

Essay

June 2009



Released From the Obsession



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 husting 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.

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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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Newcomers: Contact SA by telephone toll-free at 866-424-8777; outside North America call 615-370-6062; email at saico@sa.org; or SA website at www.sa.org.

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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Released from the Obsession

One morning in the spring of 2000, my mother threatened to throw me out of the house when I arrived home at 5:00 a.m. I ran away that night so I could continue acting out. I was 21. I had been attending college full-time and had two part-time jobs, but I dropped out of school and didn't show up at work so I could act out.

I felt a lot of shame about my behavior so I convinced my boyfriend to marry me. We married in April 2000. But we were both sex addicts and we raged at each other daily. In our marriage we acted out in lust and remained isolated people. My husband downloaded porn on our computer. He sometimes showed it to me. At times we acted out by watching it. When we were together we would criticize how crazy these people were, but when my husband wasn't home I would look at what he had downloaded and act out in secret. Once he caught me and got angry and we had another yelling fight. Lust killed our relationship.

In July 2003, I separated from my husband and moved back to my parents' house. In the

separation I got the computer, which I set up in my parents' living room. I would sit there viewing the porn

my husband had downloaded, acting out while watching it. I was disgusted with my behavior but couldn't stop.



In October

I acted out with a former college teacher. When I called him, he said he didn't remember who I was or what I looked like but that it didn't matter. For me, all I cared about was that he said yes. We acted out together once and I became obsessed with him but he was done with me. I stalked him online, called him at work, and went to his work looking for him. He told me to stop trying to contact him.

In my despair over losing this "connection," I became involved in Internet chatting. I stayed up late at night chatting about sex on the computer. Over time I stayed up later and longer, seeking out more to lust after. I started out in Christian chat rooms, then progressed to singles chat rooms, then to married-and-still-looking chat rooms. I tried to live out fantasies with others who were

looking for sexual conversations. I tried to stop but could not.

Sometimes while I was acting out, I would hear my parents turn over in their beds and would jump and close everything down and cover up fast. My mother sometimes came out to the living room and told me angrily that it was too late to be up. As I shut down the computer, my hands would shake from the scare of getting caught. I thought to myself, "I need to stop this or she'll see what I'm doing."

In November I installed a camera on my parents' computer. I started using the camera while chatting. One day while chatting with some people, I acted out in front of the camera. The reaction of these people did not fit my fantasy. When reality hit, I felt less than human. But I could not stop this behavior.

I was feeling crushed by the weight of the shame of acting out with strangers online. I was obsessed with thoughts of acting out with my ex-teacher. I was still trying to live out the perfect fantasy. I was obsessed with the forbidden.

I began to wonder if I might be a sex addict. At the time, I counted six for-sure acting out partners in my history. I thought, "That is not a lot to call myself a sex addict"—but I felt so much pain. I thought, "I'll just stop having sex with others and only masturbate."

But one day—after exposing myself in cyberspace and acting out—I searched for help online. I felt sick to my stomach. I found a number for an "S" fellowship and called a member. At the suggestion of the person who answered the phone, I decided to try six S-meetings to see if I might be a sex addict.

In my first meeting, I was the only woman with about eight men. That was too stressful. The guys tried to reassure me by giving me a phone list and pointing to another woman who sometimes came to the meeting, but after attending only a couple of those meetings, I searched the Internet again for a meeting that might have women in it. I found a women-only SA meeting.

That women's meeting was my first SA meeting. I started attending in November 2003. I went to a couple of meetings that month and a few the following year, but I was not committed to the group. I heard women share that they struggled with masturbation. I remember thinking, "Yuk! I can't call myself a sexaholic. That's not me. That would mean I'm a sicko."

I masturbated often, but *my* masturbation was healthy! I wasn't hurting anybody. I would go into fantasy when acting out with myself and would purposely "forget" what I was doing. I believed I wasn't doing anything disgusting because

my reasons for acting out were good ones: to go to sleep, to wake up, to feel better, or to feel alive. But if I was not in fantasy acting out, I felt alone, afraid, and unworthy to be alive.

Eventually I left the meetings. I was too busy. My family complained that they wanted me to spend more time with them. So I quit SA. I thought, "I'm not like other SA women, I can stop having sex with others and myself. I can stop on my own. I can share my progress with my mother." But I was soon back to my same behaviors and took more risks.

I installed a new chat program on my computer to see who might chat with me. A friend from college came back home after serving in Iraq. In December, he contacted me using my chat program and invited me to lunch. I was triggered. I asked my mom for advice. She said, "Go have fun with your friend." So I went. We had a nice time eating and talking. But when he brought me home I felt let down that "nothing happened."

He then invited me to watch a movie and I agreed. During the movie, a switch turned on in my head. I went on auto pilot. My mind was filled with fantasy. When I came back to reality, I had already acted out with him. The next thing I remember was feeling like the scum of the earth and walking back up my driveway to my parents' house feeling disgusted. I

didn't understand what had happened. The addict personality in me was getting stronger and I was lost and confused about what I was doing.

In February 2004, I started going to night clubs with my cousin. In the next couple of months, I acted out with others in the nightclubs. I thought my cousin was a drag because she kept pulling my partners away and telling them to get away from me. She pulled me to other areas of the club so we could have fun "in peace."

I felt like two different people. The addict in me was becoming more dominant than the part that hated the addict. My addiction was spinning out of control. I was acting out online again in the living room. I began doing Internet searches for porn. I told myself I was just browsing.

I was acting out at work during my breaks. I acted out again with the man I was divorcing even though he was emotionally abusive and had physically harmed me when we were living together. I began thinking of finding a job in the sex industry as a waitress so I could work at lusting full-time.

I thought I could make a lot of money in the sex industry, yet I was terrified to work there. I called myself a Christian and believed that God would break my legs if I worked in that industry. However, I carried around the phone number of a place

offering a job as a waitress for a “Gentleman’s Club.” I called once to get the address and find out what to bring. I knew that if something didn’t stop me I would work there. My family would be upset and I would lose what little self-respect I had left.

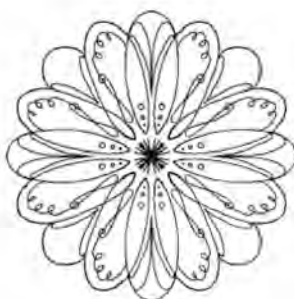
I wanted to kill myself because I felt that was the only way to stop myself from working at the club and to stop acting out. I thought I had to act out or I would die, yet I felt that acting out was killing me. Acting out was killing my spirit, my creativity, my personality, and all joy. In January 2005, I hit bottom again.

Shocked that the lusting and acting out were rapidly getting worse, I came back to SA. After about 14 months of “research” deciding whether or not I was a sex addict, I swallowed my pride and forced myself to go back to an SA meeting. I went to the women’s-only meeting first. They did not yell at me or ask me what I had been doing since I left. I began announcing myself as a sexaholic. I struggled in the program, regularly losing my sobriety before I could get a 30-day chip. I kept going to meetings but could not figure out how to stay sober.

In my spiritual life, I had started going back to church. One day I

responded to an invitation for people to walk up to the front of the church for prayer to be healed of illnesses. This was my Step Three experience: I walked up and actively turned my will and my life over to my Higher Power. I told a man doing the healing service that I suffered from an addiction that was not of a chemical nature and asked for prayer to be healed from it. He asked me if the church leaders could pray for me and I agreed. I was willing to do whatever it took to be healed.

After they prayed for me, I walked back to my seat tired and broken. I surrendered my life over to the care of God as I understood Him. I promised God in my heart that I would continue going to SA meetings.



Shortly after this experience I dreamt that I was released from the obsession of lust. The people who had prayed for me were in my dream. They covered me with a white blanket and told me I had been set free from shame and obsession. This dream was an important part of my recovery experience, but I wondered, “How does one live a free life?” Since that experience—in spite of my very slow and imperfect recovery—I’ve felt a freedom to be able to work the

program that I hadn't felt before.

I continued attending the women's SA meetings. But as a free person and feeling high on God, I wondered whether I was free to lust again. Then I found that if I chose to lust, the consequences of lust quickly followed.

My counselor said I needed to treat the meetings as if they were a job; something that I have to go to and plan my life around. The meetings became required in my mind. I went to the women's-only meetings once a week for awhile. I did not trust myself to go to the mixed meetings. I was scared to be in a room full of SA men.

My triggers became more frequent and I began to desire sex with myself and others again. The once-a-week meetings were no longer enough. I broke down again and became willing to do whatever it took to stay sober and grow in recovery. In April 2005, I started attending 7:00 a.m. mixed meetings.

Before I went to the mixed meetings, I prayed that I would be shielded from being lusted after and

from lusting after others (I learned this from a woman SA member). I kept my head down and listened. To my surprise, I heard my story told over and over again. I heard: my fear, my anxiety, my loneliness, my rage, my resentment, my lusting, my confusion, and my hope for freedom. I began to feel alive again. My sponsor encouraged me to continue going to the mixed meetings. She also kept saying that the large evening mixed meeting she attended was awesome. She would share that at every women's SA meeting I went to.

I took another chance and went to that large Tuesday mixed meeting. I was amazed to meet people who had ten or more years of sobriety! I hadn't known that was possible. I shared at the meeting and did not die. I led a meeting and was thanked by many. I was welcomed to the meeting as one of them. But I still felt shame calling myself a sexaholic; I felt worthless quite often.

My sponsor shared that she had attended the SA/S-Anon convention in July 2007, and that it was amazing to see so much sobriety. Driven to



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.



learn more about staying sober, I saved up my money and paid for the trip to attend the Akron convention in 2008. The convention was healing and wonderful. The male and female SAs had good boundaries and were respectful. I cried many tears of gratitude in my hotel room and in meetings.

While there, I went to a morning meeting on Shame. The closing share was by the leader of the meeting.

He said he is proud to call himself a sexaholic because that means he has to turn his will and his life over to the care of God as he understands Him. He has to pray, work on purity, be honest, and surrender resentment and lust.

Because of his illness, he has serenity from working the SA Twelve Step recovery program. He has to work the program or he dies. Just like me. I have to work the program or I die.

Today, I'm happy to say that I am a recovering sexaholic who loves going to SA meetings, and I'm supported by hundreds of people in the SA fellowship. I'm not alone anymore. Sometimes when I feel scared or overwhelmed, I recall the time when I led my large home group meeting and afterward they thanked me for leading. I saw them smiling at me with acceptance in their eyes, and I felt in my heart that I was home.

I feel close to my sponsor and love her very much. Also, I respect her husband and I feel supported and have been helped by him too. I call my sponsor often. She has helped me more than she will ever know. I am grateful to my sponsor and her husband for taking the time to be with me at the convention last July. I am blessed that they were able to celebrate a graduation with my friends and family in the home I grew up in. I love them.

Sometimes I go ballroom dancing. I enjoy it. I go home without giving my spirit away to acting out or lusting. I'm on speaking terms with my family even though I had forgotten and ignored



them for about three years before I came to SA. I accept that I may never marry again and most days I feel a peace about living single. I hope to marry someday, but it is not the destructive lust for marriage that I used to feel. Whatever happens, happens. I accept life on God's terms and not my own. I can see the miracles of SA in other members' lives. I hope that newcomers experience the miracles also.

Life in SA is awesome. The promises are coming true for me. I love you people!

—Anonymous

Sometimes Lust is Not About Sex

While in prison, some of my fellows and I found that we all spoke fondly of one particular board game from our youth. After recounting past glories, we sought to obtain a copy of the game. But the game requires dice, and prisons frown heavily on gambling, so our request to have a copy of the game was denied. With time in abundance (after all, we were in prison), we decided to create our own copy of the game from memory. Each of us contributed time, energy, and talent to the creation of cards, playing pieces, dice substitutes, and the world map.

After a few games, the superiority of my game strategy was clear. After feeling very low for the crimes I had committed, I now found a true thrill in dominating this game. I was also reminded of the feeling of inferiority that covered me while losing countless games of Scrabble® to my fellow prisoners. It was galling that, as a former school teacher, I was whipped every game by men who all had far less education. This feeling fueled my determination to make a statement by crushing all who would play our current game. Each game became incredibly draining because of intense concen-

tration and huge expenditures of mental energy. Obsession was firmly in control of my gaming—which was rather appropriate for a game based on global domination. The lust to win was my medication of the moment.

My strategy was working. I was midway through a game and in a favorable position to take control of the contest and win. At that moment, the absurdity of my quest came to me. While playing, I became testy and short-tempered with my fellows and felt hollow after each victory. I'm sure my subconscious was drawing parallels with the temporary reprieve I found in my acting out. I won every game, but the cost to me and the men with whom I lived was enormous.



There are times in this game when players might feel their situation is hopeless. In that case they will (if you'll forgive the phrase) "go suicide," relentlessly attacking with their "armies" until their forces are totally depleted and are easily conquered by another player. It is a way of throwing in the towel. Tonight, when I suddenly recognized my obsession to always win, I tossed in the towel. I began to roll and attack everywhere that I could.

The realization that I had “gone suicide” began to dawn on my opponents’ faces. As each set of eyebrows on my fellows raised, I felt a self-imposed chain fall off me. Each step away from winning was a step closer to freedom from this obsession. In losing, I was smiling. This was something I had never done while I was winning. Letting go was the key.

I have now been out of prison for over 12 years, and I always try to keep mindful of this lesson while

working my program. This does not mean I throw in the towel about all aspects of my life. I still need to work my program, keep employed, and pay bills and taxes. I am just more selective when deciding which issues get some of my finite supply of energy. There will be endeavors in my life that will justify expending the amount of capital that I put into playing that game, but rigorous honesty helps me to keep that list very, very short.

—Davis C.

Three Days in Jail

On July 26, 2007 at 5:00 p.m., I was arrested in a small Southern city for propositioning an undercover police officer in a city park. I never wanted to go to that city again and legally can never be in one of their parks again. Last night, however, business travel took me there briefly. I was within a mile of where I had been arrested. I was flooded with an immense sense of anguish. I did not want to be there. I texted several guys for prayer. I asked God why I needed to be here of all places in North America.

His answer was that He wanted to remind me of what He had done to get my attention. Two SA friends called and we talked. Both reminded me that the past is the past, and that it’s what it took to get me to SA. They reminded me that God has a purpose, and I would not be the

man I am today if it were not for the arrest. I would not have the experience of God’s grace and love today. The brokenness is what helps me to be of service to others, to share my heart with others. It took stripping me of everything to make me willing to be used by God to help others. Without the arrest I would not have the hope I have to share today. It is through brokenness that I have learned humility, compassion, mercy, and encouragement for others.

I learned some valuable lessons during my three days in jail. I asked God to use me while I was there, and He did. I was able to share the program message with five other guys who were struggling with addictions. I learned humility when an inmate who was leaving gave me



his drinking cup (cups were a prized commodity). He filled it with water and brought me a drink of water. I saw mercy, compassion, brotherly love, kindness, respect, and courtesy among the inmates—more than I had ever seen in any religious institution I have been affiliated with.

Most of all, I learned that when stripped of everything, I still have the power of choice over my response to the situation. I had been wrong. I had broken the law. I deserved to be in jail. I chose to surrender it to God and allow Him to use me while I was there. I would not trade the experience of those three days for anything.

As I was leaving the city, I prayed for the arresting officers and judges. I asked that God protect them, bless them financially, and allow them to feel His presence. I thanked God for their service to the community.

“Nothing, absolutely nothing,

happens in God’s world by mistake” (AA, 417). The greatest blessings in life are spiritual. As I have moved forward in my recovery, I cannot contain the joy and excitement. I want to tell everyone how God has used this program to change my life. I want to be used by Him any way He sees fit. I want to be of service to the addict who still suffers. I want to help others find the God of their understanding.

“This is the way to a faith that works” (12&12, 34). I am humbled and feel unworthy and unqualified to be of service to God. I’m just a poor sex addict who is powerless over lust and his selfish, sinful nature. I yearn for fellowship and I wish I could meet all of you. “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God . . . and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny” (AA, 164). It is truly all good.

—Jim H.

SA Corrections Facility Committee (SACFC)

SACFC is dedicated to carrying the message of SA recovery to incarcerated sexaholics. We provide the literature commonly used for doing Twelve Step work to members, groups, and Intergroups who work with people in correctional facilities. We also share the experience, strength, and hope we’ve gained over the years doing this work. If you would like to help in ways such as writing to or sponsoring prisoners, contact SACFC via saico@sa.org.

If you would like to share your ES&H about Twelve Step work done in prison (either working with others or during your own incarceration), submit articles to *Essay* at essay@sa.org. —Davis C.



Phone Meetings Really Work!

Recently, when our SA regional representative joined one of my regular face-to-face meetings, I shared how important my morning sobriety renewal phone meeting calls have been for my recovery. He was amazed at how many brothers and sisters attend these meetings every day and asked me a lot of questions about what we cover in the meetings and what I personally get out of them. His last question was the topper: “Will you make a commitment to me to write to *Essay* and let them know how meaningful these daily calls are to you?”

I should learn not to open my big mouth! Despite my apprehension, I made the commitment, and that is what motivates me to write today. I have learned in this program that making and keeping commitments is a very important part of my recovery.

I was in my disease for the better part of 40 years before I came to SA and qualified for 19 of the 20 questions in my newcomer meeting. I’m sure it would have been 20 out of 20 had I been out there in my disease much longer! I lost at least two important corporate jobs due to my acting out. I had destroyed one marriage and was well on my way

to destroying my second marriage. I lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in the divorce in legal and other fees and have been estranged from my daughter for more than five years.

She was 12 when her mother and I split and she is 17 today. I’m certain that my 19-year-old son suffers from one or more addictions, including ours. I came to SA a broken man who had most certainly hit his bottom.

Now I’ve been sober for a little over a year and my life has changed so dramatically that it’s

hard to even imagine what my life was like in my disease. But I have not closed the door on the past. I keep my story fresh for newcomers and sponsees so that I can readily share my experience, strength, and hope.

When I gave my Step One after a couple of months in recovery, I was grateful for the feedback from several members in the room who had solid, long-term sobriety. While some encouraged me for my honesty and courage, others in the room warned that I had a “tough road” ahead, that I always needed to lead with my weakness, and that I should work the Steps fast and not worry about doing them “right” the first time. I was told that



I had to go beyond attending meetings for support and to work hard and stay with the program. I mentioned the abstinence commitment I'd made with my wife, and they said that was a good thing. The first period of abstinence in our marriage was more than eight months. We've had a few more 30- or 60-day periods since then. I was also told that Step Nine would be "big" for me—and that was no joke!

So what does this all have to do with phone meetings?

Well, almost immediately after completing my Step One, I had to travel on a long-term basis to another city where I had the privilege of attending some form of "S" meeting every day, and sometimes multiple times a day. I got a new sponsor and worked the Steps with him every day for about a four-month period. I completed all Twelve Steps. God was working in my life and I took to heart all of the suggestions from my Step One meeting.

But when I returned home, I

could not get to more than two or three face-to-face meetings per week. What was I to do to keep working my program hard? I don't remember how I first learned of the phone meetings (although it was probably mentioned in one of my face-to-face meetings), but I called in one day and just listened and thought, "Wow, this could work for me!"

I discovered that there were morning sobriety renewal calls, Step study meetings, "White Book" meetings, and just general sharing meetings—and almost 50 per week! At first, I called in once or twice just to listen. It was a bit scary and intimidating at first, but I gradually found the courage to speak up and contribute. I've since taken a service position on the 8:30 a.m. Eastern morning sobriety renewal call (5:30 a.m. my time) and participate at least five days every week in that phone meeting. While I was writing this story, I noticed that there was a phone meeting going on (the morning sobriety call for the Asia Pacific region), and I

Daily Sobriety Renewal Phone Meetings

Are you unable to attend your regular face-to-face meeting because of sickness, bad weather, or your car won't start? Do you have difficulty getting to a meeting when traveling? *Now you can make a meeting every day!* You can attend a live SA teleconference meeting with others around the world who are seeking sobriety. Meetings are scheduled throughout the day, every day of the week. Information and schedules are available at:

<http://www.denversa.org/Misc/phnflyer.pdf>



called to listen while writing. I also attend one or two other book-study or sharing phone meetings to supplement the two or three face-to-face meetings I attend every week.

Some of my brothers in the program have asked, “How do you get up so early to do those phone meetings?” My response is almost a reflex: “Well, I used to get up and act out at 5:00 a.m. when my family was asleep. Now I get up, do my morning meditation, prayer, and conversation with my Higher Power, and then get on a 45-minute renewal call before



starting my day and serving my family breakfast!” There is no question that having these phone meetings every day, multiple times per day, allows me to work my program very hard and, as a close friend in the pro-

gram likes to say, keeps me “frosty in recovery.”

Phone meetings really work, and they are an important part of my recovery. Have you tried one yet? If not, visit www.denversa.org, click on “Phone Meetings:

They meet every day!”, check out the schedule, and give us a call. You’ll be glad you did. Keep coming back!

— *Anonymous, Santa Barbara*

Thoughts on Step Five

One morning this past winter, during a depression, I was meditating downstairs in my bedroom while my wife was eating breakfast upstairs in the kitchen. She sneezed, and my initial reaction was annoyance (not the most spiritual reaction, but human enough). Immediately following the irritation was fear: “Oh no, I just felt annoyed at my wife for sneezing, what do I do? I’m so unspiritual, so far behind everyone else in the spiritual life. Why do I



have these terrible thoughts?” After the fear came unreasonableness: maybe I should ask my wife not to sneeze while I’m meditating. Ask and ye shall receive, right? That’s part of my spiritual practice today; asking for what I need, being direct. This is all healthy stuff. Right?

This is depression for me. At least it’s a part of it. Every thought and feeling carries huge significance. And I get crazy.

I called my sponsor and told him I was thinking of asking my wife not to sneeze while I was meditating. I said that part of me thought

this sounded a little crazy and I needed confirmation from an objective source. “Yes,” my sponsor said, “you’re crazy.”

Of course I was. But what’s scary is that I remember that part of me really believed I should actually tell my wife not to sneeze while I was meditating. This is why I can’t live the spiritual life in isolation: because I’m insane. Not only that, but I usually don’t even know that I’m insane, and I have to have someone else point it out to me. This can only happen if I have the courage and willingness to share myself with another.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions says, about Step Five, “experience has taught us we cannot live alone with our pressing problems and



the character defects which cause or aggravate them... We have to talk to somebody about them” (55). A very spiritual man once told me that Step Five is about transparency. It is about coming out of hiding. It is about losing my secret self, and the ego I’ve constructed to protect it, in order to find my true self, a wondrous, beautiful, and (sigh) imperfect child of God, full of light and faith and love.

I can’t say anything miraculous happened the day I called my sponsor to have him confirm my insanity, unless it was that I was able to let go of my ego for a while, or at least to loosen my grip on it a little, enough so that I could feel some space between it and myself—which may be as good as it gets.

—L.B.B.

Upcoming International Convention: “Serenity in the Rockies,” July 10-12, 2009, Denver, CO

Sometimes we need to get away from our day-to-day recovery and look at our program from a different point of view. In Denver—exactly 5,280 feet above sea level—you’re bound to get a better view of your program. 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 TomL125@comcast.net.



We look forward to seeing you there!

Attention Conference Attendees: Please share your convention experience. Submit articles to essay@sa.org

Waiting on the Chair

I wanted it: a beautiful leather reclining chair and ottoman. Ads claim it as the most comfortable chair in the world. I'd tend to agree because a friend I was visiting offered me the use of his chair when I contracted a cold at his house.



Toss or turn, it made no difference. I couldn't sleep. Then Rich said, "Why don't you try sleeping in my chair? It works for me every time." I was desperate. When I sat down in the chair and adjusted it, it conformed to every contour of my cough-wracked body. I was soon fast asleep. I slept in the chair for three nights!

Returning home, I knew I had to have that kind of comfort available in my study. In fact, I soon became quite attached to the idea. However, I'm thrifty by nature and when I found out that my friend had paid nearly \$2,000 for the chair more than 15 years ago, I knew that it would never be mine at that price. I could do better. Damn the obsession, full speed ahead! I scoured Internet shopping sites for comparable chairs. My reward came after days of searching well into the night. A local man had "The Chair" for only \$900, and it was only two years old. I called him

and he described the chair glowingly and said that he was willing to come down to \$800. My compulsive self was hell-bent on getting it. Then the problem came to mind. My dear wife (of 37 years) and I instituted a policy years ago that such a major

purchase required the agreement of both parties. I tried to justify my obsession by reasoning that I would simply use some of my inheritance to purchase it. Still the agreement was in principle.

Fear and anxiety that some other buyer was going to get it before I did set off a couple of major warning bells. I decided to bring the issue before my wife and, surprisingly, she suggested that we both visit the local furniture store that weekend and check out the floor models. While we were there, we both sat in the exact model that was for sale on the Internet. I was honest with the store owner that I really wanted to get the Internet chair and told him the price. He suggested that I buy it immediately. YAY! My wife sat in the chair and saw the color swatch. She seemed amenable to proceeding, but seemed a bit cautious. I noted this.

Monday's quiet time gave me the

opportunity to put the big question—to buy or not to buy—to my Higher Power. Three readings later, all encouraging charity and self-restraint, I was so depressed by the input that I got up and logged onto the Internet news. The articles on “Slumdog Millionaire” seemed interesting, so I watched the video reports. The young actors who so powerfully portrayed the misery and poverty in the slums of Mumbai seemed jubilant over their Oscars. I wept tears of gratitude for their brilliant reminder of the plight of the poor.

Returning to my quiet time, HP formed the transformative question: Could the money I

wanted to spend on the chair perhaps be better used to love and serve those less economically fortunate than I? That was it! Frustrated again, I called my sponsor for help and began describing the situation. His terse response was, “If you’ve got \$800

to spend on a comfy chair, then send it to me and I’ll make sure it gets to people who need it.”

I hung up just as my wife walked in from her staff meeting. She led out with, “Looks like we’re going to have a shortfall of \$21,000 this summer in our budget for sending poor kids to camp. This will also mean that our staff salaries will be cut. I’m a bit depressed.”

My addict’s first thought was, “You think *you’re* depressed!” But thanks to the program, I passed on mentioning that.

Instead, I paused and within a few moments, I got it. I said to her, “I’d like to give you the \$800 that I was going to

spend on the chair—no, let’s make that \$1,000—to support the kids and your work.” She looked at me with grateful eyes and gave me a big hug. It was worth waiting for.

—*In service, Dave Mc.*



God’s Will Not My Will

Accepting God’s will for my life, when it conflicts with my own desires, is a difficult part of recovery for me. One of the things that helps me do this, however, is to remember that I’m incapable of properly running my own life. When I was in charge,

things got messed up badly—and not just because of my addiction. I finally came to the realization that God has to be in charge of everything in order for me to function.

It was difficult. I wanted to turn my will and my life over to God, but

I didn't know how—and I didn't realize that I didn't know how. As I got further into working the Steps, however, I began to see specific areas of my life that I was clinging to. I could then make the decision to surrender them.

Now that I have six years of sobriety, the process has gotten somewhat easier. But I still frequently find myself in a situation where my self-will comes into play. It's about dying to self.

There's another aspect to this, one mentioned on page 418 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Quite simply put, I don't know what's good for me, but God does. It helps to remind myself that God can see the big picture.

Here's a trivial example. Suppose that I don't like the way the person in front of me is driving. He's going too slow, and I can't pass. Do I get irritated and angry? Do I tailgate him

so that he'll maybe go faster? Or do I surrender the situation as being part of God's will for me? Maybe if this person wasn't slowing me down, I'd get caught in an accident further down the road. Or maybe I'd get to my destination sooner, only to have the building collapse on me in an earthquake, whereas that wouldn't happen because I'd been slowed down. Maybe that driver ahead of me is an angel in disguise, sent there by God to keep these bad things from happening to me. Yet I, in my small,

self-centered world, can only see that my will is being stymied.

Finally, I have come to realize that God has my best interests at heart. He loves me and wants

me to be happy, joyous, and free. I've come to trust His will over my own.

These are the things that work for me.

—Chad C.



Experience Versus Wisdom



On occasion, I like to tell this story to newcomers who want to treat me as if my 40 years of sobriety and gray hair give me some great wisdom: I bought an old house and moved in without doing any repairs. The third step in the stairs was broken and the first three times up and down I tripped and fell. From then on, I just stepped over the broken step whenever I went up or down. When friends would visit, I would tell them to be careful of that third step. That is sharing my experience. Wisdom would have been fixing the step the first time I tripped on it!! —Chuck A.

Vigilance



As is often the case, I was desperate

when I crept in to my first SA meeting at the end of December in 2007. I was desperate for so much then: sobriety, recovery, a hug from my daughter, a night without tears, a glimmer of hope from my wife. Desperation became my buzzword. I seemed to always work that word into my shares. Any time I was asked to do what I considered impossible, I asked myself, “Am I desperate today?”

I spent days in international hotel rooms without turning on the television; I pinched myself hard whenever I let my mind wander from reality; I kept my eyes on the floor when walking through airports. I was desperate.

Then about four months later, I found myself trying to get out of a meeting because the thirty-minute drive was “too far.” I was not desperate that day. I had slipped from complete desperation in only four months. I shivered. I had been down this road before when I replaced desperation with complacency. Complacency led me to the dark, solitary cave of relapse

from which I had just emerged after fourteen years. So, was it possible to stay desperate? Was it good to stay desperate? Constant desperation is not in the serenity prayer, is it? What was I missing?

I live in a land of lust. Although it is peddled as if it were as vital as water, lust is my enemy. So what have people done in the past when they were surrounded by enemies? First, they desperately fought to carve out a safe place in which to live. They had desperation. Then, after the enemy was purged from their immediate vicinity, they built walls for protection and manned tall towers from which to look for any approaching threat. While their desperate battles may have

been over, they had not replaced desperation with complacency. They had replaced desperation with men in towers. They shifted to vigilance! That was my answer.

I needed to stay vigilant and look for the lust that would attack at any time. I had to strengthen my defenses with the tools I learned about from the literature and other members. I was not desperate that day, but I could start being vigilant. For me, vigilance is going to meetings, staying connected, and



working my program.

I went to that meeting that night, and guess what one of the shares mentioned? Yes, the word “vigilance” was spoken for the first

time from a long-sober member. I had my confirmation. I had my new word. I am vigilant. I am sober.

—Mark E., San Antonio

Withdrawal

I had never thought of myself as unstable, nor ever noticed anything particularly erratic about myself until about three weeks after I got sober. My first several meetings were somewhat numb experiences. People talked about all kinds of alarming, bizarre stuff at meetings and, amazingly, I had almost zero reaction to any of it. In large part life remained steady and went on as normal.

Then came withdrawal. Volcanic rage, wild mood swings, explosive and violent anger—I’d never experienced such things! At that time I had a fairly high level of a martial art under my belt and became genuinely afraid of what I might be capable of. I burst out laughing at a funeral. I burst into tears a couple of times. When other people were around, I would literally grind my teeth, growling to myself, “Don’t they understand what I’m going through?” Deep despair and depression would drown me, followed by impenetrable

pink-cloud enthusiasm. Any attempts at control were obviously futile.

This business went on during every waking moment; I was never given any rest. I cannot recall any other period of my life that was so uniquely unpleasant. After about four months it started to taper off, and by the end of my first year I was doing wholly better.

I’ve been sober for about six years now, and I have not seen any consistency in people’s withdrawal

experiences. Some people have it better, some worse, but I got through it the same way many others have. I kept my eyes on the people who had years of recovery and trusted that if I did what I was told, one day it would get better. What proof did I have? I didn’t have any, but

it seemed to me that these people had been through it themselves, and they appeared to be doing pretty well nowadays. Maybe if I did what they had done I might one day do well also.

—Anonymous, Milwaukee



Providing Translations Around the World



I'm Jerry L., Chair of SA's Translations committee (a subcommittee of SA's Literature Committee). Our committee handles requests for permission to translate *Sexaholics Anonymous* and other SA literature from English into other languages. We assist in various ways such as providing contacts who speak the language being translated, offering translation assistance, and providing any other resources that are helpful, such as chips and English copies of SA literature. We also check and ap-

prove the linking of other countries' websites to sa.org.

Our main objectives are to ensure that translations are accurate, that the sobriety definition is not changed, and that no material contrary to our program has been added. We have received requests for assistance from many countries around the world.

Following are summaries of some current projects, including areas in which we could use more help.

Current Translations Committee Projects

Country	Status of Project	Help Needed
Australia	Ongoing contacts with SA fellowships.	
Egypt	Members attempting to start SA fellowship in Cairo have requested permission to translate SA.	
England	Ongoing contacts with SA fellowships.	
Greece	Permission granted to translate SA into Greek.	Translation checkers who speak Greek
Germany	SA literature published in German; Ongoing contacts with SA fellowships.	
India/Pakistan	Translation has begun for Urdu (language of Islamic population).	Translation checkers and contact person
Iran	Translation into Farsi has begun. Ongoing contacts with SA fellowships.	Translation checkers who speak Farsi
Israel	Ongoing contacts with local fellowships. Translation checkers available.	More translation checkers & contacts who speak Hebrew
Japan	Translation has begun.	

Country	Status of Project	Help Needed
Kenya	Translation has begun. Permission granted to change some language & add stories applicable to the culture.	
Korea	Translation has begun. Ongoing contacts with local fellowships.	
Netherlands	SA has been translated into Dutch. Book needs to be reviewed.	Translation checkers and contact person
Poland	SA and some SA brochures have been translated into Polish. Translation has begun on <i>Step Into Action and Recovery Continues</i> .	
Russia	SA translated and published; translation has begun on <i>Step Into Action Series</i> . Ongoing contacts with local fellowships.	Additional translation checkers

When I first started as Translations sub-committee chair in 2006, I thought we might receive one or two requests for translations. At the time, I was Chair of the Literature Committee and Chair of the Delegates. We'd been receiving requests for permission to translate our literature and I had had some direct contact with the fellowship forming in Iran. I had sent them chips and an English copy of SA.

I've traveled and studied in Europe many times since 1985. I find the contact with other cultures challenging and broadening. It's exciting to see the growing interest in SA around the world, and to have contacts with groups worldwide. I hope the spread of the fellowship into other countries will not only help them in their search for sobriety and sanity, but will help the fellowship in

North America as well.

While I find the work of our committee interesting, at times I feel overwhelmed by all of the requests. We could use more translators in just about every language. For example, we have not yet identified a native speaker to help with the Egyptian translation when it arrives from Cairo. We also need members who can travel to these countries or who have contacts there, to serve as contacts with new groups. Additionally, we would like to coordinate more closely with the International Committee in the future.

If you would like to serve in the area of translations, please contact SAICO at sa.org or contact me at jwl44sj64sl97@earthlink.net. We would love to have you join us.

—Jerry L.

Age Restrictions at SA Meetings?



The Detroit area Intergroup has been grappling with how to handle youth (i.e., children and teens under legal age) who wish to attend SA meetings. We've been discussing this ever since one of our

local meetings sent away two girls last year. Many of us agreed that although our own addictions began when we were still teenagers (and for most of us that was before the Internet), we also recognize some serious legal, ethical, and practical concerns about minors attending meetings.

After discussing this topic at length with each other and with SA members around the globe, Detroit approved the guideline shown here. We offer this tool in the spirit of encouraging conversation throughout the fellowship.

We wonder whether other groups have had children or teens attend?

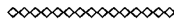
What would you do if they did? What if they were 14 years old? Or 17? How does Tradition One apply in this instance? What about Traditions Three, Four, or Five? Is it safe or helpful for children or teens to listen to SA meetings? What about the safety of adult SAs?

We hope you'll continue this conversation with your own sponsors, sponsees, Intergroups, and regions. Perhaps there will be discussion on the subject at the upcoming International Convention in Denver.

A group of us are hosting a breakout session at the Nashville International Convention in January 2010 to discuss this issue further. If you've had experience with minors attending SA meetings, or would like to hear how other groups have handled similar situations, please watch the Nashville Convention program guide for more information.

We hope to see you there!

—Anonymous



Guideline for Responding to Youth



Background: In 2008/9, the Detroit area Intergroup discussed a local incident in which two teenaged girls tried to attend an SA meeting to get help with their behavior. The girls were asked to leave, and our Intergroup discussed the issue over the next several months. As the result of these discussions, we developed the following suggested guideline.

Individual SA groups may choose to follow the Intergroup’s approved guideline or not. Please consider Tradition Four: “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SA as a whole,” and discuss within your own meeting whether you will adhere to the guideline.

Suggested Guideline: In March 2009, the Detroit Area Intergroup decided to strongly urge all local meetings to only allow individuals who are 18 years and older to attend SA meetings.

Concerns: The attendance of teenaged boys and girls at SA meetings poses multiple concerns. Most of all, we want to protect the safety of children as well as of all current members of SA. Some SAs are legally required not to have contact with children. Some content in SA meetings could be considered abusive or harmful for children to hear. Children at SA meetings expose the fellowship to legal, ethical, and public relations problems from parents and other community members who might find out about their attendance. If a minor at a meeting describes sexual acting out with an adult, some SAs are legally required to report this behavior, thus breaking the speaker’s anonymity.

Such attendance also poses a variety of legal questions. The Intergroup investigated both Michigan and national laws about contributing to the delinquency of a minor. Various laws stipulate 16 and 17 years of age as “legal,” but we feel strongly that the most restrictive age guideline best serves our fellowship and future members.

What To Do: If you suspect a visitor to your meeting may be under 18 . . . ask! It’s better to ask the age of 100 25-year-olds than to allow one 17-year-old to stay for a meeting because of fear of giving offense or making a mistake. We suggest that two members of the meeting take the young person outside of the room and say:

- This is not a safe or appropriate place for you to get help.
- We’re glad you’re seeking help. We hope you’ll come back when you are of legal age.
- Please accept this resource guide¹ of some other organizations that might be helpful.

[¹Note: The Detroit Intergroup has not yet developed the final resource guide. Example resources might include national suicide hotlines, runaway hotlines, domestic violence shelters, sexual assault shelters, or your local Child Protective services]



Attention Members: Have you developed guidelines for age restrictions at SA meetings in your area?

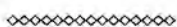
If so, please share your experience, strength, and hope.

Submit articles to at essay@sa.org

What is the Intergroup and Why Should I Care?

Fifteen months ago I volunteered to serve as Chair of Denver's Intergroup. I didn't particularly want to do it. I'm not very good at schedules, and it meant showing up at a specific time and place once a month for two years. Nobody else was stepping up, however, so I decided to give it my best shot. So far I've missed two meetings.

Here in Denver we're going through a period where it's difficult to get volunteers at the Intergroup level, possibly because newer members aren't familiar with what it is aside from the occasional announcement asking for volunteers. So I was asked to write an article about the Intergroup: what it is, what it does, and why it's necessary.



The Intergroup is made up of representatives from the meetings in a local area. It achieves goals that are usually too large for an individual group. For example, in Denver, we:

- Publish a monthly newsletter and meeting directory
- Maintain the denversa.org website and contact email

- Maintain a phone line for newcomers
- Organize a yearly retreat
- Sponsor a prison meeting in a nearby city
- Send informational mailings to local therapists, psychiatrists, and clergy
- Provide scholarships for SA international conventions
- Sponsor periodic regional and international conventions



We also facilitate communications among meetings, provide a forum for meetings to share ideas for strengthening recovery, and assist in starting new meetings (see *SA Service Manual*, 15).

The Intergroup has a formal place in SA's service structure. Local groups send representatives to their Intergroup, which in turn sends a representative to the region, which elects a representative to the General Delegate Assembly. The Delegates oversee the business of SA as a whole. They appoint the Board of Trustees, which manages SA's day-to-day operations (including SAICO), such as printing and shipping the literature commonly used at meetings.

Some people, however, have misconceptions about the Intergroup. For example, an Intergroup does not govern—it does not have the ability to command its members. Each group is autonomous and can choose whether or not it wants to belong to the Intergroup. Also, the Intergroup receives its money from member groups. Thus each group has, as a last resort, the ability to cut off funds.

The Intergroup provides crucial services for members and newcomers, such as maintaining the phone line. Lack of these services would not stop groups from meeting, but it might detract from their effectiveness. Remember, the primary purpose of each group is to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.

Ideally, every group should appoint an Intergroup representative. An Intergroup will be most effective when it represents all of its member groups. The Intergroup also relies

on its members for financial support. Each group determines, by group conscience vote, the level of contribution the group will contribute to the Intergroup.

Most important, however, is the fact that the individual members are the ones who make Intergroup happen. Someone must answer calls to the phone line. Someone else has to update the website. Others drive to to another city to meet with prisoners. Without these volunteers, the Intergroup could not perform all of its functions.

I hope this information is useful. I encourage you to attend a meeting of your local Intergroup and get involved. More information about SA's service structure can be found in the *SA Service Manual*, which can be downloaded for free or ordered in hard copy format from the SA Online Store at sa.org.

—Chad C.

Higher Power



—Jimmy M.

You Don't Have to Slip¹

The newcomer has not been in the group very long but he has heard a good deal about slips and has begun to worry about himself. Someone should inform him emphatically and authoritatively, “*You don't have to slip!*”



While it is easy to say that slips are unnecessary, how do you avoid them? After observing hundreds of AA members over a period of nine years, I have the feeling that continuous sobriety is, in part at least, a matter of attitudes and

There are a few other members, not newcomers but men and women who have been around six months to two years who periodically—every few months or every few weeks—go off on a little binge. Nothing serious, understand, but they evidently are not getting the program, and certainly are not getting all the benefits of continuous sobriety. These lapsing members are worried and perhaps a little ashamed. Someone should take them aside and shout politely, “*You don't have to slip!*”

One of the persuasive bits of evidence that slips are unnecessary is the simple fact that thousands of members have two, six, ten, and more years of uninterrupted sobriety. Some of them are not very smart—maybe not as smart as the slippers—but they are sober.

that those attitudes can be cultivated by the member who really wants to stop drinking. The member who does not want to stop drinking should go elsewhere for advice.

What are those attitudes? They may vary with the individual but the following pattern should fit a good many cases.

Attitude I. *Sobriety Must Come First—For Me.* The member who tries to make AA a second or third class hobby usually has trouble. We have a Number One problem and we have to treat it as such. Sobriety cannot defer to job, family, friends, neighbors, pain, embarrassment, anonymity—or to anything else! If we do not have sobriety we ultimately will not have any of the things we hold dear. While the “high bottom”

¹ Copyright © The AA Grapevine, Inc. (September, 1955). Reprinted with permission. Permission to reprint The AA Grapevine, Inc., copyrighted material in Essay does not in any way imply affiliation with or endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or The AA Grapevine, Inc. —Submitted to Essay by Anonymous SA member

drinker may not have lost much of anything—yet—some day he may lose everything if he continues to drink. If he gets sober and stays sober then everything else usually falls into place and the more he has of other things the more he can enjoy them.

Hence, the member who really wants to stay sober should place sobriety as his first objective and then rearrange his life accordingly.

Slips often occur when a member does not feel well. He is nervous, jittery, about to explode. A second situation that prompts a drink is one of expected personal embarrassment. The alcoholic is out with friends or business associates and he just cannot say “No.” The next two attitudes relate to these frequently encountered situations.

Attitude II. *I Will Suffer This Pain. It Will Pass. Even If I Die Now I Will Die Sober.* The nervous situation is the basis of many slips. The alcoholic begins to shake mentally and sometimes physically. He gets so excited he nearly loses his reason. He feels as though he might go right through the ceiling. Physical pain may also be in the picture. Relief from physical pain sometimes seems to be an excuse to drink—not a sufficient excuse of course—but it serves the alcoholic who wants a reason.

This kind of nervous or painful condition is familiar to most alcohol-

ics. Some who have been dry many years have to put up with it from time to time. They recognize the situation, however, and know that the feeling will pass. Newer members may not be so sure, but they should resolve not to drink even if they are going to die on the spot. Not many alcoholics actually die in this manner, but when you are willing to die for your sobriety you will probably stay sober.

Attitude III. *I Will Suffer Any Embarrassment For My Sobriety.*

Fear of what friends or associates will think or say has led many alcoholics to take a drink. They fear the pink

cars and burning cheeks. They conjure up in their minds all the accumulated ridicule of their colleagues. This type of situation is a great mental hazard for many new members and

others not so new. They can survive these situations if they will cultivate the following line of thought:

“I’ve suffered terrible embarrassment in the past because of my drinking. If I drink again I will suffer still greater embarrassment in the future. So why not suffer a little embarrassment for sobriety? I will refuse that drink even if a dozen people point to me with scorn. Even if I fall down in confusion and disgrace, I will not drink!”

Actually, the frightful embarrassment with which the alcoholic



mentally wrestles practically never occurs—but the alcoholic must be prepared for it. If he resolves to die of embarrassment rather than to take a drink he will almost certainly stay sober.

Attitude IV. Sobriety Must Be Earned. *Sobriety cannot be bought with money.* Many of us tried that to no avail. But sobriety has its price and if we try to buy it too cheaply it may elude us.

Hence, if I attend two meetings a week and do not get sober I will step up my program to four or five meetings and also increase my other AA activity: work in the kitchen, chauffeur others to meetings, go to lunch with other members, help at Intergroup, make hospital calls, read AA literature a few minutes each day, use the telephone more (particularly if I am debating about a drink) and so on.

This intensification of activity has particular applicability to members who have been around some time but with limited success. They may be trying to buy sobriety too cheaply. It usually can't be done. Sure, Joe stays dry without going to many meetings. Some few stay dry on their own. . .but what has that to do with me?

If a member finds he is not “getting the program” he should consider whether he ought to increase the

volume of his AA activity. In other words, give—not money—but of himself, more generously. Naturally this fuller scope of activity may mean some sacrifice. Perhaps that too is necessary.

Attitude V. Try To Put Greater Emphasis on Personal Contact with That Higher Power. Some new members may not be ready for those Steps which relate to the Higher Power. For them the cultivation of Attitude V may have to be delayed; but they can probably read this short section without doing violence to their principles.

Some of us who enjoy sobriety ask that Higher Power each morning for grace to get through another day. “No matter what happens, don't let me take that first drink today--no matter what happens!”

At night we give thanks for the day just gone and look forward to the morrow, humbly asking Him “for twenty-four more hours of sincerity, sobriety, and serenity”; asking His help tomorrow to “improve the quality as well as to increase the quantity” of our sobriety.

We don't feel compelled to limit our requests to the morning and evening. When we enter that restaurant with the boss and two VPs; when we walk off the eighteenth green and head for the clubhouse; when we



feel alone in that distant city; what is wrong with repeating, “No matter what happens, don’t let me take that first drink!”

That is conscious contact with God! It is as simple as that. And it won’t do the slipping agnostic or atheist much damage. Who knows, it may get him sober. Nothing else has, so what has he to lose?

These five attitudes by no means tell the whole story. Some members may have to think through other approaches for themselves but these five are basic to a wide range of cases.

They emphasize to us that sobriety must be our first concern and that to obtain it we should be willing to suffer any pain or embarrassment. We try to earn our sobriety by giving of ourselves generously rather than stingily and we maintain close contact with that Higher power through supplication and thanksgiving.

You don’t have to slip and if you cultivate these five suggested attitudes, you probably won’t!

It’s worth a try, anyway.

—Anonymous, Scarsdale, NY



Meditation

Three Slogans

Acceptance is a big part of my program today. Acceptance keeps me out of expectations (premeditated resentments), resentments, and revisited resentments. I can take “hits” off of any of these, and these hits can lead me directly to lust. One thing that helps me a great deal is using three simple slogans.



“It is what it is.” This reminds me that the circumstances of my life, in this very moment, are what they are. It is of no use to fret over them. “You are Who You are” speaks of the awesome greatness of my God. He is the great I AM. He can handle any situation that is confronting me. “I am who I am” tells me that I am exactly who God wants me to be in this very moment. It doesn’t mean that I don’t have character defects that need to be changed. It just means that today I accept where I am in the process.

“It is what it is.” “You are Who You are.” “I am who I am.” All are good slogans to remember on the road of recovery.

—Nancy S.

A Note From the Delegate Chair



Dear Fellow SA Members:

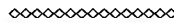
Question: What is the purpose of the Delegates?

Answer: To serve the fellowship. That's why we are called "servants."

The fellowship elects us, and trusts us to do what is best for SA as a whole and report back to the groups. The procedure developed through the years calls for groups to elect reps to the Intergroup, who elect reps to the Regions, who elect Delegates to the General Delegate Assembly. The GDA sets policy, elects Trustees, and helps Trustees implement the assigned tasks.

I write all this to emphasize that we are all just group members who have volunteered to make some payback to SA for the help we have received. My character defects and triggers remain; service has helped me to realize that I can now cope with them in a much better manner. As my sponsor puts it, "SA was here when I needed it, and it is my obligation to see that SA is here for the next person who needs it." A very appreciated side benefit is that I have made many friends in this fellowship whom I would otherwise have never met.

I suggest you do yourself a favor: move further into working Step Twelve.
—Larry H.



SAICO Financial Update



One day I realized that although I had spent generously on my addiction, I'd been pretty stingy with my giving in recovery meetings. The

SAICO Financial Update 1st Quarter 2009	
Revenues	98,783.50
Expenses	97,363.37
Revenues - Expenses	1,420.13
Total Prudent Reserve as of 03/09	158,300.00

selfishness and denial that had blinded me to lust also blinded me to greed. I realized that I needed to grow in the area of financial recovery. Today I believe that, as part of progressive victory over greed, my Higher Power offers me many opportunities to give generously.

Today I find freedom in random acts of giving: a generous tip for the waitress who served me dinner, \$10 for the street person who asked for spare coins, freedom to drop a \$20 in the SA basket and not count back the change dollar by dollar. When I give generously to the SA basket, I am supporting our fellowship's primary purpose of reaching out to more addicts who still suffer.

—In service, Dave Mc.

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

Delegates and Trustees

Delegates

Region	Delegate	Committees
Mid-Atlantic	Larry H., <i>Chair</i> Laurens A. Will K. Lia F., <i>Alt</i>	Service Manual, Nominations, RAC International Nominations, International
North Midwest	Marlene L. Gary L. Jeff O., <i>Alt</i> Lee W.	Nominations, Literature Literature, RAC, Legal Finance, Internet
Northeast	Mike F. Tom V., <i>Alt</i>	Literature, RAC Internet
Northwest	Farley H. <i>Alt</i>	RAC
Southeast	Steve S., <i>CoChair</i> Bill S. Dave Mc John B., <i>Alt</i> María H., <i>Alt</i>	COMC, Finance, Service Manual Finance, COMC Conventions
South Midwest	Glen J. John W., <i>Alt</i>	International, Conventions CFC
Southwest	Mike S. Tom K. Eric S., <i>Alt</i>	Conventions, Service Manual CFC, International CFC
UK, Ireland	Nicholas S. Denise O., <i>Alt</i>	International, Translations International

Trustees

Trustee	Committees
Gene J., <i>Chair</i>	Nominations
David T.	CFC, International, Loners
Luc B.	Internet, Translations
John C.	COMC, RAC
Lawrence M. Sean R.	<i>Trustee CoChair</i> , Literature, Service Manual
Carlton B.	Finance, Conventions

Attention Delegates and Trustees: Please notify saico@sa.org if your committee information changes



Trustees and Delegates can be reached at saico@sa.org

Calendar of Events



September 25 - 27, 2009.
SA Unity Conference,
Irvine, CA. *Living in the
Here and Now*. More info
at www.sasanonunity.com
or 2009@sasanonunity.com

September 26, 2009.
Greater Detroit Marathon,
Warren, MI. *The 12 Steps:
A Design for Living*. More
info at www.sa-detroit.com

October 16 - 18, 2009.
Annual Chicagoland Fall
Retreat. More info coming
soon.

Upcoming International Conventions

July 10 - 12, 2009. SA
International Convention
Denver, CO. See info below.

January 8 - 10, 2010. SA
International Convention,
Nashville TN. *Fellowship of
the Spirit*. More info soon.

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

*Submit info to be listed in
September 2009 Essay by
August 15, 2009.*

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

*Please contact an interna-
tional operator for
guidance on making
international calls.*

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

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 at www.serenityintherockies.org. For hotel reservations call Doubletree Hotel Denver at 1-800-222-TREE (8733); ask for special "Serenity in the Rockies" conference discounted rate (\$99/night), available 7/6 through 7/13.

Questions? Contact registration Chair John N. at johnng4mid@gmail.com or SA Co-Chair Tom L. at TomL.12S@comcast.net.

New Groups

*For more information
about groups in your
area, visit sa.org*



Canada

Vernon, BC
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Singapore

Taiwan ROC
Taipei City

USA

Albany, NY
Baton Rouge, LA
DeKalb, IL
Grand Rapids, MI
Jericho, VT
Ocoee, FL
Ormond Beach, FL

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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.

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Essay Illustrator <!!!!!!@sa.org>
To: Essay Editor <?!?!?@sa.org>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2009 8:58:25 AM
Subject: Back Cover

To the editor:
I hope you can understand my situation. My higher power has taken control of my computer;
I think He is trying to tell me something.
My drawing application behaves like my word processor, and my word processor like a photo editor...
To make things worse, my printer behaves like a note pad.
Anyways, I wanted to paint a nice seascape, with the serenity prayer in the margin. Below is what I got!
I trust your readers will accept this situation, and perhaps someone can help.

I think I need to recite the serenity prayer: 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.

Your trusted illustrator.

