

Essay

September 2009



The Gift of Sobriety

A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

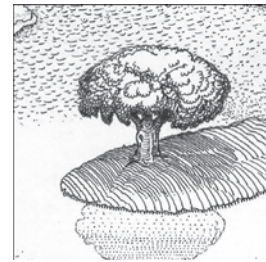
The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

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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September 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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The Gift of Sobriety

Today I know that I'm not in charge of my life. I know that there is a God, and that I owe my continued sobriety to my relationship with Him. But it has taken me a long time to learn those lessons, and I'm still learning them today.

I was born in northern Canada, when my older sister was 11 months old. My family moved around a lot. Eventually we settled in a small southern Canadian town of about 6,000 people.

When I was around seven, an elderly relative would visit us. He made us pray the rosary on our knees on the hardwood floor for 30 minutes or more. To a seven-year old boy, that felt like an eternity! I once complained that my knees hurt. He said, "Why are you complaining? This is nothing!" He showed me huge calluses on both of his knees. I thought, "If that's what it takes, I don't want to know God."

At the religiously managed schools I attended, I felt that I was harshly treated. My teachers taught me about God but did not help me know or understand Him. I remember once, when I had missed one word on a religious doctrine test, that I had to go home and write the whole

paragraph-length answer 100 times for the next day. I had no time left to go out and play that night. My hand, wrist, fingers, and arm hurt. I felt angry and confused. I believed that I could never measure up to others' concepts of God.

My father was my idol, my first God (or maybe second after my mother). But he was sexually inappropriate toward me, and I began to realize that he was not truly available for me as a father. I also noticed his confusing behavior while in the car with him one day, driving down the road. We were in the middle of a conversation when all of a sudden he turned his head to look out the window. "What's wrong?" I asked. "Is there a fire truck going by? Did I say something wrong? Did I do something wrong?" He answered, "No, everything's fine." But I was confused and wondered what was going on.

When we got home, I asked my mother why my father would suddenly turn his head while driving. She said, "Don't worry about that. It's nothing." From my mother, I learned to ignore what I'm feeling or seeing. I learned about denial and secrets.



From my father I learned staring, lust, and fantasy. These tools served me well on the road of avoiding the painful realities of life.

My father and mother seemed unable to care for me in a nurturing way—not because they didn't want to but because they didn't know how. They were both orphans; each was raised in a religious institution from the age of seven. I cannot imagine what being dropped off like that would have felt like. But I felt their fears of abandonment through their actions toward me.

Most of the time they would tell me what to do regarding every aspect of my life, over and over again. Even something as simple as how to hammer a nail into a piece of wood—they would insist that I did not do it correctly. When I didn't please them they would ignore me. One of them might stop talking to me for months at a time.

As a boy I was fairly small. After school, five kids at a time would beat me up. Hoping to avoid the daily beating, I'd be the last to one enter the classroom and the first one out. This set me up for a lifetime of playing the victim. I had a great fear of angry and abusive people. I was unable to stand up for myself. I was completely overwhelmed by all the pain in my life. I remember making a conscious decision that lust and masturbation were the only ways I could feel good

or love and care for myself.

During my teenage years I tried to have relationships with others without much success. I especially wanted a girlfriend, but I always found myself playing second fiddle to some other guy. I'd be in a relationship, and then suddenly the woman would be gone. I wondered what was wrong with me. Today I know that I hung on too tightly to relationships because I was so insecure.

As time went on, I felt I would be better off alone rather than to be intimate with anybody. I had lust and masturbation to nurture myself—so who needed a girlfriend? During this time I crossed many boundaries, including pornography, voyeurism, and bestiality. Lust was my Higher Power. It temporarily took away the unmanageability of my life.

Before moving away to the university, I had a girlfriend for two years. That was a record for me. When I came home to visit her during my first year at school, she told me she had dated someone else. I was afraid of losing her. My only response was, "Do you still love me?" Even though I had continued to act out at college, she was my drug of choice. She answered, "YES, absolutely." So I said, "I don't see anything wrong with what you did. I understand what you are going through." This helped relieve my guilt about my own sexual transgressions

(which I had not shared with her). I was in complete denial.

A few months later I got a “Dear John” letter from her. After reading the letter, I went for a five-hour walk in a snow storm. I decided I would not get hurt again. I proceeded to look for the most needy, most vulnerable person I could find—someone who would be so grateful for my attention that I could use her sexually without feeling guilty. It worked, and I got sicker.

When I married this wonderful woman (who thought I was God), I was still mourning my former girlfriend. Even after 11 years of marriage and kids, I remained attached to my former girlfriend and fantasized about her.

Over time, sexual relations with my wife became infrequent. I blamed her for the lack of sex. I started harassing her, telling her to get help for her sexual issues. That didn’t work out so well; I was eventually told it was my problem. I decided that our sexual problems gave me *carte blanche* to get my “needs” met outside the marriage. I crossed more boundaries and my disease got worse.

I decided to explore a friendship with a psychologist friend in order to work on my unmet needs. Unfortunately, because I was so vulnerable, this man was able to

break down my defenses, and our relationship became sexual. One more line was crossed. I told myself it was not an affair because I had been advised to take care of my sexual needs. Besides, this was a man and not another woman. The psychologist wanted me to leave my marriage, but I couldn’t make up my mind to do it. I felt like an elastic band being pulled



between the affair and my marriage. I was living a double life with all sorts of lies.

By this time, my resentments were killing me. Suicide seemed like the only way out of my miserable life. I thought, “If this is the only life I’m going to get, I might as well check out.” As I started making specific plans for the suicide, I began to feel happier. At last I had found a way out of the insanity.

The psychologist saw that I was becoming seriously disturbed. One day he handed me a brochure for a Twelve Step program and asked me if I would like to try going to a meeting. I thought, “What have I got to lose? I’m committing suicide tomorrow!” So I went. I was amazed to find 35 people there, all of whom were telling my story and offering help.

I thought the psychologist had orchestrated the whole thing for my benefit, and that it must have cost him a bundle to hire all of those people.

I decided to postpone the suicide and go to the meeting again the next week. I thought, “He can’t afford to pay these actors to do the same thing twice.” But the next week the meeting was the same. Another member told my story. I asked him, “Did you read my diary?” I thought I had been alone in my insanity, but here I was surrounded by others just like me.

I got a sponsor and started working the Steps. I asked one of the guys who had told my story to sponsor me. I thought he would know how the story would end, but he said he did not. He said the only thing he could offer was to

show me how to get connected to my Higher Power. He said that is what would work, and that God would provide the answers in due time. In 1992, I began a new life.

I started applying the Steps and Traditions to the resentments I carried. Even though I believed I had been abused, I had no other choice but to forgive. My life depended on working the Steps and Traditions, and surrendering resentments. Those actions are my responsibility, and they are the keys to getting closer to God’s will.

After two years of SA sobriety, however, I found that those same resentments were allowing me to justify continuously entertaining lust

in my head. I was sober but still struggling. Then, at an international convention, in the middle of a hotel lobby, I read a Step Five to seven sober men. I was no longer afraid of who knew. I could hold my head up high and look the world in the eye.

After sharing that Step Five, I finally became sober from entertaining resentments. At the same time, a wonderful miracle occurred: by the grace of God, I was also given freedom from lust. I felt recovered, as promised on



Alcoholics Anonymous:

“The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism.”

This wonderful way of living saved my life. I am eternally grateful to my sponsors, who helped me get over the resentments I had been carrying since childhood. I needed to be free of them.

At meetings people began saying to me, “I like what you have to say, would you say more?” I was shocked that people would want to hear more from me. Today I know that this has nothing to do with me. It has to do with the fellowship of SA, and how my SA brothers and sisters brought me into a closer relationship with

God. Without the continual support of this fellowship, I would have been dead a long time ago.

Today I also believe that my sponsees help keep me alive, as well as happy, joyous, and free. Why? Because they show me exactly who I am, where I've been, and where I'll go if I do not follow the Steps to the best of my ability and get closer to God. Without Him, I'm dead.

Today I have a new life. It's not mine, it belongs to God and others. In these rooms, we are working and sweating together. Without the fellowship of SA around me, none of these miracles would have happened.

When a sponsee shares a resentment with me, I say, "Fantastic! Have you worked the Steps yet? You haven't? Oh well, go have some more pain then." I don't do this out of cruelty but out of love, because I know that pain motivates change. It wasn't until I was willing to check out of this life that I was humble enough to follow the directions of my Higher Power, and to change my thoughts through the obedience that He requires of me.

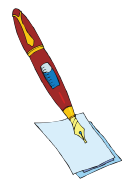
Recently, I was talking on the phone with a sexaholic who was struggling. My heart went out to him. I asked, "Have you reached bottom yet? No? Okay, give me a call when you do." Without that change of attitude, without being willing to go to any length (even to attend a conference or marathon), recovery will be difficult. So when a guy asks me to sponsor him, I'll say yes, and then add, "I'm going to make you mad at some point in time, because I love you and you need to hear it." I didn't want to face my own pain, but when I started working the program, all of a sudden a power greater than myself showed up in spite of me and gave me some tremendous freedom. I know this can happen for others.

I've been married 30 years to the same woman. That's a miracle! At first I tried to get my wife into a program because I'm a control freak. But I had to realize that I'm not God, and that I just need to work on myself. As I did that, I gained some sanity (I didn't know what sanity and real love felt like before). What a joy!

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.



Today I'm grateful for the five kids who used to beat me up. I used to look fearfully into the eyes of the people who abused me, but I've found healing from looking into the eyes of recovering SA members across the room and thinking, "These people understand me and still love me." Letter writing and phone calls have not had the same impact on me as working with other sexaholics face-to-face. Today, because of this fellowship, I'm able to trust people without fear of abuse.

I've met many SA members who suffered as I did and survived. We all deserve a medal. The most important thing I can do is to pass the word on to other members that there is hope and the possibility for a new life.

I have given up many things because of this program—things that I wanted to hang on to for dear life! But I've learned to let go. I had to let go of three businesses I had owned for 22 years because I needed a change. I needed to be more accountable to others. That included having a boss. When I was my own boss, I had too much power, too much freedom, and too much control. I was acting out in all kinds of ways. Being my own boss fed my lust for power over people. So I gave my businesses away. I even gave away a building. Financial insecurity seemed better

to me than having a business that encouraged my character flaws and my addiction. I would rather have peace of mind.

I got sober before my kids became teenagers. That was a blessing. At least they had somebody to come and talk to about these issues. This disease stops with me. No more denial. No more secrets. I need to get all of my "secrets" out into the open (with the right people) and keep working this new life of sobriety for everyone around me. Everyone can benefit, including my children.

Today, I've been sexually sober for 13 years, one day at a time. I've also been sober from entertaining resentments and lust for 11 years. I never thought this would be possible. Some days I still have difficulty believing that this has happened to me—but I accept this as a gift from God.

The peace and serenity I experience today are unbelievable. Amazingly, they are even increasing. This outcome is what I hope for every one of us as we all work together face-to-face, working the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts in this wonderful fellowship of SA.

—Anonymous



The Pain Of Lust



It's hard to say exactly when and how I became a sexaholic. At age 10 or 11, I was given a pocket calendar with a picture of a naked woman on it (I was so deeply impressed that today I can still remember the calendar.) After that I would often go to the market in my neighborhood looking around for more "sexy calendars" hanging on the walls of the stalls. I discovered very quickly that I could get pornography at school, and that even my dad had his private collection of "girlie magazines" available at home. I would spend hours masturbating and fantasizing over those pictures (and the scenes that I developed in my mind) as a means of escaping from a reality (my school and family) in which I felt uncomfortable and inadequate most of the time.

At a very early age I had found in masturbation the way to cope with my environment and myself, but I would have to wait another 30 years of progressive disease and a good deal of suffering until I realized how powerless I was. When I was an adolescent, my lust was already demanding more explicit pictures and images in the magazines that I bought and hid at home. I had also started drinking in a similarly progressive manner, but it was difficult for me to think that I had problems with either

sex or alcohol at the time (or for a long time afterwards). I wasn't 18 yet when I discovered porno cinemas and sex-shops in Madrid. I enjoyed watching those movies for hours, always looking for something newer and more explicit. God knows how much pain and suffering the dreadful power of those images exerted (and would continue to exert) on me.

When I was 30, after a long and disastrous drinking career, I joined AA. It wasn't long before I realized that, even though my life had changed for the better since I'd given up drinking, I was still powerless over my sexual behavior. Once my drinking was over, I seemed to look for pornography even more than before. I contacted the SA group in Madrid, but I wasn't ready for the solution. I would engage in successive relationships in which I got obsessively jealous and demanding. I would also visit porno cinemas and sex-shops. I thought the "perfect relationship" would fix my sex problem, but it didn't.

My "sex problem" was getting completely out of control. Looking back, I can tell how progressive this disease can be: If watching other men having sex had previously looked

disgusting to me, in a few years I was the one looking for sex with other men in porno cinemas. If years before I had been acting out once every week or two weeks, in the last stages of my addiction I could spend three or four days in a row on a sex bender. Every time I left one of those places, my shame, fear, and guilt were unbearable. I would promise a thousand times never to come back, but there I was again in a couple of weeks or even days. I would ask God to remove this terrible obsession from my mind, but I wasn't willing to stop masturbating, flirting, or having relationships with one woman after another. These relationships were getting shorter and more painful each time. Of course none of these women had the slightest idea of my acting out in porno cinemas and sex-shops.

As in many other areas of my life, I could appear to be a good worker, a good son, a good member of the church, even a good AA member, but nobody knew what was going on in my mind or about my suffering. I was full of lust, fear, and guilt—even though some little part of me still pretended that everything was fine. That little part is the one that kept me acting out for years.

I was in SA for many years before I could really stop. I had stopped

many times, but would relapse once more in a few weeks or months. I didn't know what was wrong with me. It was getting worse each time. After each relapse, my sponsor would ask, "What is it that you are still holding on to and don't want to let go of?" I still wanted to enjoy lust somehow by subtly flirting or looking at women, or simply by thinking about them. Therefore, when I stopped acting out, I would give up pornography, masturbation, anonymous sex, prostitution, and relationships, but lust was still in my mind. No wonder I relapsed periodically. When I did, I would go back to those same things all over again.

One day, on a short holiday in Vizcaya, in the north of Spain, when I had been sober for two or three weeks, I felt once more the craving for lust (I had been triggered at a beach the previous day). Once more, I felt powerless over the madness that

was driving me to look for some place to find my drug: pornography. I made a cell phone call to a fellow member, but I still wanted to act out. In fact, I was on my way to look for that place when "Something" made me stop for a moment. The craving was painful; it was a hot day. I sat down on the sidewalk. For a brief moment I could see clearly what my life had become and what it would become if I didn't stop what I was doing. Most likely I



would drink again; I would become a homeless person; I would commit suicide. But I could not stop.

At that very moment, out of pure desperation, sitting on the hot sidewalk, I started praying. I said something like: “God, I’m powerless over this temptation; please help me.” I don’t know how, but Something made me stand up and look for help. As there were no SA groups in that town, I went looking for an AA group. The nearest one I found was closed, so I went to the other one at the far end of the town. Something was telling me that I needed to be in contact with another addict, no matter the addiction.

I was praying desperately all the way in the subway, reading some SA literature, while the craving was as painful as ever. This time, however, I was willing to accept the pain of resisting the craving, with God’s help, rather than suffer the pain of relapsing once more. I arrived at the AA group very late, but it didn’t matter. I felt welcomed. By the time the meeting had finished the craving had gone. I was exhausted, but sober and much

more serene.

As I’m writing these lines I have been able to keep sober for one year, by the grace of God, one day at a time. I’ve had quite a few difficult temptations, especially during the first few months. But that day in Vizcaya I learned two powerful lessons. First, whenever I’m willing to accept the pain of resisting a temptation, God will be there to lead me out of it to a better place—as long as I humbly admit that I’m powerless over the sexual fantasy (which, if entertained, would only lead me back to the hell



where I was). Second, I learned that prayer is much more powerful than the fantasies.

My life has changed drastically, but I guess that this is only the beginning.

Working Step Four, I am starting to see how powerless I am—not only over my instincts gone astray, but also over my fears, resentments, feelings of inadequacy, and guilt. Lust and alcohol were the painkillers that enabled me to cope with life. In the last stages of my addiction, however, lust was more painful than the pain

2009 SA Convention in Spain

Spain’s second annual SA convention will take place in Alicante, October 9-11, 2009. For more information about the convention—or to learn about SA meetings in Spain—contact http://es.geocities.com/sa_espanarec/



I wanted to kill. Lust had killed me spiritually; eventually it would have killed me physically. While practicing my addictions, I could never learn to face life on life’s terms. I never grew up emotionally.

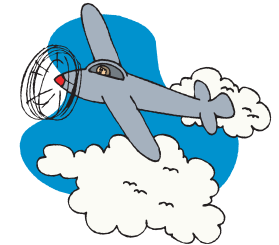
Thank God, the SA fellowship in Spain has grown in the last two years. We celebrated our first convention in Toledo in March 2008, and we’ll be celebrating the second one in Alicante in October 2009. In Toledo, many of us were happy to meet, in person, fellow members who we had previously only known by speaking over the phone. Our mutual help, understanding, and love are constantly present, not only in the regular meetings, but also in our daily contact by phone, by the Internet, or just by meeting for a cup of coffee.

Today, as a single person, I’m very grateful for SA’s sobriety definition, which protects me from the self-deceit that was a constant in my life for years, and makes me feel safe within certain boundaries. Because I’m single, other members have suggested that I not have a girlfriend during my first year of sobriety. At first, this was very hard for me to accept. I was often filled with self-pity—but that was the disease speaking to me. Now that I’ve been sober for one year, I’m not in a rush. I don’t feel the necessity to have a girlfriend as I did before. I prefer to leave this matter to God. Today I can see that sex is truly optional (SA, 61).

—God bless you all, Alberto,
Madrid, Spain

2009 International Convention

Serenity in the Rockies July 2009, Denver, CO



I didn’t want to go to the SA convention, “Serenity in the Rockies.” The title seemed cheesy to me, and I hadn’t experienced anything close to serenity in a long time. But my sponsor had instructed me to go, and I reluctantly agreed. I was still mad at him because of the flight. We had planned to travel together, and he had said he would buy the tickets. Two weeks before the convention, he still

hadn’t purchased the tickets. I couldn’t wait and purchased my own ticket. The only ticket I could afford left Denver at 7:00 Sunday evening and arrived back home at 1:00 a.m. on Monday!

When I got to the conference on Friday afternoon, I was profoundly uncomfortable. My fellow sexaholics walked around the hotel—a public

place—wearing badges around their necks with “SA” written in red. Just like the *Scarlet Letter* I had read about in high school! On Friday night I took off my badge whenever I talked to the hotel staff. I didn’t want them to know I was one of those people. Worse still, I was embarrassed to be on stage at the “birthday party” receiving a chip for 28 days of sobriety, when I had been in various sex addiction programs for almost 18 years.

As the weekend went on, I received wisdom from each workshop, and got to know people through their shares and through conversations at meals. I learned so much from so many people, and I found I had something to offer to others when I shared honestly and led with my weakness. By midday Saturday, I had lost track of when I was wearing my badge and when I wasn’t. I didn’t care.

By Saturday night, I was burned out and I missed my family terribly. I felt sorry for my wife, who was home managing the kids by herself all weekend. Once again I tried to assert my will. I called the airline to see if I could get the flight changed

to an earlier time. They couldn’t make any promises. I could come to the airport the next morning and take my chances on the stand-by list, they said. “Maybe God wants me to be here tomorrow,” I thought. I decided to ask for help. I went downstairs and asked a few guys from Colorado what I could see the next day that was within driving distance. They had plenty of suggestions about what to see and how to get there. I could even rent a car from the hotel and leave it at the airport!

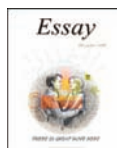


The next morning I left the conference early, jumped in the car and drove into the mountains. It was my thirtieth day of sobriety. For the next few hours I saw some of the most beautiful sights I have ever seen. I spent the entire day alone, yet was at peace. The mountains on my chip came to life before me. I literally experienced Serenity in the Rockies. What a gift to see that if I follow directions, ask for help, and I follow God’s will for me rather than my own, then the promises—“We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace”—begin to come true in such a short time.

—Anonymous

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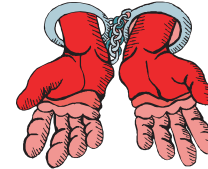
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Why Am I Disturbed?

My name is Scott; I’m a recovering sexaholic serving a 6 1/2 to 13-year prison sentence for sexual abuse. It has been my great privilege to be a sober member of SA since March 24, 2006. Six months prior to incarceration, I joined a home group, found a sponsor, and became determined to practice a new way of life through the Twelve Step program. This formed the foundation that has become the mainstay of my ability to adapt to and change through the prison experience. I repeatedly arrive at the truth that although places like this are meant to break a man’s spirit—the action of grace can rescue us from such a fate. There is nothing stronger than the power of love.

Both *Alcoholics Anonymous* and *Sexaholics Anonymous* promise that God will show us how to create the fellowship we crave. And so that’s what I expected to happen. When I landed here, there were only a few men gathering for the purpose of sobriety. We decided to pray that God would help us carry the message. Within two months, our fellowship grew to about thirteen members and went from two weekly meetings to five. We held a group conscience, elected a rotating service structure, adopted a home group name (the “Why Am I Disturbed?” group of SA), and eventually joined an



Intergroup. We actively practice all of the Traditions, including the Seventh, and have experienced the wonderful surprise of unity and autonomy while under the forfeit of individual liberty.

The home group has been a sanctuary for us, a place of accountability, sharing, and compassion. Through it, I’ve met men to sponsor. And as incredible as the group has been, it is by the action of sponsorship that I’ve found true freedom. This place is where society casts its unwanted, those it deems as hopeless and worthless. But the truth is that within each one of these men dwells the potential for living a sober, surrendered, and God-inspired life. It has become an honor and sacred duty to show them what I’ve had to do and still do in order to recover. Some make use of it, while others do not. But they’ve all taught me an invaluable lesson: it is not a matter of giving it away to keep it; we must give it away to find it. In the midst of sorrow and sadness, God has given me this purpose. I believe that anyone who is the type of addict I am has been given a similar purpose.

I’ve seen men rise from the pit of despair to discover hope. God has allowed me to be a vehicle for His love, healing my own wounds in the process. The Twelfth Step is truly the gateway to a happy and useful life.

Our group would love to hear from yours. I've given my sponsor the go-ahead to share my contact information with anyone who means business (contact Davis C. at saico@sa.org).

You can also contact the Lehigh Valley Reading Area Intergroup (EasternPASA@yahoo.com or 610-

Surrender

What a life. Great job. Tons of friends and a loving family. Oh, did I mention that I'm insane? Clueless and selfishly delusional, I spent years wreaking havoc on others while projecting the image of Superman. In early 2007, my addiction to Internet pornography landed me in jail. I lost my job and my wife. I'm a registered sex offender, on probation until December 2011.

SA meetings were my sanctuary: my source of love and support when there seemed to be so little. When probation began, I received approval to attend six meetings per week. Then, due to my "superman" attitude (I'm special!), probation cut it down to two times per week. Then my defects of self-centeredness, fear, and anger kicked in. I chose to be inappropriately angry with my therapist over the phone and I lost all SA privileges. That was in April of 2008.



682-9622). They'll be able to get in touch with us. If you know of anyone facing legal problems due to this addiction, feel free to give them my address or, if you yourself need a sponsor, I'm always available.

—*In love and service, Scott M.*



I spent much of 2008

arguing my case: debating, proving, resenting, and blaming. Eventually, with the help of God and my friends both in and out of SA, I came to believe in God's plan, or as my SA friend Charles would say, "It's God's deal, not my deal."

What could I do to nourish myself in the program? Isolation and withdrawal were not working, as they just fed my addiction to lust and resentment. So instead, I took the risk of asking an SA brother if he would like to meet for coffee on Fridays. We haven't missed more than a few in the past year! Today, my sponsor meets me every Thursday morning for breakfast. And, what a gift Saturdays have become! SA brothers have changed their routine on Saturdays, and occasionally come to one of my "approved" restaurants after the

morning meeting. I have learned that meeting rooms are wonderful (I look forward to returning!), but fellowship is everywhere and anywhere I am able to experience recovery from the powerlessness of my sexual addiction through conversations with others.

Recently an SA brother asked me for feedback on "surrender." I think my journey with SA is another lesson in God's will that I surrender, that I let go of control, and that I truly live life on life's terms, today. Following are some of my thoughts on surrender:

- Surrender is not "giving up," it's living to fight another day.
- Surrender is a peaceful transition of power.
- Surrender is giving someone else the wheel when I'm too drunk to drive.
- Surrender is what happens when



Father's Day

It's Sunday afternoon and I'm having a great conversation with a fellow SA member about the Eighth and Ninth Steps and the amends letter he is trying to write to his wife. It's not unusual for me to spend my Sunday afternoons this way, except that this one is happening in the visitation

we go to church, fall down on our knees, and pray to God.

Are we "giving up?" No, we are acknowledging a power greater than ourselves and asking for love, guidance, support, and the grace that comes from giving Him the wheel.

Personally, I don't like the word "surrender." It can seem like weakness or "losing." I like "letting go" or simply "Thy will not mine be done."

That's it. Thy will...not mine... that's what surrender is all about. Control. Power. Releasing it to my Higher Power. Refusing to continue the attitudes and behaviors that have not worked in my life.

Surrender is acceptance of the truth. With truth, comes grace. So—I guess surrender equals grace.

—*Anonymous*

room at the state prison, and today is Father's Day.

The prisoner, an SA member, was fortunate to have been a member of our local SA group for about 10 months before being incarcerated. He used that time wisely by getting a sponsor and seriously working the Steps. He had a spiritual awakening that, among other things, has allowed him to make the most of his time in prison.

When he first went away, he wasn't allowed to have visitors for several months. Then he was placed in a state prison over 300 miles away, and visiting him wasn't feasible for most of us. His sponsor did visit him there once though. His sponsor also went to great lengths to keep Sam included in our group. He made frequent announcements in meetings, sharing Sam's address and his news, and encouraging other members to write letters. Several of us wrote and Sam always responded promptly. It turns out that prisoners also need money, so his sponsor arranged for several of our members to send him money every month. Sam tells us about fellow prisoners who receive no mail and have no money.

After about a year, Sam was transferred to the prison in our community. His sponsor investigated how we could be approved as visitors and again made announcements asking other members to apply to visit Sam. This prison has a three-week rotation of visiting times. A few non-SA friends from the small town where he used to live cover the first week, and the members of our SA group cover the other two weeks in the cycle. Six or eight SA members split up those two days. The visiting sessions are two hours long, and he is allowed a maximum of three visitors

each Sunday. Sometimes three of us bring him a meeting; sometimes one of us spends two hours with him.

One of our members acts as schedule coordinator and stays in touch with designated members of Sam's group of non-SA friends and his extended family so that each Sunday is covered. In the past six months since he was transferred here, we haven't missed a Sunday. Our visit is the high point of his week.

Carrying the message in this way is something we can do together that none of us could do alone.

My last visit with Sam started out with him talking quickly and urgently, dominating the conversation. It seemed that he felt he needed to entertain me, or perhaps he was starved for conversation with outside people. I just relaxed and listened for a while. Eventually I found an opening to talk about the Steps; he was struggling with preparing an amends letter.

As we began talking about Steps Eight and Nine, something magical happened. It was as though the rest of the room disappeared and together he and I were taken into another dimension. We lost track of time, sharing experiences, hopes, fears, solutions, and promises. We were transformed, and I truly experienced my spiritual nature. Out of nowhere came the announcement, "Visitation



is now over." We hugged and I left. Overcome with gratitude, I sat in my car collecting myself until I could drive home. I called another member to share this precious gift. God is in prison too!

It is likely that Sam will spend nine years in prison for his sexual acting out. His wife and children have not written or visited him. He relies on us, his SA family of choice to bring him the hope and love of the Road of Happy Destiny. We believe in him when he can't believe in himself. Thanks to his experience with both the program and the fellowship of SA, Sam is making the most of his prison experience and will be prepared for a new way of life

SA's Sponsor-by-Mail Program

It's the third Friday meeting of the month in San Francisco. As usual, the room is quieted by a Step Five letter I've just read aloud. The letter was written by a prisoner we've never met. We've heard other prisoners' stories, but none of the other crazy shares quite compares with this one. Yet we are united with him by our common addiction. We all know that if not for the grace of God, any one of us might have ended up in the same place.

Every few months, I call the chair of SA's Corrections Facility Committee (SACFC), to get the

when he gets out.

So it's Father's Day and I'm having a spiritual experience at prison with a guy who can't see his children. My wife and sons are patient with me. They know we will spend some quality time together later in the day. Although the frequent telephone calls, evening meetings, and weekend sessions with those I sponsor sometimes test my family's patience, they understand the importance of SA in my life. I am very grateful to the One who kept me from the full consequences of my acting out.

—Jim M., Asheville NC



name of a prisoner who has contacted SAICO to request SA literature and an SA sponsor. I respond to each such request within a week. I usually receive a reply a few weeks later.

At first I thought I wasn't qualified to work with incarcerated SAs, because I've never spent time in prison. But I began sponsoring by mail because I've worked with sober SA members who have spent years on the inside. One of these men told me, "SA recovery is the message. Just carry the message. You don't need

to have been incarcerated, you just need to be sober.” This gave me the confidence to work with prisoners.

Initially, I feared making contact with people who had been locked up and labeled sexual predators. As the father of a young child, I feared for the safety of my family. However, I soon discovered that sexaholics in prison are much like those of us on the outside. Today when I work with prisoners, I see only sponsors and sponsees.

My first attempts to communicate with these men lacked compassion, but through working Step Four inventories with my sponsor, I came to realize that their struggles are the same as mine. Their dedication to recovery is an inspiration to me. At times they offer insights more profound than my own. Whenever I read a prisoner’s simple request for information and a sponsor, I feel the same glimmer of hope I experienced when I began on my own road to

recovery.

After contacting SAICO and asking for a sponsor, the inmate usually receives a newcomer’s packet and a copy of *Sexaholics Anonymous*. Beside those tools, we also find the Twelve Step guides made available by the SACFC to be helpful in communicating with prisoners. Because SA meetings are usually not available to prisoners, I often suggest that sponsees behind bars attend an AA meeting, if there is one, and read *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

After receiving a Step One letter from a prisoner, I read it to my group, collect feedback, then send the sponsee suggestions for working Step Two. With each Step, we discuss how to address issues that arise. When I receive a response, I often run ideas by my sponsor before I respond. People convicted of sex crimes often find that it’s not safe to speak of their sexual issues in prison. It’s a relief for them to know they can

SA Corrections Facility Committee (SACFC)

The SACFC is dedicated to carrying the message of SA recovery to incarcerated sexaholics. We provide the literature used for doing Twelve Step work to members, groups, and Intergroups who work with people in correctional facilities. If you would like to write to or sponsor a prisoner, contact SACFC at saico@sa.org. If you would like to share your ES&H about Twelfth Step work done with prisoners or about your own experience being incarcerated, submit articles to *Essay* at essay@sa.org. —Davis C.



communicate in confidence with SA sponsors and groups on the outside.

I learned something about myself when a newly-released inmate called me for a ride to a Sunday night meeting one night. After being released from a federal facility in the eastern region, he was now assigned to a halfway house near where I live. He had just traveled by bus from West Virginia for three days and was in an upbeat mood. Without thinking, I replied, “I don’t usually go on Sundays.” “Oh,” he replied, sounding as if he had been made small by my answer.

I recalled an AA speaker who, after asking for a ride to his second meeting was told, “Sorry I have a date that night.” I also recalled that our primary purpose is to help the addict who still suffers. I quickly reversed my decision and agreed to drive the sponsee from his neighborhood to the Sunday meeting. The second time he called, it was for a ride to a Saturday meeting. Since then, he has been able to travel to Sunday evening meetings after church, and we’ve been riding together to Saturday meetings.

Being of service in this way gives me some reprieve from lust. Although I will never be “cured,” I feel some respite from the compulsion. It is a fact of life that through the process of

helping others, we seem to reap the most benefits.

I have come to realize that sponsoring prisoners is not about me. I don’t have to believe in my effectiveness or in the outcome of my service. I am open to the urging of my Higher Power as He continues to motivate me.

One formerly incarcerated SA I know says to his new sponsees, “Every person has dignity, no matter what his or her station in life, economic status, addictions, or illness. No matter what you’ve done, you have value and worth. You were wondrously and marvelously created by a loving God. May you find Him now.” Today, I feel this same empathy and love when I work with these men.



I view each prisoner’s request for a sponsor by mail as a gift from God. I want to give back what God has given to me. Being spiritually fit enables me to be available for these opportunities as they arise.

In the quiet space of the Friday meeting, I look around the room and see the impact of the prisoners’ shares to know that working the Steps, going to meetings for several years, and staying sober has prepared me for the next service opportunity that arrives.

—In service, Eric S.

Sober Dating

From an SA Man's Perspective



What is sober dating? I can only speak for myself. For me, sober dating has been the hardest, most demanding, and most rewarding experience of my life. When I was “out there” in my addiction, I never dreamed I would be able to be in a close relationship with a woman and remain sober from lust and sex. Today, I’m here to tell you that it is possible. It’s not easy, but it is possible. One thing that makes it easier, however, is that I have the tools of the Steps, which teach me how to relate honestly with others.

For me, the hardest things about dating in recovery have been being honest and having healthy boundaries. I’ve had to be honest with myself and with others. For my relationship to stay healthy and my sobriety to stay secure, I must be 100% honest with my sponsor, my home group, and myself. Throughout the 18 months of our relationship, I have constantly had to fight against my desire to keep little secrets and get away with just a little lust.

Early on, I tried to get away with slim to no boundaries and ended up losing my sobriety, when I climaxed while we were kissing. This was a humbling experience. It was hard to admit that I had lost 18 months

of sobriety only three days after being in a relationship. Today, I thank God for that experience because I started this relationship knowing how powerless I truly am.

After losing my sobriety, I still tried to get away with little lust hits. *This did not work!* The power of my lust finally humbled me enough to admit that I am no different than any other sexaholic. I cannot get away with any lust hits, no matter what. I must treat my relationship partner exactly the same way I would treat any other person. I cannot lust after her.

Good boundaries have been the key to not lusting, one day at a time. The lack of healthy boundaries is what caused me to lose my sobriety at first. Our boundaries today include no kissing—even on the cheek or forehead. When we sit together on the couch, we must be sitting up. We don’t spend any time alone at my apartment. She lives with her parents, so we spend a lot of time at her house because of the safety of being around others. We experience appropriate touch through hugging and holding hands. It is also very important for

us to have good communication and develop intimacy through talking and sharing our emotions.

For the sake of sobriety, I can’t set up too many boundaries. I need to be constantly aware of what I’m feeling. I must be honest and admit when something we’re doing threatens my sobriety.

I believe that any sexaholic who is considering dating should list his or her boundaries on paper, share them with a sponsor, then share them with the relationship partner. If the partner cannot agree to what is needed to stay sober, then that is not a good relationship for a sexaholic. If I’m not sober, I have nothing to offer anyone.

We started our relationship with friendship first. We were friends for about four months and spent a lot of time together with her parents. We played cards and other games. I ate dinner with her family and she spent time with mine. We took walks together, talked a lot, and went bowling. We danced in salsa class together; that proved to be good grounds for recovery and surrendering lust. I talked with my sponsor constantly about our time together and my thoughts and feelings about this girl. Before I asked her to date me, I talked with my sponsor and made sure it was the right time.

My home group held a check

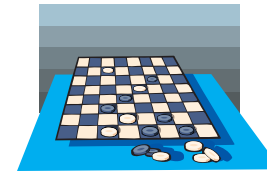
meeting for me, where I could share and get feedback from those who know me best. This was great because I felt that I was not going it alone. I had the support of my closest friends.

Our relationship has been far from perfect and I do have some regrets. I wish that I had been totally honest from the beginning. Because of my dishonesty and keeping small secrets, I hurt my partner by having to ask for boundaries that should have been set up from the beginning. I wish that I had set up better emotional and time boundaries as well. We have had a lot of trouble with dependency issues because I was too unhealthy to ask for the time apart that I needed. But the regrets have taught me to surrender more to the process of recovery within our relationship.

I believe that any sexaholic who desires a relationship should have a good period of sobriety and recovery before beginning. Even though we are never “cured,” being as healthy and sober as possible will help avert a lot of problems.

My relationship has caused me to grow in ways that would have been impossible alone.

A relationship demands something that being single and independent usually does not. In this relationship, my defects have become more glaring than ever. This has required me to



work the Steps more consistently. If I begin to get off track and lose my focus on sobriety, it becomes apparent rather quickly. I have learned to make amends quickly and cleanly—and I have to make amends a lot. I hate it, but I have to do this in order to stay sober.

I know that this relationship is

Member Shares

My Best Thinking

As I was reading *Step Into Action*, I was reminded of the phrase “My best thinking has gotten me to where I am today!” I started thinking about “my best thinking” prior to recovery and realized that my thinking had been all about me. My lust was about what I wanted, what I desired, what I thought I needed, or what I thought I should have had. It was all about what was exciting, interesting, or stimulating *to me*.

My best thinking was obsessive. I obsessed about anything and everything, not just about sex. I obsessed over money, success, leisure activities, what my wife should do, religion, making the right choice, how to “fix” things, how to get away with things, and how to hide things. My life was one big obsession.

My best thinking was extreme: success or failure, right or wrong, always or never, wonderful or horrible, love or hate. Everything had to be done right! Words like

God’s will for me, and I will do the very best I can to have the healthiest and most rewarding relationship possible. I hope that my words are of service to some of you who are trying to do this thing which we call “sober dating,” I hope to meet some of you on the journey of recovery.

—Anonymous



big, successful, award-winning, money-making, fantasy-fulfilling, and world-changing made sense to me. If a little was good, more was better. I saw everything in the extreme.

My best thinking was isolating. “I can do it alone!” “I just need more of what I want.” “I don’t need a sponsor.” “I don’t need a Higher Power.” “I don’t need the fellowship.” “No one would understand.” The only person I thought I could trust was myself. My best thinking told me to keep my addiction a secret.

My best thinking was bound up in shame. “People would run if they knew my secret.” Prior to recovery, I was resigned to the “fact” that this secret was going to be a part of my life. I tried to keep it in its cage. I lived in fear of what would happen if the monster escaped.

My best thinking protected my ego. I wanted to be right, look good, be accepted. I tried to do all of the

things that would make me look good. I tried really hard to believe that I was so much better than I felt on the inside. To protect myself, I pointed out my wife’s weaknesses. My best thinking was sure she had problems too! This way I could keep the focus off of me and my insane addictive behaviors.

Prior to recovery, I needed hip boots to wade through the garbage of my best thinking. “Stinking thinking and steer manure have a lot in common: they stink.” I had mastered the art of justification and rationalization. Is there anything wrong with trying to find a good deal on a new winter coat for my wife? Did I forget to mention that it was July, late at night when I was on the Internet, and my wife didn’t really need a new coat? I couldn’t find the coat I wanted to buy her, but I found what I was really looking for.

Self-deception and denial prevented me from seeing what was so obvious to others. I believed that I could comfortably afford the price of admission. “There are no hidden costs.” “I can get away with it.” “No one is going to get hurt, nothing bad will happen.” “This ‘little’ indiscretion is like a hobby; it’s just a way to let off steam and reduce stress.” “What I do is normal, even healthy, and not nearly so bad as... .”

“My career, my family, my life are all fine.” “I have been able to keep my secret world from impacting them.” “What’s that I’m smelling?”

I know now that I am only as sick as my secrets. When I hit bottom and the denial and self-deception no longer provided relief from the pain and stench of acting out, I could no longer deny the wreckage and insanity in my life. Something had to change. I realized that everything I truly loved and valued was in jeopardy. I could no longer afford the price of admission.

Somehow, somewhere my best thinking told me that I was in trouble and needed help. I began to understand that lust was destroying my soul and that I needed to find the true connection. My best thinking got me to my first meeting. My recovery began.

My thinking and my behavior began to change.

In recovery my best thinking got me to two meetings last week. My best thinking helped me ask a sponsor for support and accept his suggestions. My best thinking talked me into making calls so I could get out of the obsession and the lust that were pulling me in a direction that I could now recognize as dangerous. My best thinking said, “I am going to finish my Step One inventory this week.” My best thinking volunteered



me to chair an SA meeting and offer service to others who needed my support. My best thinking brought me to my knees in prayer seeking the guidance, support, and life-saving grace of my Higher Power.

My best thinking tells me to work my program one day at a time. It reminds me that I've missed my daily Tenth Step and need to do it. My best thinking uses the grand equation (SA, 102) every day: “. . . the grand equation for getting well and filling the great void at the heart of our lives is Uncover → Discard → Discover. . .”

Each day I have opportunities

Let Feelings Inform Me

The other day, my wife and I were traveling from North Carolina to Florida. She had been on her cell phone for about an hour nonstop. I became annoyed that she was not paying attention to me. I remembered that she had asked me, in a prior conversation, to remind her if she seemed over-focused on her work. Feeling justified making a comment, I told her in a patronizing way to “relax.” She correctly took it as my trying to control her, and we were off! In this old familiar pattern, we pit ourselves against each other in a cosmic battle for control. After some intense exchanges, we



to uncover the lies, self-deception, and denial, as I courageously work the Steps. Each day I identify what needs to be discarded so I am free to move unencumbered by the chains of addiction and underlying character defects. I have discovered that recovery, health, and true connection create serenity. Serenity is good. Gratitude is good. Recovery is a beautiful thing. Relying on my Higher Power and seeking to do His will has saved me.

Maybe my best thinking, with God's help, ain't so bad.

—Jon, a grateful recovering sexaholic

called a time out and she perceptively asked me what was really going on. I paused and went deep.

I discovered that I was feeling sad about leaving North Carolina and our friends in meetings there. In addition, I was sad about leaving such a beautiful environment and

returning to the city. Our neighborhood in Florida is generally not as peaceful as the cabin by the mountain stream that we live in for half the year. At a deeper level, I felt the long-term grief about losing five friends and relatives I had been close to during the last two years. My sadness and grief came into focus and

I began to weep. I relinquished my need to feel “in control.” Afterwards, my wife agreed that she would postpone her phone calls so that I could have a time of quiet. I had made a mistake. I really wanted a real connection with both God and my wife in my grief, but I didn't have the clarity to ask for it directly.

My fantasy is that I can meet my own emotional needs. I can't, but routinely I'll go to any lengths to deny or distract myself from any feelings that attempt to get through my defenses. If I look at the positive in this pattern, I may have a model in my ferocious commitment to denial of my feelings. What if

Fishing

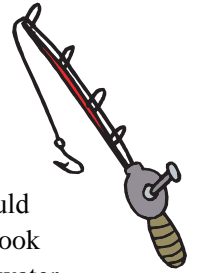
When I first came into SA, wrote my Step 0, and came to meetings, I knew what I had to do. I deleted the phone numbers of three guys I had acted out with. I closed down my Instant Messenger program and removed the program from my computer. Sometimes I would get a text from a previous partner saying “Hello,” but I could not handle it. I spoke to my sponsor at the time and she said, “Do not respond!”

This is something that I call “fishing.” I used to do that very thing myself. I would e-mail, text, call, and very nearly stalk a person. I would be careful not to come on too strong—just saying “hello” or something

I were to practice my recovery as recommended in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (87) with the same energy and determination? “As we go through the day, we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the next thought or action.” Perhaps a starting point for me would be program wisdom of pausing “when agitated or doubtful.” This would allow feelings to inform me instead of fighting with my mind and my wife.

I have a long way to go, but I wanted to share some progress on the path of my recovery.

—Dave Mc.



small— but I was really fishing. I would put the bait on the hook and dangle it in the water, hoping that the fish I was luring, would bite. For the fish, taking the bait means death.

This is the image I use when I am asked the question, “How are you doing?” by a partner I had previously acted out with. I will not respond, or take the bait. This may be running away and avoidance, but it has worked for me.

—Sara D., *Gratefully sober by the awesome power and grace of God since March 25, 2005*

A Note From the Delegate Chair



The General Delegate Assembly met on Thursday and Friday prior to the July convention in Denver, CO. Attendees included 17 Delegates, six Alternates, nine Trustees, one representative from SAICO, and several observers.

GDA Actions/Reports:

1. GDA approved a Resolution of Appreciation to Roy K., expressing thanks for his years of contributions to SA. We also received a letter of thanks from Roy to the fellowship. The letters are printed on the following pages.
2. GDA elected two new Trustees: Betsy T. and Francis H., elected Mike S. as GDA Chair, and elected Steve S. to continue as Vice-Chair.
3. GDA reviewed Trustee tasks and committee reports. These included:
 - *Finance*: Income year-to-date through June is up slightly, due to increased literature sales and convention contributions from Nashville 2009. Groups and individual donations are down by about \$1,100. GDA approved 2010 budget: projected income of \$241,200 and expenses of \$241,200.
 - *COMC*: Approved technology for archiving SA historical documents.
 - *Phone Meetings*: 300-500 people from 33 countries attend a phone meeting each week. In a recent meeting, a member shared a Step One.
 - *RAC*: SA fellowship is growing daily, with new members worldwide. We now have 59 Intergroups, 1,474 meetings, and 9,091 members. This is a 2% increase in Intergroups, 60% increase in meetings, and 29% increase in members since 2003. While the GDA was in session, 5 new meetings were reported in Germany and 10 in Poland.
 - *Literature*: *Step into Action* is in the process of further editing. Other works in progress include: "Women in SA"; "Is SA for me?"; and "Do you Have a Problem with Pornography or Lust on the Internet?" GDA tasked Literature Committee to study expediting production of new literature.
 - *Conventions*: GDA formed an ad hoc subcommittee to help draft guidelines for accommodation of religious groups at international conventions.

I would like to thank the fellowship worldwide for your suggestions and feedback. Your input helps us better serve the fellowship and carry the message to all sexaholics. May you continue to find serenity, sobriety, and progressive victory over lust in your life and unity with the fellowship.

Thank you also to Larry H. for your excellent leadership in Chairing the GDA and for your continued service to the SA fellowship.

—Mike S., GDA Chair

Expressions of Gratitude

During the July 2009 meeting of the General Delegate Assembly (GDA) in Denver, two special letters were read.

First, I introduced a letter (intended to be from the fellowship), expressing gratitude to our founder, Roy K., for his many years of service to SA, for carrying the SA message of lust recovery throughout the world, and for his experience, strength, and hope. After I read this "Resolution of Appreciation," the GDA approved it as the sentiment of the fellowship to be delivered to Roy. The resolution was signed by the Delegates, Alternate Delegates, and Trustees. Our Southwest Regional Delegate, Mike S., took the Resolution home with him and delivered it to Roy.

Unbeknownst to me, Mike had also brought a letter to share. The letter was from Roy. In his letter,

Roy expressed his gratitude to the fellowship for the support he has felt through the years and for our prayers and support during his current illness. He also exhorted us to stay true to our principles, to look into ourselves, and to meet the challenges of the present and future in a spirit of unity. This was quite an emotional moment for me. Neither Mike nor I had known of the other's letter beforehand.

The GDA voted to share both letters with the fellowship in the September *Essay*. We also read them to the convention attendees, who warmly applauded them. The letters are presented here for your encouragement.

Mike is now the newly elected Chair of the GDA. I feel comforted and blessed to pass the baton of service over to him.

—Larry H., outgoing GDA Chair

Resolution of Appreciation by the SA General Delegate Assembly for the Life and Work of Roy K.



THE SA GENERAL DELEGATE
ASSEMBLY FOR THE FELLOWSHIP

Denver, Colorado
July 9, 2009

Roy, this resolution of appreciation from the fellowship of Sexaholics Anonymous to you is long overdue.

It is a humble attempt on the part of the General Delegate Assembly, as servants of SA, to put into words our sincere gratitude for your life and work on behalf of our Fellowship.

Every day this gratitude is observed and expressed at SA meetings

around the world, on five continents, in many languages.

It is observed in the lives of men and women newly sober from sex and lust addiction through the Program of Sexaholics Anonymous. It is evident in families reunited under God and in newfound spiritual union between husbands and wives. It is expressed in the letters of prisoners and seen on the faces of new members.

We are aware that for years you were the only “other” who had gone before us, walking the walk of sexual sobriety and lust recovery. In a world where most people are in denial and some are openly hostile to this message, you carried that message of hope with great courage, quiet resolution and an unshakable faith in a loving God. In all your difficulties, your only prayer was for God’s guidance in your efforts to reach others.

In seeking to create the fellowship you craved, you drew from the experiences of people who had overcome similar hopeless states of addiction. In a spirit of gratitude, you got a sponsor in AA and worked the Twelve Steps. You sought the prayerful input of others at every turn. You drew from the group conscience, growing from the inside out, one member and one group at a time.

You used the principle of our Tenth Step—consistently taking your own inventory and promptly admitting when you were wrong—to bring healing to your marriage and your family. You cheerfully put this principle into practice in all your relations with your fellow sexaholics.

We thank you for documenting with great care and conviction what you and the early members of SA learned as you walked the path of recovery, and for sharing this literature freely with all who sought sexual sobriety. Today this is the literature that inspires our growing membership, guides our meetings, and is sent to all who reach out for help—again sharing freely, seeking no monetary gain for yourself.

The literature introduced us to a new language. It taught us to lead with our weakness, bring the inside out, surrender our top plates, take the actions of love. It inspired us to change our thinking and behavior. By putting into practice the principles it described, we learned that sex is optional, lust recovery is possible and love cripples like us can become the joy-filled instruments of a loving God.



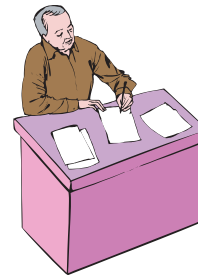
We are particularly grateful for the efforts you took, at great cost to yourself and your family, over a number of years, to protect the unique message of sexual sobriety and lust recovery inherent in this literature.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude for the support of your loving wife, Iris, for the sacrifices she made during the years when you worked for SA without monetary compensation, and for her love and courage in not abandoning you and the infant SA Fellowship, during the turbulent years of your marriage. In Iris, the SA Fellowship has no greater non-sexaholic friend.

The health and strength of our Fellowship today, such as it is, is the evidence that your prayers were answered.

Roy, we thank you for your life. You will always be in our prayers.

—The SA General Delegate Assembly for the Fellowship, Denver, CO, July 9, 2009



The Searchlight of the Spirit: A Message from Roy K. to the SA Fellowship

When I was asked if I wanted to share anything with the GDA, I thought about it and welcomed the opportunity. First, Iris and I ask God’s richest blessing on all who have expressed concern and have offered prayer. We bless you. I love this very special fellowship of the Spirit, which on the personal relationship level can go so very deep as we “bear one another’s burdens” and so fulfill the law of love. Thank you!

As far as my health is concerned, I am still being treated for a very aggressive cancer, and we don’t

know the outcome. The results are in God’s hands. Never has “One day at a time” meant so much. The joyous victory in this trial is that the same One who broke through to me in lust recovery years ago is keeping me sober one fear and uncertainty at a time. It’s a whole new program, and I’m asking that I not miss the blessing that’s on the other side of this. “The Lord is good, and His mercy endures forever.”

This personal trial for me is not unlike many we have encountered in the history of SA itself and will doubtless continue to encounter. The unique need and promise of our recovery—deliverance from the

power of lust in all its forms—makes our “impossible” principles an easy target for compromise or questioning, especially from within SA itself, as our own history continues to reveal. Long before cancer actually appears, the body’s cells can start going haywire if our immune system has been degraded. The immune system for Sexaholics Anonymous is our Twelve Traditions. Though they were discovered in the crucible of AA’s experience, we find that we are continually tempted to disregard some of their early warning immune degradation indicators. They knock us in the head periodically and try to get our attention. That’s how we’re learning their truth for ourselves! The hard way. So I challenge you to continue discovering together and afresh, the deep import and relevance of that amazing trinity of SA Traditions—Traditions One, Three, and Twelve.

What constitutes SA unity, and why does personal recovery depend upon it? What are the implications of our requirement for membership—“the desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober”? What constitutes sexual sobriety, and what constitutes lust recovery? And how may we unwittingly be putting personalities before principle? How does all this tie in together? Yes, we’re being

tested here in all three. And we shall be tested! Let us examine ourselves honestly and often in the searchlight of the spirit of these time-tested realities.

Therefore stand! Stand on principle. Stay true to our historic and unique calling. Yes, it is unique. And don’t be afraid of voices that would try to make this an “easier” program.

I love this fellowship—with the whole history of its problems and adversity. God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. We are “more than conquerors” through Him who loved us and called us into being for the glory of His grace. Stand fast. Times may get tougher. Contend for the truth. Above all, let us be ready to offer, through our own personal lust recovery testimonies, what increasing thousands will need and seek. And above all, let us love one another in the truth.

I believe a new beginning awaits us as we discover the impossible reality of lust recovery under God and humble ourselves before him so he can pour out his blessing on those who suffer.

I thank you for your lives and service. May God bless you all. Be blessed and be a blessing as you work together this week and in time to come.

—Roy K.

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

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Calendar of Events



Upcoming International Conventions

January 8 - 10, 2010, SA International Convention, Nashville TN. *Fellowship of the Spirit*. Info at www.sa-sanonconventions.org.

July 9 - 11, 2010, SA International Convention, Chicago, IL. *Sweet Hope Chicago*. More info soon.

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

Submit info to be listed in *December 2009 Essay* by *November 15, 2009*. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact.

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

Canada. *Maintaining a Daily Reprieve*. More info at satoronto@reptiles.org or essaybarrie@gmail.com

November 6 - 8, 2009, 4th Annual Veterans Day Weekend SA Workshop, Marietta, SC. *The Steps We Took*. Info at www.orgsites.com/sc/upstata

November 6-8, 2009, Ninth Annual SA Fall Men's Retreat, Ben Lomond, CA. *There Is A Solution*. Contact Steve A. at 925-330-3363 or www.sabayarea.org

November 14, 2009, Solutions & Answers Marathon, Morton, IL. Info at 888-853-0258 or info@solutionsandanswers.com

June 11 - 13, 2010, Northwest Regional SA Spring Retreat, Raymond, WA. Info at www.puget-soundsa.org or www.sanorthwest.org

September 25 - 27, 2009, SA Unity Conference, Irvine, CA. *Living in the Here and Now*. 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 3, 2009, Fifth Annual Day of Spiritual Renewal, Stirling, NJ. *God Could and Would If He Were Sought*. Info at 1-732-886-2142 or www.njessay.org

October 9-11, 2009, 2nd Annual SA Convention, Alicante, Spain. Info at http://es.geocities.com/sa_espanarec/

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

October 16 - 17, 2009, 13th Annual SA Ontario Marathon, Toronto, Ontario,

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

New Groups

USA

Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii
Forest Grove, OR
North Platte, NE
Orangeburg, SC
Sedalia, MO
State College, PA

Canada

Prince George, BC
Victoria, BC

Africa

Tanzania

Lithuania



Additional Meetings

Grand Rapids, Mi, USA
Ocoee, FL
Madrid, Spain
Barranco, Lima, Peru

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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.

