast.net.



Events are listed here solely as a service, not as an endorsement by Essay or SAICO.

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The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

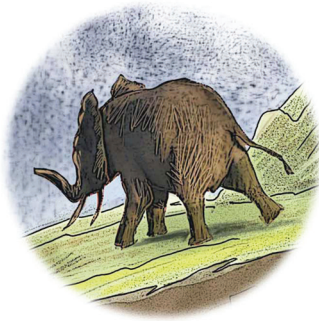
1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SA membership 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.

Essay presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. Opinions expressed in Essay are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by Essay. Manuscripts are invited, although no payment can be made. All articles submitted are assumed intended for publication and are subject to editing. All materials submitted become the property of Essay for copyright purposes. In submitting articles, please remember that SA's sobriety definition is not debated, since it distinguishes SA from other sex addiction fellowships. SA is not a forum for non-SA sobriety. In submissions, please do not reference unadjudicated illegal actions.

*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.

