

Essay

September 2010



Acceptance Is the Answer

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.

—Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine Inc.

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Acceptance Is the Answer

One day, while I was still active in my addiction, I threw away my pornography collection and swore off masturbation. My resolve didn't last long however, and soon I was back to my old habits. I really missed several of my old porn magazines, so I ordered back issues at inflated prices. The next few times I decided to quit, I kept those special issues "just in case" I started up again. Even then, I knew I was powerless to stop.

According to *Alcoholics Anonymous* (62), our troubles are "basically of our own making." That was definitely true of me. Today, after eight years of sobriety, I clearly recognize that my sexual acting out was a futile attempt to resolve my many problems with life.

I suffer from very limited energy, and I'm also an extreme introvert. Being around large groups of people drains me. I have difficulty connecting with others. I have sleep problems that affect my ability to maintain a regular schedule. Sometimes I find it difficult just to exist—and if I can't find a

way to relieve the difficulty, either by sleeping or by engaging in a lustful escape, then I'm miserable.

Clearly, my life has been completely unmanageable.

As a child, I was convinced that I needed to deal with these issues on my own. I didn't believe that anyone would help me, but somewhere along the way I discovered that women could make me feel better. Unfortunately, the women of this world did not dedicate themselves to the cause of helping me. My frustration and helplessness grew into a deep resentment and hatred toward women.

Even today, a part of me

still desires control over women.

When I was nine, I was so miserable and unhappy that I decided to kill myself. I had the means to do it and even wrote out a will—but I didn't make the attempt. Instead, I developed maladaptive coping mechanisms.

I relieved mental and emotional pain by suppressing it. I was brimming with anger and fear but did not consciously feel these



emotions. I also suppressed physical pain. For most of my life I stored stress as pain in my body, but I could only feel the pain after several years in recovery.

When I was young, I would push myself beyond my energy level until I was sick. When bicycling, for example, I would get to the top of a hill and puke. I ignored the consequences of my actions because of a desire to “fit in.” In an effort to connect with others, I developed masks. The masks were dishonest—I was representing myself as someone I was not—but at least I was able to connect on some level.

In my early teens, I found that sexual fantasies would help pass the time. I became powerless over these fantasies. I couldn’t control the fantasies, but I could control the rest of my sexual behavior by clamping down on it completely.

My anger at women, combined with my sexaholism, led me to my dark side. I would fantasize about committing various violent acts against women. At the same time, I was terrified of the evil I might be capable of.

Throughout my teen years, until the summer after my first year of college, I suppressed my sexuality. I didn’t date and didn’t even know what masturbation was. This probably saved me from going to jail for rape.

By the time I was 27, I was

masturbating one to three times daily. I tried to stop several times but could not. The sexual fantasies were more powerful now, and pornography became a big part of my life.

I had relationships with two different women, each of whom I would have liked to have married, but my insistent focus on sex caused each of them to leave me. I was frustrated because I knew what was happening but was powerless to prevent it.

I once briefly dated a woman with whom I had sex as often as possible. As we became physically intimate, I began to feel emotionally close. Then I began treating her poorly because I couldn’t handle the closeness.

I began recovery on October 25, 1993. I attended my first Twelve Step “S” meeting in April 1994. For the first time in my life, I was able to stop acting out. I even stopped fantasizing. Once I became sexually sober, however, there was nothing to stop my anger and rage from surfacing. One day, while looking through some of my old elementary school writings, I was suddenly hit with the realization of how miserable I’d been. My suppressed anger came to the surface, and I was consumed by a tidal wave of rage.

After about five months of living sober, I met a woman. We got engaged a few weeks later and

married two months after that. Like the couple in “A Personal Story,” (SA, 13), we hardly knew each other. The marriage lasted for two years and was a complete disaster.

Even though I was sexually sober, my anger and rage had increased, and I could no longer successfully suppress these emotions. I raged at my wife. We finally separated after I was arrested for domestic violence. We were divorced four months later. Today, I’m grateful that my wife had the courage to go through with this; I believe she saved both of our lives.

I attended my first SA meeting in March 1996, shortly after my separation. For awhile, I attended SA along with other S meetings. It took me five years to complete the Steps.

During this time, I discovered Internet pornography and became hopelessly addicted to it. I was miserable. I wanted what the program has to offer: a happy, joyous, and free life. I realized that the only way to get this would be through sobriety. But the longest I could stay sober was three months—and even that much time was rare.

Eventually, I recognized a huge area of unmanageability in my life: my job and schedule. I was still trying to push myself past empty. I was constantly exhausted. I remember lying in bed, telling myself that I’d be fired if I didn’t get up and go to work. But another part of me wouldn’t move. My attendance and

job performance grew progressively worse. I knew it was only a matter of time before I’d be fired. I had no choice but to face the harsh truth. I’d had enough.

I’d been trying to balance recovery and work. I would act out, then place more emphasis on recovery. Things would get somewhat better, so I’d shift the focus to the job. Then work would begin to consume my energy, until there was nothing left for recovery and I’d act out. This cycle went on for months, until I realized that, in order to stay sober, I would have to make sobriety my number-one priority. This is still true today. It doesn’t mean that I completely abandon my job. It means not pushing beyond my limits, even if work suffers somewhat, because I’m particularly susceptible to acting out when I run on empty.

My sobriety dates from that time, July 10, 2002. Around the same time, I switched my attendance to SA exclusively, because I began to see more of an emphasis on sobriety in SA. Today, sobriety is an absolute requirement. Without it, my life falls to pieces. With sobriety, and with the ability to determine and do God’s will for my life, things work out.

Following are some of the things that sobriety—and trying to get sober—have taught me:

First, I came face to face with my anger and fears while working on my Fourth Step Inventory. While

writing the resentment inventory, all the emotions I had suppressed for years came to the surface. I was overwhelmed. I'd get caught up in storms of strong, conflicting emotions, usually centered on a woman. The resentment inventory was the hardest thing I've ever done.

As I struggled with these resentments, I considered the Fourth Step Prayer (AA, 67): "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done. . . .". That prayer is followed by related comments such as, "God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one." Clearly, I needed to let go of anger and resentment.

My sponsor made me go through every person identified on my resentment inventory and say the Fourth Step prayer for the person involved. By the time I was done I had even forgiven my ex-wife!

While writing my fear inventory, I discovered two major fears that had controlled about half of my actions: the fear of my dark side, and the fear that I would be miserable for the rest of my life. Even though I hadn't realized they existed, my fears and anger had been controlling me. That is spiritual bondage. Step Four freed me from bondage.

Second, Step Eleven taught me a new way of praying and of

relating to God. In the past I would pray something like, "God do this, God do that, God help this person or that person." I was basically telling God what to do. But program literature says we should never pray for specific things for ourselves and should exercise caution when praying for others—being sure to append "...if it be Thy will" to such requests (12&12, 102).

I've learned to respect "God as we understand Him." My second sponsor was a gay Buddhist, and I am an evangelical Christian. Yet he managed, via the Twelve Steps, to teach me more about interacting with my Christian God than I'd ever been able to learn in church.

There's an old Twelve Step saying, "Find God or die." I believed that was true, but I couldn't make use of it in my addiction, because my spiritual connection with God was blocked. Even though I earnestly sought Him, my attempts failed because I was full of self-will in the form of anger and fear. But the Twelve Steps are designed to clear up spiritual blockages, and as I worked the Steps, I began to find a God that worked.

Today, I focus on my spiritual condition and not on solving my other problems. I have not completely stopped working on my issues, but I've learned that once



I put less effort into “fixing” the problems, things have improved. Basically, I am insane. But as I stay sober I get flashes of sane thinking.

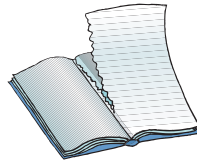
Third (and most important), I focus on acceptance. If I were shipwrecked on a desert island and had my choice of one page from any book ever printed to bring with me, I would choose AA page 417 (or 449, 3rd ed.):

“And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place thing, or situation unacceptable to me ... and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment . . .”

I’m still prone to fear and anger. The difference is that today, when I find myself getting angry, I pause and look at what’s going on inside my head. Often the anger is covering fear. I surrender the fear and accept the current situation as being God’s will for me. I make any necessary amends and gain a measure of serenity. I do this as often

as necessary.

To help me gain acceptance, I remind myself that in the past, my best efforts were always unsuccessful. I could not manage my life on my own. I also need to remember that I don’t know what’s good for me. When God’s will conflicts with my own, I can trust



that He knows what’s best. God is running the show now. I’ve turned my will and my life over to Him. Nothing happens in God’s world by mistake. My job is to accept that whatever happens to me is His will for me at that moment.

Today, SA is not merely a part of my life—it *is* my life. The Twelve Steps have given me the tools to be able to maintain my spiritual fitness. This is what keeps me sober. I’m closer to the place of being happy, joyous, and free than I was eight years ago. For the first time in my life, I’m bearing fruit: I’m able to help other sexaholics in a meaningful way. And life keeps getting better.

—Chad C., Denver

Members Please Submit Your Stories!



Sharing your experience, strength, and hope encourages the addicts who still suffer as well as others who are in recovery. Please share what you were like before, how you became involved in SA, what happened, and what is working for you today.

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

Feeling “Part Of”

SA/S-Anon Convention, July 2010 Chicago, IL



I had a great experience at the Chicago Convention. I usually attend non-taped meetings at conventions, so that when I get home and listen to CDs of the taped meetings, I feel like I’m attending a second convention!

The meetings I attended were large; I counted 80 members in one meeting. Sharing guidelines stipulated that only members with 30 days or more sobriety could share for the first 20 minutes—ensuring that the sharing would be focused on the solution. After that, anyone could share, but the sharing was limited to one minute. This seemed to make the shares more focused and real.

After the meeting, all 80 of us stood up and said the Serenity Prayer in unison. The sound boomed in

my ears, solidifying the unity of the fellowship and further making me feel “a part of.”

Following are a just a few things I heard in the meetings I attended:

- SA Member: God, I have three things I need to do today. Which one should I do first? God: I had 500 things for you to do today and you picked the bottom three.
- If I’m looking for what’s wrong, I can never see what’s right.
- I’m never alone when I’m connected to the fellowship.
- Surrender is getting away from what I’m doing and doing something else.
- I surrender my right to be right.

—Ed R., Columbus, GA

Upcoming International Convention

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

January 14-16 2011, Irvine, CA

“Sunshine and serenity”—that’s just part of what we call recovery, California style. Ocean breezes and mild temperatures are a great setting for focusing on recovery. Escape the dead of winter in a healthy way, with a trip to Southern California—the birthplace of the SA and S-Anon fellowships.

This is a long weekend, so plan to extend your hotel stay at the convention rate. For conference registration, hotel reservations, program highlights, opportunities to serve, and other information, visit our website at SASANON2011.com. Hoping to see you in Irvine!



— Sunshine and Serenity Planning Committee

A God I Can Trust

My struggles with sexual fantasy began when I was five years old. I began masturbating when I was ten. But in the summer of 2009, when I was 27, I walked into SA and have been sober ever since, by the grace of God alone.

When I was very young, my dad sexually molested me. Still, he seemed like a fun and happy person and he felt safer to me than my mother. My mother was quite emotional and would cry and rage at us. I did not feel safe with her. I was sad when my mother divorced my dad after I disclosed to her the molestation. I wanted her to make him stop; I didn't want to be left alone with her.

When I was five, to survive the emotional chaos, I began living in a sexually violent fantasy world. At 10, I discovered masturbation. Over time I got more sophisticated at it. My mother eventually remarried, to a man who was an alcoholic and rageaholic. He would physically beat up my brothers and me. I remember that after being beaten, I would masturbate again and again. At age 11, I discovered the Internet. I would spend hours downloading violent pornography. This filled me with shame.

As a young teenager, I created

fantasy relationships with other women. In my later teens, I had

both male and female sexual acting out partners. During my marriage, I had emotional affairs with both men and women. I would also spend hours viewing pornography and masturbating.

I was surprised when my husband joined SA last year and disclosed to me his sexual addiction. I was sure that he was mistaken. I knew that I was the real addict. But after seeing him become a changed person, I no longer felt comfortable acting out. That was hard because I did not want to give up masturbation. It had been a friend I could rely on. But I started reading my husband's White Book and loved what I read.

One day I found the courage to call SA Central Office. I received a list of meetings in my area as well as a phone list of SA women who are willing to receive calls.

When I entered the room for my first meeting, it was full of mostly guys. They told me that I was in the wrong room. I insisted I was not, and I stayed and I grew.

There are very few SA women



in my area, so I asked a woman on the phone list to be my sponsor. I had been in Twelve Step rooms prior to SA, but was unable to keep a sponsor, unable to get past Step Three, and never had a spiritual experience. I would objectify my sponsors, place them on pedestals, and sexualize them. Through SA, I found a sexually sober sponsor. I'm grateful for the safety she gives me by setting boundaries, such as insisting that I call other women and attend live meetings.

Following are some things I surrendered when I came to SA:

- Putting people on pedestals, romanticizing them, lusting after them, and wanting to be lusted after
- Reading books to find new material to use for my fantasies
- Using the Internet or the news or movies to feed my fantasies
- Looking at things and people that I don't need to look at
- Using social networking sites, because I'd snoop on guys and gals, and receive unexpected porn

In exchange for what I've given up, I've gained so much more. God is the main gift SA has given me.

Even though I belong to other Twelve Step fellowships, I never found the spiritual experience I've found in SA. While I was practicing my fantasy life, there was no room for a Higher Power. Now, as a result of working the Steps and stopping the fantasies, I have found a God I can trust.

In a crazy way I thank God for my addiction, because it gave me peace and comfort when there was none, but today, I'm learning that the universe will provide me with the comfort I need. I don't need the addiction. Either I'll be given the strength I need, or I'll feel God's presence, or He will send someone else—but I need not figure it out. I can trust that He has it figured out for me, and that His plan is best.

It's hard to let go of euphoric recall when it comes, the energy is so seductive, but then the shame and remorse come, and that is worse. By not practicing those fantasies, I redefine who God really is for me.

Today, I'm actually doing what I thought impossible: I'm having a quiet time, mostly with guided meditation, and not consistently yet, but I think it will come. This has



Phone Resources for SA Women

Women: would you like to connect with women outside of your local area? Women in SA (WiSA) offers phone meetings and e-mail support, as well as a list of SA women who are willing to sponsor and/or receive calls from SA women. For info, contact SAICO at 866-424-8777 (toll free).

helped me to intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle me (AA, 84). I'm learning to make friendships with women without lusting. That feeling of worthlessness and self-pity is lifting. Sometimes, I get to see through the haze.

Today, I'm able to do more of jumping off the bridge, of letting go and surrendering in many areas, just as I do with lust. I'm facing my

financial insecurity and trying to trust there also. I've got a long way to go, but today I'm trudging the road of happy destiny, together with others in recovery.

At times, it seems that my precious sobriety might be rather easily lost, but I'm holding on tight!

—*Gratefully sober sister in sobriety*

Sober Dating: One Woman's Story

Seven years ago, when I was 29, I came into SA after crossing one of my boundaries: I had an affair with a married coworker. It wasn't the affair that made me realize I had a problem, however, but the fact that my affair partner wanted to become emotionally attached and I wasn't interested. I thought, "Something's wrong with me."

Dating for me was mostly about trying to get attention, and not necessarily sexual attention. My parents separated when I was five and were divorced by the time I was seven. I never felt any emotional closeness with them. To fill the gap, I sought attention from men.

As I began my SA recovery, I also worked with a therapist. One day, after I had been in SA a few months, the therapist said to me, "You need to have no contact with



men. You need to dry out." I said, "I'll die without some kind of relationship!" She just smiled.

The therapist (in conjunction with my sponsor) gave me strict guidelines: No contact at all with men. No phone calls, no emails, no talking one-on-one—whether at work, church, or any social setting. I couldn't sit next to a guy at church or in a restaurant. All contacts with men (other than relatives) had to be in a group setting. That was extremely difficult for me, because so much of my addiction was about the emotional connection. But until I dried out, I was of no use to anyone.

After six months, I began noticing that my life seemed pretty good without guys. I had friends and interests, and I was available for new activities. Before, I had always put everything on hold for my addiction, including family, friends, and responsibilities.

After another six months, the therapist announced one day, “It’s time to start dating again.” I argued that it was too soon and that I had begun liking my life without men. But she insisted that I needed to date. Within three days of that session, guys started coming out of the woodwork. I didn’t know what to do.

Today I know that the one-year period of physical and emotional drying out was the key for my being able to date soberly. I learned to see men as human beings, mainly by attending the mixed meetings in my area. As I listened to the men share about themselves, I could see that they are human, just like me. We are all just human beings travelling together on this recovery journey. By interacting with those guys, I learned to form relationships with men based on friendship and respect rather than on lust and scheming.

My first dating experience did not go well, because the guy did not respect my boundaries. The second relationship was a breakthrough for me. For the first time in my life, I was able to truly love a man for who he was—I think because we were both past the superficial idea that we needed to have sex in order to make a connection. That was a gift of SA. I had the tools to say, “For me, sex does not equal love. I don’t need sex

to have an intimate and emotional relationship with you.”

This guy was also on a recovery journey and respected the fact that I had boundaries. I had never experienced that respect before. From SA, I learned to respect myself. I believe that is the key in attracting others who will treat me with respect.

That relationship also ended. The breakup was painful for me, but I learned that feeling pain is part of my recovery. My addiction had always sought to cover my pain. Now, for the first time, I was able to be conscious and present and know real pain. With help from my sponsor and other SA members, I was able to work through the pain, grieve the loss, and move on.

Four years ago on New Year’s Eve, my life changed. I was supposed to attend a party, but I had just flown in that morning from a horrible vacation and did not want



to go. Then I thought, “If I just get ready and go, I’ll have a good time.” So I got dressed and went—and much to my surprise, I met the man who would become my husband that night. We spent most of the night dancing and talking.

He proposed to me after we had dated for about six months. We were married a year later. Today, we’ve been married for three years.

One of the great things about the relationship was that I was able to tell my husband my boundaries up front, and he accepted and respected them. It was important that I could be open and honest about my issues. This does not mean that the first time I met my husband, I told him my whole story. To this day, he still does not know the whole story. But he knew enough to understand why I set the boundaries I did, and he could understand why SA was my number one priority.

During the 18 months that we dated, we faced challenges with physical boundaries at times. Sometimes I needed to step back and say, “I need to limit my contact with you. I can only see you once a week,” or “I cannot talk to you or email you today. I can see you tomorrow.” I had to be purposeful about these things because so much of my powerlessness was about the emotional high. I could not allow myself to get sucked back into a position where my life was solely and only about one guy. I was rigorous

about attending meetings, making phone calls, meeting with sponsees, and continuing other service work, because when I did those things I wasn’t entirely focused on the guy or the relationship.

I don’t think it’s possible for an SA member to date soberly without rigorous honesty. Unless I am rigorously honest and working my program and making sure that it remains the most important thing in my life, I will lose, and I will not be in a position to date soberly.

I’m grateful that I was in SA and was sober and working my way toward health before I went down the path of dating. I believe that the SA recovery process gave us a solid foundation for marriage, and makes my husband and me both better spouses. I know that God has different paths for each of us—but my prayer is that my experience, strength, and hope regarding dating might be of help for those who are on the same journey.

—Anonymous

The Gift of SA

I started attending SA meetings regularly in October 2006, when I was 21. I didn’t know very much about recovery or the Twelve Steps, but I knew I needed help for my sexual thinking and behavior. I had known for some years that I had a problem with sex. I had been in

a relationship in high school and became uncomfortable with the things my girlfriend and I were doing sexually. My conscious mind told me that what I was doing was wrong. I told my girlfriend that I was uncomfortable and that I wanted to stop. She said okay. About a

week later I initiated sex with her. Confused, but determined, I told her once again that I was not comfortable with our sexual behavior and wanted to stop. Again, she said okay, and again I initiated sexual contact within a short period. After a third round of this I became baffled by my inability to stop doing something that made me feel bad about myself and that I truly wanted to stop doing. Unable to stop, I told myself it wasn't really a big deal and continued with the behavior, though I still experienced guilt every time. I was relieved when the relationship ended, because I thought I would be able to start my next relationship on the right foot.

No such luck. The old patterns reappeared almost immediately with the next person I met (the woman who would become my wife). While for a time I was able to keep from crossing an arbitrary physical boundary around sex, I was still driven by lust and still experienced the consequences of my lust-based behavior. This included having to take painkillers on a regular basis to numb the physical discomfort of becoming very aroused without ever having an orgasm. Talk about insanity!

After my wife and I had been married for a few months, I became overwhelmed with guilt over my lust.

I had never realized that lust was a problem. I always thought it was just my sexual behavior that bothered me. But when I found myself continuing to lust after other women after committing myself to my wife, I couldn't take it. I did what the White Book specifically tells us not to do (*SA*, 3)—I spilled my guts to my wife about my problem. She was angry and hurt, and I knew I needed to find help.



The first meetings I attended were in another S-fellowship, where members did not talk about surrendering lust or working the Steps. So although I was not acting out, I did not have recovery. After a few months of going to meetings, I started to get depressed. I experienced several brief but very painful depressions over a period of about six months. I was in bad shape. I was angry at my wife, and was convinced that leaving her would fix me. I hated myself, though I didn't realize it at the time. At one point I had thoughts of suicide, something I never thought I would experience. One afternoon, in August of 2007, I sat in my kitchen crying, in the grips of another depression. I said to my wife, "I don't know what to do anymore. Something's wrong with me and I don't know how to fix it."

Even though I had hit bottom and

was attending meetings regularly, I still struggled to accept that I was a sexaholic. The others I met in the program (most of whom were twice my age) had suffered a lot more it seemed and had experienced much greater consequences than I had. A couple of people openly questioned whether I belonged in the program. After all, I was still married, still had my job, and had never been arrested. I had even maintained a modicum of sobriety while dating my wife. Didn't this prove I wasn't truly sexaholic? All I knew was that I couldn't control my sexual thinking and behavior. I also knew the misery I experienced when I did stop for a time. I needed help, and SA was there.

After hitting my bottom in August, I started working the Twelve Steps in earnest. I went to a few regional SA conferences and met many recovering sexaholics who had what I wanted: sobriety and peace of mind. I got their phone numbers and began calling them, learning how they worked the program. One of these people told me to pray



whenever I started to obsess about something. “Just repeat the prayer over and over in your head,” he told me. That was a very useful tool early in my recovery, and I still use it today when I start to get crazy. More than anything though, it was working the Steps that changed my life from the inside out. The Steps, by connecting me with a Power greater than myself, have brought peace of mind, healing in my relationships (especially with my wife), and a way of life that really works.

I used to resent it when people told me I was lucky to be in the program at my age, because it reminded me that I was different and didn't belong (or so I thought). Today, I am incredibly grateful to have found SA as a young person. I have the opportunity to raise my future children in a healthy environment, to build loving relationships with my parents (and even my grandparents), and to pursue worthy goals that otherwise would have been obscured or distorted by sexaholism. What a gift SA has given me!

—Anonymous

Connected to the Fellowship

I came into SA when I was 23. In meetings, I would sometimes hear other members share about the tactics they had used in their sickness

to isolate themselves from other sexaholics. I related to their tactics—thus making it easier for me to justify acting out.

One of my temptations has been to use my age as a justification for isolation. I have thought, “I can recover when I’m older” or “I’m still better off at my age than the older members of the group were.” This was a futile attempt to control and enjoy my addiction.

For over a year I tried to convince myself that certain facts of my life—such as being single and never having to pay a mortgage—meant that I wasn’t an addict.

At times I felt that other members seemed to be more lenient on me. Thank God that my first sponsor was not one of those because, after I had been in the program for a year without ever having received a 30-day chip, he fired me.

After that I went on a week-long binge. I had been using my age as an excuse to isolate myself from the program. Today I see that my age does not excuse me from my disease. In fact, if I’m not surrendered, it can actually serve as a mechanism to further it.

After bingeing for a week and again losing control of myself, I crawled back to an SA meeting and asked a different member to be my sponsor. Thankfully, he saw straight through my facade and made it perfectly clear that age would not be an excuse, and that it was time for me to get sober. If he was going to

sponsor me then I needed to make commitments to the fellowship and stay connected with other addicts. These commitments have become my strength in staying sober. Ironically, it is only after experiencing sobriety that I have been sure I’m a sex addict. I also recognize that age is as foolish an excuse as gender, race, or socioeconomic status.



Every week I meet for breakfast with several guys from our local meetings. I make at least two phone calls every day. I’m becoming more open and vulnerable inside the meetings and out. These are the things that give me the strength to work my program.

A couple of months ago, a newcomer was sharing at a meeting that his wife had kicked him out and he was afraid he was going to lose his family. An older member leaned over and said, “You never have to go there if you stay sober now.” That has stuck with me ever since.

As a young person, I have a tremendous opportunity to grow in recovery and give back to the fellowship that has given me so much. The circumstances that led me to SA and recovery were a gift from God for which I am truly thankful. But whether I am 23 or 100—it will always be only one day at a time.

—Anonymous

Lessons in Humility

Tradition Two: 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.

For me, the Steps and Traditions have been an education in humility. My first lesson came in Step One, when I recognized and admitted my powerlessness over lust. This humility developed further in Step Two, when I came to believe in a Power greater than myself, and Step Three, when I decided to place that Power in charge of my life.

When I got to the Traditions, I got a big smack of ego-deflation right off the bat, when I learned that there is an entity more important even than me—the Group. The Group’s welfare is paramount, and supersedes the welfare of the individual. Then I found that the Group itself is not the authority. There is something greater: the Higher Power who may express Himself in our group conscience.

Group conscience meetings were painful for me. Here I’d come, with my sheaf of new ideas for improving the meeting (not to mention everybody else’s recovery), which would then be roundly voted down by my supposed friends. I’d leave the meeting feeling puzzled and hurt.

Why were they doing this to me?

I don’t deal well with authority. I resent it when somebody is placed above me. “Don’t tell me what to do!” I holler. So now I’m stuck—I resent the Group for making decisions that are not about me, and the Higher Power for being the authority behind those decisions. I saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how?



As I am reminded in *Recovery Continues* (71), “Underneath it all, I’m a rebel against God.” Could that be the core of my disease, and the reason I need a spiritual solution? But if I’m a rebel at heart,

how can I escape, and become a contributing member of a group that claims God as ultimate authority?

The key for me is the phrase, “A loving God” in Tradition Two. It’s that love that disarms me, and allows me the crucial change in attitude to want to place the good of the Group above my own petty wishes. This is the phrase that informs my belief and underpins my trust in God. Today I believe in a God who wants the best for me, and who gifts me with

sobriety, one day at a time. As I turn my will and my life over to that Power, I can turn the decisions of my group over to him as well, and trust that “our common welfare” includes me too.

The second part of Tradition Two says, “Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.” This continues my process of ego-deflation, as I practice serving the group in whatever job I have—whether mopping floors or making coffee. If I am chosen my group’s secretary, and am proud to lead the meeting, I will no doubt have excerpts from the “Meeting Guidelines” (*SA*, 188) read to me as another lesson (in my group, these guidelines are read once a month):

1. Leaders of meetings are servants of that meeting. They don’t “carry” the meeting; they merely facilitate it . . .
2. ... [The] leader’s presence is inconspicuous and non-controlling.

I was also told to read the Secretary’s duties in the White Book, in the section called “The Group (*SA*, 174).” Here a set term of office is suggested, “usually six months or a year. . . Rotating leadership is best” . This ensures that no one holds a job indefinitely—that I don’t make it my personal property, and regard

it as a sinecure for life. It means that all group members have the chance to do all the jobs, from the most “prestigious” to the most “menial.” In truth, every position has the same value, just as all members are equal. Pride and power are to be cast out; as servants, we do not govern.

Tradition Two, then, sums up SA’s philosophy of service, and derives from the centrality of the group (Tradition One) and our belief in a Higher Power (Step Two). The group depends upon the contributions of every member. All contributions are equally valuable. Serving the group contributes to my own welfare. A loving God presides over us all. As George MacDonald puts it (with his soft Scots burr), as quoted in the introduction to “The Fellowship of Sobriety” (*SA*, 171):



Every one of us is something that the other is not and therefore knows something—it may be without knowing that he knows it—which no one else knows. It is everyone’s business . . . as inheritor in it all, to give his portion to the rest; for we are one family, with God at the head and heart of it. . .

—A Grateful Member

Made a Decision

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

I like to look up definitions of words that seem important to me in the Twelve Steps. I use a 1934 *Webster's Dictionary* that was current when the Big Book was being written. My love of studying these old definitions somehow turned into a love of making drawings based on them.

One word that was very difficult to understand and illustrate was "Decision." Step Three says: "We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood him*." I have heard the word "decision" debated and examined in Twelve Step circles, so I looked it up: "Decision - n. The act of terminating by giving judgment on."

That definition sounded fairly stiff, technical, and even legalistic. I tried to put it into my own words: "End the debate over what I should do." Interesting idea, but if I reword a definition, I am changing the definition from its historical roots. I forced myself to return to what the 1934 dictionary said.

Before starting the Steps, I had been living the insanity that the White Book describes. Admitting my powerlessness (Step One) had been easy enough. Believing that no human power could solve my problem (Step Two) was not difficult. But now I was

faced with something very concrete and difficult—a decision.

Decisions used to come easily for me. I made them quickly and often. If lust was not involved, the results were usually good. But lust was becoming an over-arching presence that increasingly claimed every aspect of my life. My decisions didn't seem to mean much after a while. In reality, I was simply doing whatever my addiction decided.

Then I listened to Joe and Charlie's Big Book Study. In it, they discuss the history, personalities, and words found in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. They discussed a "decision" as being a change in the mind that is meaningless unless followed at once by strenuous action. As an example, Charlie said he decided several times to visit relatives in California but he didn't actually go there until he took all of the actions necessary to make the trip.

With this added perspective, I realized that a decision without action results in no change at all. Sure, Step Three sounded like an enormous change, but that decision would only produce real change if I then took Steps Four, Five, Six, and the rest.

I didn't know it then, but this seemingly small change could lead

me out of my insanity.... but only if I followed the decision with strenuous adherence to the Steps.

I wondered how I would put this simple but complex truth into a pen and ink drawing. Since childhood, I have been awed by trains, and knew that even powerful locomotives must follow whatever track they are on. When trains need to change their direction, they must drive over a special Y-shaped rail intersection called a “switch” which diverts them to a different track and a different destination.

I made some informal sketches of rail switches, but that wasn’t enough. I drew people throwing switches, but that showed the action rather than the mental step. Finally, I thought of a lone figure standing on the tracks and trying to mentally command a train to change tracks.

Here was a person who I could identify with. How often I stood in front of my onrushing addiction, telling myself I could make it go away simply by deciding I must stop. How often I would wake up the next day, wondering why my sincere and powerful decisions had failed so completely. As the drawing

progressed, I made sure that the person looked tall and resolute and dignified and spiritual. I usually exhibited similar qualities right before the addiction flattened me.

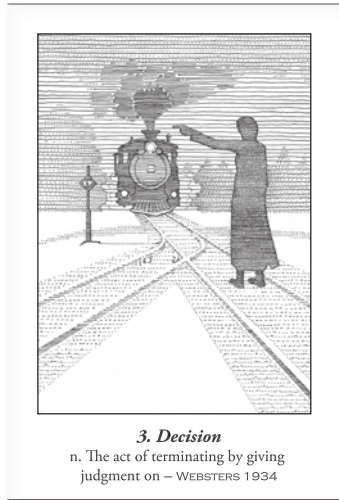
From the perspective of my sobriety today, I realize that in such a situation, I have two options.

- I can use words and empty gestures to influence the train’s course (rely on decisions alone), or
- I can run like crazy to that railroad switch and pull it as hard as I can (follow my decision with strenuous action).

Before I got sober, my mind debated whether I

really needed to change (get sober) or stay the way I was (addicted). Looking back, it doesn’t sound like a tough decision, but it was. Every time I decided to change, my addiction would knock my firm decision aside.

That dictionary offered me some hope, saying that a decision is “the act of terminating by giving judgment on.” (Funny, I hadn’t noticed the word “act” in that definition the first time I read it. Is that odd or is that God?) If my own judgment tells me it is time to terminate my internal debate, then I must act on that decision.



In the case of Step Three, I have to make a judgment: either change or stay the same. That decision must be followed by the actions of addiction or the actions of recovery. The history of recovery suggests three helpful actions: attend meetings regularly, work with a sponsor, and work the

Steps.

For those currently working on Step Three, my suggestion is to run like crazy for the next right action. This might achieve better results than standing majestically on the tracks, hoping to avoid being hit by a train.

—John I.

Making Amends

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

In recovery, I've learned to make prompt amends. In the past, when I wronged someone but did not make amends right away, the wrong would haunt me for days. A quick amends, however, can erase the toxicity of what I've done, and often creates a new connection with the other person (as well as with myself). Thus, I vow to practice Step Ten every day.

Following are some questions I have answered related to making Step Ten amends:

How will reviewing my planned amends with my Higher Power and my sponsor make a difference?

If an amends is long overdue, I need to give the matter thoughtful consideration and prayer. The voices of my Higher Power and sponsor have helped me know how to proceed. For example, my sponsor has at times advised me that an amends was not necessary and might even be a way of shaming myself. About 16 years ago, a neighbor

yelled at me for not controlling my dog. I tried to work this out the best I could at the time, but he rejected me. I wanted to make further amends but my sponsor felt that making any further amends was not necessary and might be a way of harming myself.

What is the difference between making an apology and making an amends? An

amends should communicate that I don't want to continue the behavior. About a month ago, I told a woman in a church vestry meeting that she had said enough, that we were going over the same issues again and again, and that it was late and time to close. After the meeting she left the room, clearly hurt. I thought about this for awhile and later called her to make an amends. I told her that my actions had nothing to do with her behavior (indeed, I respect her and always learn from her). I said that



my behavior was based on my own character defect of impatience, and that I am working on my tendency to be impatient. I think that is the characteristic of a true amends.

What are my motives for making amends? My main motive is that doing so restores me to sanity. Not making the amends leads to feelings of guilt, shame, unworthiness, and the possibility of acting out.

Am I willing to accept the outcome whatever it may be? Yes, I am willing, even though the outcome might be uncomfortable. I would rather clean the slate than carry the memory of my misconduct. The remorse could affect my sobriety.

How have I planned for other ways to make amends whenever direct amends are not currently possible? How will I make amends to those who have died? I have made amends to those who have died (as well as to people who are alive but whom I can't reach) by praying for them, and by taking their names to God in my shirt pocket (next to my heart) when I go to church. I try to imagine these people as well and happy. Also, I list the things that I have learned from them.

Are there amends that I can make to myself? How can I make them? I can make amends to myself by staying sober and working my program. I can participate in self-enhancing activities, such as painting

with watercolors, singing in the choir, serving on two boards, playing tennis, keeping up with my friends, calling friends and family members on their birthdays, and being grateful for my good health and for my marriage and my family.

Which amends can best be done by changes in my behavior?

What changes? I would like to make amends to all of my previous teachers, fellow students, previous employers and coworkers. I try to do this by doing well in graduate school, working hard to learn my trade (I am about to earn a certification as a therapist), being present to friends and family, and doing service work in the program.

Are any of the promises of Alcoholics Anonymous pages 83 and 84 being fulfilled in my life today?

I believe that I have a freedom and a happiness that I have not known before. More and more, I know peace. I am better able to handle situations that used to baffle me. I am more interested in being of service than in any sort of private gain. The one promise that is still difficult is that I do regret the past and I wish I could redo many years of my life.

Practicing Step Ten amends in this way has been a valuable part of my recovery because it restores relationships and keeps me humble.

—Anonymous

Comfort: Internal Versus External

In previous visits to see my family, my wife and I have established a boundary of staying in a hotel. We learned to set this boundary through experience: it gives us space, privacy, and comfort that we would not have if we stayed at a family member's house. So naturally I assumed that on our trip to visit my wife's family we would follow our custom and stay in a hotel. My wife informed me, however, that her aunt had offered for us to stay at her mom's (my wife's grandmother's) house, and my wife did not want to offend her aunt by turning her down. I reminded my wife of the reasons we had decided in the past to stay in hotels when visiting family and said that I would rather not stay at her grandmother's house. She said I was right, that she very much valued the space, privacy, and comfort of a hotel as well, but that she still worried about offending her aunt.

I need to insert a word here about my tendency to judge my wife. One of the easier, softer ways I tried before working the Steps was to try changing my wife. I was convinced that if only she improved on all the character defects I perceived in her, our relationship (and my life) would

be so much better. We had several discussions of the kind mentioned in the chapter in *SA* on Step Twelve



(*SA*, 150) where I tried to help her see the error of her ways. I would explain to her calmly (though inside I was overwhelmed with fear)

that she slept too much, didn't eat enough, seemed depressed, etc. The litany of her imperfections I knew by heart, and I was determined to purge them from her. While this tendency to judge was largely alleviated by working the Steps, I still struggle with it sometimes.

So, my wife told me she was afraid of offending her aunt by choosing to stay in a hotel rather than at her grandmother's house. As we discussed the issue one night before the trip, I felt a peace come over me that I now recognize as the fruit of true acceptance. I realized that even if we did decide to stay in a hotel, my wife would most likely not be comfortable with the decision. I saw that she was not ready to confront her need to please others. With feelings of compassion and tenderness, I said to her: "I just want to let you know that if you are not comfortable telling your aunt that we'd rather stay in a hotel, that's okay with me. I won't

be upset.” I saw relief flood her face instantly. She contacted her aunt soon after that to tell her we would accept her offer to stay with her.

The real test of my compassion and acceptance came on the night we arrived, when we discovered we would be sleeping on a cot in the middle of the living room. Talk about a lack of privacy and comfort! However, I can report in all honesty and humility that throughout the whole experience, I don’t recall having a single grumbling or resentful thought towards my wife. I was inwardly comfortable. I mention humility because the acceptance and compassion I felt in this situation were not feelings I conjured up. They simply came to me in the moment. But I do attribute their coming to the diligent and daily application of the Steps in all my affairs. God

shows up in my life to the extent that I relinquish my self-will, and I have found that practicing the principles of the Steps helps me do this. As stated in *AA*, “Acceptance has been the answer to all my marital problems (418),” and in fact, it “is the answer to all my problems today” (417).

In addition to receiving the gifts of acceptance and compassion, I also learned an important lesson from this experience: when I give up trying to change others and allow them to be who and where they are, they are more likely to learn from their experiences and make their own changes. On the way home from our trip, my wife and I were talking about how neither of us had slept well the night before because of the cot, and she said, “Never again. Next time, we’re getting a hotel.”

—*LB.B.*

The Value of Sobriety

Like many others, I came to SA for what I thought were good reasons: to get something back, to find something better in my life, or to satisfy some requirement. Yet I really didn’t believe that I was a sexaholic. I knew that my sexual acting out was causing me some problems, but a sex addict? Never!

No one else cared why I came, but eventually I needed to examine my motives for being in SA if I wanted to experience the serenity and

recovery I saw in others. For me, this attitude adjustment took many years.

At first, my attitude was, “I will stay sober if . . .”; that is, if my wife would start attending Alanon or S-Anon, if she would do what I asked her to do, or if she would go to counseling, etc. When she didn’t do these things, I felt there was no point to sobriety. So I acted out.

For several years, I played around with the definition of sobriety. I was committed to half-measures.

I stopped my most destructive behaviors but continued to act out at some level. I believed I could experience recovery without sobriety. I attended SA meetings only to hear others share, so I would feel better about my own acting out. Thus, I was a chronic slipper.

In my insanity, I didn't believe that I suffered any consequences from my lack of sobriety. After all, my wife didn't leave me, and no one in the meetings seemed concerned about my behavior. It wasn't until my sponsor threatened to fire me for my lack of true sobriety that I finally saw the light. Suddenly, I was faced with consequences that I could see. Finally, I became willing to go to any lengths.

I know other members who have been willing to go to any lengths from day one. For me, however, this willingness did not occur until I was broken by my sponsor's confrontation. I needed to get completely honest. I needed to accept in my innermost self that I was a sexaholic. I also needed a true desire to get sober.

I was told that I could experience reprieve from the physical part of the disease if I stayed away from deliberate lusting, not just from sexual acting out. If I wanted to live happy, joyous, and free, I first had to become lust-

free. I learned that progressive victory over lust is not the same as acting out less often. Progressive victory means surrendering lust in all of its many forms, not turning to them less often. And I need to do this *now*, not tomorrow, not next week.

Today, I desire sobriety because sobriety enhances every area of my life (and not just to avoid consequences). In order to grow up emotionally, I need to accept life on life's terms and face and accept reality. I must figure out how to stay sober. I have to say, "Today is the day that I stop acting out; the day I stop lusting; the day I decide to live."

But how could I do that? I realized I had already done it 100 times before. There had been an occasional day, hour, or afternoon when I stayed away from lust and sexual acting

out. I just needed to learn to stay away from that deliberate lust hit on a regular basis. And how could I do *that*? I needed to God's power. As stated in *AA* Chapter Five (and adapted in *SA*), ". . . probably no

human power could have relieved our sexaholism . . . [but] God could and would if He were sought" (*SA*, 207).



Today, I know that sobriety must be an end to itself. When I'm sober, I can experience life on life's terms. The program promises me more than mere sobriety—once I'm sober I can experience recovery in every aspect of my life: physical, emotional, and spiritual. This is how I can become

happy, joyous, and free.

I know that others can experience that same happiness, joy, and freedom that I have experienced. To those who are still struggling: all are welcome here. Stay until you experience the miracle.

—Steve C., San Diego CA

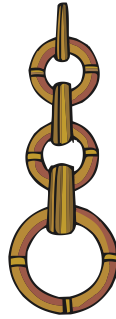
The Weak Link Exposed

I had been triggered. I was stressed out. I was working my program, but I was in an ugly place. I wanted to vent and complain. I felt justified and was going to let the world know about it. I made a program call. Before I could finish my super-charged rant, I was stopped by a simple, yet powerful question: “So what character defects are showing up right now?” I was stunned! “Character defects? *My* character defects?”

A chain will always break at its weakest link and I was experiencing a breakdown. I was upset. I had lost my serenity. A weak link had been exposed and had broken. I didn't want to look at my part. I had given the responsibility for my reaction and my upset to someone else.

Thanks to a perfectly timed question, I was brought back to reality. The energy of the conversation immediately shifted from blame, justification, and resentment to the cause of my

distress: *I am the key* (SA, 133). I looked in the mirror and saw my glaring defects.



As I began talking about the defects that fueled this situation, I found a mixture of control, resentment, impatience, and fear. In the past, all I needed to do was add a bit of lust to this mix and I was acting out.

Through recovery I am learning to give up my will. When I do, my control, resentment, and fear are replaced with surrender and acceptance. Through recovery I realized that the injury was only in my imagination (SA, 48) and that I was using resentment to avoid seeing the reality of my own actions. One small step at a time, one day at a time, recovery has enabled me to connect to a power greater than myself, and when I trust in my Higher Power, I experience hope, faith, and serenity. Once again, God is doing for me what I could not do for myself.

I no longer fear looking in the mirror. Today, I see so much more

than my ugly character defects. In prayer, I express gratitude for the character that I have been blessed with. Just as addiction was destroying my character, recovery is

strengthening it. Today my prayer is to let God use my hands to do his will. Recovery is a beautiful thing!

—Jon, a grateful recovering sexaholic

The Ungroup

Sometime back I read a short article that was published in *Essay* (2007, Issue One, p. 9). The article caught my attention. In it, Ed R. shared his practice of setting his phone alarm for 12:12 each day. When the alarm goes off, he says a short prayer of thanks for the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. I thought that was a neat idea, so I started doing it.

Being an addict, I of course believed I could improve on the idea. So I started adding the name of any group member, praying he would be able to stay sober that day. In fact, I soon started calling some of them later in the day, just to check in. When I shared what I was doing, several group members indicated that they would start doing the same. Now I was being prayed for, too!

We call it the Ungroup. It meets



at 12:12 each day, but has no meeting place. No readings. No discussion. No dues or fees. The “meeting” is over as each person finishes praying. Some have stuck with it; others have not. Many report it has been a meaningful experience for them.

There’s a funny side. At our noon meetings, several alarms go off at once. As we reset our phones, we look at each other and smile. Newcomers are puzzled, but we don’t tell them about it. They’ll find out if they stick around awhile. We just add them to our prayers.

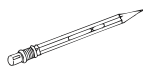
And Ed? When he and I are at marathons or conferences, we stand up and look for each other at 12:12. It’s a game between us.

Thanks, Ed, for sharing your great idea!

—Art H.

Needed: Input for New SA Home Group Pamphlet

SA’s Literature committee is seeking member assistance in the development of a Home Group pamphlet. We have found that many SA members are not familiar with the difference between a Home Group and a regular meeting. If you have experience to share on this topic, please contact sasanic@comcast.net for more info.



Only God Can Change Us

A member of our group (I'll call him Billy) has been incarcerated for several years due to his sexaholism. He has developed a beautiful spirit while in prison, and shares with us regularly by mail. In a recent letter he said, "Doing time is not that bad if you focus on building a relationship with God and not get

caught up in the junk that goes on here. It's only by God's grace that I've been able to get through this."

Billy wrote a poem, which he asked me to share with sexaholics everywhere. We hope it will bless others as it has us.

—Anonymous



The Potter

I thought I was alone on the Potter's wheel, a lump of clay—
no big deal.
Spinning aimlessly with no guidance at all, the best I could do
a worthless ball.

Then the Potter did enter, and He poured on me His living water.

Every inconsistency and blemish He sees, He takes His hands and changes me.

As He works on the inside, a change manifests on the outside.

The deeper I let Him go, the higher He allows me to grow.

I am an earthen vessel that He can use, to carry His love to whom He may choose.

God, You are the Potter, I am the clay, use me and shape me in Your special way.

A living sacrifice so that all may see, that only God could change a wretch like me.

—Billy K.



Relying on a power greater than ourselves is part of our infant instinct.

Note from the Delegate Chair

*Report of the General Delegate Assembly,
July 2010, Chicago, IL*



Dear Fellow SA Members:

The General Delegate Assembly met on Thursday and Friday July 8-9 prior to the July convention in Chicago. Attendees included 15 Delegates, seven Alternates, seven Trustees, four Trustee nominees, one representative from SAICO, and several observers. Throughout the meetings, I felt God directing our discussions and decision making. What a gift for this fellowship to be able to let go and let God direct us!

Assembly Actions

- GDA approved International Convention Committee mission statement to be included in SA Service Manual.
- GDA tasked Literature Committee with producing a pamphlet on the "Home Group in SA."
- GDA approved 2011 budget.
- Trustees announced the formation of a Public Information Committee.
- Literature Committee requested more writers of meditations. A vast amount of material is needed to produce a worthwhile project.
- GDA affirmed Betsy T., Dave T., Carlton B., and Francis H. for another year of service as Trustees; elected Art C. and Bob H. to the position of Non-Sexaholic Trustees; and elected Jerry L. and Hugh G. to the position of Trustees.

More information regarding other reports and concerns discussed at the meeting can be found in the full minutes report, which will be published after approval at the October GDA Teleconference.

Recognition of Members Rotating Off

The fellowship thanks Sean R., John C., Gene J., Nicholas S., and Lee W. as they step down as Trustees and Delegates for the service they have given to SA. We welcome the new Trustees and Delegates to the GDA.

The Spirit of Service

As Tradition Nine states: "AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." The Spirit of this Tradition is described as follows (as adapted for SA):

" . . . Unless each SA member follows to the best of his ability our suggested Twelve Steps to recovery, he almost certainly signs

his own death warrant. His drunkenness and dissolution are not penalties inflicted by people in authority; they result from his personal disobedience to spiritual principles. ...So we of SA do obey spiritual principles, first because we must, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are SA's disciplinarians; we need no others . . . Just as the aim of each SA member's personal sobriety, the aim of our services is to bring sobriety within reach of all who want it (12&12, 174-175).

May we all find the spirit of service—a true fellowship within each of us—as we trudge the road of happy destiny and continue to insist on enjoying life as we live the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of SA.

—Mike S., GDA Chair



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SA Correctional Facilities Committee (CFC) Update

The CFC met during the convention in Chicago in July to discuss our committee's purpose, goals, and methods. Our primary purpose is to support prisoners, staff, and their families. Approximately 20 meetings are held in prisons in 10 states. Our committee provides free literature including: *Sexaholics Anonymous*, subscriptions to *Essay*, the CFC brochure, and *SA for the Helping Professional*. We also facilitate a sponsor-by-mail program. In the near future, we hope to develop a prison newsletter so that we can publish prisoners' writings for the support of other prisoners.

In order to improve our prison-related services, we are interested in hearing about other members' successful experience in providing services to prisoners (see box below). If you would to share your local experience—or if you would like to help our committee in any other capacity—please contact me at sacfc1@gmail.com or call 518-638-8070 and leave details on email or voice mail.

—Tim S., CFC Chair

Information Request from CFC

If you would like to share your experience working with prisoners in your local area, please provide any or all of the following information:

- Names and locations of prisons where meetings are held in your area
- Contact info for a trusted servant for prison meetings in your area
- Names of sponsor-by-mail sponsors, number of sponsees each sponsor currently sponsors, and contact info in your area
- Any independent prison outreach services available at the individual, local group, or Intergroup level that would like to connect with SA CFC
- Contact info of local or Intergroup CFC committees in your area

SAICO Financial Update

Following is a summary of SA fellowship revenues and expenses for 2nd quarter 2010. A detailed donations report is enclosed with mailed issues of *Essay*, or is available from SAICO at 866-424-8777 or sa@saico.org. We wish to thank all of our members who generously contribute to our fellowship, so that we may continue to carry the message to the addict who still suffers.



SAICO Financial Update 2nd Quarter 2010	
Donations	\$ 8,326.20
Other Revenues	87,098.80
Expenses	120,700.00
Revenues (less expenses)	[5,275.00]
Total Prudent Reserve	183, 542.00

New SA Groups

USA

Benton, AR
Corry, PA
Denton, TX
Homer, AK
San Luis Obispo, CA
Sullivan, MO

Canada

Ottawa

Additional USA Meetings

Alexandria, VA
Reno, NV
Myrtle Beach, SC



New Meeting: Ottawa, Canada



Several of us drove to Ottawa on August 23rd to support a new Ottawa SA meeting. Ottawa (the capital of Canada) has not had an SA meeting since 2003—so we are very grateful to one of our members for taking the initiative to start this meeting.

The meeting is located at the McNab Community Centre (a very nice location), downstairs in the computer room. The first meeting had nine participants: five veteran SAs (including one visitor from Denver!), and four newcomers. Our reading was “To the Newcomer” from the White Book. There was plenty of good sharing.

We wish the SW Ontario fellowship all the best in this exciting new endeavour! Visitors are welcome, so if you are ever in Ottawa, please join us!

—In service, Mike Mac, Missuaga, Ontario and Peter T, Toronto, Ontario

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

Delegates and Trustees

Delegates

Region	Delegate	Committees
Southwest	Mike S., <i>Chair</i>	Conventions, Service Manual, COMC, Finance
	Tom K.	CFC, Conventions
	Eric S., <i>Alt</i>	CFC, Internet
	Russ B., <i>Alt</i>	International, Literature
Mid-Atlantic	Larry H.	Service Manual, RAC, Nominations
	Laurens A.	International
	Will K.	Service Manual, Literature
	Lia F., <i>Alt</i>	Nominations, International
North Midwest	Gary L.	Literature, RAC, Legal
	Tony R.	International
	Lee W., <i>Alt</i>	Internet
Northeast	Tom V.	Internet
	Terry O., <i>Alt</i>	
Northwest	Farley H.	RAC, Internet
	Lil G., <i>Alt</i> .	Literature
Southeast	Steve S., <i>V. Chair</i>	COMC, Finance, Service Manual
	Dave Mc.	
	Bill S.	Finance, COMC
	Jon B., <i>Alt</i>	Literature Conventions, COMC
South Midwest	Glenn J.	International, Conventions, Public Info
	John W., <i>Alt</i>	CFC, International
UK, Ireland	Tom C.	International
Germany	Stefan R.	International

Trustees

Trustee	Committees
Betsy T., <i>Chair</i>	Legal, Service Manual
Carlton B., <i>Vice Chair</i>	Finance, COMC
David T.	CFC, International, Loners
Francis H.	Literature, Service Manual, International
Hugh G.	H&I, RAC, Public Info
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



October 15, 2010, 14th Annual fall Marathon, Toronto, Canada. Info at 416-410-7622 or satoronto@reptiles.org

October 15 - 17, 2010, SA Fall Retreat 2010, Plano, IL. **Our Common Solution.** Info at 630-415-0341, www.chicagosa.org, or contact@chicagosa.org

October 16, 2010, 2010 Detroit Area Marathon, Warren, MI. *Willing to Go to Any Lengths.* Info at: 586-997-7518 or recovery@sa-detroit.com

October 22 - 24, 2010, SA UK Convention, Waterford, Ireland

October 23, 2010. Fall Conference, Hicksville,

NY. Info at: 516-634-0632, www.salongisland.org, or recovery@salongisland.org

October 23, 2010, Day of Spiritual Renewal, Stirling, NJ. *Finding and Renewing Your Spirituality for Recovery.* Info at 1-888-258-6104 or www.njessay.org

November 12 - 14, 2010, SA 12 Step Workshop, Marietta, SC. *The Steps We Took.* Info at www.orgsites.com/sc/upstatesa or upstatesa@yahoo.com

November 27, 2010, Recovery Day, London, England UK. Second of Four Recovery Days. For info call 07000 725463 or visit www.sauk.org

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

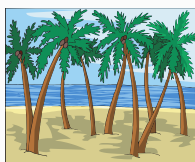
Submit events to be listed in Essay to saico@sa.org

Submit info to be listed in December 2010 Essay by October 15, 2010. 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*



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, convention highlights, and other information. You can also volunteer for service or contact any of our committee chairs with your questions.

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

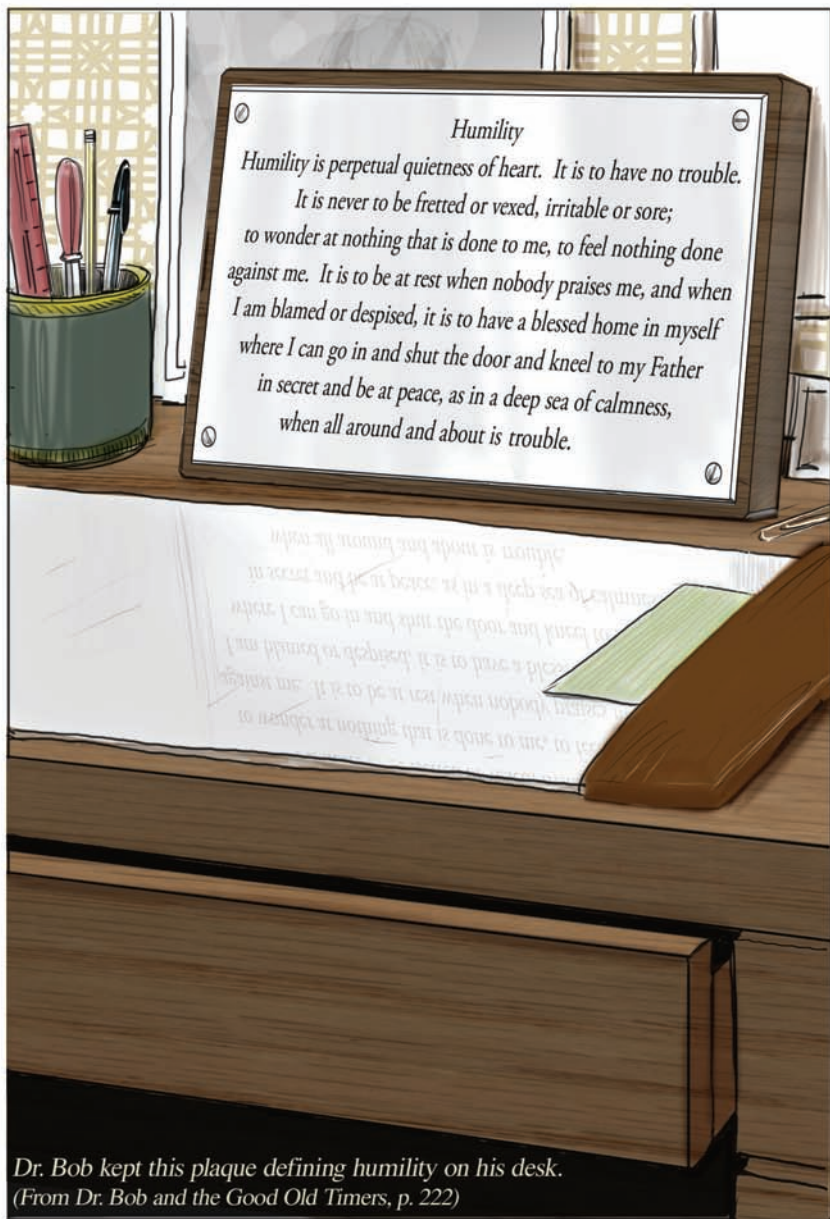
Events are listed here solely as a service, not as an endorsement by Essay or SAICO.

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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.



*Dr. Bob kept this plaque defining humility on his desk.
(From Dr. Bob and the Good Old Timers, p. 222)*

*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.*