

Essay

March 2012



My Trust Is in God

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.

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March 2012



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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My Trust Is in God

I first came to SA on November 27, 1992, and I've been sober ever since. When someone asks me what I've done to stay sober, my answer is always the same: "I don't know. I did not do it; I have a Higher Power who shows me that He can do it." I thank God every day for my sobriety—but I'm in a very hard place today.

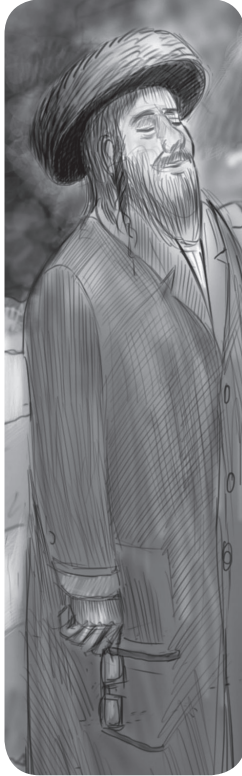
My wife passed away six months ago, on June 28, 2011, after she had struggled with cancer for 17 months. For 17 months, we went through cycles of promises of hope for her recovery, followed by announcements that another tumor had been found and they would try a different chemotherapy. Then hope! Then another tumor, a different type of treatment, more surgery, a different hospital, and different promises. Over and over. Yet none of those promises came true.

As I watched the closest person in my life go from bad to progressively worse, I went through cycles of hope and despair. Today I understand what my wife must have gone through with me during

the years of my addiction, when I made many promises to her that never came true until I came to SA. I suffered a similar pain as I watched her dying.

When my wife died, she left me with four sons at home. One of our sons is in high school, one is in college, and the other two are handicapped. My 27-year-old lives on a respirator. My 24-year-old is mentally retarded and has cerebral palsy. My wife was the hero who took care of our children for 27 years, but I must take care of them now. Sometimes I must lift one of the them into a wheelchair or back in bed. I often feel overwhelmed, trying to be both a mother and a father to them.

I have 24-hour nurses paid by Medicaid, but they are not always available on weekends or holidays. At other times, I'm home at night and the nurse who takes care of my kids is living in our house. As a sexaholic, I'm not comfortable with the situation, but I have no choice. Yet I know that if I stay sober, I will be okay.



I have been told, "Don't quit before the miracle"—and I have seen many miracles. I often cry out to my Higher Power, "Show me the light!" I'm very emotional but I know that acting out is not a solution. Staying sober *is* the solution. I need to stay sober, go to meetings, and stay connected to God—and things will work out in the end. I also must find acceptance. Almost daily I find myself in tears, and I pray again to have acceptance.

When I came to SA, I was told that this is not a religious program. I was blessed because my Higher Power led me to a man who came from an Orthodox Jewish background, similar to my own. He was able to explain things to me. He told me, "This is only a disease, it is not about being good or bad. Just step aside, and stop fighting." I had been fighting this disease for more than 20 years.

I began masturbating when I was 12, then I turned to street prostitutes when I was 20. By age 35, I was a full-blown drug addict, alcoholic, and sexaholic. Eventually, my behavior became so objectionable that my wife and sons insisted that I get help. I realized I was in trouble so I called a cocaine hot line. The person who called me back referred me to a clinic, and the clinic recommended a therapist.

When I saw the therapist I told him, "It's not the cocaine, it's the

women!" I firmly believed this. (Today I realize that it was not the women but my view of them.) The therapist said, "Maybe that's a problem, but we need to deal with the cocaine first because it's serious." I said, "No it's the women!" We went back and forth on this, but he finally convinced me to go to AA meetings.

I went to a few AA meetings but then returned to the therapist and told him that AA was not for me. I said, "I'm Jewish. You have to understand; Jewish people are different!" I continued to meet with him once a week for four months, but during that time I could not stay sober from drugs or alcohol or prostitutes. So I reluctantly went back to AA.

The meeting I attended was held in a church. After one of my first meetings, a man walked up to me and said, "Hello. My name is Robert. I'm an alcoholic and I happen to be Jewish too. I'm guessing you feel very uncomfortable here. Take my number and call me if you need help."

About three weeks later I went out on a binge. I binged for two or three days and spent around \$800. I got home at 11:30 p.m., half stoned, drunk, and acting out—and I called Robert. I said, "Robert, let me tell you what I've done." As I started dumping all the details, he interrupted me. "Stop!" he said. "Why are you calling me?" I

replied, "You gave me your number and told me to call you!" He said, "I specifically said to call me if you need help. You're not calling for help now. You're crazy! You are dying and you don't even know it." He said that if I *really* want help, I should call him before, not after I act out—and that if I really wanted help, I should call him the next morning. Then he hung up. That was my first spiritual awakening. He told me I was crazy and I believed him. I still believe it!

As I sat there staring at the phone I thought to myself, "The man is right. I am crazy," and I started crying. I got scared. In the morning I called Robert, told him I was scared, and asked what I should do. He invited me to spend the day with him at his office. So I went to his office and he began to teach me about recovery. He started taking me to AA meetings. He said, "Two years ago, I was where you are today, so I understand where you're coming from."

But I continued to struggle with lust. I would tell Robert, "It's not the alcohol or drugs, it's the women!" He disagreed. He told me to buy a stash of magazines and masturbate, but to stay away from prostitutes. He told me to attend a ton of AA meetings, talk about my struggles in meetings—and masturbate until I fell flat on my face.

I tried to be humble and follow my sponsor's directions, but this did

not work for me. Maybe other people can masturbate and be okay, but not me. I'm a sexaholic. Still, going to AA was the beginning of my spiritual awakening.

Robert taught me about listening to a sponsor and surrendering to a Higher Power. He taught me about acceptance and humility. He had me start reading the Big Book and the *12&12*, and he took me through the Steps.

One of the first things Robert taught me was that I am powerless. Every morning, before 10 a.m., I was to pray, "God please help me because I can't" (cf. *SA*, 160). Every morning I had to pray this 200 times! He also taught me to pray, "Whatever you want for me, please keep me sober and give me one more day of sobriety." He said that this was a way to live, daily, the first three Steps.

One year after starting AA, during the week of my anniversary, I picked up a prostitute on the street. When I walked out of that hotel I was crying. I thought, "Robert does not understand who I am. Maybe AA works well for him, but not for me."

The next day was November 27, 1992. I went to my therapist's office and said, "AA does not work for me. Maybe it works for other people, but I'm different from everybody else." She suggested I try SA, so I called the SA hot line and a man returned my call. After a few minutes, he said, "I



have the perfect person for you. I'll call him and give him your number." The man who called me back became my sponsor.

In SA I found my identity. I finally found brothers and sisters who could say to me: "We are just like you." Because of the things I learned in AA, when I came to SA I was ready for the program. In AA I learned that, because I'm an alcoholic, one drink will kill me. When I came to SA, I knew that masturbation was my drinking. I also knew that looking in a pornographic magazine or taking a second look would be drinking. And I knew that one look would kill me. Nineteen years later, I still know that one look can kill me. I cannot take one drink—whether alcohol or lust—and call myself sober.

When I look back on all those years, I realize that I was still crazy even *after* I came to SA. It took me years to get back to being even somewhat normal. For the first two years, once the drug of lust left my body, I could not function. I fell to pieces. Even though I was sober, I was mostly depressed and hateful. I could not deal with anything in life. I didn't want to act out, but I could not see living without acting out.

My wife got fed up with me. She would say, "Go act out. Leave the house. I can't stand you!" Yet she didn't desert me. If my wife were here today, I would say to her, "You had the full right to leave me. Why

you gave me another chance I do not know, but I owe you my life."

Through all that pain, my Higher Power kept me sober. I don't know how exactly, but every day I would beg God, "Please just give me another day," and somehow it worked, and it is still working today. God led me to SA, and through SA He has kept me sober.

Shortly after I got sober in SA, I decided to figure out how much money I had spent on my addictions, so I went through my finances for 1991 (when I was at the peak of my addiction). I discovered that I had spent nearly \$10,000 each month buying crack, smoking crack, and picking up street prostitutes. That's a lot of money! Even today it is a lot of money. But it was never enough. The worst part was that the money was not mine. I was managing real estate and taking care of other people's money—and I used their money for my disease.

I stole about six million dollars from these people. For my Step Nine amends, I had to call each of them and tell what I had done. This was scary, but all but one of them accepted the amends, thanked me for calling, and told me to pay them back when I was able. This was a huge relief! I learned that my fears are much worse than reality.

When I came to SA 19 years ago, I didn't believe in myself. I was in so much pain that I didn't believe I was worth anything. Both of my

sponsors told me to pray to God and let Him do the job, and He has proven to me that He can do it. Even more amazing is the fact that He sometimes uses me to help others! I stand in wonder that other children of God sometimes benefit from this broken vessel.

When I started in the SA program, there were no meetings in the county where I lived. Four of us would travel 45 minutes to the closest meeting. Because I couldn't drive, I needed to find rides, and I begged the group to start a meeting in our home county. After a synagogue turned us down, we found a church that allowed us to use a meeting room twice a week. We eventually found three other places to meet. In this way, we were able to spread the message to our home town.

I also helped start a meeting in

Israel. At times I would travel to Israel for family occasions, but in sobriety, I committed to myself that I could not go to Israel without being connected to SA members. Through SAICO, I found a contact person in Israel. I contacted him when I was there in 1997. I also met three or four other SA members. They had no meeting place at the time, but I learned that one of them attended the synagogue where my brother-in-law is a Rabbi. Together, we asked my brother-in-law whether we could use a meeting room in his synagogue, and he agreed. This is how SA started in

Israel.

My life has been blessed in many ways through the fellowship of SA. Today, somehow, through my staying sober and doing Step work, my Higher Power has made me both a father and a mother. I did



Are You an Information Technology Expert?

SA's Information Technology Committee (formerly Internet Committee) has agreed to begin developing a comprehensive IT strategy for SA.

Our strategy will cover:

1. Internet, web site, content management system, and e-literature
2. Office automation, contact management, and mail order processing
3. Facilities for virtual groupings

This is an ambitious task and our committee is seeking more help from the fellowship. If you have experience of the development or implementation of IT strategies, or know of someone who has, please contact George F, IT Committee Chair, at articles@theessay.org

We look forward to hearing from you!



not believe I was capable of this. To the day of my wife's death, I did not believe I could be a mother. This still is very hard for me to believe, but somehow I have not fallen apart. I have not acted out. I cannot explain this, except that I trust in my Higher Power.

The fact that I'm sober these days is a wonder. If anyone had told me that I could be alone at home with a nurse sleeping in the house and stay sober, I would not have believed it. Yet every day I surrender, and it works. I don't know what will happen tomorrow. I'm afraid, but it's healthy fear. I do my Step work every day because I'm scared, and in any case it is very beneficial to work the Steps daily.

I have a long Step Eight list of people I have harmed, but the one I hurt most was my wife. I robbed her of many, many years of a peaceful life. Yet the last six months of her life, as she was increasingly unable to take care of herself, I was there, able to be of service to her. I would read the Big Book and the White Book every day through her death, and—thanks to God—I was there for her. I am grateful to my Higher Power that I was able to make this living amends to her. I felt that this was a gift.

After almost 20 years of sobriety, I still have not come up with the money to pay pay back all the people whose money I stole. Yet

I know that if my Higher Power was able to guide me through making amends to my wife—the person whom I hurt the most—then I believe He will guide me through making amends to the others I have hurt.

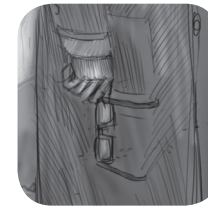
I would like to start sober dating soon. This is a new experience that I never had to deal with in sobriety. I will need to get advice from people who have dated soberly. I will have to tell my future mate, before anything serious happens, about my history in SA. I'm already full of fear about this. If she is a woman of principle, I worry about how would she take knowing that I'm a sexaholic. And yet, I will do it, and I will have to do it in a sober way.

To those who are still struggling, I would like to finish with this thought: Wherever you are in life, I promise you that, if you stay sober and work the Steps and go

to meetings, you will see miracles. Things will work out! I am living proof. I have lived through it; I'm still living through it, and somehow—even in tragedy—things are working out. When I let go and let God show me the way, He graciously guides me to a place of serenity. I place all of my trust in Him.

I want to thank all of you in the fellowship who have loved me and have shared this journey with me.

—Blessings to you all, H.T.



Staying Connected Worldwide



As a loner in the southwest of the UK, I had been accustomed to keeping in close touch with other members of the fellowship in the British Isles by phone. However, in the Summer of 2011, I became even more of a loner. I moved to China to work for some months.

As I landed in Shanghai I thought, “How on earth am I going to stay sober here?” I knew that there were only a few members of the SA fellowship in China, and each was in a different city. I knew that I would not be able to connect face-to-face with other sexaholics. I planned to connect with the AA fellowship in the city during daytime meetings a few times a week, speak with my sponsor regularly by phone, and contact other SA friends using Skype.

Once in Shanghai, however, I was inspired by my sponsor to start using the International Buddy List¹ to make more contacts with other members who are in the same position as myself. I also started attending White Book meetings using Skype. This was a great resource!

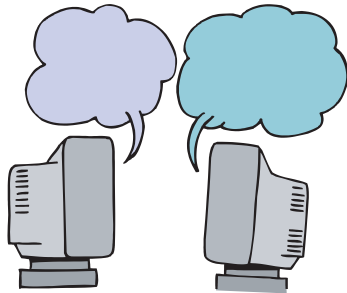
A friend from London set up the Skype meeting. It was just the two of us at first. We would meet every

Thursday and reflect on passages from the White Book. The meeting grew rapidly however, as other sexaholics joined us. From the strength and support of other sexaholics, I learned that staying sober as a loner is possible. I started to see that if my Higher Power could keep me sober one day at a time in the UK, then he could do the same for me in Shanghai.

This call was an important source of support for me at a time when I most needed it. After a few weeks in China, I began to let go of the fear of slipping and gained a more serene state of mind—mostly through being able to connect with the wider fellowship through Skype.

The Skype calls not only allowed me to share with other members in China on a regular basis; I could also call members of the fellowship in other countries who were in similar time zones.

Knowing that the meeting occurs every Thursday has been quite helpful for my recovery. I’ve planned my travels so that the meeting is a constant feature in my calendar. Since joining this particular meeting, I’ve learned that there are several



other SA meetings held on Skype, in English, Spanish, and other languages.

Although we follow the SA meeting format, the meeting is open, light-hearted, and friendly. It provides an opportunity to meet members from all over the world. We regularly have attendees from South America, North America, and various European, Asian, and Antipodean countries. In January

this year we had a “Four Continents” meeting, with attendees from Europe, North and South America, and Asia. Above all, our Skype meeting has reinforced my hope that—even though we come from all paths of life and speak many different languages—there is a common solution.

—Fed

¹ **The International Buddy List** is a directory of SA men from around the world who wish to be in contact with one another. The Buddy List is managed by SA’s International Committee and has been in operation since 2009. There are currently 246 members—men who are willing to share their contact details so that other list members may connect with them. More than 70 list members are currently available to sponsor others in the SA programme.

To learn more about becoming a member of the Buddy List, please contact sabuddylist@gmail.com.

The International SA Sisters List—similar to the International Buddy List—is a worldwide sisterhood of SA women who wish to find SA sponsors, sponsor others, or make SA outreach calls at any hour of the day or night. For more information, please contact isasisterslist@gmail.com



Care to Join Us?

Our Skype White Book study meeting, which lasts one hour, is held at 1400 GMT every Thursday. If you would like to be added to the call list, please send a contact request from your Skype account to the following Skype handle: sawhitebookstudy. The Chair of the meeting will then add you to the meeting call list.

Make sure you are logged in to Skype a few minutes before 1400 GMT Thursdays so that you can receive the call and join the meeting as it starts. If this time doesn’t work for you, then you can do as we did: start your own meeting!

Forgiveness: Another Tool of Recovery

Yes, my mother once stabbed me. I was probably 15 years old when it happened. I am now 72. I could never use the word “stab” until I had been sexually sober for many years in SA. Instead I would say that I was a very unruly adolescent, and that one day I got my mother so infuriated that she went to hit me.



The closest object she could find to strike me with was a bread knife. In the process of protecting myself from being hit with the knife, I raised my arms, and she accidentally cut me. I had to be taken to a nearby emergency room where I required stitches for the wound. That is how I would relate this story to others.

It took many years in SA before I could be honest enough with myself to relate what really happened. The fact is: my mother stabbed me in my right arm. If I had not raised my arms, I could have been stabbed in the chest. That is what happened.

Why is it important for me to tell myself and others the truth? Because only by speaking the truth could I realize how sick my mother was. Only a very ill mother would have stabbed her own son. Once I realized the truth, my long-term anger toward my mother turned into forgiveness. For a sexaholic like me, anger can turn into resentment, but

maintaining anger toward a sick person is very difficult. As I've read in the Big Book,

We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. (66-67)

I have no other choice than to see that my mother was sick. If I don't take this approach I will remain angry and resentful, and resentment is lethal to my program. As the Big Book says,

It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. ...We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die. (AA 66)

For 35 years, my mother and I never discussed this incident with each other. If it had not been for the permanent scar on my arm, it might seem that I had never been stabbed,

that it was only a bad dream.

In 1988, after being sober for a few years, I attended an SA International Convention in Rochester, NY. I was deeply touched by an S-Anon speaker who described the inner healing journey she had experienced toward her mother. I was so moved by her share that I went straight into the hotel lobby and telephoned my mother. I found myself saying: “Mom, just calling to say I love you.” Her response shocked me. “Harvey, how could you love me after what I did to you when you were younger?”

To my surprise the following words came not only out of my mouth but also out of my heart: “Mom, I forgave you a long time ago just as I hope my children will forgive me for any of the problematic things I did to them.”

Even though she stated the event in vague terms, this was the first time my mother had ever alluded to it. This was the best amends she was capable of making to me. She had been holding this pain in silently for decades. This was her gift to me and to herself: to finally bring what she had done to me into the light.

In the White Book section called “Step Eight and One-Half” we read, We take the action of

forgiving, even when we don't feel forgiving. Most of us never seem to feel forgiving until we take that inner action of giving up our right to resent. Practicing forgiveness in our hearts as we think of these people, then aloud, perhaps even with our sponsor, we forgive every person on our list and keep on forgiving them every time resentment returns. ...

Why forgive? For us it is very simple. If we don't forgive we're never free.

Unless we forgive, we are not forgiven; we remain chained to our wrongs, unable to free ourselves, leave the dark dungeons of our past, and walk in the sunlight of love.

If we are to give this aspect of our program its due, we should give it special emphasis: “*Surrendering our resentments, we asked for willingness to forgive all persons guilty of real or imagined wrongs against us and forgave each one.*” (SA, 125 and 126)

My mother eventually moved to the city where my family lived. She subsequently had a stroke and became paralyzed in her right arm and leg. I was able to be near her for the last decade of her life. She died in my arms at the age of 89.



If it had not been for my Twelve Step recovery and if I were not sexually sober, I'm sure that the forgiveness process would not have happened. I would have continued to live in hate and resentment toward my mother. I would have missed the joy of my relationship with her. I would never have been free. As it says in our Eleventh Step prayer,

Lord, make me a channel of thy peace—that where there is

Rebirth Through Recovery

The man I used to be died on May 7, 2009. As I was speeding down the passing lane of a St. Louis Interstate, my eyes were filled with tears and my hands were clenched in fists of rage as my choked-up voice screamed in agony and disbelief. I was only seconds away from yanking the steering wheel hard to the left to send my car into the cement wall median in an effort to end my life.

Fifteen minutes earlier, I was dismissed from my dream job of nine years, after my employers completed three days of deliberations concerning an anonymous mailing they had received. The mailing contained printouts of an adult profile I had posted online in an effort to get others to lust after me.



hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness.... For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen. (12&12, 99)

I am grateful to be able to share with you this wonderful tool of recovery: the tool of forgiveness.

—Harvey A., Nashville, TN

Although my online activity was not illegal, no amount of explaining or begging was enough to change my employers' decision. I was guilty of violating my company's morality clause. While I could not see it at that moment, the lust addiction I had refused to acknowledge since I was nine years old had finally cost me what I loved most in life and was now driving me to throw the gift of life itself away.

By God's grace and because of a promise I had made to my wife to explain my employer's decision, I arrived home alive in body, though dead in spirit. I spent the next several hours alternating between fits of crying, screaming at God and myself, staring through red eyes at my despicable reflection in the mirror,

and telling my wife that she'd be better off without me.

Consumed by my own guilt and pain, it took me months to adequately consider the hell I put my wife through on that day. While she already knew that I used pornography, I had managed to keep the full extent of my lustful activities a secret. Learning the truth about my hidden Internet activity was excruciating for her—yet she somehow had the grace to not give up on me or our marriage.

That evening, I visited my parents and divulged the details of what I had done. Miraculously, they did not throw me out of their house or shame me for my actions. Instead, my father helped me find our local SA website and asked me to review it. Since he himself had nearly 20 years of AA sobriety, I did not think it strange that he would be aware of other Twelve Step programs. I took SA's online quiz and answered "Yes" to 17 of the 20 questions. Having been "driven to the point of despair" (SA, 4), I left a message on the local SA hot line and was promptly called back by the man who is now my sponsor.

The next morning I attended my first SA meeting, where I was reborn. Within the first two minutes I knew that I was where I belonged. For the first time, I was surrounded by people who could relate to me and my problems with lust, pornography, and acting out. I was home.

I did not share at meetings at first, until an old-timer (now a dear friend) pulled me aside and advised me, "Open your mouth to save your rear." I knew I needed lots of saving, so now I rarely attend a meeting without sharing at least a little of my experience, strength, and hope.

Three weeks after my first meeting, I read my Step One sexual history to my home group. I finally acknowledged how lust had progressively taken over my life in the 25 years following my first exposure to pornography. I had become blind to the truth of my addiction, but reading my Step One share helped me see the sad reality.

Beginning as a guilt-consumed youth acting out with a few adult magazines, I eventually became consumed with increasing my collection of lustful material, spending an embarrassing amount of time and money to accumulate hundreds of erotic stories and videos. As a college student, I grew more brazen, going so far as to look at and even print out pornographic material in the middle of the crowded campus computer lab. Eventually, "tame" material and my own fantasy-filled mind were not enough. I needed ever greater variety in content and activity to get my "fix." I married the first woman I ever dated, and over the next several years, I repeatedly tried to coerce her into experimenting with various sexual activities she had no interest in

performing. She eventually filed for divorce.

When my first marriage ended, I felt unchained and I embarked on a six-month binge of womanizing, acting out, ignoring my conscience, and convincing myself that I was just doing what most guys do at some point in their lives. I remember thinking, “being monogamous did not keep my marriage together, so what’s the point?” In my sickness I was blind to the reality that I had been mentally adulterous throughout my first marriage, even though I did not physically act on those fantasies. Now I learned that feeding my lust with various women did not fill me up either. I felt even more alone and empty inside.

By the time I met my current wife, I had grown quite skilled in justifying my sinful behavior. I thought that as long as I was open with her about using pornography, it would be her fault if she didn’t like it. I remember declaring to her, when we were first dating, “I am never going to give up looking at pornography. If you can’t accept that, then break up with me now.” My wife had been hurt by my attitude then, but she thought that all guys looked at porn at some point in their lives. Since then, I’ve wondered many times how our lives and our marriage could have been so much better if I had honored her wishes for me to quit pornography

then. Instead, I chose to honor my inner addict and continued my lustful behaviors—until the day I was dismissed from my job.

Through working the Steps, I came to see how lust had isolated me, ending my first marriage and nearly destroying the second. I finally saw that my addiction had caused me to live a hypocritical double life. Mercifully, I no longer live a double life. Through the grace of God and the fellowship of SA, I have been sexually sober since my first meeting on May 8, 2009.

Acting out is no longer an option, so I must stay vigilant against lust in all its forms. I maintain vigilance by throwing myself into recovery as much as possible. I try to work at least one of the Twelve Steps every day. I attend meetings as often as possible, make daily program phone calls, sponsor others, and volunteer for service positions, both for my home group and the local Intergroup. I feel all of this is essential if I am to nurture the new life that SA has given me.

Today, by living a life that “demands rigorous honesty” (AA, 58), I have gained integrity, and I’m so much better for it. Facing the truth about all the many ways my disease had manifested itself was quite painful, but once my denial was shattered, I felt “a new freedom and a new happiness” (AA, 83), which I would not exchange even if I could

go back and change my past.

I believe I owe it to God, to my family, and to myself to do all I can to stay sober, to heal the wounds I caused while an active lust addict, and to give myself the greatest opportunity to experience the Twelve Promises first-hand. While I still have much work to do to improve my marriage and other areas of my life, my relationship with my wife has been deepened and renewed. My career may be different today, but we’ve adjusted to a reduced income and I’ve gained humility as a result. Recovery through SA has made me a better, more complete person.

Today I can now look at my



reflection without seeing a liar and a hypocrite staring back at me. I no longer think my wife would be better off without me. Thanks to SA, I have a life worth living and I want to live it to the fullest. As Bill W. says:

As we felt a new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter. We were reborn (AA 63)

I know I’m not alone in gaining a new life through the SA program of recovery. If it can happen for me, it can happen for anyone!

—*Gratefully yours in recovery,*
Dave B., St. Louis, MO

The Jaywalker

Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jay-walking (AA, 37)

If a vote were taken, I think that the most beloved character in the Big Book might be the Jaywalker. That hunch is based on the grins, laughter, and head-nodding I see in my meetings whenever that character is mentioned.

The Jaywalker is sort of a tragic clown who takes delight in intentionally dashing out in front of fast-moving traffic. At first, he enjoys his dangerous habit, but over time he is plagued by increasingly

frequent and serious injuries. One day, he vows he will stop but soon finds himself returning to the busy roadway, taking ever greater risks. After one too many mad dashes, he is finally knocked flat on the road with a broken back.

The Big Book says, “We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted alcoholism for jay-walking, the illustration would fit us exactly” (AA, 38). What “illustration” is Bill referring to? The

Jaywalker—a tragic clown who took senseless risks until one day it caught up with him? Or the alcoholic who takes risks for no reason, which he had better stop taking before it is too late? That description sounds more like how non-drinkers view alcoholics: that alcoholics are tragic clowns who should simply mimic their non-drinking friends and their problems would correct themselves. That may be what non-drinkers believe, but the interpretation does not match any other part of the Big Book.

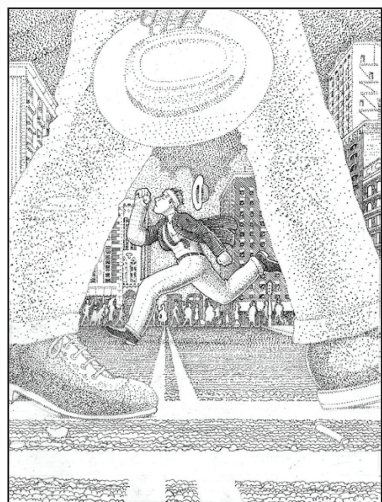
What other interpretation might there be? Consider that the story appears right after Bill defines the “insanity” of alcoholics as the “lack of proportion and ability to think straight” (AA, 37). The Jaywalker certainly demonstrates this lack of proportion and ability to think straight. For a moment, let’s picture the Jaywalker as a real person. Maybe he just stepped out of a cigar shop and onto a busy sidewalk. He sees his barbershop directly across the street and realizes he needs a haircut. He wants to cross the street

but he’s in the middle of the city block—far from the traffic lights located at either end of the block.

At those traffic lights, hundreds of thousands of people safely cross the street every hour, all waiting for the “Walk” signal. They feel no need to hurry, knowing the cars will stop when the light turns red. They safely cross this street by using ordinary crosswalks, walk signals, and traffic laws. Proportioned (sane) and straight (sane) thinking abounds around the Jaywalker.

But something is troubling the Jaywalker. He looks 100 yards up and down the block at these pedestrian crosswalks. He knows what they are for. But he doesn’t want to walk from the cigar shop all the way to the intersection, cross the street, then walk back to his barbershop. That seems crazy when a quick dash across the street will get him there within seconds.

The Jaywalker has two choices. One is to walk calmly and safely for five minutes. The other is to dash into the open road, heart pounding, narrowly eluding death—and arriving at the other side in



The Jaywalker

a moment (while those dull-witted slowpokes at the crosswalk are still waiting for the light to change). He willingly risks his life to save five minutes of drudgery. And he will likely brag about this to his friends.

The Big Book definition of insanity—the lack of proportion, of the inability to think straight—now seems to fit the Jaywalker perfectly: I do not believe Bill was describing alcoholics as tragic clowns. I believe he was describing a type of person who is constitutionally incapable of doing things the ordinary “boring” way even when the ordinary way is easy and convenient. I believe he was saying that alcoholics lack the proportion and straight thinking to take the safe route—to choose the sensible solution that is easily within their grasp.

My drawing shows the Jaywalker making his typical mad dash across the open road, heedless of whether or not cars are coming. His body already bears scars from his recent

close scrapes, but he is lured back to his habit by an insatiable desire to beat the system. His sense of superiority over the dull “trudgers” who cross safely at the distant intersections motivates him to defy ordinary rules, customs, and habits.

He is not a clown in my eyes. The Jaywalker is me. He reflects my tendency to take shortcuts, my secret desire to defy society’s rules, my aching need to feel better than everyone else, and my egotistical love of always being right. He is my lack of proportion. He is my inability to think straight.

I am the Jaywalker. Plain and simple. That is, until I ask God what He would have me be. Would He have me walk 100 yards, wait with the crowd at the intersection, cross with the “Walk” signal, then trudge the Road of Happy Destiny another 100 yards back to my barber shop? I think so. I believe so. And now, that’s what I do.

—John I.

Emotional Sobriety



Even though I have almost nine years of sobriety and a lot of service work behind me, I know that I can still be deceived by lust. For me, the crux of the program is still, fundamentally, surrendering

lust in all areas. As my former sponsor used to say, “You’re a smart guy, and despite this you can stay sober.”

Self-awareness comes slowly at times. Recently, I knowingly watched part of a movie that contains nudity (changing the channel at the really explicit parts). I thought I could “manage” a little

lust. Afterwards I called my sponsor, admitting my powerlessness over lust. He suggested that I look at any emotions that might have led to this slippery behavior. I realized I had been harboring resentment toward another program member. I had stopped speaking to him.

We had been close friends, I thought. When I was new in the program, he helped me, answering a lot of my questions. When he came to my city, we would go to meetings together and share meals. I was happy to be his friend. The last time he came to my town, I was excited to see him again—but it wasn't the same. He seemed distant, and seemed to be withdrawing from the relationship. I was hurt and felt resentment start to grow.

My wife says that my neediness can drain other people, like squeezing an orange until it's dry. What was it that I needed from him? Slowly, I began to realize that the fault was mine: I was taking from him, when I ought to have been giving. I worked the Steps on this situation and made an amends to him for my false expectations. But even after working the Steps, the resentment lingered and I continued to keep my distance.

It has taken some time for me to see my part. I eventually realized that my self-righteous thinking and

emotional sickness often get me in trouble. I become too needy in friendships; I cling too tightly. I need to be able to support a friend on his journey, whether or not he is part of my journey. More important, I need to rely on God and not on people to meet my needs, and to concentrate more on being of service to others rather than worrying about their behavior toward me.

Last night I made a complete surrender and gave my hurt feelings and resentments to God. I asked Him to teach me how to have

healthy relationships. I need to focus on Step Eleven, and pray "that I may seek to love rather than be loved" (12&12, 99). I can then begin to realize the blessings of being other-centered and the freedom of letting go of outcomes.

When I'm emotionally sober, I am able to get what I need from my Higher Power, and am deaf to external events with their siren call of excitement and rush of ego satisfaction. These emotions always leave me wanting more, even when there is no more to be had. However, if I leave my neediness in God's hands and look for those I can help, then I am restored to sanity and shielded from lust. Today I pray to be an instrument of the Higher Love, who shows me how to love without demands.

—Anonymous



Holidays

Well, it happened again. I sat waiting in the parking lot because the person who has the key did not show up. Perhaps someone have decided that, since this was a holiday, everyone would be busy with family and would not get to a meeting. I did not get that message.

Let's think about that idea. First, some of us don't have family and are looking for a place to go. SA is my family. I have many friends here and we do have fellowship outside of meetings. I want to see my friends on holidays.

Second, I heard a friend say recently say that his family installed his buttons and therefore they know how to push them. What better time for a meeting than right after a heavy dose of family? What better time to unwind and get rid of some of the feelings that have come up?

Third, my disease works overtime on holidays. These are some of the times that I have expectations that are not fulfilled, or I feel anxious about the time I'll be spending with certain people. Holidays are the times that I need meetings the most!

So what do I do? I plan my day so that I can get to a meeting. If I am hosting a dinner, we eat early so that I can get to a meeting. If others

from the program are at the meal, we do not have a meeting there but go to the planned meeting site so we do not exclude anyone. If I have an invitation, I let my host know that I will be leaving at a certain time because I have a "previous commitment."

I'm very grateful to the SA fellowship for my 20 years of sobriety. But even after all those years, I still go to any length to keep my sobriety. If I go to a New Year's

Eve meeting, I can still go to a party later. If I go to a Christmas Eve meeting, I can still to a church service later. Meetings, meetings, meetings!

For this sexaholic, face-to-face meetings are crucial to my sobriety. So I need to figure out how to get to one, even on a holiday. I always found a way to act out, so I need to find a way to make a meeting on a holiday!

Maybe in future, if I learn that a meeting place is going to be closed, I can find another location, send an e-mail announcement to the group, and then put up a sign at the original site for anyone who didn't get the message. That way others like me will be able to find a meeting.

Hope see you there!

—Anonymous



Five Years Later



Today, January 14, 2012, I am five years sober. It seems impossible! Before, I had a 35-year addiction, in which I was always looking for something new, exciting, and different—getting bored with what I had and always searching for something better. I went through two marriages and two divorces and ruined every relationship I ever had.

Then in July of 2006, I came to SA. I stayed sober for two months but did not get a sponsor or work the Steps, and on September 26, I acted out again. I felt intense pain, despair, and loneliness. I wanted to kill myself. I had a gun in the house but before using it, I cried out to God and said, “Please help me!” Somehow I didn’t get the gun, and when I went to bed that night, I forgot that it was right next to me in the night stand drawer.

I worked the Steps after that but still didn’t listen to my sponsor. I slipped twice more, once in November 2006 and again in January. I had trouble staying sober until I finally started following my sponsor’s advice to be of service to others.

On October 31, 2006, I started a meeting where I live. Before that, I had to drive two hours each way to Atlanta and back, because my sponsor asked me if I was willing to go to any lengths to stay sober. But

then I took the action of starting a meeting for members in my local area. At first, only one or two members attended this meeting, but this morning there were eight of us! One of my sponsees gave me my five-year chip.

A couple of years ago, I walked my daughter down the aisle at her wedding. This is the same daughter who wouldn’t speak to me for years because I had emotionally abused her. I went to a funeral visitation for a coworker’s dad, the same coworker who I used to resent.

I could go on and on about how things are better in my life today, but what I notice most is inner peace. As the result of working the Steps, surrendering to my Higher Power, and following directions, I have inner peace today. Even recently, when I was in the hospital recovering from a heart attack, I had inner peace. I was worried at times, but then I would pray and repeat a word from my faith tradition (part of my Step Eleven practice), and my fear was relieved. This program works if I work it!

Have a great day in recovery today!

—Ed R.

How I Found “Liberty from Self” in New York

SA/S-Anon International Convention, January 13 - 15, 2012

When I first arrived at the Newark Convention in January, I was uncomfortable. I’m used to being the planner of events, the director of the play, but here I was just another attendee. I was out of my element. In my addiction, I was boisterous, always surrounded by people (not necessarily friends). I never felt shy walking into a room full of strangers. I was always full of ego and dying for attention.

And now suddenly I was in a place I’d never been, with people I’d never met, and I didn’t have the false ego of my addiction to cover for me anymore. I felt quiet and shy, asking for directions. I had planned to meet a few people I knew there, but I flew by myself, had a room by myself, and spent more time with myself than I had in a very long time. It was ironic that at the “Liberty from Self” convention, I was learning a great deal about “connecting” with myself. I practiced being alone, but not lonely. I spent quiet nights in my room meditating and reading. Apparently, even *I* can meditate. I always thought I had to be a

religious guru or Tibetan monk to meditate. But thanks to some wise words I heard at one of the meetings, I’ve learned that’s not the case.

On the other hand, I was “out of self” more than I had been in a long time. I had to practice getting out of my comfort zone, really reaching out and meeting new people. I listened to the stories of people who have many years of recovery, and gathered as many tidbits as my brain

would hold. I was meeting other convention “first timers,” and we helped each other follow the agenda and get to the various meetings and fellowships. I practiced praying for others. One afternoon, I ventured into Manhattan all by myself and spent almost an hour at the 9/11 Memorial, just feeling the magnitude of the event and crying for the families affected by the heinous act of terrorism. I was humbled deeply and said a prayer of gratitude for my life and my family.

I already knew this disease didn’t discriminate but was surprised to find that about one-third of the attendees were Orthodox Jews. I



had lunch with one of the Orthodox women at a kosher restaurant in Manhattan, and I learned a bit about her beliefs. It was such a joy to learn about a whole different way of life that I otherwise would never have known about. A Rabbi shared his story at the Saturday night dinner. It was a powerful story, filled with emotion. I was also very fortunate to meet and have dinner one night with the Trustees. This was a wonderful, unexpected benefit. It was as if God knew I was nervous, and He provided a way for me to feel more comfortable and close to Him.

We prayed before meals, something I've never done as a child or an adult. I've carried this into my life at home now, making it a regular habit. It may seem like a small thing, but gratitude is a very freeing emotion for me. I get to let go of resentments, anger, and fear—even if just for a few moments—when I practice gratitude.

One of my favorite parts of the convention was meeting members from the various phone meetings I attend. I participate in at least three phone meetings each week, and to finally meet these people in person was incredible! Even though we had never met before, we knew each other. We knew of each other's recent struggles, and shared a bond just like with the bond I have with

people in my face-to-face meetings.

After dinner on Saturday night, I talked with one of the women until one o'clock in the morning! The hotel staff had to kick us out of the dining room; we could have stayed all night! My friend gave me her phone number, and she shared some valuable tools that she's learned over the years. She taught me a "feelings" game. Beginning with the letter A, we take turns naming one of our feelings that starts with each letter, and try to identify the cause of the feeling. Now, we text once or twice a week, going through the whole alphabet together. This has helped me learn how to identify and deal with my feelings.

I now have a fellowship that spans the entire world. Because of SA, I'm building real relationships and friendships with men and women. This is an unexpected miracle! I've always struggled with having close friendships, especially with other women. But in Newark, I put myself out there—vulnerable, raw, and immature in my recovery—and guess what? I survived. I'm so much better for having been there. I can't wait for the next International Convention I can attend. There's something wonderful about being in a place with over 700 other SA embers. I really am not alone.

—Wendi F., Colorado Springs



God's Handiwork

January 13 - 15, 2012, Newark, NJ

Two years ago, I was wondering what I could do to bring my recovery to a new level. I wanted to get past the phase of just not acting out. I wanted to get closer to my Higher Power. I wanted to do service, but I didn't know where to begin.

Then in January 2009, I attended the Nashville International Convention. I was uplifted by the speakers' messages and all the recovery I saw there. I decided it was time for me to get involved. I took the leap of faith. I called SAICO and volunteered to chair a convention, and I asked what I should do.

At the time, I was clueless about what might be involved in running a convention—but the journey for the past two years has been amazing! To be involved for 22 months in spreading the SA message to those who are still suffering has been the opportunity of a lifetime. Today I feel that all of my years of acting out and all of my struggles in recovery were worthwhile if they enabled me to be part of this incredible journey. To be involved with 700 people and see them get excited about recovery in one weekend—and knowing that God allowed me to be part of the process—has been a huge blessing.

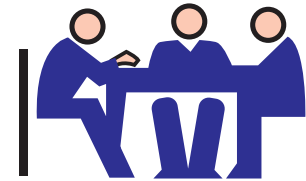
This is not to say that we had

no challenges. Midstream in our planning process, the hotel changed management personnel, and three months prior to the conference we had to re-negotiate our year-old contract with them. This was a shock to me, and the new manager was tough! Once I got angry and sent her a strong e-mail. I thought that my message was stated kindly, but looking back, it was one of those e-mails

I should never have sent. For some reason though, the e-mail bounced back with an error message. After two tries I thought that God maybe did not want it sent.

The following Monday, after I had calmed down, the hotel manager told me that the company had changed her e-mail address, and not to send her e-mails. I was blown away by God's intervention. At that point my focus changed. I realized "This is God's conference, not Alan's." That change of attitude was by far the greatest gift I received as convention Chair.

Actually, we did not reach an agreement or sign the new contract until four days before the conference, but I wasn't concerned because I believed all along that things would be all right. I felt humbled and grateful to see God's handiwork unfold in front of my eyes. The key for me was



to remember two things. First, I had to constantly remember that I am a sexaholic and my thinking is not trustworthy. I knew I needed to stay out of the way and let God take over. Thus, 99% of the decisions were made through the group conscience process. Second, I needed to remember that even though I was working with other sexaholics, it was our Higher Power (not we sexaholics) who was really in control. As Step One says “we” admitted, I needed the conference to be a “we” program. With these thoughts in mind, I was able to feel serenity amidst the hustle and bustle of preparation. I also kept in daily contact with my sponsor, as well as with the International Committee and Conference Committee Chairs.

As the convention drew nearer, I received an increasing number of calls; people wanting to find out all sorts of stuff. There were many first-timers who didn't know what to expect. All I heard in their voice was: “Help, I want recovery, I heard it is

SA/S-Anon Winter UK Convention

Midlands, United Kingdom, January 6 - 8, 2012

I absolutely loved the SA/S-Anon convention in Midlands. I learnt a massive amount about myself—from all the people I shared with and from all those who shared with me. I've never experienced so much experience, strength, and hope as I did during those two days. I was sad that

being offered this weekend, how do I get there, how do I get involved?” God changed my hearing, because I didn't consider the calls burdensome. They were a gift from God telling me (a sick minded sexaholic) how important the work was.

Through the years, I've heard members share how they jump-started their programs by attending International conventions. A member in our local group had only two hours of sobriety when he attended his first conference five years ago, and he's been sober ever since. I love conventions because they've been proven to be so helpful to our recovery.

These wonderful events take place twice a year. Get involved! I guarantee you that your Higher Power will show you the way. It's not difficult (and like me, you don't need much experience!).

Thanks to all of you for your participation in the convention. We could not have done it without you!

—God Bless, Alan N, NY



it had to end!

One high point for me was being asked to share at a joint SA/S-Anon meeting. I'm not really sure what I babbled for those 20 minutes, but many people thanked me at the end! Another highlight was the absolute

high level of honesty that I find with other sexaholics. This always inspires me to want to progress more. I loved the talent show. One poem made me cry with laughter, and I loved all the songs that were per-

formed. I was also grateful to be able to attend with my wife. This was a fantastic experience for us both. I look forward to many more conventions.

—All the best, Ed

Upcoming International Convention

January 27 - 29, 2012, Nashville, TN: “Three Legacies”

A summer convention in Nashville? Yes! The convention hotel has great air conditioning and plenty of room for us all. Come join us in what promises to be a very spiritual weekend.

Congratulations to the New York and New Jersey members who put on one heck of a convention! The record turnout was exciting for all of us! We have some great things in store for the Nashville Convention this summer as well.

Our conference theme, “Three Legacies,” will focus on the three legacies of AA: Recovery, Unity, and Service. We will offer the usual cadre of recovery topics. Our special speakers will share their experience, strength, and hope with the fellowship.

Kicking off the weekend Friday afternoon will be two old-timer panels recalling the early history of SA. One panel will be women, followed by a second panel of men. We will offer several open SA meetings and open S-Anon meetings, which any

registered member may attend. These meetings will be posted in the lobby. We have also scheduled three breakout meetings for SA women.

This year we will include a continental breakfast buffet in the hotel lobby. Hopefully this will eliminate overcrowding in the fellowship suites in the morning. Our entertainment committee is planning a wonderful Talent Show. If you would like to perform in the show, contact us at info@sanashville.org to the attention of the Entertainment Chair.

Bring your mind, your heart, and your spirit. Come share your recovery with all of us. If you are new to SA, you have more to offer that you could ever know. Come and share this new way of living!

For more information, call +1 (615) 345-4334 and leave a message, send an email to sanic2012@gmail.com or visit our website at sanashville.org.

—Jon B., Convention Chair



Brimming with Gratitude¹



This past November, many of us celebrated the blessings we enjoy as citizens of the United States. Tradition has it that the early British settlers held a Thanksgiving meal with the natives who had helped them bring forth a bountiful harvest that year. The British were thankful for freedom from religious oppression and that God had given them the opportunity to live a new life in the New World. Unfortunately, the goodwill and thanksgiving didn't last forever. So it often is with us sexaholics.

Many of us, when we first came to SA, experienced a period of real elation, where the possibility of a new and brighter way of living filled us with optimism and new-found personal growth. We began to think we had the problem licked and we celebrated the victories accordingly. Sometimes that celebration led straight to a relapse. We sexaholics don't need much reason to use: good times, bad times, mediocre times, and so on. I know that when I'm uncomfortable, I want to drink. Bill W. experienced similar issues. Writing in the AA *Grapevine* in July 1946, he commented,

I saw that I had been living too much alone, too much aloof from my fellows, and

too deaf to that voice within. Instead of seeing myself as a simple agent bearing the message of experience, I had thought of myself as a founder of A.A. (As *Bill Sees It*, 133).

They say pride goes before a fall, and that is certainly true of me. Whenever I become proud of the recovery I have achieved, I put myself at risk of failure. Bill W. continues,

How much better it would have been had I felt gratitude rather than self-satisfaction—gratitude that I had once suffered the pains of alcoholism, gratitude that a miracle of recovery had been worked upon me from above, gratitude for the privilege of serving my fellow alcoholics, and gratitude for those fraternal ties which bound me ever closer to them in a comradeship such as few societies of men have ever known.

So it seems that humble gratitude or thanksgiving is the added insurance that I will maintain my sobriety.

As a sexaholic, I needed to recognize that I was powerless to control my addiction. I had to have

something with more strength than I could muster. That something was God. The Big Book (85) says, "What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." Because I am able to surrender, on a daily basis, my need to control my life, God is able to help me with one more day of sobriety. I still cannot do it alone, and if I become proud of my length of sobriety and become convinced that it is me doing it, I will most certainly be at risk of relapse.

The spiritual toolkit initially developed by the founders of AA includes the practice of gratitude. In the beginning, I had difficulty finding things to be grateful for. At first my gratuities were simple things, like waking up sober one more day. As I've gone on in this program, I've found myself giving thanks even in trying situations: I can be grateful that God has enabled me to endure the trial before me with grace and peace. The important thing is that I have developed a regular practice of gratitude in my outlook on life and its ups and downs and changes. Gratitude enables me to experience the promises of recovery in their fullest measure. As Bill W has said,

I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful

heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know" (As *Bill Sees It*, 37).

I'm thankful for a new heart of love for my fellow man and grateful to the Creator who made that possible. I'm thankful that today I am again sober and sane. I'm thankful that even in prison, I can

be useful to God and others. I'm thankful to have many who love me and whom I love in return. I'm thankful that the founding members of AA and other similar groups

persevered to find the answer to the spiritual disease of addiction and made it available to others.

I hope that as we go through life we will all be able to find many things for which to be thankful. I pray for all of us here in prison, that as we transition into the free world, we will be able to cultivate a spirit of gratitude that results in "outgoing love" instead of returning to the selfishness of addiction. The 12&12 reminds us that "we are today sober only by the grace of God and that any success we may be having is far more His success than ours" (92). We are truly not alone.

—Chris C.

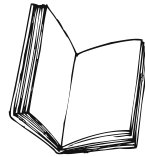


¹Originally published in prison newsletter 2011, adapted for *Essay* by permission.

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—Sexaholics Anonymous Permissions Committee

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*EMER = Europe & Middle East Region

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George F.	Finance, IT, COMC



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

Meditations Wanted!

SA's Literature Committee is developing a daily Meditations book and we are seeking contributions from members. Meditations should describe your personal experience in recovery or your experience using a particular recovery tool. They should be about 200 words in length, should include a short quote from SA or AA literature, and should end with a prayer. All submissions become the property of SA and may be subject to editing. Please submit meditations or ask questions at saico@saico.org. Following is a sample meditation.

Priorities

*Rarely have we seen a person fail
who has thoroughly followed our path. (SA, 206)*

When I first came into SA, I heard all kinds of things that members were doing as a part of their recovery that I considered ridiculous.

"I don't watch TV any more."

"I don't go to movies or newspapers or magazines."

"I get on my knees every morning and night."

"I make at least five program phone calls a day."

"Holy Cow!" I thought. "That seems ridiculous." But I also discovered a new perspective.

As I was talking to an old-timer in our group, I told him that I was still having trouble lusting as I walked down the street or rode the bus. "Look at your shoes," was his four word solution. "That's ridiculous!" I thought. Until I tried it. What a relief!

As I travel farther along the path of recovery, I find that God has helped me become more willing to do whatever it takes to keep sober. What I once considered "ridiculous" I now find is often a powerful tool to help me stay sober and achieve serenity.

*God, grant me the courage to be willing to do whatever it takes
to stay sober today.*

Note from the Finance Committee



Dear Fellow SA Members,

The 2012 budget—approved by the GDA at their July meeting in Portland—is shown on the following page. As you review the Financial Snapshot, you will see that 2011 was financially a very good year for SAICO operations. We finished the year with a \$4,088 net gain compared to a budgeted \$4,300 net loss. Total revenue exceeded budget by just under \$15,000 (6.4%). Increased literature sales and *Essay* subscriptions accounted for \$12,500 of the revenue

excess. Convention revenues accounted for the remainder.

Expenses were \$6,600 (2.5%) over budget. Corresponding to the increased literature sales was an increase in printing and distribution costs (\$6,500). Roughly \$3,600 of these literature costs covered the printing of the new *SA Pocket Tool Kit* and the purchase of 400 copies of *Sexaholics Anonymous* for the Pennsylvania prison project.

Our thanks go out to the fellowship for their continued support.

—In service, Carlton B., Finance Committee Member

SA Financial Snapshot 2012

Budget Item	2011 Budget	2011 Actual	2012 Budget
Revenues			
Contributions	142,000.00	142,284.46	155,000.00
SACFC	8,200.00	8,205.31	11,000.00
Conventions	20,000.00	22,530.17	25,000.00
Literature Sales	60,000.00	73,221.53	62,000.00
Discounts	(6,500.00)	(8,774.19)	(6,800.00)
Interest	1,200.00	1,220.96	2,000.00
Essay	7,400.00	8,559.00	8,000.00
Total Revenues	232,300.00	247,247.24	256,200.00
Expenses			
Bank Charges	100.00	107.85	200.00
Credit Card Fees	4,200.00	6,111.36	8,400.00
Internet Services	5,000.00	4,849.88	4,900.00
Liability Insurance	1,400.00	2,276.00	2,300.00
Legal	2,000.00	187.50	2,500.00
Accounting	4,900.00	4,717.00	3,900.00
Literature Expense	18,000.00	19,034.46	19,000.00
Labor	125,500.00	119,940.68	130,000.00
Payroll and Benefits	8,500.00	9,550.49	8,500.00
Postage and Freight	10,000.00	9,216.95	11,900.00
Professional Fees	2,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
Office Expense	2,600.00	2,650.74	2,600.00
Printing	7,000.00	12,448.67	8,900.00
Rent	18,000.00	17,487.07	18,500.00
Repairs & Maint	500.00	1,457.27	500.00
Taxes & Licenses	600.00	474.36	600.00
Telephone	7,800.00	7,850.55	5,900.00
Travel	22,500.00	27,927.79	30,000.00
Total Expenses	236,600.00	243,159.31	256,200.00
Revenues-Expenses	(4,300.00)	4,087.93	0.00

For Additional Budget Info Contact SAICO@sa.org

Calendar of Events



April 13 - 15, 2012, Northwest Regional Spring Retreat, Raymond, WA, *The Wave of Recovery*. Info at sanorthwest.webs.com/events.htm

April 21, 2012, Mountain Spring Retreat, Asheville, NC. *Renewing Our Recovery*. Contact 828-237-1332, MountainSpringAsheville.com, or SA.MountainSpring@gmail.com.

April 27 - 29, 2012, South Midwest Regional Retreat, Wichita, KS

April 28, 2012, SA Northwest PA Marathon, Shenango, Greenville, PA. *Returning to Our Roots; the Steps & Traditions to*

Freedom. Info at steve.mcawho@gmail.com or 814-449-1421.

April 28, 2012, Spring conference, Sacramento, CA. *Stepping into Recovery*. Info at 916-491-1772, www.sasacramento.org, or info@sasacramento.org

May 5, 2012, Twin Cities Marathon, Shoreview, MN. *Workin' the Program / How It Works*. Info at 952-239-5030, www.orgsites.com/mn/sa_mpls, or iminmn-sa@gmail.com

May 11 - 13, 2012, SA Informal Weekend Away, Surrey, UK. *Daily Reprieve*. Info at saico@sa.org

July 20 - 22, 2012, Dublin Convention, Dublin, Ireland. *Celebrate Recovery*. Info at saico@sa.org.

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

Submit info to be listed in June 2012 Essay by May 15, 2012. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact.

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

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.

USA

New SA Groups

Benton, AR
Baton Rouge, LA (additional meeting)
Crossville, TN
DeKalb, IL (additional meeting)
Eden Prairie, MN
Henderson, TN
Marion, IN



New York NY (additional meeting)
Seattle WA (additional meeting)
Spokane WA (additional meeting)
Springdale AR

International

Utrecht, The Netherlands
Nanaimo BC (additional meeting)

Upcoming International Conventions

July 27 - 29, 2012, Nashville, TN. *Three Legacies*. The Sheraton Music City. For information visit our website at sanashville.org

January 11 - 13, 2012, Atlanta, GA. *The Courage to Change*. Sheraton Gateway Hotel, 1900 Sullivan Road, Atlanta, GA 30337. For info visit our website at www.couragetochange2013.org.



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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.