

# *Essay*

March 2011



## *No More Hiding*

*A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

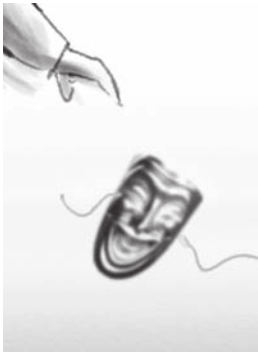
## The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

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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# March 2011



## Sexaholics Anonymous

is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.

—Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine Inc.

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

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**New To SA?** Call toll-free at 866-424-8777 or outside North America call 615-370-6062; email us at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org); or visit SA website at [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org).

## No More Hiding

I was born in 1947, the middle of five children in a Catholic family. My oldest brother died of a mental illness when he was 30. I don't remember much of my childhood, except that I seemed to be in a constant state of fear.

I never did well in school. I was devastated when I learned that I would have to repeat the seventh grade. Around the same time, I entered puberty. I found a pleasurable friend in masturbation. But as the compulsion grew worse, the pleasure turned into guilt, shame, and remorse. My friend became my enemy.

In the eighth grade, I turned to weightlifting and football for relief. Our football team did well. For awhile I was less preoccupied with self. I even enjoyed school. However, one day I injured my sciatic nerve while lifting weights. This ended my football career. I found myself fantasizing about sex more. I couldn't get home fast enough to masturbate. I also began visiting prostitutes.

The summer after ninth grade I felt a calling from God to become a priest. I had a secondary motivation: I thought the priesthood might cure my addiction. I applied to the seminary but was told to

wait because my grades needed improvement.

I met a girl in my sophomore whom I really loved. We went steady for three years. I wanted to do the right thing, so I stopped visiting prostitutes— but we were still acting out by having mutual masturbation. Still,

everything was beautiful for a time. Then God intervened.

I asked my counselor about being a monk, since I couldn't apply to seminary. He gave me books about the monastic life. As I read the literature, I started thinking about my girlfriend, my money, my car, and my freedom. I was in torment until one night, when I made the decision to go into the monastery. Then, a great peace came over me.

I entered a monastery when I was 18. The first week, I was so homesick and lovesick that I vomited every morning. I told my Higher Power that if I vomited on the seventh day, I would go home. Well, the seventh day I was peaceful and I didn't vomit!

After six weeks, I was sent to another monastery for a one-year novitiate. That year was a blessing. Even though I had gone to a Catholic high school, I had never been



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interested in faith-related matters. Now, everything was new and I loved it.

At the end of my first year I had my wisdom teeth pulled. The surgery was difficult and painful. As a result of the pain, I started masturbating again. I had had a year of abstinence, but that would be the last time for years to come that I would be free from masturbation.

When I was 20, I started at the Catholic University. I also took my three-year vows of poverty, chastity, obedience, and stability. I took the vow of chastity, figuring that once I settled down, I would be okay.

I graduated in May of 1971. Because of my constant struggles in school, graduation felt like a great accomplishment—a miracle from God! After graduation, I took my final vows. I thought again about the vow of chastity. I still had no solution for my sex addiction. I had to trust God and hope for the best. I continued to pray and search for a solution.

In 1972, I started teaching and counseling at our high school. This was extremely difficult because I was so timid, but I got through the year. A jail chaplain asked me to help him with counseling and serving Mass at the jail that year. I was excited about helping him, and again started

thinking about becoming a priest. This time, I was encouraged to apply to seminary. I began my studies the following fall.

I decided to get a Master's degree in criminal justice so I could become a prison chaplain. I chose a university in Texas that offered the program. As I drove there, I had severe anxiety attacks. I was always filled with fear when I encountered new situations.

I interned as a prison chaplain at the local Department of Criminal Justice, in the psychiatric treatment center. The inmates had pornography pasted all over their walls. For three months, I saw these images eight hours a day. This fueled my lust to the point that I started buying my own pornography on a regular basis.

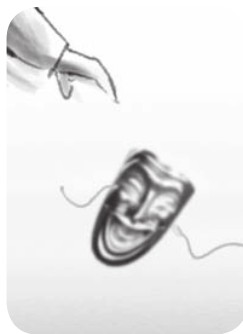
In 1975, I began my fourth year in theology. This was an important year because in June I would be

ordained a priest. I often wondered when I would stop masturbating and viewing pornography.

I talked with a moral theologian and a psychologist, but neither of them had a solution. I felt like two persons.

The inner tension caused severe headaches. I got a prescription for pain pills, and I soon became addicted to them.

In June 1976, I was ordained a priest. I started conducting Mass at



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the county jail. Unfortunately, now that I was working at the jail instead of the monastery, I could come and go as I pleased—and my sex and drug addictions took off at full speed.

For three years, I would pop pills, wash them down with wine, and hit the streets to pick up prostitutes. I achieved some control by flooding my brain with spiritual reading. I cut down my pill intake as well as the frequency of using pornography and masturbating. However, it would be 10 more years before I would find the Real Solution.

Several members of the Mafia were housed in our jail. I visited them daily. Over time, I became close friends with the mob outside of the jail. They trusted me, because I didn't want to know their business. I visited their families, helped their children, baptized their babies, blessed marriages, annulled marriages, heard confessions, and served them Communion.

I partied with members of the mob at restaurants and at their clubhouse. They bought me expensive clothes and paid for nice vacations. I tried to be a priest to them, but my addictions affected my judgment. In the end, I lowered myself by providing contraband to the incarcerated mob. My life was out of control.

My last year at the jail was like a constant tornado. My mob friends

had been moved to other prisons around the country. My sex addiction went into remission because my drug addiction was at its peak. I had mood swings between rage and depression. In my rage, I wrote nasty letters to the sheriff because of poor jail conditions. I became angry with a judge for sentencing a religious brother who had sex with a minor. Help arrived when the bishop let me know that it was time for me to leave the jail. This was some relief, but I still had plenty of rage inside of me. No one knew I was chemically dependent. I did not know I was that sick. I only knew that something was wrong and I couldn't fix it.

I decided that a change in prisons would solve my problem, so I asked my superior if I could join the federal prison system. In 1986, I went to Georgia for prison training. Once there however, the drug addiction was so bad that I could not perform even a simple task. My addiction threw me into a deep depression. Because of the depression, I would lock myself in my office, unable to do anything at all. I started attending a Twelve Step program dealing with emotions. I also went to a psychiatrist who put me on medication. But I could not overcome my addictions.

I decided that I was ready to take action. I quit! I told my religious superior that I was having suicidal thoughts and could no

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longer take the work at the prison. He told me to come home.

That Spring a travel agent asked me to take a group of parishioners to Yugoslavia to participate in a spiritual event. I experienced many miracles there. One miracle was the joy I felt after hearing confessions in English for eight hours straight. As sick as I was, I felt lifted up out of myself. The second miracle was that I met a drug and alcohol counselor who lived only 30 minutes from my home in the States. She would be the one to get me through hell and into a treatment program.

When I returned home from the trip, I was assigned to teach high school. After 16 years of working with prisoners, I found that I could not control a high school class. Instead of teaching lessons, I showed religious videos. This solved my teaching problem, but it did not solve *my* problem. My depression got so bad that I would have preferred to be on death row.

During this time, I had been seeing the counselor I met in Yugoslavia. When the school year ended in 1989, she suggested I go into drug addiction treatment. She recommended a long-term facility for priests and religious people. But I decided to hang around the monastery for the summer instead.

That summer, I had a mental, emotional, and physical meltdown. I was admitted to our local hospital.

From there I was sent to the out-of-state program for priests. When my religious superior came to visit, I broke down crying. After a life time of stuffing my feelings, they all came gushing out. I was ready for treatment. I had nowhere else to go.

I stayed at the facility for seven months. Besides classes and therapy sessions, they offered Twelve Step meetings. I went to AA meetings at first. Then I learned about a program called "Sexaholics Anonymous." The program even had a book with instructions: sexual sobriety means that if I am single, I cannot have sex at all, including masturbation. At last I had found a solution!

I was terrified to speak in those meetings. I kept everything inside. I didn't have a sponsor. I worked



most of the Steps on my own. However, I worked Steps Four and Five with my counselor. For the first time, I was able to share some of my story. The shame and despair of my life came pouring out. I received some guidance. I also learned that I was suffering from bipolar disorder and severe depression. All of this gave me hope and some tools, and I was able to stay sober for a time.

I was put on a new depression medication, which helped a little, but each day was a struggle. My brain was drugged, my personality suppressed. All I could do was hope for a better day and put faith

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in God that everything would be okay. I believed that the Twelve Step programs would work because at the meetings I saw happy people. So I persevered in these programs.

In the summer of 1990, back at the monastery, I went to AA meetings in the evenings. I thought that if I attended AA every night, I would not need SA—but after a year I masturbated once. Back to SA! I dragged myself to meetings. I just sat there taking up space. I was still afraid to share. My brain was in a fog from the drugs. It took about three years for the fog to lift.

I knew I had to take action, no matter how I felt. I put the gloves on and crawled into the ring of life. Every day was a battle. Some days I got knocked down, but the next day I would pick myself up and start again. I kept fighting. There was no alternative. As the White Book says, I needed to “Take refuge in God ... [and] call on God’s presence as a shield to protect me from my own lust and emotions” (166).

I volunteered to give talks and visit treatment centers. Program people say that if you want to be happy, help another drunk. I wanted to be happy.

At first I went to only one SA meeting per week and felt better. Then I went to two meetings a week and felt even better. Finally, I went to five meetings per week,

and the healing process really took off. I became less depressed. The temptations to act out lessened. I was beginning to feel peace and serenity. I was better able to listen to others and not be so focused on myself. I started enjoying the meetings and looked forward to going to them. I had a whole new outlook on life.

It took seven more years before I found the courage to open up at meetings. Everything is better now! Today I have a sponsor. I go to two meetings per week. I sponsor three men, and I call them every day. I never called members of SA before. I’m not so introverted today; I can share myself with others. All of this

program activity gives me serenity—only by God’s grace, after 19 years of sobriety.

Now I see how healing a phone call can be. I don’t know how I kept sober in those early years without doing the basics. But meetings, meetings, and more meetings have saved my

sobriety. All the counseling in the world was not enough; I needed the SA program. My God, working through SA meetings, has saved my life.

In the Spring of 1991, my religious superior said that a year was enough rest and that I should look for a ministry that would pay





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for my room and board. I enrolled in a pastoral education program that was designed to train a person in counseling. After the training, I found a hospital chaplaincy position. I have been the chaplain at this hospital for the past 19 years.

Today, God has given me true peace, joy, and happiness. No more guilt, self-hatred, or depression. No more hiding. Today, I can pray to my Higher Power with intimacy and love. My spiritual life is full of hope, and I am making progress daily.

Today, God is using my weaknesses to help others who have the same problems I do. I will always have the addictions and the bipolar disorder, but now they are

assets, not liabilities. God can use my experiences to benefit others. I am free and sober today. God has made me a new man.

I'm grateful for the love and support of my monastic community and the people at my church. But most of all, I'm grateful for SA. I was looking for sexual sobriety since I was 13 years old. I wish there had been SA back then; maybe I would not have suffered as much. But God knew what I needed: soul surgery without pain medication.

Today, I am happy, joyous, and free, thanks be to God. May God bless you and your journey.

—Father D.R.B, August 15, 2010

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## SA Around the World

### My Virtual Trip to Russia

Recently I had an exciting opportunity in my recovery—something I had never done before. I was invited to tell my story to a group of Russian SAs. Did I travel to Russia? Not exactly. Am I proficient in the Russian language? No way. Was this all a dream? Sort of. Let me explain.

An SA member from Russia (who is studying here in America) invited me to speak to SA members in Russia about my experiences as a sexaholic in



recovery. This was to be done electronically from my home computer. I would read my story sentence by sentence to the SA here, who would translate it into Russian for a small group there. They could hear, but not understand, me speaking English, and vice versa. Afterward there would be a chance for impromptu questions from them.

As I prepared my talk, I was both excited and apprehensive about doing it. I enjoy writing, so



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preparing my story was relatively easy. The apprehension came at the thought of being put “on the spot” by questions I might find uncomfortable or difficult to answer honestly. The old voices of doubt and shame tried their best to deter me. “Who me? I’m not capable enough, or well enough, or interesting enough to be worth listening to for an hour. I’ll be boring, or stutter, or make a fool of myself in some way. Better not try to do it—maybe another time.”

Another voice from within spoke differently. “Of course I can do it. Maybe not perfectly, but certainly in an adequate manner. I have some sobriety, I’m working the program, I sponsor people and I do service work. I have something worthwhile to contribute. In a way I’m an ‘expert’ on being a sexaholic and I’m learning to be a recovered one. Progress, not perfection, as they say.”

Knowing that my Higher Power was with me, and my listeners were somewhat eager to hear my story, I prayed for strength and guidance to share my experience, strength, and hope in a way that might be helpful to my “comrades” half a world away. More importantly, I needed to do this for myself—for my own growth in recovery. How many times I have said in meetings, “I can’t keep it if I don’t give it away.” Here was a chance to be useful to others like

me, who would understand and relate to my journey. I had to do it.

So on a Saturday morning at 10 am (6 pm Moscow time) I sat nervously before my computer and began to share. I’ve never spoken by translation before, but I soon got used to it. I began to relax as the words flowed from English to Russian. I could feel a oneness with my listeners, despite the geographical and linguistic distance. As the White Book says, I felt like I was home. The time flew, the questions were sincere, and I could feel the appreciation of those listening. When it was over I breathed a sigh of relief and thought of what my granddaughter says

after accomplishing a difficult task: “I did it! I did it!” And I was glad I did.

Will I ever get to Russia in person? Probably not. But I have already “been

there” in a sense more important than physically. I have been there personally, and have shared myself with others with whom I never dreamed I would have the privilege. I have truly become part of SA’s international outreach—carrying the message to those whose language I cannot know, but whose experience I am acquainted with intimately.

*Wow!*

—Art S., Columbia, SC



## The Precious Gift of Sobriety

I was born with a fatal kidney disease. It wasn't diagnosed until I was 22 years old. Once it was diagnosed, my doctors could keep an eye on it and help me learn how to live with it.

When I was 44, I was diagnosed with the fatal disease of sex addiction by a different kind of doctor—a Ph.D., who recommended SA as the treatment for my illness. I went to a few SA meetings but decided not to stay and switched to another S-fellowship.

I had been in that fellowship for six years when my kidney disease finally caught up with me. I was told that it was time for either a transplant or dialysis. I had just recently gotten sober—again—and I stayed sober through the entire transplant testing and waiting.

Finally, the day came for the transplant—a life-saving gift from one of my sisters. My biggest fear going into the surgery was losing my sobriety of eight months, which I really treasured. I had become very dependent on the fellowship for my sobriety and feared that not going to meetings during my medically-imposed post-surgical isolation would make it nearly impossible for

me to stay sober. Not having learned how to handle fears by using the Steps, not being connected to God and quickly slipping into self-pity because of the isolation, I did lose my sobriety within a couple of months after the transplant.

After about a month of using Internet pornography and masturbating, I really wanted to stop, and

decided to give SA another try. At the first meeting, I recognized two of the men from my first few meetings in 2002. Both had been sober since I stopped attending, six years earlier. I found that pretty encouraging. Soon after I started in SA, I got sober too. Two-and-a-half years later, I can see the parallels between maintaining my transplanted kidney and maintaining my sobriety. I can also see how much harder it has been to maintain my sobriety and why.

To keep the gift I received from my sister through the efforts of the transplant team, I must take several immunosuppressant drugs every day. I must also keep an eye on my weight and blood pressure to watch for signs of possible rejection. I go to the lab regularly to have my blood drawn so the transplant team can make sure everything is working as it should. I go to the clinic several



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times a year to meet with members of the transplant team for a check-up.

I've also been doing my part to keep the gift of sobriety I received from God through the fellowship of SA. First and foremost, it requires daily attention. Instead of pills, I use prayer, meditation, and contact with others in the fellowship on a daily basis to stay connected with God as a defense against lust—in much the same way that my immunosuppressant drugs provide a defense against my body's tendency to reject the transplanted kidney.

I could do a mini-inventory every few weeks to see whether I am practicing the principles of the program the way I should—but I find it is much more effective to do one daily. And just as my transplant team often suggests adjustments to my medications (which I always follow, without question), members of the fellowship give me the feedback I need to make necessary adjustments to my program (which I am much more likely to heed than I was in the past). Both help me stay alive.

But probably the most important similarity is that, in both cases, I realize I have been given a tremendous gift through the grace of God and the generosity of others. Just as I have gotten into the habit of caring for my new kidney, the fellowship of SA is helping me get into the habit of caring for my new

relationship with God, which makes staying sober one day at a time a real possibility. Whenever the “demands” of maintaining one of those two gifts seems a little burdensome, I just have to remember how blessed I am, and be grateful.

Interestingly, it was much easier for me as a patient to turn my will and my life (literally) over to the care of the transplant team than it was for me as a sexaholic to turn my will and my life over to God's care. Perhaps it was easier for me to accept my powerlessness regarding my kidney disease. Or perhaps I have been insufficiently grateful for the gift of sobriety. In truth, I cannot count on one more recovery if I go back to my sex addiction, any more than I can count on getting another donated kidney should I lose the one I have.

It has taken me a long time to treasure my sobriety as much as I have treasured my new kidney from the day I received it. Thank God, the members of SA have taught me to appreciate the gift of sobriety as much as I appreciate the gift of my new kidney.

I will never be able to repay my sister for her gift to me, but the Twelfth Step gives me a wonderful way to repay those SA members who have helped me stay sober one day at a time. May I never forget to pass on what I've been given!

—*Jim H., New York*



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## Sitting in a Rowboat

My first experience with pornography was at age six, when a teenage boy in the neighborhood showed it to me. This became a secret we shared. He used the bond of secrecy to lead me to an isolated location so he could molest me. Early on, I became a sexaholic.

The greatest misunderstanding about addiction, in my opinion, is related to its size and power. I see the addict as a six-year-old boy in a tiny rowboat in the middle of the ocean with a handful of marbles. An armored battleship is steaming toward him. He can't see the ship very well because thick fog is everywhere. He is trying to sink the battleship by throwing marbles at it.

I am the six-year-old boy. My sexaholism is the battleship. Those marbles are my efforts to overcome the addiction on my own. The fog is misinformation, confusion, bias, and judgmental attitudes about my addiction. It confuses me and keeps me from seeing two stark realities: (1) the battleship is enormous, and (2) I am alone in a tiny rowboat trying to stop it with marbles! I confidently think that if I can just throw those marbles hard enough, I will eventually pierce the hull and

the battleship will sink. I tell myself, with conviction: "I will soon conquer my addiction."

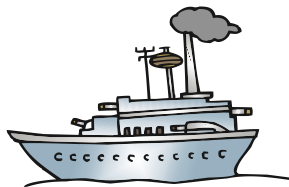


During my lifelong battle with the enemy ship, I kept looking for reinforcements. I spoke with psychiatric professionals about my inability to control my compulsions to act out sexually. The doctors shrugged and said they didn't really see sex as a problem. One suggested that if I didn't like what I was doing, I should stop. I felt genuine empathy from the few non-professional people in whom I confided. However, their most common, well-meaning counsel was that I probably needed to pray harder and more often. So I resolved to them, to myself, and to God that I would prevail this time. But there was a huge problem: now I was sitting in my lonely little rowboat, saying lots of prayers—and I once again started throwing

more marbles at the battleship.

Today, I am just a few days shy of one year of sobriety. That is a miracle! It is by far the longest period

of sobriety I have enjoyed in all my adult life. I recently told my wife that for the first time in my life, I am happy without an asterisk next to the



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word “happy.”

To what do I attribute my sobriety? After trying to stop 10,000 times, what was the difference this time? My last disclosure to my wife in April 2010 was catastrophic. Two days later, as I was wallowing in my misery, unsure whether our marriage would survive or our family would stay together, I was struck by the realization that I needed help. In a moment of inspiration, I called a friend in another state to tell him what I had been doing. He listened and then told me some things that changed my life.

First, he said that he knew exactly what I was going through, because he and his wife had dealt with the same thing four years earlier. Second, he said that my brain was broken, I had an addiction, and I could not get over it by myself. Third, he said there was hope for recovery and that all was not lost. Fourth, he told me about the fellowship of SA—a group of sexaholics who meet to support each other in their quest for sexual sobriety. He said, “Go to a meeting, now!”

After some hesitation, I went to my first meeting on a Friday night. I listened in awe as members shared their struggles with sexaholism, as well as their hopes and successes. When my turn came, I was able to talk about everything: the loneliness,

the shame, the fear that I had destroyed my marriage, the pain I had inflicted on my wife—as well as my desire to change my life, stop acting out, and simply live as I knew God wanted me to live. I started attending meetings on a regular basis.

The remarkable thing about being in SA is that I have been able to expose my secrets to the light. Before SA, the shame and fear that accompanied my thoughts and behavior remained hidden inside of me, where they festered and grew. The more miserable and isolated I felt, the more I felt compelled to medicate by acting out. But I have found that in SA, as I bring my secrets into the light, they are beginning to lose their power.

In addition to meetings, phone calls have been a lifeline for me. I make calls and receive calls for many different reasons. I’ve called members because I’m having a rough day, or because I want to reaffirm my intention to remain sober for another day, or just to check in. Once, I received a call from a member at 11:30 pm. We chatted for a few minutes about nothing in particular, expressed our appreciation for each other, and said goodbye. That short phone call helped him stay sober that night.



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One of my favorite program slogans is “One Day at a Time.” I recognize that I will always be a sexaholic. But I also realize that if I work the SA program, I can remain sober. With God’s inspiration and strength, I intend to do that work.

Over this past year, I have still been sitting in the rowboat and the battleship is still out there. But now I see a bunch of other rowboats surrounding mine. They belong to my friends in SA. They have power tools for dismantling the battleship. They tell me to stick with them and

they will show me how to slowly dismantle my battleship piece by piece, because they’ve done it before. They say, “It takes an addict to help an addict.”

What is the power source that all these cutting tools plug into so they can be used to chop up my battleship? It is the power of a loving God who is mindful of me and other sexaholics. I believe He wants us to find peace in this life and is helping us to do so.

—Anonymous

## Leading My Family in Recovery

Recently, I was blessed to participate in another member’s Step One inventory. After the member shared his inventory, someone asked him, “What could be the consequences if you continue down this road of addiction?” As I listened to his response, I knew that I had heard all of those consequences before. In fact, I had personally experienced many of them to a greater or lesser degree: loss of a job and financial ruin, loss of respect in the community, loss of respect from children, loss of other close relationships—as well as stress, shame, fear, lies, secrecy, jail, disease... right down to loss of life.

As an addict I know this list, even if I have viewed parts of it



through the filter of denial. In addiction, all of this can come true! I have known for years that the slippery slope only leads downward, and it gets uglier and more painful the further you slide. As I was reviewing the familiar list of losses, I was blessed with a new insight—a new loss that I had never thought of before and wanted to share. I thought, “*If he stays in his addiction he will lose the opportunity to lead his family in recovery.*”

As he talked of the wreckage and drama that was now a part of his life, I began to see how many other people had also been hurt. They needed healing as well as he did, and hopefully they will heal. The question was clear in my mind:

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“Will he step up and be a leader in healing the pain and wreckage that he caused?” Then, more important, I had to ask myself, “Have I stepped up, and am I leading my family in healing and recovery?”

I began to think about what it means to be a leader in healing. I know what it is like to be a leader in destruction—I had been doing that for years! But to be a leader in healing?

I came to SA in June of 2006 and since then, one day at a time, I have tried to be a leader in healing the wreckage and pain caused by my addiction. My family has been blessed by my continuing recovery. I am so grateful! I love recovery. In my addiction, with no thought or possibility of recovery, I was destroying everything that is truly important and beautiful in my life. In recovery, everything that is truly important and beautiful is healing and growing as I lead the way—one step at a time, one day at a time, through my own recovery.

I have been able to have conversations with my children about lust, love, and sexuality. I’ve been able to have conversations I never had with my parents. I grew up believing that my wife was the approved object of my lust. In SA, I have learned to surrender lust in

marriage. My children are seeing an example of a marriage that is healing and becoming more loving, honest, and open.

The tension level of our home is dropping—and when it does go up, it comes down faster than before. I invited my son to go to a meeting with me. He accepted my invitation, and recovery has blessed his life. I am happier, more peaceful and fun to be around. I have more patience and more understanding. Today when I am home, I am truly at home.

I still struggle. I am an addict. But in those moments of stress, temptation, and insanity—when old addictive thoughts and behaviors surface—I have tools, skills, and support that I didn’t have before. Today I am grateful for the miracle of recovery.

I look back now and I can see so many places where God has done things for me that I could not have done for myself. I frequently have to remind myself to let Him drive the bus. But even when I kick Him out of the driver’s seat and drive the bus off the road, He is willing to take over and help me get back on the road again.

I heard once from an AA old-timer that recovery is “mercifully slow.” There are so many things that need attention, healing, and recovery that I could never do it quickly.





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If I tried to fix everything on my “wreckage” list today, I would feel hopeless and overwhelmed. But if I practice recovery, just one day at a time, with the Grace of my Higher Power, I have hope.

I have seen the miracle of healing in my family as I have been blessed to be able to lead the way. I

## Thankful for One More Day

A few years ago I decided that I would not call myself sober if I engaged in “lust-driven use of the Internet.” My particular disease has not (so far) included prostitutes, affairs, or even masturbation, but I recognized that, at least for me, the act of clicking that suspect link is a “drink” that triggers my own disease and insanity. For years I had justified all kinds of insane (and sometimes illegal) behavior because it did not happen to fall under the caption “sex” in my mind. But how is searching the Internet for women in various stages of undress *not* sex outside of marriage?

As I click on the images, I might rationalize that I am not, after all, looking for sex. However, the truth of my addiction to lust eventually comes out and I have to admit that it really does not matter what, specifically, I may or may not be looking for. For me, lust is manifested

now have a partner in my healing—my Higher Power—Who is helping me demonstrate to others His love and power as I learn to do His will. As I heal, my world is healing. Recovery is a beautiful thing!

—Jon S., *grateful recovering sexaholic*

whenever I seek fulfillment or relief from pain anywhere but in God.

At first, I was unable to share my shameful behavior with anyone or even look at it myself. But as I opened up more in meetings, with my sponsor, and in my journal writing, I became more aware of the actions and attitudes that led to those Internet “drinks.” I became more aware of the parade of images dancing through my head and the choices I made each day to “click” on one of those links or images whenever my willingness to work the program was weakened.

As I began to lose the shame and isolation that kept me from sharing about those images, I was helped. I realized that I have little, if any, control of the things that pop into my head, but I can learn new attitudes about them. I can choose to immediately surrender them to God and the Fellowship rather than



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obsess on them in isolation.

As I find the willingness to surrender even the grossest and most disturbing of those images or ideas (something I am careful to do explicitly only with my sponsor or my therapist), I can sometimes experience long periods of relief

even from the lust that pops in uninvited. I have been amazed at the freedom I experience when they are gone. At least for today, I can indeed be thankful to God, and to you the Fellowship, for one more day of sobriety.

—Ned O. Seattle

## The Wreckage of the Future

Lately, I have not performed well at my job. I'm worried that I'll be laid off. I've feared a layoff before, but this could be it.

Guilt about my performance greets me as I wake up each morning and follows me all day until I fall asleep. Guilt is accentuated by depression. The guilt leading to depression forms a terrible cycle. I don't sleep well, and the guilt gets worse and turns into fear. Fear leads me to live in the wreckage of the future. I think:



me not to make mistakes again. But guilt lowers my energy level, so my job performance gets worse. Guilt also eats at the confidence I need to find new work.

Sometimes I resent others for their contribution to the fix I'm in. This works! When I let anger flow in, the guilt goes away, and I experience the illusion of being powerful and in control. However, if I want to heal, I need to surrender my guilt to God, as described in Step Seven:

Every time I surrendered a wrong in process—temptation to lust, resentment, or fear, for example, and would say something to the effect, 'I don't want to bear this; I want You to bear it for me; I cast it onto You,' *it worked.* (SA, 121, italics added)

If I ask God to remove my shame, I could pray for guidance about how to proceed, and the power to carry it out (Step Eleven).

- I'll never work again.
- People will know it was all my fault and will treat me with derision.
- I'll be forced to live with destitute strangers in a small dirty apartment.
- Health ailments will descend upon me, and I'll have no money to care for myself.

Often, I don't want to let go of guilt because I think it will remind

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I could ask Him to “remove from me every single defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness to [Him] and my fellows” (AA, 76). Sending



this mini inventory off to *Essay* is the beginning of my healing, as described in Step One:

Experience has shown us that the public aspect of surrender is crucial. It seems

surrender is never complete until it is brought out into the open, into the company of others. This is the great test that separates the wishers and whiners from doers (SA, 85).

I am tired of wishing away this addiction to guilt and to failure. So with God’s help, I surrender my defects publicly to the fellowship of SA, and I pray for the strength to act accordingly.

—*Anonymous*

## Hitting Bottom

I have often heard talk about the need to “hit bottom” in order to get sober. But what is this “bottom?” I’ve heard members share that they hit bottom after being arrested or losing a job, or after a spouse threatened divorce or actually filed for divorce. Yet these members continued to act out. I know of other members who suffered none of these consequences, but they found sobriety and ceased acting out.

What then is the “bottom” that one has to reach to stop acting out and to embrace recovery? I’ve come to the conclusion that it is not an event or an action. Instead, it is an attitude change—a willingness to do whatever it takes to change and to cease doing destructive actions.

When I was an in-patient at a

facility, a therapist asked if I was willing to push a baseball down the street with my nose if I was told that it was necessary for me to get sober. I was. The newcomers who enter our program with this attitude get sober and stay sober, regardless of what they have done. The “bottom” for



many of them was very high: being caught on the Internet by a spouse, realizing that they are cheating their company and themselves by looking at porn, or just coming to see that they want to stop. They were not arrested, divorced, fired, etc. So, I have come to believe that the “bottom” is an attitude change that renders one willing to do whatever it takes to stop lusting, to get sober, and to get into recovery.

—*Jerry L.*

## Step Eleven: Conscious Contact

*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 it out.*

I like to look up definitions of key words found in the Twelve Steps, using a 1934 *Webster's Dictionary*, which was current when the Big Book was published, and then create drawings for them. Step Eleven has lots and lots of words! I could see a lot of important words in there, but for me the two most important words were “conscious contact.”

When I first read Step Eleven, it was difficult for me to relate with the phrase “our conscious contact with God.” It sounded highly religious! Whenever the word “God” was mentioned in the Steps or at meetings, I felt uneasy and wanted to skip to another subject. I associated God with the ideas and practices of highly religious people and that made me feel uneasy.

At some point, my sponsor detected that I was faking it when I mentioned my Higher Power. One day, he asked me point-blank whether I believed in God. I reluctantly shook my head no. After a pause, he asked if I could ever remember believing in God. I was about to shake my head again, but stopped. I suddenly recalled that

when I was in elementary school, I felt an invisible and loving presence always nearby. Whatever it was, it seemed to be pleased when I did the right thing, and disappointed when I did not.



I found myself smiling over that distant memory. When he saw my smile, my sponsor asked, “Can you make contact with that presence again right now?” For some reason, I felt irritated that he would waste my time talking about a faded childhood memory when I was losing my life to addiction in the present. I almost snarled at him saying, “Well of course I can!” My sponsor didn’t miss a beat. He said “Okay. Then use that as your Higher Power for now.”

It is difficult to describe how much his statement shook me. That old memory had been dead and buried in my childhood. How could my sponsor suggest that I embrace such a childish feeling as my Higher Power? I suppose it was because he had read the White Book. He concluded that this conception of God was both real and natural to me (as opposed to lust, which made me a slave to the unreal and the unnatural). On that day, I

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made a Real Connection. It was as different as it could be from Bill W.'s mountaintop experience, but such personal progress can look quite different from one person to another.

When I decided to create a drawing for Step Eleven, I knew I had to find a real-world example demonstrating a "conscious contact." The phrase sounded good, but what exactly did it mean? I turned to the dictionary for guidance. It defined "conscious" as: "Sharing knowledge; aware of that of which another is aware." That definition surprised me because I had always thought that "consciousness"

was something lofty and complex. Yet in the language of 1934, "conscious" was simply a sharing of knowledge. Next, I turned to the word "contact," which was defined as: "A union or junction of bodies. Here I stopped cold. Surely I'm not supposed to seek physical contact with the God of my understanding?

I had to pray and meditate longer than usual about this one. Finally, I recalled the Big Book saying that we suffer from a mental insanity and a physical craving. By my reading,

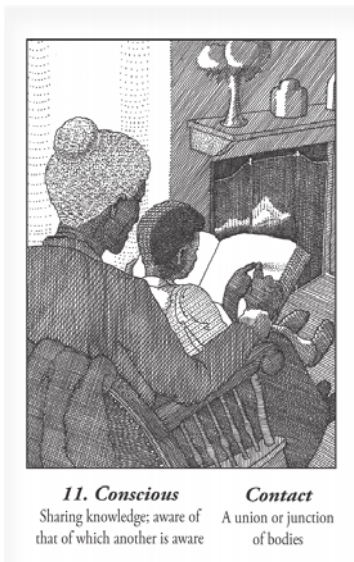
those two facts define the entire problem we must overcome with the help of our Higher Power.

When I turned back to Step Eleven, I saw something new. The Step directed me to keep my mind and physical body close to my Creator—mental and physical, mind and body, thoughts and actions, will and life.

Step Eleven encourages me to let my Creator stay close enough to touch. I do this by letting Him know what I know (shared knowledge) and letting Him go where I go (junction of bodies).

While reflecting on a possible "conscious contact" drawing, a memory

came back to me that seemed to fit these descriptions. Whenever my mother came over to babysit my young children, she would put them on her lap and patiently read book after book to them. My usually squirmy, noisy kids became very quiet while perched in her lap. To them, there was something magical about my mother's physical presence as well as the knowledge that she wanted to share with them through reading the books. While reflecting on this simple bedtime ritual, I found



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my illustration of sharing body and mind. Today, in recovery, if I can maintain anything approaching this level of closeness with my Higher Power in body and mind, maybe I can stay sober one more day.

Today, I feel grateful to my sponsor for helping me discover that my Higher Power has been with me

## Morning Sobriety Renewals

I first entered these rooms in 2001, after confessing to my wife that I had had a number of encounters with prostitutes during our eight years of marriage. I thought that if I could stop my abhorrent sexual behaviors of cruising and employing prostitutes, I would save my marriage, write a book, and embark on a speaking ministry across the country to help men and women trapped by sexual addiction.

When five whole months of “getting sober” didn’t solve my problems, I gave up and began recklessly acting out. A year later, I found myself in a treatment center for sexual addiction. There, I was introduced to the idea of a daily sobriety renewal: a daily “check in” with another “drunk,” in which we each confirm our desire to stay sober (by God’s grace) for the next 24 hours. During my 35 days in rehab, every morning and every evening we checked in with the other residents of the house as part of our recovery.

all along. I am humbled that my family was supportive as I trudged my way back to sobriety. But during this 24 hours of sobriety, I am glad to be part of a fellowship that is built upon improving our conscious contact with God as we understand Him.

—John I.



I didn’t realize how important that daily check in was for me until I had been home for awhile and still couldn’t get sober. At home, I heard about other SA members doing their daily renewals, using a standard set of questions. Those questions did not work for me, however, because they were all “yes/no” questions, and I found myself breezing through them without really thinking or surrendering.

So I started a daily renewal with a friend and we formulated our own template for a morning renewal that has worked for us. It has three parts:

1. What am I feeling right now?
2. What do I surrender today?
3. What do I commit to today?

We start by sharing all of our feelings that day, whether fear or courage, gratitude or resentment, love or hate, peace or anxiety, hope or despair. No values are placed on the emotions; we merely acknowledge their existence.

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Acceptance is the key. My emotions don't have to rule my actions. They simply are what they are, and I need to greet them each day so I can be aware of any obstacles I might face as I move forward.

After acknowledging the feelings, we move on to listing the things that we are surrendering that day. I've already given them up to God. Now, just as in my Step Four, I give them to a fellow traveler who is trudging alongside of me. In so doing I cement the surrender. I do not merely list things like the right to lust after people on the street, or the right to view pornography in any form, etc.; I also list my character defects such as sloth, procrastination, self-righteousness, narcissism, or

anything else that is coming out of my Step Five or Step Ten inventory. All these things are included on the list that I give up that day to my renewal partner.

Finally, we share with each other the things we will commit to doing: whether going to the gym, going to a meeting, calling a certain number of people, doing Step work, or vacuuming the living room floor. In short, we list whatever positive plans we are making that day that will help us love better and move forward in recovery.

This format might not work for everyone, but it works for me and my renewal partner. Perhaps others would like to give this a try.

—Stephen G., Portland OR

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### SA Daily Sobriety Renewal International Phone Meetings



Are you unable to attend your regular face-to-face meeting? Can't leave your house because of sickness, bad weather, or your car won't start? Is it difficult to get to a meeting when you're traveling? *Now you can make a meeting every day!!*

Attend a live SA teleconference meeting with others in the U.S. and other countries who are seeking sobriety. Find meetings, schedules, and more at <http://www.denversa.org/Misc/phnflyer.pdf>

*For a sample of typical Daily Sobriety Renewal questions, see [http://sasandiego.org/daily\\_sobriety\\_renewal.htm](http://sasandiego.org/daily_sobriety_renewal.htm)*

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### Monthly Teleconference Traditions Workshop

#### *A GOOD LOOK at the TWELVE TRADITIONS*

Members of all fellowships are welcome!

March teleconference on Tradition Three: March 27; 2011 at 5 pm EST. For more information, please contact Steve S. at [sfstrain@yahoo.com](mailto:sfstrain@yahoo.com) or Robert M. at [4robert2c@gmail.com](mailto:4robert2c@gmail.com)



## Carrying the Message Behind Bars

My friend Chris began his recovery from sexual addiction after being arrested in 2007 for a sex-related crime. In 2008, shortly after celebrating one year of sexual sobriety, he learned that he could plead guilty and receive a 15-year sentence, or he could go to trial. His lawyer stated that the likely outcome of the trial would be 30 years, and recommended that he accept the plea. After some agonizing deliberation and prayer, Chris went with the 15 years and began serving the sentence immediately. The law in Chris's

state currently allows no chance of early release. He has two teenage daughters who are likely to be in their late twenties when he is released.

Chris has an SA sponsor and remains sober to this day. He is active in service at the prison. In December 2010, he contributed the following article (which has been adapted for *Essay*) to the prison newsletter. Chris asks your prayers for his attempts to start an SA meeting in his prison, which have so far been unsuccessful.

—Steve S., Memphis, TN



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### A Real Gift

As Christmas came and went, it occurred to me once again that I really didn't have anything to give to any of my family for Christmas. I was pretty sure that none of them wanted a sack of Maxwell House or a 10-pack of Ramen! What did I have that they would want? I say these things kiddingly, because it occurred to me that in recovery, I do have a gift that my family will receive, but with

complete joy. It's me—the real me.

I recently heard on the radio, in a commentary by a Christian preacher, that a man had gone to AA and gotten sober, but that his wife was not happy. Sober, he was a jerk! Bill W. makes the point in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (122) that: "Cessation of drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition."





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Personally, I've made a mess of my life, created very difficult situations for my family, and much of that will take time to heal. Aside from that, I've often been so self-centered for so long that it has taken a long time for me to learn a new way of life. Quitting my sex addiction was a good start, but working the Steps and moving toward healing has been an extended process, and it will almost certainly continue to carry with it plenty of trials.

Bill W. continues, "The head of the house ought to remember that he is mainly to blame for what befell his home. He can scarcely square the account in his lifetime" (AA 127). Recently, I've had personal experiences that remind me of this fact. There may well be things I can't clean up, regardless of how much I want to do so. Some injuries, some consequences, cannot be removed or made up for, and the victims of those injuries or consequences will have learn to live with them or deal with them on their own. That is the sad but very real truth of my situation. Frankly, I'm very sad about the harms I've caused others, but I know there is no amount of groveling, manipulation, whining, smiling, or any other action that can take away this reality.

What is the answer then? That



is where the idea of a gift comes in. In sobriety, I have learned about the causes of my own problems—the why of my addiction. I have worked the Steps in order to clean up the wreckage of my past, drop off the baggage, and move forward clean and fresh. This work brought me a new spirituality, based on the realization that there is a God who will help me each day. Because I

have been relieved from the "bondage of self" on a daily basis, I have become a more grateful human being. In the new life, I've found that I can experience joy through living my life for others.

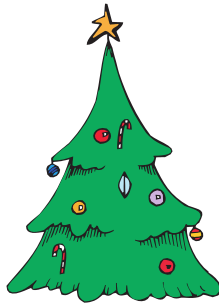
In SA, as in all fellowships that practice the Twelve Step principles, we find that,

"Being wrecked in the same vessel, being restored and united under one God, with hearts and minds attuned to the welfare of others, the things which matter so much to some people no longer signify much to them. How could they?" (AA, 161).

I can relate. I spent many years in my addiction caring only for myself. I wanted to care for others, have meaningful relationships, and be seen as a good person, but I was not capable of true union. The self I presented to others was false. It was a front that protected the wounded person in me, who was incapable of

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dealing with life on life's terms. Sad, but true. Healthy people (whoever they may be!) give of themselves in relationships without expecting anything in return. They are not looking out for themselves first—they take care of themselves by nurturing their spiritual condition and looking for ways to make their loved ones' lives better. They give because they know that they have received: they forgive because they know they are forgiven.



So, this past Christmas, my gift was: the real me. How did I give it? By choosing to live my life in such a way that others can see that I have truly changed. I must stop all self-seeking behavior and look for all the ways that God would have me help others in my daily life. It may be just a smile and a compliment of another's work. It may be giving my labor or my material goods. It may

just be my willingness to sit with another in his or her time of need. Regardless, I do so because it is the right thing to do in the circumstance; not because it makes me feel good, even though it may. The final paragraph of the text of *Alcoholics Anonymous* sums up the program and the way to this new life nicely:

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny (AA, 164).

This is truly the gift that keeps on giving. I need to recover for myself, and stay that way, so that I can be a gift to others.

—Chris C.

[adapted by from December 2010 prison newsletter for *Essay* by permission]

### *Prisoners, Please Submit Your Stories!*

The SACFC is soliciting submissions from prisoners or former prisoners for publication in upcoming issues of *Essay*. Your experience, strength, and hope as a prisoner will be an encouragement to other prisoners, as well as to the SA fellowship as a whole and the addict who still suffers.

Please submit stories to SAICO at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org), or mail to PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024-3565, USA.



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## Starting a Local CFC

In the San Francisco Bay area, we started a Friday SA group with the purpose of interacting with prisoners who are part of the local sponsor-by-mail program. We wanted to create a different kind of meeting from our usual White Book “read and share” meetings—a meeting that would establish bonds between SA members in prison and those of us on the outside. Our Friday group has provided joyous recovery for all of us.

At first, our intention was simply to expand the sponsor-by-mail program in our local area. We encouraged sober members to sponsor those in prison, and to send out information packets to the prisons, explaining the principles of recovery. But as we went along, we began to envision new opportunities to carry the message. We became aware of the great needs of incarcerated members.

In our meetings, we read the letters we get from the prisoners. Many times, after a letter is read, there is a period of profound silence, as we feel an overwhelming spiritual connection with the prisoners as they work the Steps. We begin to see recovery in a new light. Afterwards, we often write individual shares in response to the prisoner.

Let me mention that none of our current group members has ever been to prison. It was by circumstance that I got involved, after listening to an SA member in prison share his story. He contributed

a column for our local SA newsletter, in which he shared his progress in recovery as he works his program. His service has been vital to our understanding of the prisoners.

As an outgrowth of our Friday meeting, we have established a regional arm of SA's Corrections Facility Committee (SACFC), under our Northern California



Intergroup. Impressed with the progress of the SACFC, we set up our regional CFC in the hope of forging a connection with the California state penal system.

Since becoming a CFC sponsor-by-mail, I have sought like-minded people who are intent on carrying the SA message. Based on my experience, I would encourage other members to interact with prisoners in your local area, and other Intergroups to connect with the SACFC. Our group has found this to be a rewarding experience that enhances our own sobriety.

If you would like to learn more about our local experience, or how to connect with SA's CFC, please contact me at [eric\\_j\\_s@comcast.net](mailto:eric_j_s@comcast.net), or contact [sacfc1@gmail.com](mailto:sacfc1@gmail.com). I will look forward to serving along with you.

—Eric S.

## The People I Meet

*SA/S-Anon International Convention  
January 14-16, 2011, Irvine, CA*

I just came back from the Irvine convention. I had a wonderful time!

I met many newcomers at the convention—members who had never been to a meeting before. I was surprised by their courage to go to such a huge gathering, where they did not know anyone. I met other people who have long-term recovery. I was encouraged by the serenity that radiated from them.

I was blessed by listening to a man share one night, at our dinner table of ten people, about the struggles he had with a really bad day. As he shared, I heard his acceptance of the day—as bad as it was—and his gratitude that God reached down and pulled him out of it. He also shared that, without any SA meetings in his small town, he began his SA work through AA meetings. I was inspired by his faith in God and his willingness to go to any lengths to recover.

But I think my very favorite convention share was the Sunday morning SA speaker. He seemed filled with the joy of recovery, and he wanted others to experience the same joy. He shared that a sponsee once called him and reported, “Well,

I’ve made it through another week” (meaning that he had been sober another week). The speaker replied, “You made it through another week? That’s not what recovery is about. Recovery is about enjoying life!” The speaker then said to all of us: “If you have nothing enjoyable to look forward to, you need to talk with your sponsor!” He encouraged each of us to find our own joy in recovery.



One other thing he said was, “I spent most of my life trying to work the hell out of my life. It was when I learned to accept God into my life that I found peace.” I was blessed by his joy and his faith in God.

I love conventions because in the stories of the people I meet (both near and far), I hear of the power of God at work. I’m grateful for old-timers as well as newcomers, because I learn from them all.

What a wonderful feeling to be a part of something meaningful and powerful with all of you.

—Sara, grateful member of SA,  
sober by the grace of God and  
SA since March 25, 2005

## Upcoming International Convention

*July 15-17, 2011 Portland, OR  
Recovery on the River*

The SA and S-Anon members of the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area invite you to join us for the “Recovery on the (Columbia) River” convention in Portland this July. When you arrive, our local members will heartily welcome you. A program of recovery for sexaholics has been steadily growing here in Oregon and Southwest Washington since the mid-1980s, and we look forward to sharing our recovery with the fellowship.

With the usual mix of speakers, couples groups, and smaller breakout meetings, we will encourage one another with the spirit, power, and love of our Twelve Step way of sobriety and recovery. There will also be literature to buy, Step work to do, and lots of conversations with fellow recovering folks. After all, “we are 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” (*SA 201*).

Our convention site is adjacent to the Portland airport. The conference center is just a short walk from the airport, or you can take a free shuttle. Within easy drives are numerous sights and treks in urban settings as well as outdoor vistas—and the month of July is almost always sunny here. Our region is a tourist destination because of the mountains, ocean, rivers, waterfalls, and cultural features, as well as a host of fun and interesting things to do. Public transportation is readily available, bicycle paths are everywhere, and you can get to the river by walking to the end of one of the runways.

Register before March 15 to take advantage of the lowest rate. For more information, visit our website at [www.recoveryontheriver2011.com](http://www.recoveryontheriver2011.com). *We look forward to seeing you here!*

—David M. and Kathleen D., Co-chairs



### Attention Convention Attendees

**Please Share Your Convention Experiences!**

Let us know how attending an SA International or Regional convention has enhanced your recovery. Please submit your thoughts to [essay@essay.org](mailto:essay@essay.org)



## Note from the Delegate Chair



Dear Fellow SA Members:

Lately, I've been reflecting on Step Three. While working Step One, I faced my powerlessness over lust. In Step Two I came to believe that there is a power greater than myself. Now, in Step Three I must take positive action and give myself to that Higher Power, so that I can be free of my self-destructive behaviors. I must ask myself, "Am I willing to accept what my God is telling me?"

The words of the Third Step Prayer challenge me to commit myself to my own recovery: "God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt" (AA, 63). "Offer, build, and do" means that I need to take action. "Offer myself to God" means that I am willing to take the time to listen to Him. I must make a daily decision to turn my will and life over to a Power greater than myself. My self-will is self-destructive. I must take action by offering myself to God, one day at a time. I can begin today!

"Build with me" means God won't do the Steps for me. I am the key to building the trust to let Him bring my inside out. Without trust, I cannot enjoy life to its fullest. Walking through the doors of SA, even for the first time, is the beginning of working Step Three and of building that trust.

"Do" means do! I must be entirely ready to surrender my lust today and every day forward. I need to just do it. I can't do it alone. I need God, and He needs all of us to carry the message. I must trust the process each day. I need to look myself in the eye each day and ask, "Am I giving myself to the SA program?" The Twelve Steps are a group of spiritual principles, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to lust and enable the sufferer to become happy and usefully whole (12&12, 15).

The SA convention in Irvine was a spiritual feast for me. Roy K's wife and his family were our guests at the Saturday night meeting. We honored them for the sacrifices and service they have given to SA from the very beginning. What a special treat for our fellowship! The family said that they felt welcomed. They expressed gratitude for making them feel a part of the fellowship. They were blessed to be able to see what Roy began so many years ago. I'm grateful to have been a part of this event.

The convention in Portland this July promises to be another great spiritual feast. I invite all members to join us and "offer, build, and do" what we cannot do for ourselves. It will be well worth the time and effort.

—Mike S., GDA Chair

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## SA Correctional Facilities Committee (CFC) Update

I am happy to report that the CFC now has approximately \$8,000 in named reserve, mostly as a result of the Pennsylvania prison news (see December 2010 *Essay*). This is more than enough money to cover starter kits for all Pennsylvania prisons, so we would like to send White Books to prison libraries throughout the country. If you would like copies of *Sexaholics Anonymous* for your local prisons, please identify the prisons in your area, as well as contact people in each prison.

During the holiday season, our work at the Pennsylvania prisons slowed down a bit. To regain momentum, we are developing a Step One, Two, and Three workshop that we could bring into prisons for a weekend kickoff. We are working on the format and preparing a letter that will describe the process, training, and benefits to the prisoners.

In February we held our first "How to Start a Local CFC" teleconference meeting, with much lively discussion. The starting point for forming a CFC is finding a member who is willing to chair the committee and bring it up for vote at the local Intergroup. Once the committee is formed, the first order



of business is finding sponsors to participate in the sponsor-by-mail program.

The sponsor-by-mail program is a much-needed service. We continue to have many more sponsees than available sponsors, so we encourage members throughout the fellowship to participate. Please contact us for more information about how you can become a sponsor by mail.

During the teleconference, we discussed the possibility of sending introductory materials to helping professionals in local corrections facilities and the process for identifying those individuals. We also discussed how AA conducts its prison outreach, including the handbook for prison outreach work, and the concept of boot camps to train members on how to carry the message inside.

If you would like to receive a full copy of the teleconference minutes, please contact the CFC at [sacfc1@gmail.com](mailto:sacfc1@gmail.com).

I am grateful for all of you who are serving SA members in prisons around the world.

—*In Love and Service,*  
Tim S, NY

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### Next CFC Teleconference Meeting—All Members Welcome!

Our next meeting will be held on April 16, 2011 at 5 pm EST. The conference call number is 641-798-4200 PIN 6460229#. Please join us!

# SAICO Financial Update

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

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

SAICO Financial Update Fourth Quarter 2010	
Donations	\$ 42,058.45
Other Revenues	13,692.69
Expenses	69,727.08
Revenues (less expenses)	-13,972.94
Total Prudent Reserve	174,169.20



## New SA Groups

### USA

Augusta, GA  
(additional meeting)  
Jackson, TN  
Lynchburg, VA  
Orangeburg, SC

Pompano Beach, FL  
Shaftsbury, VT

**China**  
Hong Kong



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**Please submit articles for *Essay* to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)**



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## Delegates and Trustees

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### Delegates

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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	Laurens A.	International, Nominations
	Nancy S.	Literature
	Lia F., <i>Alt</i>	International
North Midwest	Gary L.	Literature, RAC, Legal
	Tony R.	International
	Lee W., <i>Alt</i>	Internet, Service Structure
Northeast	Tom V.	Internet
	Terry O., <i>Alt</i>	
Northwest	Farley H.	RAC, Internet, Nominations
	Lil G., <i>Alt</i> .	Literature, Nominations
Southeast	Steve S., <i>V. Chair</i>	COMC, Service Manual
	Dave Mc.	Finance, COMC
	Jon B.	Conventions, COMC
South Midwest	Robert M.	
	Joe M.	
UK, Ireland	Tom C.	International
Germany	Hans-Friedrich	International

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### Trustees

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Trustee	Committees
Betsy T., <i>Chair</i>	Legal, Service Manual
Carlton B., <i>Vice Chair</i>	Finance, COMC, Conventions
David T.	CFC, 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](mailto:saico@sa.org)**

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## Calendar of Events



**April 8 - 10, 2011, 2011 SA Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention, Harrisburg, PA. *A Change of Heart.*** Info at [www.achangeofheart2011.com](http://www.achangeofheart2011.com)

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

**April 8 - 10, 2011, Spring Event, White Rock, B.C. Canada. *Walking Into the Light.*** For info call 604-290-9643

**April 9, 2011, Mountain Spring Marathon, Asheville, NC. *Renewing Our Recovery.*** Info at 828-681-9250, [www.orgsites.com/nc/saasheville](http://www.orgsites.com/nc/saasheville), or [saasheville@gmail.com](mailto:saasheville@gmail.com)

**May 7, 2011, 18th Annual SA Marathon with S-Anon participation, Rochester NY. *Welcome Home.*** For info call Ken W. at 585-771-7314.

**May 13-15, 2011, SA Men's Retreat, Big Bear, CA.** Info at [www.sasandiego.org](http://www.sasandiego.org)

**May 27 - 29, 2011, Retreat Weekend. Wyevale, Ontario, Canada. *A Vision for You.*** Info at 906-553-4033, or [sasudbury@gmail.com](mailto:sasudbury@gmail.com)

**September 2-4, 2011, SA UK Convention, Ammerdown, Somerset, England.** Info at [frome@sauk.org](mailto:frome@sauk.org)

**September 17, 2011, One Day Marathon, Cincinnati, OH.** Info at 513-521-5404

**October 22, 2011, One Day Cleveland Fall Marathon, Westlake, OH.** Info at [rca2@centurytel.net](mailto:rca2@centurytel.net)

**Submit events to be listed in Essay to [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)**

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

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

### Upcoming International Conventions



**July 15 - 17, 2011, Portland, OR. *Recovery on the River.*** Sheraton Portland Airport Hotel. For more information contact 509-249-7606 (local) or 800-426-7866 (toll free,) or visit our website at [www.recoveryontheriver.2011.com](http://www.recoveryontheriver.2011.com)



**January 13 - 15, 2012, Newark, NJ. *Liberty from Self in New York.*** Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel. For more information contact [www.libertyfromself.com](http://www.libertyfromself.com)

**July 27 - 29, 2012, SA Nashville, TN. *Three Legacies.*** For information contact 615-345-4334 or [sanashville.org](http://sanashville.org)

*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.*

# 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.*

