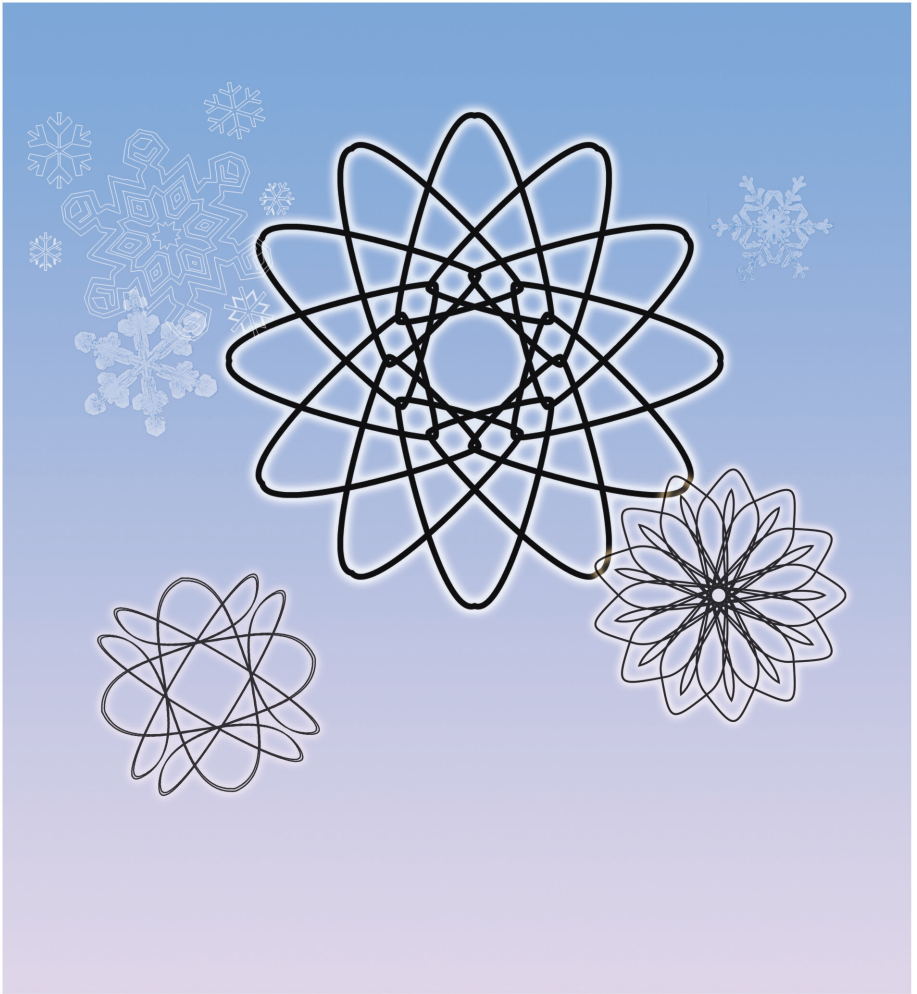


Essay

December 2010



Beyond My Wildest Dreams

A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

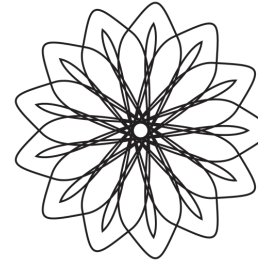
The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

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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December 2010



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.

*Essay . . .
SA's Meeting in Print*

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New To SA? Call toll-free at 866-424-8777 or outside North America call 615-370-6062; email us at saico@sa.org; or visit SA website at www.sa.org.

Beyond My Wildest Dreams

I'm Dave, a happy recovering sexaholic, sober since November 23, 1990. Today, because of SA, I have a better life than I could ever have imagined. But my life hasn't always been so happy.

When I was born, I had two brothers. They were five and six years older than I was, and they were called "the Boys." My parents then had a stillborn daughter. After that my mother was pregnant with me. They wanted a girl, however, so for all of my growing up years, we were "the Boys" and David. My parents did the very best job they could, but they had their own struggles. I learned after my mother died that she had been molested by her brother. I also learned of other strange things that happened in my family of origin; things they couldn't talk about. I felt alone, unworthy, and afraid.

I was a sickly kid. Every time we wanted to go on vacation, we couldn't go because I was sick. I had heart trouble. I couldn't do this; I couldn't do that. I felt alone. Then an adult neighbor spent some time with me. He did some things to me that hurt and were scary—but at least he paid attention to me, so I didn't complain. I did not know that eight-

year-old boys cannot give permission to participate in these activities.

Besides my adult neighbor, one of my older brothers molested me. By the time I was 12, I was

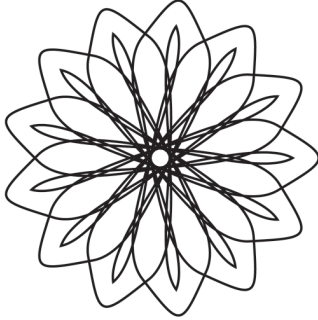
masturbating every day. I masturbated to all sorts of fantasies. There wasn't an animal around that was safe.

I didn't date much in high school because I was a good religious boy. Good religious boys

got married, so I was wife-shopping rather than dating—but all of my fantasies were about men.

When I got my driver's license, I drove back to my abuser to act out with him. I also drove to public places to have anonymous sex with men. I believed that all of this acting out would stop when I got married, so I got married. Marriage did not stop me from acting out however; I only got worse. I had a secret life going on that kept me from developing a close relationship with my wife.

My wife and I had one child and wanted another, but she was having trouble getting pregnant. The doctor told us to have sex only on certain days so that the sperm count would go up. But I couldn't wait that many



days. I would masturbate and cry while I was masturbating because I couldn't wait to let the sperm count go up. Still, we eventually had three children. I'm very proud of those children today but at the time, I wasn't there for them. I was emotionally vacant.

My wife and I grew so far apart that she asked for a divorce. I thought, "I can't live alone." But then I thought, "Great! Now I can do everything I want." Except that my church and family upbringing would not let me do what I wanted to do.

Over time, my acting out progressed. I would act out up to the edge of one of my boundaries, then I'd think, "I'll cross that boundary but I won't cross any others." Then I'd repeat that thinking and cross another boundary. I was crossing all kinds of boundaries until finally, about 20 years ago, when I came to the end of my rope. I had a job, a church family, a car with air conditioning, and money in the bank ... but I was miserable because I felt so powerless over my acting out. I thought I would never be able to overcome my obsessions and that my life would never get any better.

I contemplated suicide, but I couldn't figure out how to kill myself, so I went to a counselor and spilled my guts for the first time. He gave me a non-program book on sexual addiction. To my surprise, that book talked about me! I learned

that I wasn't the only one doing what I was doing; I wasn't alone! In all the trashy materials I'd read before, people who did these things seemed to be having fun. But I was not having fun. Now I learned that other people also were not having fun.

The book talked about Twelve Step meetings. I told my counselor that I needed to find one of those meetings. I found Sexaholics Anonymous in the phone book and went to my first meeting on November 23, 1990.

Before I went to that meeting, I was nervous and had to act out, but when I arrived that Friday night, I knew that I was home. When I heard the members talk, I knew what they were talking about. They were just like me!

One woman there shared that she had five years of sobriety and a man had four years—but they were both married, so I thought the program might not work for me. But then there was a young, single man who had six weeks of sobriety. Six weeks with no sex with himself or anybody else? Wow! That was awesome.

The next meeting was early the next morning, on Saturday. It was 110 miles away. As I drove back home Saturday night, I didn't have to act out at 80 mph on the turnpike. I didn't have to stop at a rest area. I didn't have to act out to go to sleep. I didn't have to act out

in the shower the next morning. I got to the meeting and I was sober! Not because I had a sponsor or was working the Steps. Just because there was a program that talked about me. I had hope. There was a solution!

The next meeting was on a Tuesday. I had to stay in a hotel Monday night for work. I didn't have to go out to my car 16 times to get one shoe, and then a shoelace, and then the other shoe, all the time looking around to see if I could get lucky. I made it to that meeting sober, and I have been sober ever since—only because there is a program for me. There are people who talk to me, who are like me.

I got a sponsor, worked the Steps, and did service work, and little by little—just by doing the next right thing as it came along, then the next right thing, and so on—all of a sudden, I had one year of sobriety! It took 30,000 miles on my car, and \$180 in turnpike tolls, but I had a year of sobriety. I get a discount on my turnpike pass because I use it so much to go to meetings.

All of my life I worked in education. I told a lot of stories to kids as part of my job. Early in recovery, I was working as a consultant to libraries, when suddenly I was downsized. I was out of a job! But what seemed to be the worst thing in my life became one of the very best:



I became a professional storyteller working in schools and libraries.

God led me to tell stories with strings—that loop of string used for making “Cat’s Cradle,” “Cup and Saucer,” or “Jacob’s Ladder.” The games are good “brain gym” activities, are good for memory and coordination, and they enhance storytelling. I discovered early on that kids enjoy learning these games. I now work telling stories with strings full time.

When I lost the librarian job, I think God was saying, “Dave, I can finally use you now.” He said, “You’re not too smart—it takes a lot to teach you. You know I can’t make you a preacher or a teacher or a great theologian or anything like that.” But, He said, “I’ll give you a piece of string.” So He gave me the string as a gift.

When I turned my life over to the care of God as I understood God, He didn’t tie me up like a puppet. He said, “Grab hold of Me and I will

lead you. I will give you a sponsor to lead you. I will give you meeting mates to lead you.” He doesn’t tie me up like a puppet, He just leads me down the road, when I do the next right thing. I’m having more fun in sobriety than I ever had before. I get to travel all over the world with my string. Just a dumb piece of string!

I found that anyone in any

culture can make the string figures, and telling stories with strings improves communication between cultures. Last year I was in Ghana, West Africa, in a refugee camp. I took 3,000 strings for these people who were sitting there with nothing to do. Now they’ve got a piece of string.

I got to go to the edge of the Kalahari Desert to little tiny villages with a piece of string. And Alaskan villages—the kind of villages where you fly in on a single engine plane and land in the mud, and you sleep in the school. In the past, if I’d been sleeping in a school and had the whole school to myself all night, I would have been acting out all night. I don’t have to do that today in recovery. I can go to sleep, get up in the morning, and be ready to face people with a clear conscience. Life is so good! Just doing the next right thing.

My life is a miracle today. I have a job. It’s a weird job, but I have a job. I have a car with air conditioning, I have a bank account, and I have a church family. I think it can’t get any better than this—but it keeps getting better and better, beyond my wildest dreams.

In the past I would sometimes say, “You know God, we’ve got three choices here and I want this one right here.” And He’d ask, “Are you

sure, Dave?” “Yes! I want this one.” “Are you positive?” “Yes!” “Okay.” And He gave me that choice. But one day I finally woke up and said, “Okay God, just for today, or maybe just for this hour, I will turn my will and my life over to the care of You as I understand You.” And He said, “I’m so glad you did that! You know that time when you gave Me three choices? I had 672 choices for you, and you picked the bottom three!”

Today, He’s giving me the top of my list, things that I could never have imagined on my own.

I went to Mongolia and visited the two AA meetings that are held there. They opened the meetings so that I could give my SA story. My translator, a college student, had no trouble translating The Problem, but he had a little trouble translating The Solution. We had to get the translator for the AA meeting to translate The Solution to these people. As they listened, they sat there nodding, saying, “Uh huh, uh huh.” Our brochure is now translated into Mongolian with The Problem.

My Higher Power is so big, He goes wherever I go. I’m not alone anywhere. I can go to places like Bangkok and stay there and be sober. It’s not by any power of mine. I’m not sure how it all works. All I know



is that I go to meetings: I attend three or four meetings a week. I do service work: I serve as an SA Trustee and also serve on three SA committees. I go to Regional Retreats and International Conventions. I have a sponsor. Sometimes I'll share something I'm going through with him and he'll say, "I've been working on that too." Or he'll say, "My sponsor told me..." My sponsor has a sponsor! Wow! I also sponsor other people. Another thing that has helped me is listening to SA tapes and old AA tapes. Those irascible AA men—they helped me stay sober as I listened to them on the way to meetings and back.

We haven't had any meetings here in my home town for awhile, but a new one started up just recently. Four people attended our first meeting. It was a God thing. On the Sunday before that meeting started, three of us were driving to a meeting in another city—more than an hour away—and we decided to start a meeting in our own town the following Wednesday.

On Wednesday morning, I got a call from someone who wanted to know whether we had meetings in the area. My Higher Power says, "If you offer the meetings, they will come." I don't know why the meetings in the past didn't work out. I'm sober, so I know they worked for me. But the lack of local meetings

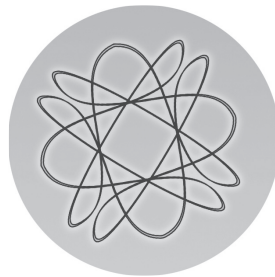
got me driving to other cities for meetings, and those meetings have been a huge blessing.

There's a lot I don't understand. All I know is that I go to meetings, I work the Steps, I call my sponsor, I read the literature, I do the next right thing—and all of a sudden I'm in Lithuania working with Chechnyan refugees, or somewhere else, fulfilling that top wish—and not the bottom three.

Today, I still have trouble turning things over at times. Sometimes I'm thrown into a situation and my life is turned upside down. When that happens, I reach inside myself for the courage to reach outside of myself for help. Then I go in a new direction and I'm free. I know things don't work for everybody the same way every time. But that is what works for me.

Last month I celebrated 20 years of SA sobriety. I am extremely grateful for my sobriety and especially for my SA family. Jess L. used to say, when he spoke, "You guys came out just for me. I know it's all a fake. You are all well but you're there just to support me and be here for me." Well I need a great big hedge around me, protecting me. Thank you, SA fellowship, for being here for me.

—God Bless! Dave T.



SA Around the World

The Start of SA Belgium



The start of SA Belgium is quite a funny story. In July 2008, a Belgian member from another S-fellowship traveled to Akron, OH, to participate in the SA International Convention there. A couple of years before, he had sought help in another fellowship because he wanted to stop... smoking!! Internet pornography and heavy smoking were always interlinked in his case, so in order to stop smoking, he decided to join another S-program. He didn't make much progress there, however, and after much frustration he learned about the Akron convention and decided—rather desperately—to book a flight and attend.

On his return, he started making phone calls as soon as he got off the plane at Brussels airport. Before, he would never make phone calls between meetings! He started talking to two other fellow addicts about lust, about not taking the first drink, about going to any lengths, and about taking drastic action. These two people—after years of trying to control and enjoy lust and not having a solution—were inspired by this message of clarity, strength, and

hope.

As they started reading the White Book, they became more convinced that the program would work, and one month later they had a group running in Leuven (Flemish-speaking) and another in Brussels (French-speaking). Yes, our tiny country has a completely unmanageable language situation, because the Southern part is French-speaking, the Northern part is Flemish-speaking, while the capital—which is in the middle of the Flemish part—is mainly French-speaking. (Fortunately, Tradition

Ten puts an end to the confusion by saying that Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues!)

The two pioneers happened to be serving in another S-fellowship—one as National Secretary and the other as Treasurer—and they began the painful process of separating from those commitments. In the spirit of "going to any lengths" to get sobriety, one found a sponsor at an October retreat in England. The other found a sponsor in Nashville, TN, where he had flown to attend 90 meetings in 90 days in order to try to stop his relapsing.



Today, two years later, we have four groups: two in Leuven, one in Brussels, and one in Antwerp. Three members have more than one year of sobriety, three have almost a year, and a couple of members are in the process of surrendering. Some other people have visited but are not yet ready for our solution.

We are in contact with members in the UK, the USA, Germany, and the Netherlands. Last March, together with the Dutch member, we had a retreat on Steps Three through Seven, led by a UK old-timer. Together with them, we also formed a Dutch literature committee (Flemish is almost the same as Dutch), and we are busy translating *Sexaholics Anonymous* and other SA literature. The French-speaking group got the translations from the French community in Quebec, Canada.

The phone is really our lifeline between meetings, and because Belgium's phone system is one of the most expensive in the world, some of us have monthly bills of \$130+ US. We also find that the CDs from SA conventions, especially from old-timers, are a valuable source of experience, wisdom, and humour. These have helped a lot to strengthen our recovery.

In the spirit of Step Twelve (and under the experienced eyes of our UK and US sponsors), we have tried to carry the message by sending informational mailings to social

workers, church officials, prison workers, sex therapists, journalists, and many others. We've cooperated twice with the written press, giving them anonymous testimonies plus information about how SA functions. These opportunities have been good experiences for us. We've also spoken to a university professor in "sexology" along with 40 of his students, a team of eight professionals working with sex offenders, a hospital team, and a team of social workers. We're open to doing more of this outreach, as long as our group conscience approves. As the addiction was a "me" program, recovery has to be a "we" program, in all aspects of our lives.

As part of my recovery, I make cartoons based on recovery concepts. The cartoon on the opposite page is an example of my work. Translating my recovery into visual terms helps keep me focused on the solution. In fact, if anyone has an idea for a recovery cartoon but does not have the gift to draw it, please email the idea to me at: luc4happiness@gmail.com, and I will try to make you a cartoon.

Here in Belgium, we miss the daily experience, strength, and hope of old-timers, but on the other hand, we have the good fortune of starting things up ourselves. One of our priorities is to make a well-documented and attractive website,

but unfortunately our site is still very basic. If any of our readers who are computer wizards feel inspired to help us, please let us know. You can reach us at info@sexaholicsanonymous.be or via our

international phone number at 0032-488-29-33-48. We hope to meet many of you in the future.

*Goeie vierentwintig uur!
Bonne vingt-quatre heures!
—Luc D., Belgium*

"God could and would if He were sought"



Group Recovery in the Netherlands

I first went to SA about two years ago, after several years of membership in another S-fellowship. “Knowledge and pride were our chief obstacles here” (SA, 91). There was hardly any sobriety in the few young SA groups in my country and no group recovery—and the sobriety definition was being neglected. I was confused, but something kept me coming back.

After a year in these groups, my hope for personal recovery, depending on group unity and recovery, was gone. I sank deeply into my character defects of self-pity, resentment, and arrogance. Self-pity because I could not stay sober, resentment because others did not stay sober, and arrogance because I thought I knew how things should change. But that show did not come off very well.

Then I went to my first SA convention in a neighboring area in the UK. I was shocked! My arrogance was torn down. Here I met people who were working the Steps, staying sober, and demonstrating humility and serenity. A new concept to me! I went home even more confused, but I soon realized they had what I wanted.

Within several weeks I got an

SA sponsor from Belgium who fully embraces the SA program. The day I started with this new sponsor—October 17, 2009—is my sobriety date today. I started writing my First Step, and I shared daily with my sponsor what I had written in the morning. One morning while I was writing, I had a First Step experience in the privacy of my own room. After I finished, I shared

my First Step in the group. I was scared to death to do this because I had been criticizing the group. I feared they would criticize me in return. But instead I got back a lot of identification and encouragement.

Then my sponsor guided me through an even more scary adventure. I felt that my own sobriety and recovery were at risk because the group as a whole did not practice SA sobriety. Trying to mention the sobriety definition to some members after the meeting felt like walking into a brick wall. Several group members criticized me for my “rigid thinking and interference.”

But how could I have a chance for personal recovery if there was no group unity? Here my sponsor pushed me to take a big risk. He suggested that I ask for a group conscience meeting to discuss and evaluate the



message that the group currently carries to the still suffering sexaholic, and to conduct a group inventory. I really didn’t want to do this. But I was willing to go to any length.

When I suggested to the group that we do a group inventory, I encountered a wall of resistance. I felt hurt and rejected. I would not have been able to go through this without the support of my sponsor and those who wanted sobriety as desperately as I did. I closely followed my sponsor’s instructions. He told me to not be afraid. If the group conscience voted for some other sobriety than the definition in the White Book, I would not go into any debate. I would listen, accept their decision, and say that, for me, this is not an SA group. I could then start another SA group for myself.

I prayed a lot, keeping in mind that God watches over me. Thank God, by the time the group conscience meeting was held, the ones who disagreed with SA’s sobriety definition had found their way to other S-fellowships. The small group of us who were left were those who wanted what SA had to offer. I was not alone! During the group inventory, the group voted unanimously for SA sobriety!

Today, the group is still smaller than it used to be—about one third—but we are now beginning to get some

group sobriety and recovery. Most of us have long-distance sponsors. We need those long-distance sponsors, because we cannot do it alone! It takes time, patience, and working the Steps, with the help of those who have gone the path before.

Most of us now visit SA conventions abroad. We are blessed with a lot of experience, strength, and hope from members in Belgium, the UK, and Germany. Today, I know that when a newcomer walks into our rooms, we are unified as a group in the message we carry.

I’m still learning. I used to believe that I would be wrong to take a stand. I thought I was expected to be passive and tolerant toward insobriety and illness in the group. Now I believe that members are needed to take

a stand at times—but those who do should be careful *not* to govern, and not to do it alone. I cannot lead with power talk, fake surrender, or insobriety. I can only lead with my own weakness and can only bear witness to the truth of my own experience.

For my own recovery (and for my own sense of group unity), personally defined sobriety did not work. I could not really feel part of, and I could not really “share” my sobriety. I was seeing the truth of what it says in our Sobriety Definition:



If we come into an SA group where we can define our own sobriety, watch those rationalizations come alive! And if we define our own level of sobriety, that's all we're likely to reach" (SA, 191).

All I got in those days was temporary sobriety and periods when I felt better as an individual, but my individual sobriety did not last. Today I can see that a sobriety definition equally applied to every member strengthens group unity and keeps me from thinking

that I am "special" (that old pattern of mine). Today, I love to be at an equal level with my group fellows—not above, not below. I feel "part of"! We have a primary purpose as a group, and the kind of sobriety where "that which each has goes to increase the possession of the rest" (SA, 171). I can depend on the group unity for my personal recovery. What a change! What a comfort! This is the way it should be.

—Daan, Amsterdam, The Netherlands (aka Holland)

NETHERLANDS

AMSTERDAM



Greetings From SA Holland

SA started up in Holland about two years ago, after previous attempts to start the fellowship did not last. Today, we have four meetings in Holland: mixed meetings in Amsterdam, Haarlem, and The Hague, and a women-only meeting in The Hague. We recently started a Dutch Intergroup. The translation of *Sexaholics Anonymous* into Dutch is nearly finished. We are very happy and grateful for the help and sponsorship we receive from countries like The United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, and the United States.

If you are ever in Holland, we would love to meet you! Please contact us by phone at +31 6 55364222, or by email at info@sa-nederland.nl



Volunteers Needed Who Speak Languages Other Than English

SA's International Committee is seeking members who speak languages other than English to serve as phone contacts or sponsors for SA members located outside of North America. If you are interested in reaching out to members around the world, please contact the International Committee through SAICO at saico@sa.org



Serving the Russian SA Community

As a member of the SA's International Committee, I serve as the contact person for the SA community in Russia. I grew up in Moscow and moved to the USA over a decade ago. I found sobriety here after hitting bottom in 2004. Today, I am excited to be able to share my experience, strength, and hope with my fellow Russians. Serving them is a passion for me.

The Russians have very few regular local meetings, but here in the US we have been able to help them by hosting two weekly SA meetings using Internet phone. These meetings are attended by loners who live throughout Russia and other countries of the former Soviet Union. Six to fourteen people typically attend each meeting.

In addition to the weekly meetings, in the past year we facilitated two independent Step study workshops via Internet phone. One workshop consisted of four three-hour sessions, which were recorded digitally. The MP3 files have been widely distributed among Russian-speaking SAs. In the other workshop, the facilitator took more than a dozen people through the Steps in four separate two-hour sessions. A monthly Traditions seminar is

scheduled to start next month.

We also have a monthly speakers meeting, during which sexaholics from the US and UK share their experience, strength, and hope with the Russian community. All of these workshops and seminars are translated live from English into Russian by a bilingual SA member.

We are looking for more volunteers who would be willing to share their ES&H with the Russian fellowship. Volunteers do not need to speak Russian (we

have people available to translate); however, we ask that volunteers have a minimum of one year of continuous SA sobriety.

Following are some suggested ideas for future activities:

1. Step Workshops (single or multiple sessions)
2. Speaker Meetings
3. Sponsorship
4. Tradition Meetings

If you are interested in leading a workshop or helping us in any other way, please contact me at bigbook12by12@gmail.com or call (240) 899-3853

—God bless, Dmitri,
Southwestern Virginia



How Amends Work

Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

On Halloween Day 2010, I stood at my father's bed and held his hand and forehead as he passed on at age 90. It was time. His life had not been what he had wanted for the past three years—since a large heart attack—and his health had become gradually and steadily worse. So this was peaceful and a time of appropriate ending.

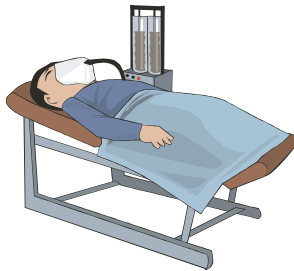
My dad lived a full life. He was a Navy Captain during World War II. He served on the USS Intrepid when it was torpedoed. He later became a pilot and was part of search operations for the Mercury space program and for the Cuban missile crisis. When he retired from the Navy, he became an environmental leader in the city of Jacksonville, cleaning up the St. John's River. He was married to my mother for over 50 years until her death, and then re-married for another 11 years. He was a golfer and a sportsman, and he lived an active life into his late 80s.

I was blessed to be able to be at his side at that moment. My wife and I had just decided that he would likely live several more days, so I was packing things up to drive

home and return again in a few days, when I noticed his suddenly irregular breathing. I stayed to talk him through his death. I told him of my love for him, and the love of so many others. I told him of all the good he had done in his life. I told him to go toward the light. I gave him permission to let go, to stop struggling. And then he died.

This was the same father whom I resented for most of my life. He was demanding and difficult to please when I was growing up. Nothing I did was ever quite enough. He taught me to strive for the best, a trait that has been both the strength of my life and the perfectionism that fed my addiction. He could never say "I love you" until recent years. I spent my teen years resenting him, my 20s trying to please him (and resenting him), and my 30s and 40s staying as far away as I reasonably could (and resenting him). I can remember acting out to the mental tune of "I'll show you, Dad." My father was number two on my Step Four list (after only my wife) and number two on my Step Eight list.

I made amends to my father



seven years ago. I came to realize that he had done the best he could do, and that in fact his best had been pretty good indeed. In Step Four I came to see him as spiritually sick, and to think of him with compassion and with admiration. I saw that his actions toward me had only been active for only 18 years, while my resentment and anger at him went on for over 30 years. What father wants his son to stay distant for 30 years? My actions had perpetuated the problem. After talking it over with my sponsor, I went to my father and apologized for having treated him badly for my adult life. He treated it lightly and set it aside, but that apology made a difference to both of us.

Since that moment, my life with him has been different. Some would say that I continued to make amends

by my actions—but I saw it rather as “practicing the principles” because I was being the son that I should have been all along. I visited him frequently in these last seven years. Since his heart attack, I spoke to him nearly every week, and I visited him nearly monthly. I was able to create a loving relationship with my father that we had never had in the 30 years before.

So the time spent with him this past Halloween was a reward, a culmination of the gifts of recovery. I can look back on his life and—now—be satisfied with my part in it.

Recovery is worth it. As the White Book says, “We found it to be the greatest adventure of our lives.” (78). Thank you God, and thank you SA.

—Eric H., Pensacola, FL, Sober since November 19, 2009



What Powerless Means to Me

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

When I started working the SA program, I really didn't know anything about the Twelve Steps. I was relieved to find that Step One appeared to be so self-explanatory. It asked me to admit that I was powerless, and that was easy. I had already lost my marriage, my business, my house, and the care of

my children. Even then, things kept getting worse, so of course I had no trouble admitting I was powerless.

Yet even as I started working Step One, I found myself seeking excuses for not fully working the Steps. I thought I should do what Step One said, but only halfway. For reasons that still baffle me today, I

looked for loopholes in the written Steps.

For example, I questioned whether I was truly as “powerless” as Step One implies. After all, a truly powerless person couldn’t do anything at all. I knew I still had the power to drive a car, or write a check, or play a musical instrument. I can remember marveling at how logical my stinkin’ thinkin’ sounded! With this as my dubious justification, I barely worked the program while mentally holding myself back from it. As any sober person in SA could have predicted, such half measures availed me nothing.

With the help of a devoted sponsor, I got my thinking straightened out. Much later, I looked up the word “powerless” in my 1934 *Webster’s* dictionary (published at the time the Steps were written). I like to use this dictionary to look up definitions of key words found in the Steps, and then make drawings based on those words.

I found that “powerless” meant “destitute of power.” Wanting more, I turned to the definition for “power” and found it was the “ability (whether physical, mental, or moral) to act.” Putting this together, I came up with my own definition for “powerless”:

Powerless – adj. Destitute of the ability (whether physical, mental, or moral) to act.

Before entering the program,

my actions were much more lust-directed than self-directed. Despite my outspoken claims of self-control, I saw my own actions becoming deeply disturbing. It took time, but finally I admitted the obvious—that I no longer had the ability to stop. I could talk about sobriety, but the actions of sobriety were beyond my reach. My own enlightened self-interest finally told me this.

If I had been completely honest with myself from the beginning, I could have easily admitted I was powerless. I would never have used any other forms of power as a diversion. Step One doesn’t ask us to admit our powerlessness over driving a car, or writing checks, or playing music, etc. Step One simply says “we were powerless over lust.”

In my years before recovery, I had used every available resource to defeat lust. I used intense willpower. I spent years in individual counseling. I went regularly to church. I took every action “physical, mental, or moral” but could not defeat lust. None of it kept me sober. At last, I had to agree with *Sexaholics Anonymous*, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, and *Webster’s Dictionary*; I am truly powerless over Lust.

When I decided to illustrate one word from each of the Twelve Steps, the word “powerless” stumped me at first. I sketched a leaf floating in a stream, because it looked so powerless over the water. I showed a man stretching to grab something

he could not reach. These images were okay, but they did not carry the message.

I asked myself, “What is something that is powerful enough to lift anything, but is powerless to lift itself?” Quickly, I sketched an enormous and powerful crane trying to lift itself. At its original small size, the crane looked too slapstick—nothing more than a childish cartoon. So I set it aside. Later, fed by prayer and meditation, I returned to it and made a

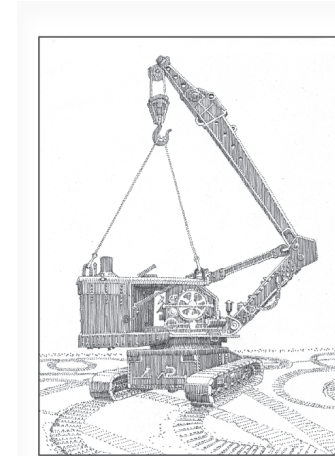
larger drawing. Far from looking comical, the drawing nearly stopped my heart. Looking into that drawing was like looking into a mirror. It carried my message: “I can do much,

but I cannot lift myself.”

The saying “A picture is worth a thousand words” probably applies here. The drawing explains itself. I chose this machine because it looked so strong, but many other machines wield more mechanical power than this one. Yet the message remains the same, even if the strength of the machine is multiplied a thousand times. The machine in the drawing lacks sufficient power, skill, or resources

of any kind to accomplish its object. It, like me, needs a Power greater than itself.

—John I.



1. Powerless
adj. Destitute of the ability
(whether physical, mental, or moral) to act.
—WEBSTERS 1934

Tradition Three: Door to Sobriety

Tradition Three: The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

The Third Tradition is a bringer of many gifts. It makes me a member of the Fellowship. It identifies “lust” as my problem. It is the spiritual link that joins me to other recovering sexaholics and ensures that the meeting will be a safe haven where

I can bring lust to the light. And it carries the promise that sobriety can happen for me, as long as I really want it.

As a kid, I was an outsider, not a joiner. I never belonged to anything. I didn’t feel a part of my family, my class at school, or a sports



team. As an adult I was fired from many jobs, including a job at my church, where as I left, the door was locked against me.

So I was wary at first about joining this “club.” Could I be a part of it? Did I want to be? My story was tame, I thought, compared to some I heard at meetings. My greatest fear was that they’d say I couldn’t belong! I remember in the early days embellishing my introduction (or “litany,” as we used to call it). When finished, it was, I thought, quite a shocker. Now nobody could say I wasn’t a sexaholic!

Today I know it’s true: nobody can say I’m not a sexaholic. But it’s not my past—shocking or not—that makes it so. As our White Book says,

. . . [We] were driven here by many different forms of the same problem.”Some of us fit society’s stereotypes of what a sexaholic might be and some of us did not. Some of us were driven to buy or sell sex on the streets, others to have it anonymously in bars or public places. . . . Many of us kept our obsessions to ourselves, resorting to compulsive masturbation, pictures, fetishes, voyeurism, or exhibitionism (SA, 1).

So if it is not behaviors that define the sexaholic, wherein lies our commonality? As “To the Newcomer” explains,

When we came to SA, we

found that in spite of our differences, we shared a common problem—the obsession of lust, usually combined with a compulsive demand for sex in some form. We identified with one another on the inside (SA, 1).

This is the genius of SA: that our disease is lust, manifested in various forms. The way we acted out didn’t matter. What was going on in our heads was the problem—the thoughts we could never get rid of, the images that would not go away. Lust, not sex, was “The Force Behind the Addiction” (SA, 39). As the Big Book says about alcoholism, “Our liquor was but a symptom” (AA, 64).

So lust is our common problem; sexaholics are powerless over lust. But the glue that bonds us in fellowship is something more than that. As the White Book points out:

There are hundreds of thousands of people with sexual and marital problems of every conceivable description. Many may want a support group, but not sexual sobriety. . . (SA, 176-177).

Here we begin to understand the Fellowship: a group of people who share a common problem (lust) and who also want to stop. I had acted out for 18 years without wanting to stop. Then came the day when I saw the horror and disgust in my victim’s eyes—and the miracle happened.

It didn’t feel very much like a miracle then. It felt like the depths of “guilt, self-hatred, remorse, emptiness, and pain” (SA, v). But today I know in that instant, a tiny germ of humility was intersected by a bolt of grace, and a loving God infused in me the desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.

The “only requirement” is a double-sided concept. It means that I don’t need any special qualifications to be a member. I don’t need to own a car or have a job. This Tradition teaches me to accept my fellow sexaholics as they are: imperfect, flawed, sober or not sober. And in accepting others as imperfect, I learn to accept myself. The only actual requirement is a “desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.” Each one has the right to be a member by virtue of his or her God-given desire for sobriety.

On a November afternoon some years ago, I met two members of SA at a diner downtown. They told me their stories and invited me to share why I had come. They asked me the questions in “How Do We Deal With Newcomers?” (SA, 180). And they explained our sobriety definition. I understood that I was being offered something I craved—a Fellowship, a chance to recover

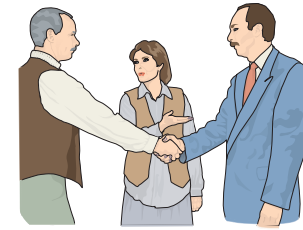
with other recovering sex-drunks, a life-changing program of action. But then there was this thing they called “sexual sobriety.” Did I want it? Could it work for me? I didn’t know.

I had a lot of questions. I told them I was single, that I came from a certain lifestyle. What about same-sex partners and “committed relationships?” The members laughed and said that SA’s definition was the same for everybody. I was free to choose any road I wanted, they said. “We Live and Let Live,” they said, “but we do not call one another sober unless we are practicing sobriety” (SA, 193).

I was full of fear. I told them that I didn’t think I could do it, but I was willing to try. They smiled and said that was good enough. They took me to my first meeting, where I soon learned that same-sex sexualizing and extra-marital liaisons were not options here. But I felt comfortable. I had found the Fellowship, and I was a part of it.

The protective arms of the Third Tradition closed around me; I was in a safe place. The desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober made me a member. This desire—God’s gift to the desperate sexaholic—opened the door to my new life of sobriety.

—A Grateful Member



Coincidence?

I've heard many times in various recovery programs that "Coincidences are miracles where God chooses to be anonymous." In my personal experience, that statement has proven to be true.

In December 1999, on an AA spiritual retreat, I disclosed that I was afraid that I was going to get drunk if I did not get my sexual behavior under control. At that time I had 14 years of AA sobriety. There were 24 men on that retreat and one of them just happened to be an SA member (coincidence or miracle?). A few days later, he took me to my first SA meeting, where I got a sponsor and started working the Steps. My wife had absolutely no knowledge of my sex addiction at this time, so both my AA and SA sponsors, in accordance with "A Caution" in the White Book (SA, 3), suggested that I not tell her about it yet.

In December 2000, one day short of one year, I lost my SA sobriety big time in a porn shop. I struggled with sobriety until March 2001. Then, beginning in April 2003, I obtained a little over two years of shaky sobriety. By this time, I was feeling like a hypocrite because I still had not revealed any of this to my wife. My SA sponsor told me to

get on my knees and tell God that I was ready, and that I would tell my wife when He provided the right time.

On Sunday morning, May 11, 2003, I woke up feeling that I was totally out of control. I knew that I was not fit, either spiritually or emotionally, and that I was in danger of losing my SA sobriety and ultimately my AA sobriety. I picked up the Sunday newspaper and noticed an article about a huge revival meeting that was taking place in San Diego that very day. This would probably be the last West Coast appearance of this well-known evangelist. I had never been to a revival meeting of any kind, but that day I felt compelled to go (coincidence or miracle?). I told my wife that I was going, alone, and she said, "Great."

At the end of the day, the evangelist asked people to come out on the stadium floor to accept God, to renew their faith, or to pray. I had not planned to do anything like that, but I literally felt drawn to go down and pray (coincidence or miracle?). When we were all assembled in front of him, this man asked us to pray for whatever was on our heart. My prayer was, "God I need a miracle and I don't even know what



I am asking for."

Four days later at an AA meeting, one of my sponsees gave me a book about the "addictive personality" (coincidence or miracle?). When I got home late that night, I threw the book on my desk and went to bed. The next day, Friday, I went to work, then to dinner with an AA group, then to a meeting. I came home late and did not see my wife until the next morning.

The next morning, Saturday, I got up early to mow the lawn and prune some trees, and was outside working when my wife came out. She asked where I had gotten the book on my desk. I said that a sponsee gave me the book, and that he and his wife had read it and thought it was great. She asked if she could read it and I said, "Sure."

When I finished working in the yard, I put in a new sink. I was done around 8 pm and then I showered. When I came downstairs, my wife told me that she had read the entire book, all 120 pages. She said that for the first time in 35 years of marriage she finally understood me, my addictive personality, and why I think the way I do (coincidence or miracle?). She asked me to sit down because she wanted to discuss the book. I was clueless as to where the conversation would go.

My wife said that if she

understood the book correctly, it said that after a person with an addictive personality gets one addiction under control, it is very common, almost expected, that another addiction will pop up and take its place. I agreed that was probably correct. She then asked, "So a person could recover from alcoholism and might then become addicted to drugs, food, gambling or sex?" I said, "Yes." Then she said, "I would like to discuss a secret that has been going on in this house for at least two years if not much longer." I was getting very light-headed but I agreed. I never took my eyes off of her.

My wife then asked me about a recovery conference I had attended a couple of years before. She said that she hadn't thought much about it at the time, but then she realized



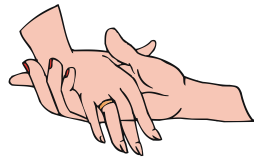
I had never used the phrase "recovery conference" before. In the past, I always said that I was going to an AA conference or convention. She said that when my registration confirmation came back, she noticed that it was from SA, but she thought I must be going for one of my sponsees. "Then," she said, "it hit me like a hammer that it was for you."

She said that she went through deep anger, then rage, then fear. She wondered whether I had a disease, or a mistress, or was having multiple affairs. She said that all she could think to do was to get quiet and pray for an answer. "Then," she said, "I

realized that if you were a sex addict you were at least doing something about it. And having seen AA work for over 18 years, I had to have faith that when you were ready you would tell me. So I decided to give you two years, and if you hadn't told me by then, I was going to buy a book on sex addiction and confront you."

Amazingly, those two years ended the very same month in which I went to the revival meeting and in which my friend gave me the addictive personality book (coincidence or miracle?). My wife then asked me the \$64,000 question: "Are you a sex addict?" I replied, "Yes." She asked me what that meant, and I explained sexual addiction to her in general terms. I told her that I had been tested for STDs and that I was okay. She asked me whether I had an SA sponsor and an SA home group. I said, "Yes." By this time we were both crying. We then sat still and said nothing for what seemed like an eternity.

Then she quietly said, "Well I've seen the miracle that AA has worked in our lives, and I know



Seek and Find

While on vacation, I went for a walk through a nature preserve. To my surprise, I saw a patch of wild raspberries. I couldn't resist picking a handful. They were delicious. I walked in that nature preserve nearly every day for a week. I kept finding

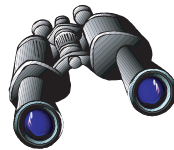
that God will get us through this." I cannot describe the immense relief and gratitude that I felt at that very moment and the deep love that I felt for my life companion. In August of 2010, we celebrated 42 years of marriage.

A few months ago, I overheard my wife talking with her sister on the phone. They were discussing my service work in the Twelve Step programs. My sister-in-law had asked my wife whether she felt second-best. My wife said that she did not. I heard her say, "Steve's priorities are as follows: God is first, the Twelve

Step programs are second, he is third, and I am fourth. However, when he works his program and faithfully keeps that order, then I *feel* first." I almost burst into tears. Yes there are true miracles everywhere we look and often they seem to be coincidences . . . but are they?

In January of 2011, God willing, I will have four years of sexual sobriety. For that I am forever grateful to the One who has all power. May we find Him now.

—Steve C., *San Diego*



more delicious raspberries. I was fortunate to be there when the raspberries were in season.

As we were out and about vacationing, I realized that I seemed to always be looking for

something. It is as if my brain is set on "seek-and-find." This worked great in the raspberry patch, but later, as I drove through a new city, I noticed my constant automatic scanning. Everyone else was looking for the right street to take, but I was scanning the billboards and storefronts for a lust hit. I found one. In the grocery store more scanning and more lust hits. Everywhere I went, even at church, more scanning, more lust hits.

I always thought that I was being discreet. My self-deception almost had me convinced that I was "accidentally" in the "wrong place" at the "right time" . . . or was it the right place at the right time for a lust hit?

As I returned home and shared this experience with others in the program, they related with the constant, ever-present "seek-and-find" when it comes to lust. I noticed that I was always looking for something when driving, watching TV, or in a group of people. I can even find images in the plaster texturing on the ceiling above my bed.

A long time ago I heard, "Where your attention goes, you go!" I am grateful that today my attention is focused on recovery. I am also quite aware of the challenge of keeping my attention on recovery. I know

that lust is cunning, baffling, and powerful. It is so powerful that every day I struggle with keeping my attention on recovery. The moment I begin to drop my guard, get distracted, or even feel that I am safe, something usually happens that reminds me of just how vulnerable I am.

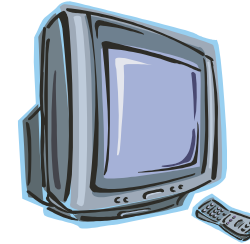
Yesterday my guard was down. I thought about making a call but didn't. I began to seek, and I found a lust hit in a "regular" television show.

I was scanning the channels and saw a show with a rating that caught my attention. At first I passed that channel only to return to it and find what I was looking for. Thirty seconds later seek-and-find worked. Lust! Do I make a call? I

have never been sorry for making a call, but I did not make a call. I have been sorry for not making a call.

I turned off the TV and went outside to do some yard work. Focusing on something different was good, but it was a distraction-based focus; not a recovery focus. Had I been focused on recovery I would have made a call, prayed, surrendered, or read from *Sexaholics Anonymous*. I know how to focus on recovery. I have done that many times before. But that day I didn't focus on recovery.

Later that night I heard about a website that was a trigger. I



didn't surrender. The impact of the previous lust hit combined with the lust of the new trigger fueled the obsession. I began to wonder if my computer filter would block it. Down the slippery slope I traveled as I disconnected from my family and tested the effectiveness of my filter. Fortunately for me, at a previous time when I was focused on recovery, I set up a series of restrictions on my computer. The site I was seeking was blocked. It didn't matter. I was in seek-and-find mode, and that was a lust hit for me. I kept seeking only with minimal success at finding, but I was there.

Sometimes I forget that lust is toxic. Fortunately this time I shifted my focus to recovery. I had to remind myself that going down this road will only cause pain. Relapse kills! I had to remind myself that I wanted peace and the Real Connection. I started to focus on recovery. I do want peace. I do want recovery. I do want a real connection. I surrendered. I surrendered in prayer, but I didn't surrender by making a call. My pride jumped in again. "It was just a little slip" was my justification. I know

that each slip, big or small, will lead to another slip, big or small, that will eventually lead to relapse.

It is a good thing that I am going to a meeting tonight, because tonight I will surrender to the group. I need support. I need reality. I need the Real Connection I find at the meeting to remind me of what I want and what I don't want. There are times when I can't trust myself or my thoughts. In the past it has been so easy for me to convince myself that lust was what I wanted, needed, and had to have. The reality of the cost, the pain, and the wreckage was consumed like a bundle of thin dry twigs tossed into a roaring fire of lust. The insanity of addiction!

It is a new day and I am once again focused on recovery. My life works so much better when I am focused on recovery. I have hope. I love recovery. I love the discovery that is a part of recovery. I love the healing that is occurring in my life and all of my relationships. Today I am seeking recovery. Today I am finding recovery. Recovery is a gift from a power greater than myself.

—Jon, a grateful recovering
lust addict



Gratitude

I resisted coming to SA at first, thinking that the sobriety definition was extreme and insisting that I was not a sexaholic—just overly

romantic. But I had been in other recovery programs long enough to hear things like, "If my way is not working, maybe I should try what is

working for someone like me."

My way was definitely not working. I agonized constantly about whether I should stay married. I hated myself for hurting my husband with emotional and sexual affairs. Prior to our marriage I'd had a long history of promiscuous behavior: having a lot of sex I didn't want to have as I desperately sought affection (including a destructive relationship I couldn't leave) and lots of lying to keep a man (or two) from leaving me.

So I was desperate enough to try what other SA women suggested. I prayed for relief from obsession every time I started agonizing about my marriage. The marriage decision was beyond me, so I asked a Higher Power to handle the bigger picture every time a thought about leaving crossed my mind.

I adopted a broad interpretation of lust recovery. Lusting for me included romantic thoughts, imagining what a person I hardly knew "must" be like, or trying to "run into" someone by shopping where he did. I began avoiding contact with former partners. I surrendered inappropriate Internet searches. I began following the SA definition of sobriety. In the beginning I thought this definition didn't apply to me, but it has turned

out to be my first step on a path to sanity and contentment.

I got a sponsor and followed her instructions on Step work. When she could no longer sponsor me, I began working with someone she suggested and have continued with her for three years. At first, I would slip after a few months of sobriety. Then came my current sobriety, which has continued for almost three years.

Since joining SA, the quality of my life has improved drastically. My commitment to my husband is strong. After eight years of marriage and a couple of years of sobriety, I followed my heart and changed my last name to his. Today, I am

far more aware of his strengths and of the traits in us that make us fit together and complement each other so well. I am becoming more able to let our difficult moments pass, rather than making them worse like I once

did. What we have is not a high that comes crashing down, but something that is sturdy, warm, and quiet. Our sex life—which at times I thought could not be healed—is now high on my gratitude list most days.

I am healthier and happier as an individual, too. The energy I once used chasing lust I now use to care for our home. I often write five gratitude items and five personal



assets that help me feel good about my day. I appreciate the positives in my life and like myself more.

Life isn't perfect. In many ways I'm still a hypersensitive, selfish, overly dependent love cripple. Sometimes feelings of loneliness, loss, or rejection overwhelm me. But my sponsor has taught me that I no

longer have to live in those feelings. I can turn them over to a Higher Power, cry if necessary, and move on.

Thank you, Higher Power, SA, sponsor, and the members in my home group!

—Debbie

The Big Book Says. . .

The Big Book says that "resentment is the number one offender" of alcoholics (AA, 64). I can't help but think that ego is also the number one killer of sexaholics.

A bruised ego and entitlement seem to go together for me. This is where "cunning, baffling, powerful" (AA, 58-59) rear their ugly heads—often before I am even aware of it. I have a chain reaction that I'm now learning to interrupt.

I will think I have something figured out, or I know just the right way to say it, or I'm right and I can prove it—and then the bottom falls out. I don't get what I want, or I am not understood, or I find that I'm not right. Then my ego feels bruised, and I feel angry and hurt. Then comes the feeling of entitlement. In the past, acting out would have been a forgone conclusion at this point. I would manipulate situations and give myself permission to enter the masturbation-escape module. When

all else (or everything, or nothing in particular) fails: Masturbate.

Like everything else in recovery, breaking this cycle has proven to be a progressive journey. Arresting the compulsion to act out came first, and, thank God, masturbation fell by the wayside. Resentment came next. There was a slow and sometimes painful transition from feeling entitled to masturbate to feeling entitled to resent. Ah, the drunk-killer emerges from the darkness. It wasn't until I learned (through much practice) to look in the mirror that I could progress beyond resentment. Seeing myself rightly has been one of the hardest parts of recovery for me, but also one of the most critical. Nobody wants to look, sound, or feel this bad.

In our local groups, we begin each meeting with short shares, during which we each share our principle forms of acting out and our length of sobriety. Regularly putting



all that on the table in front of others provides me with a continuous reminder for me of the level of offenses and harm I have committed. That acknowledgement is the starting point in my progressive victory. If I am clear and honest about my offenses, then the motivation to do the right thing is there every time. It's called the "gift of despair."

So now instead of masturbation or any other form of acting out—like resenting, smoking, drugging, or eating—I look in the mirror and see myself rightly. And what do I see? A big black-and-blue bruised ego! And what do I want to do about it?



I want to make it go away. I want to hide it. It's ugly. And what's different now? Today I know that there is only One who has the power to make it go away, and that One isn't me. So I pray. Thank God.

I don't know how I made it this far through life without prayer. Like turning on the water faucet, when I turn the prayer handle it just flows out of the tap and the relief—a cool stream of crystal clear water, my life source—flows.

Practice, Practice, Practice: I don't want to die from this disease.

—Tim S., NY

Upcoming SA/S-Anon International Convention

*Sunshine and Serenity:
Out of the Darkness and Into the Light*

January 14-16 2011, Irvine, CA

"Baby, it's cold outside," are words from a classic wintertime song. For those of us who live in Southern California, "cold" means that the temperatures have dropped below 70 degrees. 70 degrees will be the average daytime temperature for the January 2011 SA/SANON International Convention.

To date, convention registrations are on record-breaking pace. Breakout meetings, international talent show, memory wall for Roy K . . . These are just a few of the many things that will take place during this very spiritual weekend. Do something intentional for your recovery. Come and be a part of Sunshine and Serenity...out of the darkness and into the light.

Visit our website at SASANON2011.com for links to convention registration, hotel registration, convention highlights, and other information. You can also volunteer for service or contact any of our committee chairs with your questions. See you in January!

—Tom K., Southwest Regional Delegate and Sunshine and Serenity Registration Chair



Note from the Delegate Chair



Dear Fellow SA Members:

Gratitude is more than a word. It is an action. Gratitude is the heart's memory. May we find thankfulness in our hearts that we have found SA. Thankfulness not only for the fellowship, the Steps, the Traditions, and a personal relationship with God—but also for the friends we've found, who we cherish as brothers and sisters.

The General Delegate Assembly is grateful for the service you render throughout the fellowship. Your constant willingness to look inside yourself, do service work, and carry the message of SA is noticed and appreciated by the GDA. We love to hear from you.

May you continue to find peace within as you move forward in doing the next right thing. Sexual sobriety opens the door to recovery, where the healing begins. "We feel better physically, emotionally, and spiritually when we are sober and when the principles of the Steps are effective in our everyday lives" (SA, 33).

"The joy of living is the theme of SA's Twelfth Step, and action is its key word" (12&12, 106). Joy is a spiritual awakening, where we become able to do, feel, and believe that which we could not do, feel, or believe before. By taking the actions of love, we begin to feel alive and free of the obsession to lust. The actions we take working the Steps are a daily occurrence. We need to just do it. Surrender and obey.

We all need to accept where we are today and move forward in the solution of the Steps, surrender, and accountability to ourselves and to God. The past is called the past because it is in the past. We need to let go of the pain, shame, and negative attitudes we have toward ourselves and others.

Today, "we enjoy moments in which there is something like real peace of mind. To those of us who have hitherto known only excitement, depression, or anxiety—in other words, to all of us—this newfound peace is a priceless gift. Where humility had formerly stood for forced feeding on humble pie, it now begins to mean the nourishing ingredient that can give us serenity" (12&12, 74).

I'm looking forward to seeing all of you at our International Convention in Irvine, CA on January 14-16. . . . where you will find Sunshine and Serenity.

—Mike S., GDA Chair

SA Correctional Facilities Committee (CFC) Update

Outreach to Prisons in Pennsylvania

In August 2010, a prison psychologist in Mercer, PA contacted SAICO to inquire about SA's support for prisoners, and I responded to the inquiry. The psychologist informed me that the prison administration for the State of Pennsylvania has mandated that all 27 prisons implement Twelve Step recovery programs for sexual addiction. She explained that the prisons may choose any "S" program and that the program must be voluntary—but she said that I should expect many more calls, because they need assistance in getting the programs off the ground.

I shared with her the nature of the CFC's work in support of prisoners, including our Sponsor-by-Mail program and our available literature, as well as the possibility of outside participation from local SA members. She requested prison starter kits, including White Books, literature request forms, SA "For the Newcomer" brochures, "SA as a Resource for the Health and Helping Professional" brochures, and a subscription to *Essay*. So far, we have



provided starter kits in response to requests from five prisons. The first SA meeting resulting from the mandate started in December in a prison in Fayette, PA.

Because of this interest from the Pennsylvania prison system, the CFC will need many more volunteers. We are always in need of more sponsors to work

the Steps with prisoners through letters, and we expect the requests for sponsors to grow drastically—including the need for women to sponsor female inmates. Also, because most prisoners do not have access to SA meetings, we are seeking new corrections facilities committees, located near the prisons, to help the inmates get the meetings started.

If you are interested in being a Sponsor-by-Mail sponsor or assisting us in any other way, please contact me at saico@sa.org. You may also join us on our teleconference meeting on February 2, 2011, 5 pm EST, at (641) 798-4200, conference code 6460229#. We look forward to hearing from you.

—Tim S., CFC Chair

Prisoners Please Submit Your Stories!



The CFC is soliciting submissions from prisoners or former prisoners for publication in upcoming issues of *Essay*. Your ES&H as a prisoner will be an encouragement to other prisoners, as well as to the SA fellowship and the addict who still suffers. Please submit stories to SAICO at saico@sa.org, or mail to PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024-3565, USA.

SAICO Financial Update

Following is a summary of SA fellowship revenues and expenses for Third Quarter 2010. A detailed donations report is enclosed with mailed issues of *Essay*, and is also available from SAICO at 866-424-8777 or saico@sa.org.

We wish to thank all of our members who so generously contribute to our fellowship, so that we may continue to carry the message of recovery to the addict who still suffers.

SAICO Financial Update Third Quarter 2010	
Donations	\$ 54,021.81
Other Revenues	17,201.01
Expenses	59,460.01
Revenues (less expenses)	1,903.91
Total Prudent Reserve	206, 234.41



New SA Groups

USA

Dover, DE
 Memphis, TN
 (additional meeting, for women)
 Marion, OH
 Morrison, IL



Nampa, ID
 Niskayuna, NY
 Scappoose, OR

Canada

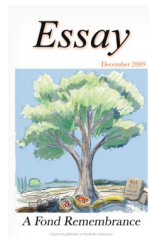
Calgary AB (additional meeting, for women)

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

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	Eric S., <i>Alt</i>	CFC, Internet
	Russ B., <i>Alt</i>	International, Literature
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	Lia F., <i>Alt</i>	Nominations, International
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Jerry L.	International, Nominations
Art C.	H&I Public info
Bob H.	H&I, Public Info



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

Calendar of Events



January 14 - 16, 2011, SA UK Convention, Pantasaph, North Wales, United Kingdom

(English spoken). Info at: den Haag.sa@gmail.com

February 26, 2011, The Journey Continues, Norcross, GA (North Metro Atlanta). *Unity, Recovery, and Service.* Info at www.saatlanta.org or atlanta-saintergroup@gmail.com

April 8 - 10, 2011, 2011 SA Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention, Harrisburg, PA. *A Change of Heart.* Info at www.achangeof-heart2011.com

March 12, 2011, Third Annual Spring Marathon, Greenville, PA. Info available after the new year.

April 8 - 10, 2011, AS Spring Meeting, Retzback bei Wurzburg. *On the Path of Recovery.* Phone: 49-178-80-26-805

March 25-27, 2011, Twelve Step Workshop, Kortenberg, Belgium

September 2 - 4, 2011, SA UK Convention, Ammerdown, Somerset, England. Info at frome@sauk.org

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

Submit info to be listed in March 2011 Essay by January 15, 2011. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact.

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

Upcoming International Conventions

January 14-16, 2011, Irvine, CA, Sunshine & Serenity—Out of the Darkness and Into the Light. Join us for a wonderful weekend of spiritual growth and recovery at the SA/SANON International Convention in Irvine. Visit our website at SASANON2011.com for links to convention registration, hotel registration, and other information. Plan to extend your stay and enjoy the long weekend in sunny California



July 15 - 17, 2011, Portland, OR, Recovery on the River. For more information contact 509-249-7606 (local) or 800-426-7866 (toll free) or visit our website at www.recoveryontheriver2011.com

January 13 - 15, 2012, Newark, New Jersey, Freedom from Self in New York. For more information, contact www.libertyfromself.com

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

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The Twelve Traditions of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or SA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. SA should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. SA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and TV.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before 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.

