

Essay

March 2010



A New Happiness

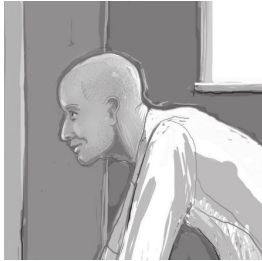
A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

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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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.

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

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A New Happiness

When I started my journey of recovery, I was not prepared to call myself a sexaholic. Even though my life was unmanageable, I knew I had a problem with sex, and I was attracted to men, I did not believe I was powerless over lust.

I joined the SA fellowship in May 2001. At my first meeting, as I heard people share I thought, “What a lot of sick people”—but of course I was the sickest one there, because I didn’t know I was sick. When I saw that the program involved 12 steps, I thought, “Okay, I will do one Step a week and be out of this place in 12 weeks.” But by the end of the meeting I realized that these people had the same problem I did: they were powerless over lust.

At the next week’s meeting, I was willing to identify and say, “My name is David and I’m a sexaholic.” I am still saying this more than eight years later. I’m not prepared to say I am a “recovering” sexaholic (which

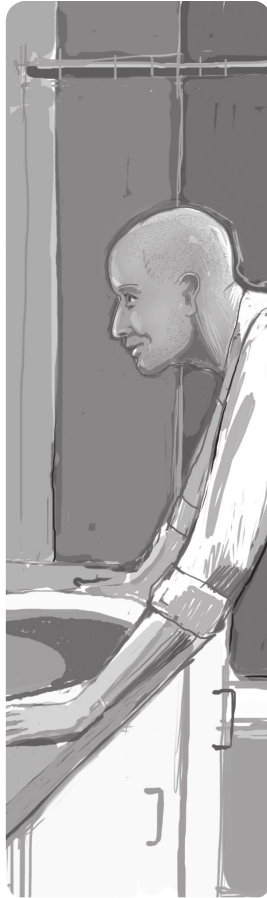
I am) however, because I will be a sexaholic until the day I die. At last I had found a group of people who cared, who were honest with God, and who were honest with themselves and others. I was home. The Twelve Steps became the framework on which I built my new life.

What It Was Like

I became interested in sexual things when I was eight or nine years old. I was a shy, introverted boy. I was curious about girls and soon found that by playing “doctors and nurses,” I could exploit my girl cousins and their friends. My only male cousin died when he was 11, so my acting out was with girls at this point. I would also read magazines, using the images to feed my lust. I had a stash of my favourite magazines hidden under

my bed.

My father was an alcoholic and a World War One veteran who found it difficult to show his love. He would buy me expensive presents, but I needed his approval and love. I never



felt that I got that. He was often quite violent and many times I would stand between him and my mother to protect her from harm. I despised him for this. My mother on the other hand was a nurturing person who tried to be both mother and father.

I was the youngest of six children. My brother was 14 years older than I was, with four sisters between us. I never really connected with him because of the age difference.

I was brought up in a Christian home and attended church regularly (which I continue to do to this day). My father also attended church, but he still drank heavily. When he died at 94, he too had changed for the better. Today, I miss him very much.

My parents owned a business. We moved around a lot as they changed the location of their business. Thus, I attended three different primary schools and was often “the new kid on the block.” I was bullied quite a lot, both at primary and high schools. My first sexual experience with another male was when I was 12 and a 14-year-old boy touched me in an inappropriate way. After that I started to compare my sexual maturity with others.

In high school, I flirted a lot with girls but never had any relationships. I still hankered after the approval of boys my own age as well as older men. I started to fantasize and

masturbate on a regular basis—to comfort myself, hide my loneliness, hide the feeling of being inadequate, and help me to go to sleep at night.

During this time I went to the beach with my parents. In the changing room I saw a man about 40 years old standing naked. He talked to me while I was getting changed. I would recall that image and masturbate, night after night.

When I was 17, I made a profession of faith and thought that now I would be free from this problem of masturbation. I did feel free from the obsession for various periods of time, but when I started again it would be much worse than before. I was on a downward spiral.

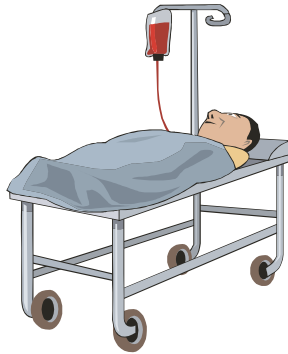
When I was 22, I married a lovely Christian girl to whom I am still married 45 years later (only because she remained faithful to me). I thought, “I can have all the sex I want, when I want it, and I will be able to stop masturbating.” But I started back up again.

By the time I was 27, I had crossed a line that I said I would never cross: I acted out with a man in a public toilet. I felt dirty, physically weak, and condemned. I swore that I would not do it again. I even tried to bargain with God as I understood Him. I said, “God, help me to stop this and I will serve You faithfully forever.” I white-knuckled it for a time. Then, when I was 30, my

mother died, and I was back to the old behaviour.

There were years when I felt free of my obsessive behavior, but each time I went back to my drug I would cross another line that I had convinced myself I wouldn't. In the end I was going to saunas and acting out, going to nude beaches, acting out in public toilets, and acting out while watching pornographic films in adult shops. I even paid for sex with men. I would act out on the way to work, during my lunch break, and after work. My whole thinking process was: "Where will I get my next fix?" All the while I wanted to stop, but the more I tried, the worse it became. The more I fought the lust, the more it fought back. Lust was my friend (so I thought) because it numbed the hurt and pain inside. But in reality, it was my enemy.

At 50 years old I had my first heart attack. I thought, "Now is the time to stop." But I was unable to stop. It would be another nine years before I had another rude awakening. I was taken to a hospital with severe angina and was struggling to breathe after a morphine injection. I prayed to my Higher Power to give me



the opportunity to put some things right. God answered my prayer and I decided to seek help. That is how I found Sexaholics Anonymous.

What It Is Like Now

As I started working the program, I realized that I was emotionally, spiritually, and physically bankrupt. I began working the Steps from memory, but when I started Step Three, I got a sponsor. My sponsor was ever so patient with me, teaching me to be honest with myself, with God, and with others. He stressed the importance of working the Steps. "No pain, no gain," he would say.

My breakthrough came while I was working Step Three: "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*" My problem was that I had to rethink what I understood about God. My theology taught me that God was a loving God, but I thought of Him as a harsh schoolmaster in the sky who would punish me if I did wrong. My natural father was a disciplinarian, and my concept of God was influenced by my natural father's actions. But as I worked Step Three, I knew that I needed to make this decision. I was ready to trust God as a loving Father.

One night I knelt down in my home while my wife and the children were asleep and asked the God of my understanding to take me by the hand,

lead me wherever He wanted me to go, and be a father to me. I fully surrendered my will and my life to Him that night.

It seems a contradiction that by surrendering my will to another I would get freedom, but that is how it worked for me. I no longer have to make the decisions. I just surrender them to my Higher Power. I just ask myself, "Is this the will of my Higher Power or is this a lust-based decision?" This prayer helps me stay sober one moment at a time.

As I progressed through the program and started my Fourth Step inventory, I realized that I was two people. On the inside, I was a hopeless lustaholic; on the outside I was a well-respected pillar of the church. But as I shared my Step Four with my sponsor, I began bringing the inside out.

When I came to SA, I had one secret that I never intended to tell anyone: I had experimented with bestiality as a teenager. However, I shared this secret with my sponsor as part of my Step Four inventory. Some time later, I was able to share it at a meeting. I had known that I needed to bring my secret out into the light, and when I did, I began to feel really free.

Bit by bit, I have surrendered my character defects and become closer to the person God intended me to be.

Now what others see is who I am, warts and all. Before, I was just a caricature of the person He wanted me to be, but now the inside matches the outside. I am no longer the violent and angry lustaholic I once was.

Working the Steps has brought about healing for me, but only by working the program on a day-to-day basis will I remain sober. To stay sober, I need the whole program, including sponsoring others, participating in meetings, going to conferences, and working the Steps as best I know how.

Most of the men I sponsor have same-sex issues. I encourage all of them to write out their stories. Sometimes when I hear one of these stories, something comes to my memory that I had forgotten, and I write my own Fourth Step inventory on that. This is just one of the ways that working with others enhances my own recovery.

I live in Tasmania, a small island state off the coast of Australia. We have only three SA members here who are geographically separated, so we seldom meet face to face. We have regular phone meetings, however, and I contact other SA members by phone or email. For more fellowship, I regularly attend conferences on the mainland.

At conferences, I find a concentrated focus on fellowship,



working the program, and listening to others share. I learn how others work the Steps, and hear how others are being set free from their addiction. To be able to listen to so many others share is a privilege for me, and is critical if I am to remain sober.

I also do a lot of reading. I have read and re-read *Sexaholics Anonymous* and *Step into Action*, as well as other program materials such as *Best of Essay* and *Practical Recovery Tools 1994-2003*. I have learned a lot from these materials.

Alcoholics Anonymous (83) promises us that:

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know *a new freedom and a new happiness . . .*"

Today, as a result of this program, I am amazed by the serenity, joy, and peace I feel. I have many new friends in SA. I am able to have healthy relationships with men; I feel on equal terms with them. I can "look the world in the eye, and stand free" (*SA*, 205).

Today, when I see men in the street, I see them as people. I don't sexualize them. But I had to admit to my own defects before I could surrender them to my Higher Power and ask Him to remove them. I had

to be honest with myself first, then honest with my Higher Power and with others. I do all of this moment by moment, one day at a time, dependent on God's grace for each sober moment.

I began life thinking that lust was my friend and God was my enemy. Now I know that lust is my enemy and God is my friend. I now have healing in the emotional, spiritual, and physical areas of my life.

I woke up one morning with a feeling of indescribable joy. I had forgotten what it was like to

experience the emotion of joy and happiness. This was a real spiritual experience—one I will never forget! I felt that my Higher Power was saying "This is what life is and can be."

Because of what this program has done for me, I live to share my story with others. I found a new life, because someone carried the message to me. I want to carry the message so other sexaholics can experience the same release from sexaholism that I have experienced.

Today, I am grateful for my eight and a half years of sobriety, thanks to God's grace and the amazing SA program of recovery.

—David W., December 2009,
Tasmania, Australia



Greetings from Tasmania, Australia

In Tasmania, we have a meeting location at Deloraine, midway between Ulverstone and Launceston. However, this is a round trip of 140 kms for me and 100 kms for a second member. A third member lives in Hobart, 300 kms from Ulverstone and 200 kms from Launceston. Thus, the three of us usually meet by conference call. If any two of us are in Hobart or Launceston, we will have a face-to-face meeting.

I was a loner for four years after I moved from Melbourne in Victoria. Today, it's great to have two guys to fellowship with! I also value the chance to meet other members at the conferences on the mainland.

—*Tassie Dave*

Greetings from Melbourne, Australia

Ye Olde Melbourne Towne (founded in 1835) of Port Phillip Bay is located in the “Garden State” of Victoria, which is the most southeastern mainland state of Australia. The first SA meeting in Melbourne is said to have been held in the inner city of Richmond, circa 1992, when the three founding members acquired a copy of the White Book and sat down to read it on a bench on the footpath of a very busy Victoria Street.

Today, Melbourne has four active meetings: Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings and a Saturday morning breakfast meeting. We also host an annual national conference in September/October. In March there is a convention in either Sydney or Canberra. Melbourne also has an active Intergroup that meets monthly.

We would like to invite anyone who may be travelling in Australia to attend a meeting and share with us your E,S,&H!

—*Joe B.*



New Essay Section: “SA Around the World”



Please keep us posted on your group!

We are always eager to hear about SA in your town—anywhere in the world! How about sending an update about how you are growing, learning, or solving difficulties? Suggested length of shares is 50 - 250 words; longer shares are welcome depending on space limitations.

Submit your group news to essay@sa.org—or consider sending a note with your next contribution to SAICO!

The Value of Sobriety

I cringe with self-centered fear each time I hear a sexaholic attempting to assuage the pain and shame of a relapse by subtly downplaying the value of his or her lost sobriety. While beating myself up will strengthen my disease through shame and unworthiness, I equally enable my sickness if I minimize the importance of sobriety. Since I have quite a way to go before becoming a spiritual giant, today I have good reason to be very afraid of the possibility of losing my sobriety.

My own disease cost me a marriage, a career, some of my legal rights, and nearly my life, and it is only through sobriety that I have learned the true value of what I had lost. A man I once sponsored committed suicide at the beginning of this year. Another sits in jail today, having been arrested last week—he is looking at eight to 30 years in prison. Yet another still has all the worldly “blessings” that I now lack—job, family, legal freedoms—and yet he remains absolutely miserable because he stays caught in the cycle of addiction. He cannot—as I could not—experience these gifts as true blessings while remaining in the service of lust.



It must remain very clear to me that the life I live today—one in which I am able to face challenges successfully that once would have overwhelmed me, and remain helpful to others in the midst of them—is not a thing that I own and control like a car, but a priceless unearned gift that is contingent upon the growth and maintenance of my spiritual condition (*AA*, 85). The possibility for this spiritual experience hinges upon the gift of sobriety, and my very life depends upon my remembering the enormous value of sobriety and the True Source of it.

If a man I sponsor relapses, I urge him not to beat himself up, while encouraging him to embrace the full consequences of his mistake. He will need to seek a great deal of help from God and others in order to do this successfully. I do not believe that I would be alive and sober today without having fully grieved the loss of what my disease has cost me. This required me to face the painful truth about what I had done and take responsibility for my behaviors—which in my case were criminal—without identifying with the behaviors themselves. I had to learn to call my crimes what they

truly were without becoming a victim of my own judgmentalism. It was impossible for me to experience this without divine help, and God chose to use the fellowship of Sexaholics Anonymous, for which I do not have the capacity to be sufficiently grateful.

My sponsor told me that I am not those things I did. If I were, it wouldn't have been killing me inside to do them. My actions in the disease were who I am not. That's why they were so harmful to me: because I was betraying my own nature in doing them, and without the spiritual



solution offered by our program, I was becoming “the kind of person” who did such horrible things to others.

Today I am learning one day at a time to become the man He created me to be. And today I need to affirm that my sobriety is the most valuable thing that I have. If I become prideful of it, I will forget that it is a gift and I'll stumble; yet if I forget its true value, I may one day find myself unwilling to pay the necessary price to protect it. I cannot afford either mistake.

—Steve S., Memphis, TN

Lust Is the Problem

Now that Roy has passed, it is incumbent on all of us to carry on his primary emphasis on recovery from Lust. Unlike other “S” fellowships, where the emphasis is on the powerlessness over acting out, we in SA emphasize our powerlessness over lust. Through Roy's guidance, our Step One says that “we were powerless over lust and our lives had become unmanageable.” It does not say that we were powerless over sexual acting out and our lives became unmanageable. Yet when I sit in meetings, the emphasis seems to be more on sexual acting out than on Lust.



Perhaps that is why there is a great deal of relapsing in our fellowship. Perhaps many members never do get sober from lust even though they will, for a time, get sober from sexually acting out.

Can you imagine how a recovering alcoholic would remain sober in AA if, even though the person was not drinking alcohol, he or she was opening a bottle of liquor throughout the day and sniffing it frequently? Is this not what many sexaholics in recovery try to do?

Sexaholics Anonymous clearly states that, “Lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out”(202).

What is lust? According to SA, lust is “an attitude demanding that a natural instinct serve unnatural desires” (40). Also, “Lust is not sex and it is not physical. It seems to be a screen of self-indulgent fantasy separating us from reality” (42).

I have had great difficulty trying to convince SA members that sexual fantasies are a “no-no”—not because they are morally wrong in my opinion, but because sexual fantasies just don’t work if comfort and serenity are goals of recovery.

Jesse L. would always say that the first look is on God and the second look is on me. Whether it is the



look or the fantasy, it is in our heads first. If I let the two-dimensional sexual photograph become a motion picture in my head, then I am on my way to increasing my chance for sexually acting out.

If I am truly powerless, how can I stop the static in my head from going into a fantasy? I cannot. However, I can surrender. I personally use the 18 suggestions found in the White Book section entitled “How I Overcame My Obsession with Lust” (SA, 158) to help prevent the first thought from turning into a fantasy.

I know this works. How do I know? Because it has worked for me for over 25 years. If it can work for me, it can work for anyone.

—Harvey A., Nashville, TN

Progressive Victory Over Lust

A member with one year of sobriety recently wrote to me, asking me to describe the meaning of progressive victory over lust. He said, “I know the sobriety definition, but how can I define whether or not I’m sober with progressive victory over lust?” I thought I would share with the fellowship my experience, strength, and hope on this subject.

The first time I acted out, at age 11, it was at best a naive act. The

last time I acted out, my senses were filled with sights, sounds, and aromas.



How did I get there? Young people enter kindergarten, and twelve years later they graduate and are ready to enter college. How did they make that progress? One lesson at a time. The first time I attended an SA meeting, I knew nothing.

After 13 years of days, I have gained new outlooks and information concerning recovery and the sober

life. We all get here the same way: one lesson at a time, one book at a time, and one day at a time.

I believe that all behaviors are learned over time. We make progress by making wise decisions about our behaviors, and then changing and growing. If we fail to change and grow, we are stuck in the old rut. But if we are willing to change—as we travel this road of happy destiny—we no longer have to curse the pot holes, speed bumps, and other obstructions, because we learn to avoid obstacles that might cause serious damage. Thus we move forward, making progress toward our goal by changing old habits and patterns.

Today I understand the dangers of looking, thinking, and harboring lustful thoughts and behaviors. I do not try to fool myself with comforting lies (such as, “I only looked at porn; I did not masturbate”). The road to hell is paved with good intentions, half-truths, and comfortable lies. Acting out now, for me, would be hell.

Perhaps my experience is helpful, but the ultimate decision in these matters rests with the individual. Do you want a half-measure of sobriety,

or the full reward of progressive victory over lust? Today I am happy, joyous, and free—not restless, irritable, and discontent. Which would you rather be?

As a recovering sexaholic, I came to believe that I was powerless over lust and my life was unmanageable. Working the Steps, my blurred vision changed, and I saw more clearly the wreckage of my past. I set about to right the wrongs I had caused and live a spirit-filled life. Things got better; I felt healthier. Those around me saw a miraculous change.

I was grateful for my growth, and I realized I had to continue to work with others to keep what was given to me. So now I carry the message to those who still suffer. Today I am happy to work with those who ask. I am just a fellow sufferer on the same journey as others. God and the Twelve Step program of SA will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Let us journey together so that we may all change for the better. May God keep us and bless us as we trudge this road of happy destiny.

—*Happy 24 hours, John C.,
sober since October 13th 1996*



The Scars Don't Go Away

Next week I will have surgery to remove some pre-cancerous cells from my nose. I was okay until I got a little pamphlet entitled “You’ve Been Diagnosed with Skin Cancer—What Now?” Luckily, the procedure “offers the highest potential cure rate—99% for skin cancer.”

I’m not really worried about the procedure; cancer isn’t a biggie in our family. But my vanity began to ask questions like, “What will my nose look like after surgery?” and “Will there be any permanent scarring that will draw people’s attention to it?” and “Will people look at me and quickly look away (like I do sometimes) pretending they don’t really see me?”

Talk about obsessing! I thought I had that under control. Yeah, right, just like I have my addiction under control with my “huge” six years of sobriety. How we fool ourselves sometimes!

The whole thing got me to thinking about this matter of scarring. I have many scars on my body, but most of them are conveniently covered by clothing, hair, fat, etc. They are from long-ago surgeries (hernia, appendix, etc.) and most

folks can’t see them. This scar, if there is one, will be up front and obvious.



The scars left by years of addiction are like that too. Many of them are old and not so obvious to most people I’m around. I don’t even really think of them very much. But they are there, permanent reminders of my past history of compulsion, obsession, and abuse of myself and others. The broken marriage, neglected children, damaged relationships, stunted careers, financial trials—hidden from others but constant reminders of the disease that has dogged me for over 50 years now. My recovery keeps most of them from view, except for a few fellow strugglers with whom I choose to be real. The scars don’t miraculously disappear from my life, though they, like physical ones, do fade some over time.

Then there are the more obvious “scars” which are exposed when I become angry, resentful, prideful, or controlling. What am I to do with these? How can I hide them—or should I? Or can I, really? Perhaps I can cover them briefly with a bandage (such as niceness, helpfulness, compliance), but eventually they will be noticed by others and I will be

exposed—again!

The good news is that I'm 65 and wrinkled up anyway, and I already have a couple of facial scars from previous procedures. What difference will one more make? Plus it probably won't even be that obvious to others. I'll know it's there—but if I can keep my ego in check, I'll be okay with it.

The same thing is true of my other scars. If I can concentrate on what's really important (God, recovery, relationships, service), then I won't

be dogged by the shame that has ruled my life for a long time now. I'll be free to accept myself as I am, scars and all, and to make the remaining years the best of my entire life. Maybe that's what the White Book means when it says in "The



Solution," "We were finding what none of the substitutes had never supplied. We were making the real Connection. We were home" (SA, 205).

— Art S., Columbia, SC

Emptying Myself

The ancient Hebrews used a bag of rocks to cast lots and determine the will of God. Each rock was inscribed with Hebrew letters. Every time the lot was cast, one rock always had the correct answer. The priest did not have the power to pull out the correct rock every time. Only God had the power to bring the rock with the correct answer for that moment to the place where the priest's hand could grab it.

An SA group, in seeking God's will through the group conscience process, is a lot like a bag of rocks. We each bring all of our assets and



defects to the bag, and we each have different opinions. One or more of the "rocks" in the bag may have the correct message, but it's not always the same rock. Sometimes the louder rocks (who perhaps through ego might think they are right) drown out the quieter ones (who perhaps through shame might think they are wrong). Then we ask every rock to speak, even the quiet ones. After the vote, we ask the minority for their opinion. When God is speaking, people sometimes change their votes after hearing the minority opinion. This is the way we hear God's will for our group.

Recently, I wrote an email of encouragement to a friend after hearing that his mom was diagnosed

with a tumor that was possibly fatal. I concluded with “Be strong” but before I sent the email, I changed it to “Be weak, so God can be strong.” He wrote back saying that my last line really made him think, and that it helped him.

It is impossible for me to be strong, because I am powerless over everything. But it’s not easy to be weak either. First I have to shed my ego. Then I have to move from knowing everything, to knowing “only a little.” Then “Thy will, not mine, be done.” I first have to get out of God’s chair. Only then can I sit in His lap. It’s really about working the first Three Steps. Once I remember that I’m weak, then God will do His best work. The results don’t always go the way I want them to.

To paraphrase *AA (164)*, “We realize that George knows only a little.” I need to remember how little



I know. When all of us remember that we know only a little, we are better able to hear God speak. If I think I know everything, I miss out on the blessings of the group conscience. If, however, I humble myself and admit that I know only a little, and acknowledge my own brokenness, insanity, and unmanageability, then God can speak through me and the others in my group. This is when God prompts the rock with the correct answer to speak up.

I think the best way we can prepare for a group conscience is for each of us in the group to empty ourselves of all ego and all shame. In a fellowship of equals, no one is either greater than or less than any other. If we begin each group conscience in this way—by emptying ourselves of the bondage of self—we will get out of God’s way and allow Him to speak.

—George F., San Diego

Humility and Sponsorship

When I first came to SA in December 1999, I had 15 years of AA sobriety, had sponsored many men, and had spoken at meetings and conferences. I felt arrogant in SA meetings. I thought that SA members were not doing things correctly, and

that I knew better than others the reasons that people were slipping. I was sure I would soon become an SA guru.

My SA sponsor had nine years



of SA sobriety, but I believed I knew more than he did because of my longer AA sobriety and because I was 15 years older than he was. Yet one day short of my one-year birthday, I had a disastrous slip in a porn shop. I was devastated and knocked for a loop. Had I not done everything my sponsor asked me to do, including attending meetings, working the Steps, doing service, and sponsoring others? In fact, I had done all these things, but only for the purpose of looking good. I was complying outwardly, but in reality, I had never completely surrendered to the program. I was pushing the sobriety definition to the edges of insanity. The only thing I wasn't doing was masturbating to orgasm.

Sadly, when I called my sponsor to tell him I had slipped, he was not surprised. He said that he and his sponsor had discussed my arrogance and pride, and neither of them had thought I would make a year. For the next six years I had varying lengths of sobriety. Only when I was finally ready to listen to what my sponsor had been saying all along was I was able to achieve sobriety and begin to experience progressive victory over lust.

My sponsor had advised me to leave my other Twelve Step program at the door and instead work the SA program. He suggested that I try to understand the words of the White

Book where it says that “sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind” (SA,192). Today, I believe that “freedom from sex of any kind” includes freedom from viewing porn, entertaining sexual fantasy, stalking, and voyeurism—and not merely from the physical act of sex with self. Today, after being an SA member for 10 years, I finally have three years of SA sobriety. This progress came, however, at the cost of smashing my ego and sense of superiority.



Unfortunately, the saga of my ego continues. Recently, I got a new AA sponsor after my previous sponsor moved to another state. I asked a man

I've known for almost 18 years (and whose recovery I deeply admire) to be my sponsor. Yet I still sometimes feel superior to him because of my longer sobriety and because I am older than he is. So I was not surprised when my pride reared its ugly head once again.

In January 2010, I agreed to speak at a meeting that fell on the day of my 25th sobriety birthday. This was also the night of my home group meeting that I had attended for 22 years. When I realized my dilemma, I shared it with my sponsor. I wanted to take a cake at my home group, but

I had made a commitment to speak. He suggested I call and ask to be rescheduled; I replied that I could not break my commitment. My sponsor didn't see it that way. He said that ego and pride were the problems, that I was afraid I wouldn't look good if I cancelled. I disagreed.

My sponsor asked me to think this over and give him a call in a day or two. After thinking and praying, I realized he was right. Then I was flooded with shame and embarrassment that a man younger than me in age and sobriety had figured me out when I hadn't been able to. There was my old belief system again: I have to be better than everyone else.

When I called my sponsor and shared my insight with him he thanked me for my honesty. When I shared all of this with my SA sponsor, he just grinned and said, "Progress not perfection."



I thank God for this revelation and this experience. What I learned is summed up by a reading from one of my meditation books:

I have gone through life thinking I am better than everyone else and at the same time being afraid of everyone. I was afraid to be me ... thus I pray that I may accept the guidance of my Higher Power in developing a realistic and comfortable self-image ...

I also pray that I might be able to hear the message, no matter who the messenger may be.

Over the years, my ego has often caused me to ignore my sponsors' advice and struggle with my SA sobriety. I need to learn to surrender my ego to God, one day at a time, so that I will be better able to listen with humility to others and more clearly hear God's voice.

—Steve C., *San Diego, CA*

Members Please Share Your Experience, Strength, and Hope

Sharing your ES&H encourages others in their recovery. We welcome your shares on any SA-related topic. However, following are three suggested themes for upcoming issues of *Essay*:

- My First Sponsor
- My Biggest Challenge in Sobriety (or: My Worst Day Sober??)
- Carrying the Message to hospitals, institutions, or prisons.

Articles should be approximately 200-800 words. Longer articles will be accepted as space allows. All submissions become the property of *Essay* and are subject to editing.

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



Healing in All Three

It is important for me to understand the spiritual nature of my disease for several reasons. First, if it is truly spiritual, then it doesn't matter what the drug is, and everything in the AA literature is also true for me. Thus, "The Doctor's Opinion," "Bill's Story," "There is a Solution," "More About Alcoholism"—all apply to me, and I need what those chapters tell me.

Second, I need to separate the physical, emotional, and spiritual. It is important for me to know that I am not my emotions. When I am in pain, I need to know that my spirit is not broken. The storm of my emotions may be raining down on me, but my Self is rooted.

Third, this disease is physical, and it has seriously damaged my relationship to my own body. For

a long time, my only relationship to my body was sexual. I was not athletic, and rarely exercised. I used my own body as nothing more than an instrument of immediate gratification. I did not treat my own body with respect. Acting out was a



one-size-fits-all cure for all negative emotions, all physical discomfort, all needs for pleasure, and all my spiritual emptiness.

So now, when I remove that "cure" I need to have new strategies to address all of these needs. In the words of the White Book, "Healing had to come about in all three" (204).

—Anonymous, *New York*

Boundaries Versus God's Grace

I get very uncomfortable when I hear: "These are my boundaries. I focus on my boundaries. If I don't do a, b, c, x, y, and z—then I will be OK."

My take is this: if we could just "not do" x, y, and z we wouldn't need the SA program! Relying on "boundaries" is not an SA concept. When I start thinking, "I can handle this," I have forgotten my First Step. I am powerless over lust, and must find a Power Greater than myself to solve my problem.

Instead of using "boundaries" to keep me sober, I rely on the grace of a Higher Power.

—Anonymous





Talent Show

2010 Nashville International Convention

I'm David, a grateful recovering sexaholic from Toronto. My wife and I wrote the following song after the Denver SA/Sanon International convention in July 2009, with the idea of singing it at the January convention in Nashville. We've never written or performed music before, but our Higher Power was there to inspire us. We did sing it in Nashville, and we have received positive feedback from many people. Several members asked us for the lyrics, so we are providing them here for the fellowship. *Enjoy!*

Steps Song

To the tune of Nat King Cole's "L-O-V-E"
As sung by David & Simone S.

One is for the Step that says "I can't,"
Two is for the Step that says "God can."
Three is where I swear I'll turn it over to God's care,
Four is inventory, that's where I write out my story.
Steps are all that I can share with you,
Steps will bring us to a place that's new.
You and I can make it,
Give-it to God and He will take it,
Steps were made for me and you.
Five, I admit my faults to God and you,
Six, I'm ready to say "With these I'm through."
Sev'n, I humbly call on God to now remove them all,
Eight I make a list of all the people that I've pissed.
Steps are all that I can share with you,
Steps will bring us to a place that's new.
You and I can make it,
Give-it to God and He will take it,
Steps were made for me and you.
Nine, I make amends to all I've hurt,
Ten, I shed light daily on my dirt.
Eleven, I pray each hour for God's will and for His power,
Twelve, I've been awoken and reach out to those still broke.

Steps are all that I can share with you,
Steps will bring us to a place that's new.
You and I can make it,
Give-it to God and He will take it,
Steps were made for me and you.

—David S., Toronto, Canada

The Joy Response

Upcoming Dublin SA/S-anon Convention
16th-18th July 2010



Our 2nd Annual Dublin Convention will take place at our beautiful and relaxing Emmaus Centre, located just 10 minutes from the Dublin Airport. We are especially grateful to be able to hold our convention at such a beautiful setting. We would love to share this venue and our fellowship with all who wish to make the journey. Greeters will be waiting at the Dublin Airport to welcome members who are flying over.

Our Dublin fellowship has grown to three meetings per week, held in Dublin City Centre. Up to 29 members attend each meeting. The “Joy Response” describes the attitude of hope and joy we all strive for in our meetings. We believe in living in the solution. We look forward to sharing this joy with SA members from all over the world.

Our agenda will include meetings and fellowship as well as a Saturday afternoon excursion and a uniquely Irish talent show on Saturday night. The cost of the weekend is €170, which comes to about \$230.

Please e-mail patireland@gmail.com if you would like to join us.

We look forward to seeing you in July!

—Pat N., Dublin, Ireland

Upcoming SA/S-Anon International Convention “Sweet Hope Chicago,” July 9-11, 2010

Join us for a weekend of Windy City recovery!

For more information, please call 630-415-0341,
visit our website at www.sweethopechicago.org,
or contact sweethopechicago@gmail.com.



Becoming the Spouse I Want to Be

In the Big Book story “Acceptance Was the Answer” (407), the author notes that his own home is the most difficult place to work his program (419), and that he eventually had to work the Steps a second time, focusing exclusively on his marriage. Following are two examples that show how specific Steps have helped me become the kind of spouse I want to be.

~~~~~

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



Step Four in *Alcoholics Anonymous* includes the phrase “we think fear ought to be classed with stealing” (68). This didn’t make sense to me until one day last fall. At the time, my wife and I were both in school and had been busy all semester. We had not spent much time together. Often she would ask if I wanted to watch a movie or go for a walk, and I would decline saying that I had too much schoolwork to do. Toward the end of the semester I was working on a big project for one of my classes, and my insecurity and perfectionism were having their way with me. I wasn’t procrastinating, but I was constantly worrying about not getting done on time and not doing a good enough job. I was afraid.

Our date day came around. (My wife and I go on a date every other Friday.) We went to a tea room a few minutes from where we live. The plan was to eat lunch and then go for

a walk. We ordered, and while we waited for our food, we talked—*sort of*. My wife made several attempts at conversation, and I half-measured my way through them, only partially listening and offering the bare minimum in response. I couldn’t (or wouldn’t) take my mind off my project. I kept thinking that I needed to get back home to work on it, worrying over the parts I was stuck on, and rehearsing the dwindling amount of time I had left to complete it. After lunch we went for a walk at a nearby park, and it was more of the same: my wife reaching out to share with me, and me trying to listen through my mind’s fearful barrage: *How far are we going to walk? The whole way? Maybe we should turn around at the pond. You’ve got to set limits, have boundaries, right?* (Thankfully, my disease always

---

speaks in italics, which makes it easy to spot.) Finally, after an afternoon of botched attempts at communication and connection—due to my total preoccupation—my wife and I came home and I returned to my work.

That night as I took my daily inventory (as described in *Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions*, 89), I considered the date with my wife. I asked myself what had gone wrong. Then it hit me: “we think fear ought to be classed with stealing.” I had stolen from my wife. Immersed in fear, I had robbed my wife of my

presence all afternoon. I had stolen her chance to connect with and relate to her husband. Obviously, I had missed out as well. By not surrendering my fear, I had allowed it to steal precious hours from one of the most important relationships in my life. The next morning, I admitted my wrong to my wife and told her I would try to do better in the future.

Today, with the help of God and the people in the program, I am giving up my right to steal from my wife (and myself) through fear.

~~~~~  
Step Eleven: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him . . .



My wife and I were taking a walk the other day, and we were discussing something which was causing me distress. (Really, my defects of fear and frustration were the source of my discomfort). During a brief lull in our conversation, I took the opportunity to work the Eleventh Step, using the prayer from *AA* (87): “As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.”

I asked God in the silence what He would have me do, and what I heard was, “Hold your wife’s hand.”

This was not what I had in mind. I like more profound responses from God. However, I’m no longer in charge of my life, so I did what

I felt led to do. I reached out and held my wife’s hand. We continued walking in silence for a few minutes. When my wife restarted the conversation, it was on a totally different topic. As we walked and talked, I felt my fear and frustration slip away. Eventually we returned to the original conversation and were able to resolve it without further conflict. It is in these small, daily interactions with others that the program works its magic to bring peace and harmony into my life. Thank God for the Twelve Steps of SA.

—*LB.B.*

Letter to My Higher Power

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

In completing my Third Step, I followed a suggestion to write a letter to my Higher Power. I thought the suggestion a bit unusual until I realized that by taking Step Three, I would be in effect entering into a covenant of sorts with my Higher Power, and that a letter would be an effective way to document my side of the agreement. Since my addiction caused me to walk away from my Higher Power



many years ago, it was important for me to carefully identify the One to whom I would be turning over my life and will. Drafting this letter enabled me to archive my commitment and surrender to the One who would do for me what I could not do for myself. Following is the record of my decision to yield once again to God “as I understand God.”

—Cameron S., Kent, WA

May Your Will, Not Mine Be Done

Dear God,

I feel that it is important that I begin this letter by identifying You as my Higher Power. As important as SA has been to my life over the past year, the program would have meant nothing to me without the assurance and knowledge of You as my Higher Power. I have come to believe that I will know You better as I spend more time with You in prayer and meditation.

I address this letter to You to document my decision to turn my life and will over to You. I have decided to let You direct the affairs of my life from this day forward. I have come to this decision because I have tried everything to solve the problem of my sexual addiction, but nothing has worked. I could not “work harder” to recover. I could not “read” my way out of my addiction. My circumstances have brought me to the point of turning to the only source of power and wisdom that will enable me to find sanity and wholeness in my life. That source is You. I am powerless over my addiction. So here I am.

I want to live my life in Your power alone. I don’t want to put any more trust in my own abilities. I desire to know Your will and to receive the power to carry it out. Gone is any thought of doing what I want. I now want to do what You want with my life.

I am certain that I have a long way to go. I must admit that I have never given You the opportunity to direct my life. I have always directed my thoughts and actions, using what I consider to be my own wisdom. But I have come to understand that outside of Your influence, my wisdom is flawed at best.

I have always searched for some magic potion, some magic formula to turn my life around. That search is over. Today I come to make a simple declaration: “Thy will, not mine be done.” I now turn to You with this simple surrender of my life and will. I surrender every thought and action to You. Do with me as You will.

My commitment from this day forward is to choose recovery over my addiction—one moment at a time—by using the program to guide me in my walk, in dependence upon Your power.

Thank You for Your kindness, love, unfailing grace, and tender mercies toward me. May our bond grow stronger each day.

—Cameron

Finding God

(Improving my Conscious Contact)

Before I could truly work Step Eleven, I had to first find the God of my understanding. This was not easy for me. Even though I had worked the previous ten Steps with my sponsor, I realized that I still was not able to have conscious contact with God in any meaningful way. So I decided to look harder for the God of my understanding.

I soon realized that one of the major obstacles to my relationship with God was that I didn't really know who God was for me. This became quite apparent when I met with a spiritual mentor for the first time and she asked me who God



was to me. I really didn't know. She told me how she experienced God in her life and gave me a couple of suggestions for books I could read that might help me figure this out for myself.

As I read one of the books, I started to see how I understood God—and how that understanding was not supporting my recovery. This book presented a completely different understanding of God and I quickly saw how a similar concept of God could help me in my recovery. At the same time, I was again working Steps One, Two, and Three with my sponsor—this time specifically

around my temptations with Internet pornography—using *Step into Action* as my guide. The combination of Step work, reading, and spiritual direction helped me to see that I was seeking a deep, personal relationship with God and that if I wanted such a relationship, I would have to devote significant time and energy to it.



Soon after this understanding came another insight that is helping to improve my relationship with God. I realized that for years I had been asking God to help me stay sober. That is akin to saying that I can keep myself sober with some help from God. This is not fully accepting my powerlessness. If I am truly powerless over lust, then only God can keep me sober. I only need do my part and God will do what He has promised to do. One of the most important components of doing my part is admitting my powerlessness and surrendering completely to God—each and every day—allowing Him to work His miracle in my life.

Truly, God is doing for me what I cannot do for myself. Today, I look

forward to spending as much time in prayer and meditation as I can each day, getting to know God better and improving my conscious contact with Him. I look for opportunities for connecting with Him throughout the day. My computer’s screensaver displays pictures of the cosmos to remind me of the Creator. I make program calls throughout the day to hear the voice of God through others in the fellowship. I provide service to the fellowship, welcoming newcomers and carrying God’s message of love and hope to them. And every day that I continue these practices, more and more of the promises come true in my life.

Most days I feel surrounded by God’s love. When I do not, I take an action to reconnect—as quickly as I can. For, as it says in the White Book, if I don’t find my true Connection, I will lose myself (93). Thank God I have this program and this fellowship to help me find my true Connection—to help me find God.

—*Jim H.*

A Suggested Eleventh Step Prayer

An important person in my religious tradition who lived at the turn of the 20th century was known to

pray a “Litany of Humility” each day. I



learned of this prayer long before I entered the program. Like many formal prayers I've known and prayed through the years, this one has gained deeper meaning for me since I received a new primary purpose. When the "pray-er" changes, the prayers change, even though the words may not.

This litany has been a welcome addition to my Eleventh Step. It helps me to call more frequently upon my Higher Power "for the right thought or action" when I need it (AA, 87). The method is formal and repetitious, but that's helpful for an undisciplined person like me! To be honest, I had not prayed this litany for months until I revisited it recently. Reflecting upon my own diseased attitudes and actions, and knowing that most (if not all) sexaholics have similar attitudes and actions, I added a series of invocations that specifically pertain to my daily experience, and possibly pertain to the experience of others. (My additions shown in *italics*)

The invocations in this litany speak to me in light of a portion of "The Problem" in the White Book: "Our insides never matched what we saw on the outsides of others" (203). You see, *everyone* is higher than I am on the scale of being loved, extolled, honored, praised, etc. Everyone fears

being humiliated, despised, rebuked, slandered, etc. less than I. And everyone is far more successful than I am at the spiritual disciplines that allow them to restrain the italicized actions and attitudes shown in my version of the litany.

Sometimes these assessments weigh in the opposite direction, and most of the time (thank God!) they fall somewhere along the broad pendulum—and on that pendulum, wow, do they swing! This is what a famous anonymous speaker in another program calls "being on the level of a 'basic human being.'" This is still hard for me, nearly three years sober.



SA has an extraordinary leveling effect on me and on all who strive to practice it faithfully one day at a time. The Higher Power, Steps, Traditions, and fellowship—that is, the "spiritual program of action"—keep me sane as well as sober. When I am off-kilter, it helps to restore me to sanity because every aspect of it is a Power greater than me, a Power greater than what I am capable of bringing to the people and situations in my life. The transformative knowledge of being just another passenger aboard a ship saved from disaster is a tiding of comfort and joy to me today. Thank you,

patient reader, for being a part of my journey. Following is my version of this prayer. May this “Litany of

Humility” be helpful for all!
—Chris Z., PA

The Litany of Humility for Sexaholics

Adapted from the original for the SA fellowship



From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Higher Power.

From the desire of being loved,
From the desire of being extolled,
From the desire of being honored,
From the desire of being praised,
From the desire of being preferred
to others,
From the desire of being consulted,
From the desire of being approved,

From the fear of being humiliated,
Deliver me, Higher Power.

From the fear of being despised,
From the fear of suffering rebukes,
From the fear of being slandered,
From the fear of being forgotten,
From the fear of being ridiculed,
From the fear of being wronged,
From the fear of being suspected,

*From seeking to impress people with
my actions,*

**Higher Power, grant me the grace to
restrain myself.**

*From seeking to impress people with
my words,*

*From seeking to impress people with my
talents,*

*From seeking to know
what people “in the know” know,
From participating in conversations that
do not concern me,
From speaking the final word that lifts me
up and puts others down,
From inflating myself upon learning of
others’ misfortunes,
From acting on the desire to fix people
and situations,*

That others may be loved more than I,
**Higher Power, grant me the grace to
desire it.**

That others may be esteemed more
than I,

That, in the opinion of the world, others
may increase and I may decrease,

That others may be chosen and I set aside,
That others may be praised and I

unnoticed,

That others may be preferred to me in
everything,

That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as I
should.

Poetry

Expressing Myself in Poetry



I’ve been a member of an SA group in Albuquerque for the last two years. I have also been in therapy for

three years. I have had my addiction since I was a teenager, manifesting itself in several types of pornogra-

phy, then moving into prostitution and more recently adult theatres and Internet pornography.

The defining moment that forced me into therapy and SA meetings was when the police raided my home to find a few child pornography pictures among an assortment of adult pornographic downloads on my computer. Since then, my therapist has written the court and my church to say that I have an addiction to Internet pornography, not child pornography. I have also taken two lie detector tests that proved that I have never had any hands-on contact with children, plus comprehensive psychological

testing that said the same thing... all of which the courts, society, and my church have ignored.

The event I have described has destroyed my life. Out of this horrendous period in my life, I have not lost hope, but instead express myself in my writings, on stage, and as a member of a group working toward just laws for sex offenders. I've written the following poem to describe my sex addiction as a beast on the hunt . . . leading to despair, a final desperate moment, and the decision to seek help.

—Matt W.

The Beast

Blood-thirsty beast of the night,
Stalking, craving are his delight,
Prowling, cruising shadowy lanes,
Tearing at his spirit, agonizing pains.

Chaos, folly, fantasies on patrol,
Plummeting down a darkened hole,
Careening, the monster must be fed,
Powerless of the devastation ahead.

Nothing else matters, loved ones too,
Breaking hearts, he has no clue,
Forsaking family, friends, morality,
Living with shame, without integrity.

The tension brewing deep within,
The heat, the storm, an insidious sin,
Demoralizing release, tears in his eyes,
No tenderness, intimacy, only lies.

What is he doing, the two lives he leads,
His spirit, his demon, both he must feed,
Devout Christian kneeling in a pew,
Perverted visions consuming him anew.



Alone in his despair, his self-annihilation,
Hopelessly engulfed in a final desperation,
A hundred excuses mull in his head,
Continuing to obsess, he'll surely be dead.

At the brink, pleading for his salvation,
Beseeching an answer to his temptation,
Looming within, a dreaded decision,
Truth, honesty must be his new mission.

Terrified, he humbles himself before his
creator,
Inching forward, stumbling, a single
millimeter,
Confronting the fiend, facing his life anew,
Unafraid to share his soul with friends like
you.

Thank You for Sharing Your Memories of Roy!

Although we knew he was sick—stricken with an aggressive cancer—the death of SA founder Roy K. in September 2009 was a shock to us all in SA. The Editors sent a message through the Delegates: Would a grieving Fellowship care to comment?



We were amazed at the response. As the word spread, *Essay* was flooded with articles, great and small, in reaction to his death. Some people who met Roy in person recalled a special moment; others talked about his effect on their lives through SA literature. For every one, there was a deep-down gratitude for this man who made his own flaws the channel of healing for so many in SA. His life proves the truth of that bold affirmation in our White Book: “Every liability will turn out to be an avenue of grace” (103).

Perhaps most moving of all was the testimony of several writers about Roy’s practice of making amends. In the last months of his life, we learned, Roy was actively telephoning members around the SA world, seeking to reconnect with those from whom he had been estranged. The stories you shared with us demonstrated that when one person reaches out to another, a channel opens that allows new life and new freedom to flow.

He was still teaching us, even as his life was ending, the truth of Step Ten: “I don’t want to be, but I’m the key. What I *am* is what I get, and the measure I give is the measure I get back” (134). The measure he gave was immeasurable, and we are inheritors of it all. As we follow his example, we see the miracle repeated at every SA meeting: “...We *give* of ourselves to others in the group. We get back recovery (189).

To all of you who contributed, thanks for sharing.

—*The Editors*

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Essay



Upcoming SA Correctional Facilities (SACFC) Newsletter

The CFC is planning to print a newsletter composed mostly of writings by SA members who are incarcerated. Usually prisoners in different facilities are forbidden to communicate with each other. The idea is for the CFC to act as a central receiving location for prisoner-produced articles. The text will be edited and distributed back to SAs in prison as a one- or two-page newsletter.

Acting as a buffer between prisoners and omitting contact information, this yet-to-be-named publication would allow SAs in different locations to share their ES&H about how they handle the special challenges of working a program and running meetings on the inside.

More details will be decided at the committee's May phone meeting. If you currently write to prisoners, please inform them of this upcoming project. If you would like to help—or if you have a suggested name for the newsletter—please contact the CFC at saico@sa.org.

—Davis C.



Needed: Members Who Speak Polish or Farsi to Help with SA Translations



The SA Translations committee is seeking members who speak Polish to review three SA pamphlets that have been translated into Polish. This is NOT an editing or revising task. The task is to check that the translation is faithful to the original text of the brochures. We will also need a member who speaks Farsi in the near future.

If you can help, please contact Jerry L., Translations Committee Chair, at saico.org or at jwl44sj64sl97@earthlink.net.

New Groups



USA
Estero, FL
Northfield, OH
Patterson, NJ
Rapid City SD

Lithuania
Additional USA Meetings
Madison, WI
St. Charles, MO
Valparaiso, IN

A Note from the Delegate Chair



Dear Fellow SA Members,

SA's Common Welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity. Unity is the most cherished quality of our fellowship. I often ask myself questions such as: In my group, am I a healing, mending influence? Am I a peacemaker? Or am I critical of others? Am I as considerate of other SA members as I want them to be of me? Working with the General Delegate Assembly (GDA), I enjoy the spirit of unity, cooperation, and personal love the Delegates have for SA, as well as their commitment to doing the next right thing for our fellowship.

Recently, the GDA moved, passed unanimously, and recommended the following statement for use by SAICO in answering questions regarding our sobriety definition:

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (SA, 2). In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside SA. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (SA, 191-192).

May God continue to bless SA and all of you as we move forward in progressive victory over lust and continue to insist on enjoying life.

—Mike S., GDA Chair

A Note From the Finance Committee Chair



As you review the Financial Snapshot on the opposite page, you will notice the fellowship again fell short of budget projections for revenue from contributions—not surprising in light of the current economy. Catching this trend early in 2009, the Finance Committee, Trustees, and SAICO discussed reducing staff hours and cancelling salary increases. SAICO staff agreed and changes were implemented. Late in 4th quarter '09, we made projections. Thus the 2010 budget restores staff salaries, hours, and benefits. The projected impact on the 2010 budget is an additional \$9,900 expense. If necessary, Trustees and Delegates approved drawing potential shortfalls (up to \$10,000) from the Prudent Reserve, now at approximately seven months expenses (\$162,000). Six months Prudent Reserve is SA's current policy.

The Finance committee will review the 2010 budget in April and discuss

any changes necessary to balance our 5th Tradition mandate to reach the addict who still suffers with the 7th Tradition mandate of being fully self-supporting. Please hold these Traditions in your thoughts as you prayerfully consider the level of your personal, group, and intergroup contributions to SAICO. If you have any questions about individual line items or would like a copy of the current budget, please contact me at saico@sa.org.

—In service, Dave Mc., Finance Committee Chair

SA Financial Snapshot 2010

Budget Item	2009 Budget	2009 Actual	2010 Budget
Revenues			
Contributions	150,000.00	133,022.66	130,000.00
SACFC	9,000.00	6,147.77	7,200.00
Convention Fees	36,000.00	51,195.00	66,000.00
Convention Donations	20,000.00	39,163.11	15,000.00
Literature Sales	71,400.00	68,903.11	56,000.00
Lit Volume Discounts	(3,400.00)	(7,550.12)	(6,200.00)
Interest	3,000.00	1,643.09	2,000.00
Essay	7,000.00	7,285.50	7,200.00
Total Revenues	293,000.00	299,810.12	277,200.00
Expenses			
Bank Charges	100.00	26.68	100.00
Convention Fees	37,600.00	65,560.13	66,000.00
Credit Card Fees	3,000.00	3,932.30	2,900.00
Liability Insurance	1,600.00	530.00	1,600.00
Professional Fees	2,000.00	2,500.00	2,000.00
Legal	500.00		500.00
Accounting	4,700.00	4,717.37	4,800.00
Literature Expense	20,000.00	24,793.87	15,000.00
Labor	125,500.00	119,940.68	130,000.00
Postage and Freight	8,500.00	9,550.49	8,500.00
Office Expense	3,000.00	3,765.66	2,900.00
Printing	7,000.00	6,902.33	7,000.00
Rent	10,700.00	10,498.48	10,700.00
Repairs & Maint	1,500.00	512.58	1,000.00
Taxes & Licenses	200.00	159.00	600.00
Telephone	7,800.00	7,132.90	7,500.00
Internet Services	12,000.00	5,949.78	6,000.00
Travel	20,000.00	22,442.44	20,000.00
Total Expenses	265,700.00	288,914.49	287,100.00
Revenues-Expenses	27,300.00	10,895.63	(9,900.00)

For Additional Budget Info Contact SAICO@sa.org

Calendar of Events



April 10, 2010, Philadelphia Intergroup Marathon, Yardley, PA. *Surrender*. For info contact 215-564-3272 or phillysa.org.

April 16-18, 2010, Spring Family Reunion, Wichita, KS. *Recovery Continues*. Call 316-942-9041, visit www.sawichita.org, or email contact@sawichita.org.

April 17, 2010, SA Recovery Conference, Cincinnati, OH. *Back to Basics*. Get it in gear and work the Steps. Contact SA of Greater Cincinnati, PO Box 36662, Cincinnati, Oh, 45236

April 17, 2010, 8th Annual Mountain Spring Marathon, Asheville, NC. *Renewing Our Recovery*. Info at 828-681-9250, www.orgsites.com/nc/saasheville, or saasheville@gmail.com.

April 24, 2010, One Day Marathon, Franklin, WI. *Trusted Servant*. For info call 414-238-2903, or email milwaukeea@yahoo.com

May 1, 2010, All Day Marathon Meeting, Rochester, NY. *Our 12 Step Program—A Design for Living*. For info call 585-234-0359 or visit www.sarochester.org.

May 15, 2010, Spring Conference, Seaford, Long

Island, NY. Info at 516-634-0632, www.salong-island.org, recovery@salongisland.org.

May 28 -30, 2010, SA Ontario Retreat Weekend, Wyevale, Ontario, Canada. *The Spiritual Nature of Addiction*. For info contact 613-217-6406 or kingston-sal@yahoo.ca

June 11- 13, 2010, Northwest Regional SA Spring Retreat, Raymond, WA. *Lighting the Path Ahead*. For info contact 206-548-9538, www.pugetsoundsa.org, or lighting.the.path.ahead@gmail.com.

June 13, 2010, Recovery Day, London, England, UK. One of four Recovery Days planned for 2010. Call 07000 725463 or visit www.sauk.org.

July 9 - 11, 2010, Second Annual Dublin Convention, Dublin, Ireland. *The Joy Response* More info at patnireland@gmail.com

September 3-5, 2010, SA Convention, Ammerdown. Info to follow.

September 11, 2010, Recovery Day, London, England UK. For info call 07000 725463 or visit www.sauk.org

September 24-26, 2010. SA Spiritual Retreat, Paoli, PA. *Conscious Contact Weekend*. For info contact 215-564-3272 or www.phillysa.org.

Upcoming International Conventions

July 9-11, 2010, SA International Convention, Chicago, IL. *Sweet Hope Chicago*. Info at 630-415-0341, www.sweethopechicago.org, or sweethopechicago@gmail.com.

January 1 -16, 2011, Irvine, CA. *Sunshine & Serenity*. Info at www.sasanon2011.com

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

Submit info to be listed in June 2010 Essay by May 15, 2010. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact.

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

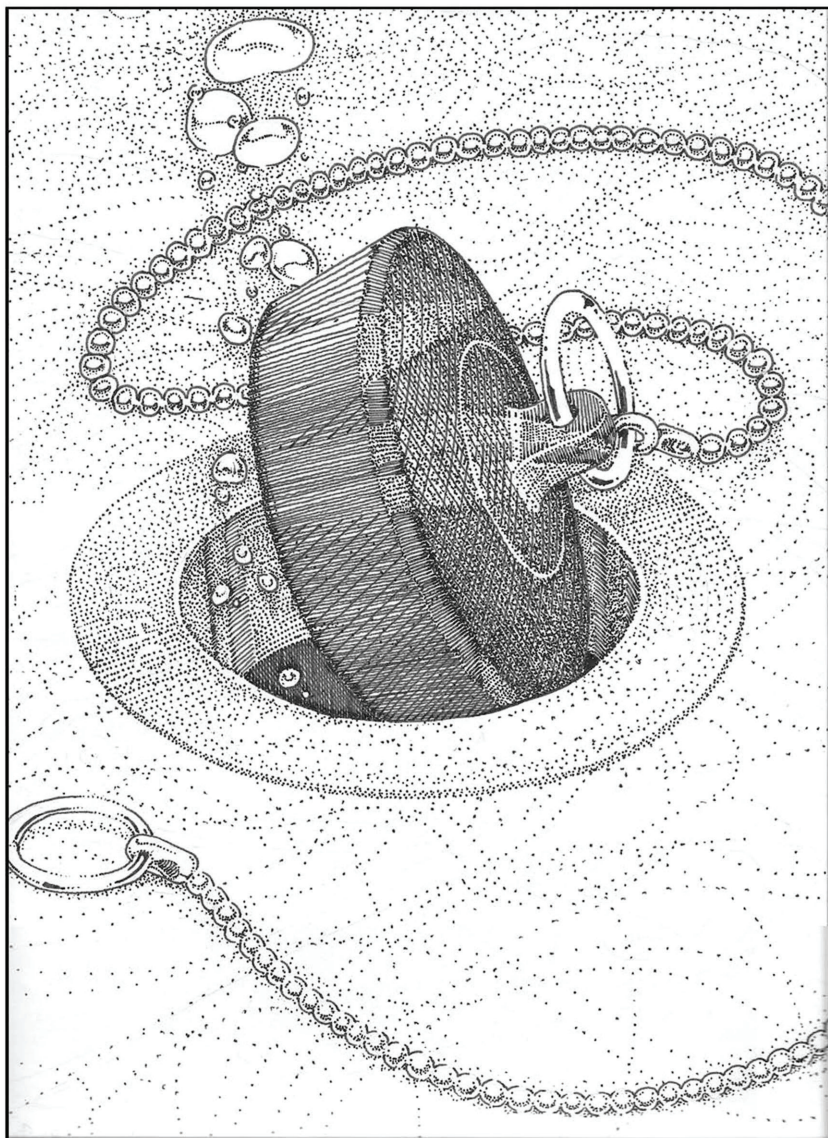
Events are listed here solely as a service, not as an endorsement by Essay or SAICO.

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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.



Step 7. Remove

v. To change or shift the location, position, station, or residence of.

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