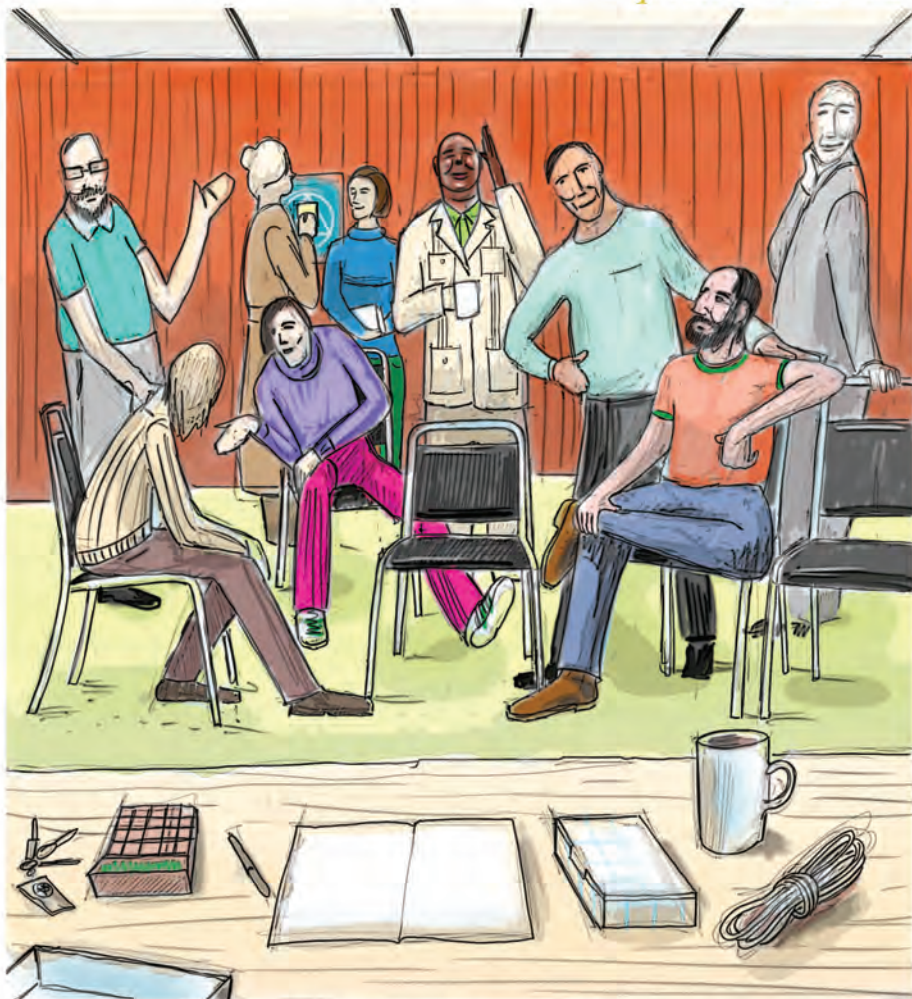


Essay

September 2012



The Gift of Brotherhood

A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous

1. We admitted that we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Essay is the quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

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Sexaholics Anonymous

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

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The Gift of Brotherhood

On the outside, my early life looked like an episode from a Fifties sitcom. I was the third of six kids. My mom stayed at home, organized the family chores, baked bread every week, and had a hot dinner on the table every night when my dad came home. My dad worked all day, came home at six, and was home every weekend. He helped us fix our bikes and do our homework.

However, there were some distortions in this seemingly happy picture that created an immense anxiety inside of me. Both of my high-functioning parents struggled with mental health. My dad was often depressed and critical. My mom was nervous and fearful, and she was quick to rely on me for the emotional support she wasn't getting from my dad. I was often nervous and uneasy, and like my mom, I was starved for masculine attention. Life seemed hard; I was rarely comfortable. Every day felt like boot camp, just to survive.

In elementary school I was obsessed with cute girls and pestered them until they were uncomfortable. I felt excited, thinking that one of them might like me or think I was special. Then one night when I was nine, I saw male strippers on TV and

watched all the ladies go crazy over their bodies. I was instantly hooked and subconsciously found what I most desired: to be lusted after.

When I was 11, a male substitute teacher taught the boys in my fifth grade class how to masturbate. I was hooked. Masturbation soon became a daily ritual. As puberty set in, I obsessed over my body and the idea of becoming a sexy male. I masturbated compulsively and lived in a fantasy of naked men. I had no access to pornography except for clothing catalogs and a creative mind—but I got along just fine without it.

Friendships with girls came easy for me. I became skilled at getting their attention. My insecurities as a male and over-attachment to my mother made me a perfect candidate to be every girl's best friend. The boys started excluding me and I began to feel less like a boy and more like a girl.

I wanted so much to be one of the guys, and I constantly watched them and studied their behavior so I could change what I was doing wrong and be accepted. I constantly compared myself to other guys and hated my body—I never felt adequate. I was never very strong or fast as a boy and was often ridiculed



for my lack of athletic ability.

Still, I learned many things in my studies of men. I became a master of being who I thought others wanted me to be. I became a master at pretending. I lost touch with my real self altogether and gave away my power to others. I masturbated four times a day, became a constant voyeur, and began lying, stealing, and deceiving to feed my lust.

My attraction toward women began to fade and my longing for male companionship grew, but I was 19 before I could admit to myself that I might be gay. I had no other explanation for my thoughts and feelings. In my early twenties I suffered a nervous breakdown. With the help of therapists, doctors, and church leaders, plus the support of my family, I avoided being hospitalized. However, I awoke to the reality that I could not do anything to change my situation. I was sick and I was stuck. After the nervous breakdown, my energy and stamina were even more depleted.

I began to relearn how to function in life, but it was difficult and discouraging. I continued masturbating compulsively and lived in my fantasy world. I wanted to be gay. I wanted a man to love, who would love me back. I wanted more than anything to be strong and healthy and lusted after.

By age 23, I discovered the Internet. I also discovered adult bookstores, online hook-ups, and

many other ways to act out.

When I was around 27, I “came out” to my parents, church leaders, and select friends and siblings. I had worked hard to fight these urges using every tool my church and therapists could provide, but nothing worked. I felt I had no other option than to accept that I was gay. The more I tried to stop, the more my addiction escalated. I estimated that in a five-year period, I had between 100 and 200 sexual encounters, most of them with different partners.

When I was 33, my addiction took me to a dark and sketchy gay sex club. The night before, I met my “dream” acting-out partner online. I had arranged to play out the perfect fantasy, and it played out just as I planned it to the last detail. But when it was over, I felt empty. It wasn’t real. I had just acted out my ideal fantasy and felt lower than ever. Desperate to escape this feeling, I ended up in one of the most degrading places I had ever been.

My addiction had escalated once again. Sex clubs became my new obsession. I began feeling a deeper blackness and desperation. I could see that my addiction would never be satisfied. I felt out of options. I wanted to die.

A friend who knew what I was going through gave me the phone number for our local SA hotline and suggested that I call it. I was afraid to call. I had no idea what lay beneath my sexual behavior or what fueled

my obsession for men. I longed for a place to belong but was sure that the men of SA would not understand my issues with same-sex acting out. I was positive that they would not understand my desire and longing to be romantic with men.

When I first began attending meetings, I was determined to keep my homosexuality a secret. I felt that I just needed to get in, get well, and get out. I had a life to live, or so I thought. It wasn't until I heard another sexaholic share about his sexual acting out with men that I felt like I might be "home." I was so touched and encouraged that I went right home and acted out! I was baffled. With tears in my eyes, I called the one guy in my home group who was sober and asked him to be my sponsor.

If there had been any other choice I would never have called this man. He symbolized everything I resented about men. He was a rough-talking, hard-nosed, tough-guy farmer. This was the type of man who usually rejected me. I had nothing in common with guys like him! But, since it was him or death, I had no other choice. The day I asked him to be my sponsor I masturbated for the last time. That was nearly two years ago.

Out of desperation, I committed myself to the program and was able to trust my sponsor with my story. Shaking and trembling, I began to do what he asked. He asked me to make

calls every day. He said that he didn't know anyone who got sober making less than three phone calls a day to different guys in the program.

This made my heart pound, my hands shake, and tears roll down my cheeks. I feared men and their rejection above all else. If my own father couldn't tolerate my neediness, how could I ask these men to do so? This was one of several hard things I had to do which in the end nourished my growth.

I was also asked to go to three meetings a week and attend regional retreats and Intergroup meetings. These activities required me to let down the barriers around myself and be known as I really was. I found that the men I reached out to responded positively to me, and I soon discovered that many other members admitted to same-sex acting out. No one seemed uncomfortable with me. Still, none of those guys ever talked about same-sex lusting, and once again, I told myself that I was different.

I told my sponsor that I felt "uniquely" gay, and that I struggled to know how to proceed with my program. He chastised me and said sharply, "Stop trying to make yourself different! You acted out with men and I shot up with cocaine, but our addiction to lust is the same." On another occasion he said, "You need to drop the stigma against yourself about being gay. Don't worry about whether or not you are gay. Ask God

to show you. In the meantime, you just need to stay sober today.”

Those simple words were life-changing for me. My sponsor gave me permission to just be me and just live in the moment. I accepted my addiction. I accepted my attraction to men. I continued in my Step work, and my Higher Power began to open my eyes.

While working the Steps, I began to see many ugly things about myself. I came to realize that all the things I hated in others were also defects in me. I came to realize that I had hurt others in all the same ways that I had been hurt. I always blamed others for my problems, but now I saw I was no better than anyone else. I was equally sick. I never could have looked at these things without the reassurance that I belonged and was accepted.

Before I came to SA, I hated myself so deeply that I could never bear to admit my faults to others. I could not bear to look at anything ugly about myself. In SA, I was challenged “to develop transparent honesty of complete self-disclosure” (SA 189). I learned to be transparent about who I was, where I had been, what I am, what I thought, and how I felt. Today I value transparency as a sacred quality and believe that



my willingness to be transparent is largely what opened me up to a Power greater than myself. I found that meetings were most helpful when I strove to be 100% honest and say the things that were hard to say.

By working the SA program and following my sponsor's directions, I found a new way of relating with men. Instead of lusting after them I found a spiritual connection with them. In place of sexual objectification I found brotherhood. I became “part of,” instead of “apart from.”

I accepted service opportunities as they came. Each one caused me to shake with fear. Facing my fears has been one of the key factors that has opened me up to brotherhood. About a year into sobriety, I had my first sex dream about a woman. Unbeknownst to me, my attraction toward women was growing. God showed me that my seemingly romantic and affectionate feelings toward men were actually based in fear and resentment. I was not having sex with men because I loved them, but because I was angry.

As I worked my Fourth Step, God began to take away the resentments toward men in my past. Same-sex attraction began to fade. SA is the only place on earth I am aware of where I could expose my emotions to other men and thereby

surrender them to God. In this I found connection to a Power greater than myself.

The outcome was undeniable. I remember a spiritual experience when I felt my Higher Power was communicating with me. If I were to put it into words it would be something like this: "Jared, what does sex have to do with your desire to connect with men? I designed you for brotherhood and placed that longing deep within you. It is not going away. This longing for brotherhood was meant to be realized. It was fear, resentment, and addiction that told you this longing was about sex."

Today, after almost two years of SA sobriety, I no longer identify with being gay. I feel more masculine and more a part of masculinity than ever. I feel more connected and useful to men than ever. In the words of a fellow sexaholic, "I can show up as a man for a man." What a gift! SA is helping me to be the person God intended me to be and helping to fulfill my deepest desires.

I have not recovered perfectly. Many days I still feel attracted to men. Any time I try to do something that scares me, my first reaction is to crave sex with men. It is

always the first place my mind goes whenever I feel scared, weak, alone, or overwhelmed. But despite my diseased thinking, I continue to surrender my right to use lust and fantasy to manage my feelings. I continue to get transparent with the men in my group and say the things I fear saying. I continue to rely desperately on God to manage my resentments and fears.

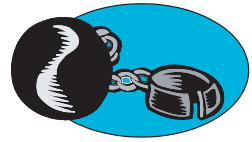
My sobriety feels like a delicate flower that could wilt at any time and has at times begun to wilt when I've been careless. Yet despite my clumsiness and diseased thinking, I am still getting the gifts of recovery. I just keep trudging along.

Each day of sobriety is a gift of new life. I treasure the gift of masculine connection and have never had it in such abundance. I don't know whether I will ever have a wife. I don't know if my attraction to women will continue to grow. I just try to give up my right to sex completely. I try to recognize the miracles that have come to me and remember to be grateful for them. I cling to my sponsor's words: "You just need to stay sober today, and surrender tomorrow to God."

—Jared R.



Recovery Started in Prison



I'm bored. That's a dangerous place for me to be, because one of my stronger lust triggers is boredom. I'm locked in my cell, waiting to be called to an appointment. I walk back and forth—window, door, window, door—with the occasional stop at the cupboard to see if I've overlooked some food item. Food can be a medication to relieve my boredom, just as lust can. My mind won't shut down. How did I manage to put myself in this place?

It started in my early teens with the discovery of sex and pornography. Lust took me in a stranglehold from the first experience. My need for that high was never satisfied. I tried masturbation and then an endless conveyor belt of shallow relationships, always looking for more, better, or higher highs—but these were never enough. On rare occasions when I got a glimpse of reality, I knew that lust was killing me. But then I just looked harder for something that would satisfy the hunger.

Even in the beginning I was two people. Outwardly I was kind, caring, and considerate, while deep down I was very self-centered, lustful, and dishonest. At age 20 I married, desperately wanting

a normal life. I was not faithful, as I could not pass up any opportunity to act out. I had many one-night stands as well as one longer affair. Fear forced me to confess my "one slip" to my wife. I damaged a precious relationship, yet my only regret at the time was my confession. Another opportunity to face my demons was squandered. I continued to be unfaithful.



I discovered the Internet many years later, and it quickly became my master. Eventually it also became my destruction. I'd been chatting for four months with a woman I thought was a mom, arranging to meet up with her and her two minor daughters. I finally made the arrangements to meet them during a business trip to Pennsylvania. While driving to the meeting place I kept saying to myself, "This is wrong," but I was powerless to stop. It turned out that "Mom" was a police detective.

In September 2007, I was arrested as a result of this Internet sting. On that day, as the handcuffs clicked shut on my wrists, I said aloud, "Thank God, it's over now." Fear now ruled my waking hours, with all the stories I'd heard of what happens to sex offenders in prison rushing through my mind. I

made peace with my Higher Power and was prepared to meet Him for judgment. However—to put it simply—God’s grace was showered upon me. In one of the worst places imaginable, I found peace, fellowship, and compassion.

Waiting in county jail for the legal process to slowly grind onward, I was blessed with a counselor who knew about SA. He gave me a copy of the White Book. Of course I’d heard of Twelve Step programs such as AA and NA, but I had no idea that a group like SA existed. I devoured the book, tears often streaming from my eyes. I thought, “I’m not alone, there is hope, and there are people who are willing to help.”

As I read, I felt as if someone had opened up my head and poured the contents into the White Book. I related to the problem, but I had no idea how to put the principles to work. I’d already made the choice to become sober.



My challenge was what to do next.

In October 2008, after about 10 months in county jail and three months waiting to be classified, I arrived on my cell block. I was informed there was an SA group right in my cell block! I, of all people, do not deserve so much grace.

I went to my first meeting that week, and have regularly attended meetings ever since. Our group meets four or five times each

week. Depending on work or other commitments, between three and 10 members attend each meeting. I have no way to compare our meetings to those on the street, but I do know that the meetings contribute significantly to my recovery and sobriety.

At first, all I did was attend meetings, listen, and share. Eventually, I chose a sponsor and worked the Steps. I know that none of these things is a “once and done” process. My nature is to say, “Okay, that’s done, what’s next?” The answer I’ve found is to help others, carry the message, and go back and work the Steps—again, again, and again.

I was bored when I sat down to write this. Writing is one of the many tools I use to dislodge lust from my mind. I write letters (I’m fortunate to have SA members to correspond with) or short stories.

Reading is a major tool. I made a choice to not have TV. TV seems to be a major source of challenges for me, and it drains my time more than anything else.

I’m active. I work out, sing, and enjoy many other activities. My job here in prison is satisfying and offers positive challenges. Prayer, meditation, Bible study, SA meetings, Twelfth Step work, and being able to share my problems with others all contribute to my sobriety.

I cannot be complacent. It

takes work—often hard work—to overcome lust. A friend of mine says, “Lust is outside in the parking lot, doing pushups, waiting for you.” I need to be working much harder than lust to ensure I can defeat it when the need arises.

And arise it does. I know it will, all the rest of my life. However, with the help of my Higher Power and the fellowship of SA, I will continue to have victory over my defects, one day at a time. I am grateful to all of you who choose to stand with me in troubled times.

—Pete M., *Camp Hill, PA*

.....

I wrote the above article in 2010. It’s now August 2012, and I’m free of that physical prison. However, I am still in the lifelong custody of lust, living in Toronto and slowly working on building a life for myself. My family chose not to include me in their lives, one of the many consequences of my actions—but I can’t do anything about that. When my Higher Power wants me to be included, He’ll let me know.

Since my release and deportation to Canada in November 2011, I’ve continued to be graced by the God of my understanding. I attended my first Toronto meeting at 7:00 am on November 3, 2011. The SA fellowship here in Toronto is strong.



We have more than 20 meetings a week. If I don’t attend a meeting it’s because I have made that choice, not because there is no meeting to attend—and attend them I do.

In the days after my return to Canada, I attended six to eight meetings a week. I needed the support and fellowship. I knew no one here, having lived about 100 Kilometers (60 miles) away prior to my “visit” to Pennsylvania. This is a wonderful city, but living downtown, with all the advantages and disadvantages that brings, was a challenge to my sobriety at first. Without SA to help me stay grounded, connected, and aware I could not have celebrated four years of sobriety this past March.

I’m still triggered to lust by the same things, and I still use the same tools that I used in prison. Fortunately, I’ve been able to add some new items to my toolbox. The most important tool is my phone. I’ve heard that it’s the heaviest thing in the world to pick up, but that’s not true for me. I can lift it up and reach out anytime. A quick text can save me when I’m on the subway, walking, or in stores. Without the SA fellowship, there would be no one to reach out to.

I work the program any way I can: by attending meetings, doing service work, and working the Steps.

I would love to attend a convention but I am barred from entry into the USA. However, by Gods' grace, the Ontario fellowship recently brought some very wise SA old-timers to speak here. What a blessing! That was another wonderful step taken on the road to my recovery.

Each day I wake up and give thanks for my sobriety. I make the decision to be sober, just for today,



and tomorrow will sort itself out. My ability to "let go and let God" grows and strengthens every day. I've learned to live much more in the present, thanks to this fellowship. Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift. That's why they call it the present.

—Peter M., Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Letter to My Home Group

Dear SA Fellowship,

As I celebrate three years of sobriety, I want to thank the SA fellowship for being such a large part of my life. The years I spent running around like a fool in your rooms were the best of my life. I greatly miss our regular fellowship, but I am so very grateful to still be connected with you in the way that I am.



I've been sexually sober since May 2, 2009—and I have no idea how that is possible! I've used lust to numb my pain for most of my life. This last year has been particularly painful, but through a grace I don't understand, I have felt every bit of the pain and have not reached out to lust. I'm grateful to have found SA and sobriety before coming here to prison. Without the SA fellowship, the pain of this transition would have been much harder to bear.

Although my acting out brought me into prison, I have faith that sobriety in the SA program of recovery will help bring me out. I want to thank all you who have supported me—spiritually or physically—over the past year. Your support has meant the world to me. You have been my link to SA, and that link is saving my life.



However, the link has been tested this past year. Without being able to regularly attend meetings or talk with other sexaholics, I've had to find other ways to stay connected to the program. Most of

the year I felt myself slipping away, no longer reading program literature or working the Steps on a daily basis. I continued to use program tools to overcome lust, and somehow I stayed physically sober—but my character defects came back and were running my life. I began feeling intense pain in my relationships with others. I found myself at odds with every friend I had made in prison. I had stopped thinking of what I could do for others and started judging them. I would analyze their every word and I began resenting everyone, continuing to look for more evidence of their wrongs while completely ignoring my own behavior. The more I resented the people around me and pushed them away, the more I wanted to turn to lust to numb my anger, disappointment, and loneliness. I was lost—but thankfully I realized one day what I needed to do. I turned to prayer and meditation.

Meditation wasn't easy for me at first. In my second year of sobriety, my sponsor asked me to start meditating by sitting still in the morning and counting each breath until I got to ten. When I got to ten, I was to start back again at one. One day I told him that my mind would not quiet down and I kept losing count. He said whenever that happened I should start back at one. And that is what had happened to my program: I had lost count, so I needed to start back at one.

I now spend 30 minutes each morning reading from the *Essay* or other program literature, meditating, and praying on my knees. And just as this worked when I first started in SA, it is working for me today.

At first I felt scared praying on my knees in prison, where everyone is watching everyone else, but the pain of living with my defects was greater than the fear of being judged.

Now, when I start to judge my friends—and before resentment can take hold—I ask myself how I can be of service to them. Then I do what seems impossible: I forget about my needs and focus on their needs instead. The Eleventh Step Prayer says that it is only by self-forgetting that I can find myself (12&12, 99). Today I realize that sobriety is just the beginning of a long journey down a spiritual path.

When I first came to SA, I thought lust was my problem. I felt I would die without lust or masturbation. I knew people who had multiple years of sobriety and thought how much easier their lives must be without the constant desire to lust. However, once sobriety ceased to be my main problem, I was left with my original problem: *me*. Today my character



defects are the greatest challenge of my recovery. So now it seems to be time to deal with my defects through the Steps.

I'm currently working the Steps on my defects in relations with certain types of people. I'm trying to change my resentful and condemning attitude toward one person in particular, and I'm finding Step Nine especially difficult in this case. However I know that I cannot receive the benefits of this spiritual program while separating myself from others in this way.

Despite my character defects, many things are going well in my life. The biggest hindrance to my happiness is not my imprisonment, but my attitude. I would rather be free, but I've had moments of happiness in prison. These moments give me hope that there might be more in the future. The biggest challenge to my attitude is obsessing about the length of my imprisonment. Living outside of today—of this moment—is dangerous for me.

I'm amazed to find how much power I have over the type of day I will have. I can choose to serve the needs of others and have a nice day, or I can choose to seek only what I can get out of the day and find myself having a horrible day. At the peak of my insanity this year, I chose to have some very bad days because of my attitude. Now, thanks to prayer and meditation in the morning, I have been choosing a service-minded attitude each day, with much better results. I still sometimes let character defects flare up, but now I'm able to quickly replace them by right thinking. With my new attitude, I find myself filled with much gratitude at the end of the day.

I'm grateful that this program and its principles can work here in prison—but their potency seems directly dependent on how much work I'm willing to put into them. When I choose to put in the work, I get the results. I wish these lessons didn't have to come from pain, but that seems to be the only way I will listen.

I'm still very much a sexaholic. My instinctual desire to lust is still very much a part of me, although not nearly as strong as it was early on. I wish I could have lust ripped out of me, but I know that the desire to lust motivates me to reach for my Higher Power. Today when I feel the familiar pull, I can choose either to look or turn to my Higher Power. This is a choice that I never had before. What a gift!

—Brett



Marriage Built on Sobriety

My story is similar to many I've heard—riddled with pornography, masturbation, and a multitude of sexual encounters. For most of my life, I didn't even think that the things I was doing were wrong. Only when I wanted to stop and could not did I start the downward spiral into despair that brought me through the doors of SA.

When I first came to SA in October 2008, I had been married for five months and had just gone through something like full disclosure with my wife (I don't recommend this to anyone before getting into SA!). In a panic, and hoping to find a "solution" to my issues, I attended an AA meeting and an SA meeting. It took only one SA meeting for me to know that I was in the right place.

When I first got into SA, I was excited. I felt that there was a solution and that I was on a road to recovery. Before I knew it, I had 30 days of sobriety and could not understand why my wife was not overflowing with gratitude for my excellent "recovery." It did not take a genius to figure out that the history of my acting out, which I had dumped on her, had taken a significant toll on her and on our relationship.

When I was almost six months sober, and despite my pleading, my wife moved out and filed for divorce. I was already grieving my mother's death; she had passed away from lung cancer two months earlier.



Losing my mom and being divorced from my wife were the two most painful events I had ever experienced. I was staying sober from alcohol as well as all forms of sex, so for the first time in my life, I

had no drug to soothe the pain.

While struggling to cope with my divorce and my mom's death, I called an SA member who had long-term sobriety and asked him what I should do. He said, "In all the painful things I've been through in this program, I've had a choice: I could choose to go through them sober or go through them not sober. I knew what not sober looked like, so I chose sobriety." That was so helpful to me. I had a choice. I could go back to my old ways of womanizing, instant gratification, and selfishness—or I could make a change in my life. I chose sobriety.

The first two years of my recovery were hard beyond words. I had just lost the two women closest to me in my life. I have gotten a lot of worth and value from both

relationships, and now I was living alone with no close friends. The first action I took was to seek friendship with SA men. I never had close male friends before. I would go to bars with guys or play sports with them, but there was no one I trusted, with whom I could be open and honest. Making my first recovery friend was the start of something different.

I started attending three meetings a week, working the Steps, and meeting with other men in the program. I slowly opened up about my fears, insecurities, and the poor decisions I had made. I looked for guys who had sobriety and recovery—in essence, who had what I wanted. And then I listened to them. I soaked up as much information as I could about recovery, sobriety, and working the Steps. I did my best to emulate others. It did not always look perfect, but I made a decision to stay sober and honest, and to work the program to the best of my ability.

During those two years, I felt more emotional pain than I had felt in all of my 28 years of life. I was sad, angry, resentful, and lonely. I kept myself busy in the fellowship and in my church, but the hole in my soul was still there. This hole, which I had always tried to fill with lust and sex, was really a God-sized hole that only God could fill.

During that time of committed singleness, I played with the edges on a few occasions through

“innocent” encounters with women. Each time I stepped outside of my commitment to stay away from women, I sorely regretted it. I came crawling back to my sponsor and other friends in the program, sharing with them the boundary I’d crossed and eventually having to make some sort of amends for it. Slowly but surely, I caught on and learned that wrong actions or choices could be the cause of further pain. If I just stayed out of my own way, things might turn out okay!

With just over two years of sobriety and 18 months living on my own, my sponsor suggested that I start to date again. All of my emotional insecurities came back. I was fearful of being rejected and maybe even losing my sobriety. The difference this time was that I no longer had the option to resort to my addiction to cover my feelings.

In December 2010, I met a woman at my church and we started dating. I had always imagined that once I got to this place, the courting and dating relationship would be bliss. It was not. The problem was that I brought myself into the new relationship. I still had issues I needed to work through and part of me still looked for “her” to be the solution.

Initially, dating was different as we got to know each other emotionally and spiritually, but not physically. This was completely backwards from anything I had done

before, and I didn't know how to handle it. I had to be open and honest with her about my addiction and my past, and take the chance that she might reject me. In doing so, I opened myself to the grace of God. And not only did she *not* reject me, but she provided me with more love and acceptance than I had ever known. This was a difficult, emotionally trying time that in the end contributed to my growth.

Along with the emotional vulnerabilities of dating came the struggle to set physical boundaries. Two major factors were crucial to my staying sober during this time. The first was that she understood my need for physical boundaries in our dating relationship and was willing to commit to them. We discussed our views about God and where we wanted to place Him in our lives. We believed that to participate in sex before marriage would be to defy His plan.

The second crucial factor that I committed to was rigorous honesty with other SA members. Every time I faced a questionable situation or felt that I had crossed one of my boundaries, I discussed the issue with my sponsor and other SA members. Accountability was the key for me in staying sober. And as my girlfriend and I practiced sober dating, we

grew close both emotionally and spiritually.

During this time of abstinence, I came to know my girlfriend better than any other woman I had known. We discussed how we felt about one another (both good and bad), and we did not have sex to confuse our feelings or hinder the process. Our relationship was built on spiritual principles instead of the worldly view that I had carried with me all my life.

After dating for a year and a half, we were married. Because of our sexual abstinence, we were able to experience the beauty of marriage the way we believe God intended it. Our wedding was beautiful, and

our marriage continues to be a beautiful experience. The love and joy that we share in our marriage is something I could never have imagined before.

Now, after almost four years of sobriety, I am grateful that in SA, God has given

me a guide for living my life in a completely different way. Our marriage is not perfect, but it is solid and built on a foundation of sobriety and honesty. I would not be where I am today without this program.

Today I can honestly say that I am grateful to be a sober sexaholic in recovery.

—Adam R., San Diego



God's Timeline

Two years ago, I was halfway through graduate school and living in Nashville. I thought I was doing pretty well for myself—until I sat down with my girlfriend in a student counseling session and explained my acting-out behaviors. To the therapist and my girlfriend, I recounted all the ways in which I'd been completely powerless over lust: the all-night pornography binges, the chat rooms and dating sites, the phone sex, the manipulation, and hardest of all to admit, the lying to cover up my disappearance for hours in the world of online intrigue. I had become expert at keeping my behavior secret. Now I no longer had anywhere to hide.

Even after I realized I needed help, I could not stop acting out. In college and for a few years afterward, I had been only dimly aware of a progressive powerlessness, as I objectified countless women online and in my day-to-day life. Many nights, as I lay in bed trying to fall asleep, the thought would cross my mind: "I could spend 30 minutes trying to meet someone special on the internet," or, "No point in just lying here awake, I might as well invest time looking for my future wife."



Funny how, in my shame of the next morning, I never wanted anything to do with the women I had objectified the night before—so much for investing!

What I did "invest" was often an entire night, clicking through thousands of profiles and images in a trance. I sent messages to these virtual women, sometimes portraying myself honestly; other times assuming a different persona, with photos to match. Not until I had several months of SA sobriety did I realize that the phrase "We bought it, we sold it, we traded it, we gave it away" (SA 203) actually applied to me (even if no money ever changed hands).

As far back as I can remember, I was always obsessed with lust. In the seventh grade, I was already making up fake online identities to talk explicitly with girls. In college, I remember sitting in the library obsessing over a woman sitting nearby, secretly gathering information about her online. I remember once in grad school making a U-turn to follow a pair of women for about a mile before realizing how crazy my action was. I stopped only because I had no idea what I would do when they arrived at their destination!

I once heard someone share at a meeting about the cycles of his relationship with his girlfriend: acting out then confessing to his girlfriend, followed by the emotional pain of a brief period of separation, and then the resumption of sex with his girlfriend as a kind of absolution. This was also my pattern. If my girlfriend had understood the difference between an apology and amends back then, she might have seen sooner that her forgiveness was being abused.

After a few months in couples therapy, I relapsed with the Internet and consulted an addiction psychiatrist. Though two previous therapists had been inclined to “normalize” my behavior, he immediately recognized the gravity of my problem and said, “I think you ought to go to SA.” I am forever indebted to him for his advice.

The week after my first SA meeting, I announced in our couples therapy that I probably would not return to SA because “those SA guys were different than me and a little strange.” Yet some part of me identified with them, and thank God, I did go back. I found relief there. After a couple of weeks, I even asked someone to sponsor me.

My sponsor told me to call him every day—another gift. During my first two months, I would tell him I

was “sober” while my girlfriend and I continued to act out together. When we broke up, I finally told him the truth. Even then I justified myself by saying, “SA sobriety doesn’t really apply to me, because my upbringing supported premarital sex as a stepping-stone to marriage.”

He replied, “That’s very interesting that you thought that didn’t apply to you.” When I asked what he meant, he replied, sarcastically, “Oh nothing, it’s just very interesting.” I was furious! I acted out once more that week,

arrived at a Sunday SA meeting the very next morning, and decided to give SA sobriety a try. And for good measure, I decided I might as well also work the Steps.

Over the next few weeks, I experienced the pain of not acting out in any form while being separated from my girlfriend, the object of my emotional dependence. This was unlike any pain I had felt before. I wanted to get my girlfriend back, but a voice inside me knew that something fundamental about me had to change before I could ever be with her again. As the White Book says “...most of us don’t have pure motives in wanting to get sober. Recovery is a slow process” (SA 66). My motive in starting the Steps and working them intensely (30 minutes each morning) was to somehow get my girlfriend back without being at



odds with SA. What a motive!

At the same time, I had committed to attending 90 meetings in 90 days, and in each meeting I heard maybe one or two things that sustained me for another day without running back to her. One day I heard, “You can’t go around it, you have to go through it.” Another day someone said, “When you give it up to God and He gives it back, it’s so much better.” Without surrender, how could a sexaholic like me know if someone was really “right” for him anyway?

My sponsor told me there’s never a bad reason to stay sober today, although some reasons are better than others. Similarly, my impure motives for starting the Steps did not stop me from having a spiritual experience. It’s funny how God can work through things like that. Besides, I could only get “promoted” from one Step to the next when my sponsor signed off, and somehow he could sense the true degree of my surrender (or lack of it) between the lines of my Step work. I’m grateful that he put the brakes on my bright ideas for an immediate reunion with my ex-girlfriend. In fact, today I can even say I’m grateful that God’s timeline is different from mine.

During the period when I was both single and sober, I learned

many important things that I’m not sure I would have learned otherwise. I learned that being at home alone wouldn’t kill me, nor would crying. I learned that I enjoy being with myself, but that I still need to give myself breaks from the intense “productivity” demands I put on myself in my work. That means that if I have to choose between making some deadline and taking a break to relieve stress, I take the break. My Higher Power has taught me that sobriety and recovery must come before career—in fact before everything else in my life—because my addiction is simply too powerful to withstand.

A lot has changed since I started working this program. After a few months of sobriety, another member asked me to sponsor him. Since then, working with sponsees has been one of the greatest joys of my recovery. I’m often reminded of a story in the Big Book of an early member who couldn’t keep anyone else sober, but then realized after a year that he was still sober from trying. This has been my experience.

I’m 28 now and I just celebrated two years of SA sobriety. I still attend meetings regularly, although not every day anymore. Still, whenever I feel I need another meeting, I get myself there, by phone if I have no other options. I still get up 30 minutes early each morning to

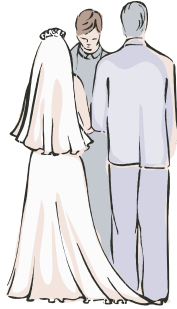


say my prayers, write in my journal, and meditate. I know my addict is off somewhere in training, so I need to keep spiritually fit. It's helpful for me to remember that when I think I'm in neutral, I'm inevitably going backward. I want desperately to go forward, and I hope I never lose that desperation.

When I was almost six months sober and had completed my Seventh Step, my sponsor gave me permission to date my ex-girlfriend. That relationship was restored only by God's grace. Eighteen months later we got married—it was actually a lot simpler using SA's sobriety definition rather than my own! But though it was simple, going from dating to marriage in SA recovery was not easy. It required much recovery work for both of us.

One of the biggest challenges in our relationship came when we had been back together about 10 months and my girlfriend decided to read

my journal while I was out. I was devastated by this breach of trust, and she was devastated by some of the things she read—but ultimately we both learned many things from the experience, and it pushed us to seek greater recovery in our relationship. By surrendering to God and this program, the results have been nothing short of a miraculous.



Just yesterday morning, as I was meditating and writing in my journal, I realized that I had lost four friendships in college (two men and two women) because of my sexaholic behavior. It took almost two years of SA sobriety and recovery for me to see my part in that! For me today, a positive sobriety means that if I do this work for the next 24 hours, tomorrow I may see reality a little more deeply and clearly. That vision is what SA is giving me, one day at a time.

—Anonymous

True Union of Persons

I recently heard a member share in a meeting that he thought SA is not a friendly place for singles because our Sobriety Definition does not allow them to have sex. He questioned how he could be expected to stay abstinent for the

rest of his life with that definition. When I heard this I laughed; maybe because I've had the same thought at times.

Then I considered the question more seriously, and I decided to share my thoughts. I shared that SA

is not for everyone. No one is forced to be an SA member. SA is only for those who want what we call “sexual sobriety:”

Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, *sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust.* (“The Sobriety Definition,” SA 191-192)

Victory over lust is a constant challenge for me. It’s not easy for me to surrender lust. Lust is cunning and baffling. I am continuously confronted with situations or people that trigger my lust. I got rid of my TV to reduce the risk of lusting. I thought the radio was safe when listening to boring news or informational broadcasts, but recently, when I was listening to a book review on a usually conservative station, I suddenly heard a graphic sexual description as part of the review. The description lasted less than a minute, but it triggered a lust fantasy for me.

Then I remembered everything I’ve learned from my SA fellowship. I remembered members saying that they would do whatever it takes to

stay sober. One member said that, if necessary, he would walk out of the shower without rinsing off. Another said he would get out of bed and splash water on his face. Another said he would go take a walk even if it was pitch black outside.

Besides taking those actions, I know that I can pick up my phone to call or text my sponsor or other members. I can pick up a piece of SA literature. I can do whatever it takes to stay sober. So when I started lusting that day, I texted two SA women right away. I read a portion of the *12&12*. And I prayed to God to surrender. Surrender for me means

turning over one temptation at a time.

Still, sobriety is more than just not acting out. Our Sobriety Definition goes on to discuss “positive sobriety:”

What we strive toward is not only the negative sobriety of not acting out our sexaholism, but progressive victory over the obsession in the looking and thinking. We also strive toward the positive sobriety of acting out true union of persons. (SA 193)

Today I value “true union of persons” more than sex. For me, as a single woman in SA, celibacy is a gift. Every time I had sex with other people I regretted it. I ruined my friendships with male friends by



having sex with them. When I got married I married for sex (although I told myself I was marrying for love!), and I regretted it. Then I wished I were still single!

Now that I'm single again and have been sober for some time, I am learning to embrace my singleness as a gift. I'm making friendships with men and women and I'm learning about appropriate emotional intimacy with people.

I'm finding real joy in unexpected places. I'm feeling connected and supported in SA sobriety by my SA fellowship. I am learning that I don't need to date to feel connected.

Recently I went to dinner with seven other women. We laughed

and had a good time. Another time I had dinner with a man and just enjoyed his friendship. I'm learning that I can feel content without a boyfriend. I enjoy doing service work in SA (such as serving as a group rep to our local Intergroup), and I've served in various charities through my church. I am learning that I can bless others and feel that my life has real meaning.

For me as a single woman in SA, celibacy is a gift. For those who don't want SA sobriety, there are other options and other fellowships. But for sexaholics like me who choose to be in the fellowship of SA, it is a way of life that works.

—Sara D., sober since March 25, 2005 by the grace of God through the SA fellowship



Resources for SA Women



Are there only a few SA women in your local area? Would you like to get to know other women in our fellowship? SA offers many ways for women to make contact with other women, including the following:

- The International SA Sisters 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
- The SA International Central Office (SAICO) maintains a list of SA women who have volunteered to take calls from women newcomers and who may be available as sponsors. For a copy of the phone list, and for information about a women-only SA phone meeting, contact SAICO at saico@sa.org or 866-424-8777.

Celebrating One Year

I began my recovery from sexual addiction three years ago by joining an online sexual addiction forum. That forum helped, but for me it wasn't enough. Then I joined a Twelve Step phone conference offered through the forum. That helped more, but twice I relapsed after a seven-month clean streak. I realized that long-distance support wasn't working for me; I needed face-to-face support. So just over a year ago, I joined SA.

It took some time for me to adjust to face-to-face meetings. At first I hated the meetings. I hated sharing with "no cross-talk." I wanted to tell everyone about my problems, then I wanted them to give me the answers. Instead we'd go around the room and people would share about their own struggles with lust—and nobody gave me any solutions to *my* problems! I am only now beginning to appreciate this. As an addict, one of my biggest problems has been keeping things to myself. I've learned that just plain sharing is a big part of the solution.

Another part of getting sober was just going through the motions, even when I felt stupid doing them. I've called people to say that I was having a lust attack, or just to say hello. I started calling people often enough that they started calling me back.



Many times I sat down at my computer determined to look at pornography, and determined to not call anyone. But just at that moment someone would call to say that he was having a lust attack, or just to say hello. I didn't have enough sanity to call for help, but I had enough common sense to pick up the phone and admit that I needed help! Then my friend would offer some direction, like, "Get away from the computer. Get out of the house and go for a walk." I listened and took action. I would not have one year of sobriety today without accepting direction.

A lot has changed in my first year. I used to feel as if I were possessed by a demon; I felt forced to masturbate about once a week. I haven't had this feeling in a long time. Also, whenever I sat down at the computer, I would hear a voice in my head saying, "Porn, porn," and I felt compelled to look—no matter what was going on in my life. Thank God and thanks to SA, I usually don't hear this voice anymore.

In the past I suffered from terrible mood swings. Today, these mood swings are less frequent and less extreme. Using the SA tools of recovery, I can usually let go of a resentment in a few hours that once might have lingered for weeks.

I can sometimes surrender lesser resentments on the spot.

Not only are the negative aspects of my life starting to go away, but positive things are beginning to happen. I had been working freelance for about 10 years, which basically means that I was wasting a lot of time on the computer and not earning any money. I recently got a regular job with regular work and a regular pay check. It's not the greatest job in the world, but it's a step in the right direction.

In addition, I'm part of a program for Jewish studies. I spent years learning on my own because I thought no one else was smart enough to learn with me. Now I recognize that this attitude was a result of my sick desire to stay isolated, so I've become more involved with other people and learning with them, rather than judging their capabilities.

For years I resented the head of my program for not recognizing my great talents as a teacher and putting them to use! But lately I've been able to put aside my resentments and accept things as they are. I even got up the courage to discuss this matter with him—and, not long ago I was able to substitute for him when he was away.

I've been attending a Hebrew SA group in my neighborhood. At first, I

felt uncomfortable with the language and didn't want to return. Yet the other fellows made me feel welcome and accepted—we had SA in common! Since then, I've been able to put aside my fears. I've become more comfortable reading publicly in Hebrew. I've even led meetings. In fact, when I celebrated one year of sobriety, I was able to speak in

Hebrew for half an hour—and they seemed to understand what I said.

My marriage has also begun to change. For example, I had been disturbed

about the family dynamics at dinner time and I recently told my wife how I felt. I shared my feelings very politely and without placing blame. Later in the week my wife asked, "So what are we going to do to change dinner time? You said you didn't like it." I felt, though, that I didn't need to change it anymore! I just needed to tell my wife how I felt, and that alone was healing. Of course, not all of our problems are that easily resolved, so my wife and I are taking those problems to experts who are qualified to solve them. We are learning to admit that we don't always know best.

As I become more aware of my perceptions and motives, I recognize that I am as powerless over anger as I am over lust. So I've begun to



surrender my anger too, and life has gotten better as a result.

I also see improvement with my children. I'm able to answer their questions and be helpful to them, even when they are interrupting me in the middle of work. I can put my three-year-old to bed, even though it may take a half-hour or more. He

may scream and cry, and I may have planned to do other things, yet I no longer resort to yelling at him or other such measures. I can remain calm and gently rock him, or even sing to him.

Thanks to the tools of recovery, I'm becoming the husband and father that I had always hoped to be.

The Fellowship of Joy

Being the perfectionist that I am, I believed for a long time that I had to work the Steps very hard before I could start being joyous. But today, with over 10 years of sobriety, I've learned from observing others in recovery that it is possible to find joy on the first day in this program.

I have a lot of tools I use to combat lust. But how do I replace the empty space where lust used to dwell? Joy is a positive thing that can replace this vacuum:

Negative sobriety didn't work. It was uncomfortable, dangerous, and short-lived.

I was not cheating on my wife. I was not having sex with myself. I was not looking at the pictures or going to those places. Not, not, not. . . For months and months I was NOT. Until one day, NOT was not enough, and I went back out there.



We discovered that unless we found what our lust was trying so unsuccessfully to fill, we were not going to make it. Either we filled the vacuum with the real thing or we had nothing but the negative. (SA, 145-146).

But what are some ways to find joy? Here a few that work for me.

1. *Go where laughter is.*

Nowadays, I listen to a lot of tapes from SA and AA conventions that include laughter, humor, and jokes. When I hear those things, I have to start laughing! I cannot resist. I join meetings where I find a lot of laughter. Often open AA meetings are full of joy.

2. *Breathe.* As the White Book says, "Most of us sexaholics really live on the inside of our heads; we're seldom in the real world." (SA, 158). How do I get in the present moment? One tool I use is breathing. After I take a few conscious breaths, I'm

able to get out of my head and begin feeling joyous and happy.

3. *Develop a sense of humor.*

I'm convinced that every one of us has a sense of humor. Mine was covered by many years of tense and serious acting out. But today I ask myself: "What can I laugh about? What makes me smile?" I like a certain type of comedy. I like to watch funny movies. It also helps me to go back into my childhood. Now I try to remember what I laughed about as a child. Many of our childhoods were sad but still there might be things we can laugh about. I have heard that we addicts are

childish—so let's laugh like children!

4. *Help others.* The White Book suggests that we "Learn to give instead of take... It seems to be a law of the universe: The measure I give is the measure I get back" (SA 162). As soon as I focus on how I can help another person today, I get out of my head and out of myself. I actually start feeling joy by simply seeing others succeed. This world is not exclusively about me.

These are some of the things I do to practice a joyful sobriety. I hope they'll be helpful to you as well.

—Uwe H., Toronto, Ontario

Finding the Fellowship I Craved

He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave. (AA 164)

Working the Steps in SA was a progressive journey of discovery for me. I found that I had played a part in causing my pain, and had inflicted it on others. After making restitution and amends to the best of my ability, the next task at hand was to begin paying attention to the present moment. Inspiration began to flow, and my life took on new meaning. Suddenly, attending meetings and calling other members became opportunities to give rather than take. Now, it seemed that the meetings themselves were only a small part of SA. The greater part of the fellowship took place outside of the rooms, during candid conversations in diners, coffee shops, parked cars, and around kitchen tables. Newcomers and peers alike are attracted to love, compassion, and acceptance. These began to pour out of me. And following the subtle cues of my Higher Power led to opportunities to actualize this potential every day.



SA happens because men and women are drawn together through this force. Instead of shame and chaos from lust, today I can create healing and harmony in the sanctuary of fellowship. God builds a fortress for us, out of each other, when at least one of us is paying attention.

—Scott M.

Convention Wisdom

I recently returned from the Nashville convention, where the speakers were hugely nourishing to my recovery. By God's grace, I've been able to attend 25 SA International conventions. I've faithfully attended two conventions each year—because I need them! God has done for me what I could never have done for myself: He has kept me sober for 20 years. I'm forever grateful for the power of the SA program.

In January 2012, I served as program chair for the International convention in Newark. We worked hard planning the breakout meetings, and by God's grace members seemed to be blessed by them. I was honored to be able to finally give something back after so many years of receiving so much from conventions.



Whenever I'm at a convention, I take notes. Over the years I've compiled a list of insights I've gotten from listening to others share at conventions. These insights come from the speakers after meals, from breakout meetings, and from one-on-one conversations during the conventions.

I would like to share some of the wisdom I've gathered from conventions. Perhaps these thoughts can become seeds in others' hearts, to grow and flower with time and cultivation. The seeds are slowly budding forth in my own heart, and I'm supremely grateful to all those members who uttered these words in my hearing. Words spoken at a convention seem to have lasting power for me.

—A/R.

-
- The bigger the problem, crisis, temptation, conflict, or chaos, the bigger the opportunity for growth.
 - Small choices result in big changes in my life.
 - God loves me so much He allowed me to have an addiction.
 - I don't need to feel bad about the bad stuff that goes through my mind.
 - "I don't have any insulation, and that's okay." (Roy K.)
 - You become what you think about.
 - I can be serene while feeling like "jumping out of my skin."
 - I never know when "suddenly" is coming my way.
 - Every act of lust is an act of violence.
 - I'm no longer a victim. I'm a volunteer.
 - I am an egomaniac with an inferiority complex.
 - My job is to find gratitude in a negative life situation.
 - Observe the craving. Watch it pass.

Conventions Around the World



SA Ontario Canada Fall Marathon

16th Annual SA Marathon October 12-13, 2012

Carrying the Message: The Tradition of Sponsorship

SA Ontario is holding its fall Marathon in Toronto. Cost is \$25 before October 1, or \$30 after October 1st. Scholarships are available. For more information visit tinyurl.com/SAon1ut and click on Marathon Flyer, or call 416-721-1220

All-Russia SA Conference

23-25 November 2012, Moscow, Russian Federation



We are expecting participants from the USA, Belarus, Estonia, Ukraine, and Poland. We will offer two concurrent meeting tracks: Newcomers Track and Topic meetings. We will also offer speakers and public first step inventories. SA and AA literature in Russian will be available for purchase. For information, contact Moscow SA Information Line: +7 (905) 553-96-81 or sa-msk@yandex.ru

ВТОРАЯ ВСЕРОССИЙСКАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

23-25 ноября 2012, Москва, РФ

Для информации, обращайтесь: +7 (905) 553-96-81

или sa-msk@yandex.ru

Basking in Barcelona

November 30 - December 2, 2012



The Spanish Intergroup is hosting a Twelve Step Workshop in Barcelona this Fall. The cost is €75 (approx. \$95 USD), all-inclusive. The fellowship in Spain is about 20 years old, although growth and recovery have been slow in recent years. The Spanish Intergroup has decided to boost sobriety by inviting Nicholas S. from the UK to take Spanish members through the Steps. Attendees will complete eleven out of Twelve Steps in a 24-page workbook, which will be provided.

The workshop will be held Saturday and Sunday, although most members will arrive Friday afternoon. For more info, contact Artemes S. at artemeslds@gmail.com, +34 618 015 606 by phone or Whatsapp, or Skype: [artemeslds](https://www.skype.com/user/artemeslds)

Note from the Delegate Chair

Report of the General Delegate Assembly, Nashville, TN

Dear Fellow SA Members:

The General Delegate Assembly met on Thursday and Friday, July 26-27, prior to the July convention. Attendees included Delegates, Alternates, Trustees, Trustee nominees, representatives from SAICO, and observers.

General Delegate Assembly Actions

- Moved to adopt the budget for 2013 (*shown on opposite page along with budgeted and actual expenses year-to-date; see "Note from the Finance Committee Chair" on page 30*).

- Moved to adopt policy for unbudgeted funding requests.

- Moved to approve \$5,500 request from the International committee to support spreading the message overseas.

- Moved to budget the travel expenses of GDA Chair (or Vice chair), to attend all Trustee face-to-face meetings.

- Moved to appoint an ad hoc committee of five people to study the issue of improving communications between the Trustees and bring recommendations back to the GDA in October.

- Reaffirmed the current Trustees for another year of service. Elected Laura W., Nicholas S., and Mike D. as new Trustees. Welcomed new Delegates: Mike A., Dennis P., Dimitri P., Scott S., Art S., and Francis C.

More information regarding other reports and concerns discussed at the meeting can be found in the full minutes report, to be published after approval at the October GDA Teleconference. See your Delegate for a copy.

Recognition of Members Rotating Off

Retiring Trustees: Dave T., Carlton B. Retiring Delegates: Tony R., Nancy S., Lee W., & Nicholas S. We are grateful to you all for your service.

Requests From the Fellowship

- Travelers willing to visit meetings outside of North America, and speakers of languages other than English to help with translations.

- Members to continue faithful donations to help make up shortfall.

- Readers to help edit drafts of new literature and members to write short prayers and meditations for the meditation book.

- Members to sponsor inmates by mail or carry the message into a prison.

Thank you all for carrying the message and for your suggestions and feedback. We believe that we are doing what you have asked us to do for

the good of and the development of the fellowship. However, we need your input, so please continue to provide feedback.

May God bless you on your journey—and remember to insist on enjoying your journey.

—Mike S., GDA Chair

SA Financial Snapshot 2012

Budget Item	2012 BUDGET Jan-June	2012 ACTUAL June YTD	2013 BUDGET
Revenues			
Contributions	77,500.00	65,830.45	150,000.00
SACFC	5,500.00	4,703.58	10,000.00
Convention Donations	12,500.00	12,662.08	20,000.00
Literature Sales	31,000.00	33,072.54	78,000.00
Lit Volume Discounts	(3,400.00)	(2,312.51)	(9,400.00)
Interest	1,000.00	22.03	2,000.00
Essay	4,000.00	3,741.85	9,400.00
Total Revenues	128,100.00	117,720.02	260,000.00
Expenses			
Bank Charges	100.00	11.42	200.00
Credit Card Fees	4,200.00	3,219.98	8,400.00
Credit Card Recovery			(5,000.00)
Internet Services	1,250.00	1,940.40	2,400.00
Liability Insurance	1,150.00	530.00	2,300.00
Professional Fees	2,200.00	3,200.00	4,400.00
Legal	1,250.00	1,946.50	500.00
Accounting	1,950.00	1,796.14	5,000.00
Literature Expense	9,500.00	5,531.50	20,000.00
Labor	67,050.00	66,239.58	138,000.00
Postage and Freight	5,950.00	5,364.00	12,300.00
Office Expense	1,300.00	1,698.77	2,600.00
Printing	4,450.00	2,265.11	9,000.00
Rent	9,250.00	8,855.40	18,500.00
Repairs & Maint	250.00	396.02	500.00
Taxes & Licenses	300.00	314.00	600.00
Telephone	2,950.00	3,442.14	6,500.00
Travel	15,000.00	7,771.88	33,000.00
Total Expenses	128,100.00	114,522.84	259,200.00
Revenues-Expenses	0	3,197.18	800.00

For Additional Budget Info Contact SAICO@sa.org

Note from the Finance Committee Chair

Dear SA Fellowship:

The “Financial Snapshot” on the previous page shows our 2012 budgeted versus actual year-to-date expenses, as well as the 2013 approved budget.

For years, our fellowship was struggling to balance the budget, and we relied on the Quarterly Appeal to build our prudent reserve. Since then, our members have stepped forward to build a strong financial base. Recently however we have seen a slight softening of member contributions to SAICO, reflecting a shift toward addressing local service needs during these hard times. Please remember SAICO as you pass the basket.



A personal highlight from this year’s GDA was seeing the growth in both the quantity and quality of service to our fellowship. Results can be seen across the service spectrum. The great news is that we are only in the early stages of this fellowship service expansion!

Thank you for your continuing support in helping SA reach the addict who still suffers. I would also like to thank the fellowship for allowing me the opportunity to serve as Finance Committee Chair as well as Trustee for the past four years. If you have any questions, please email me at saico@sa.org.

—Carlton B., Finance Committee Chair

USA

Austin, TX
Clarksville, TN
Del Ray Beach, FL
Grand Junction CO
Pacifica CA (3 additional mtgs)
Raleigh NC (2 additional mtgs)

New SA Groups



Seattle WA (additional mtg)
Youngstown OH (additional mtg)

International

Tokyo, Japan (English speaking)
Aberdeen, Scotland (add'l mtg)

SA Correctional Facilities Update



The CFC is always in need of more sponsors to work the Steps with prisoners by mail. For more information, please join us on our next teleconference meeting, on October 20, 2012, at 5pm EST. The conference call number is 641-798-4200 PIN 6460229#. All member are welcome to attend. You may also contact me at saico@sa.org.

—Tim S., CFC Chair

Delegates and Trustees

Delegate	Region	Committees
Mike S., <i>Chair</i> Tom K. Eric S. Jim C., <i>Alt</i> Steve C. <i>Alt</i>	Southwest	COMC, Conventions, Sv. Structure, Finance Conventions, CFC, Nominations CFC, IT, PI Finance, Conventions, IT CFC, PI, Service Structure
Mike A. Dennis P. Mike S., <i>Alt</i>	Mid-Atlantic	Finance, Legal, Conventions COMC
Gary L., <i>V. Chair</i> Scott S. Dmitri P.	North Midwest	Literature, Legal, PI IT International, Conventions, Literature
Terry O. Gary M., <i>Alt</i>	Northeast	Internet, Public Info Finance, Nominations
Ned O. Marie W., <i>Alt</i> .	Northwest	Literature, Service Structure International, Conventions
Jon B. Ed R. Art S. Dick B, <i>Alt</i>	Southeast	Conventions, COMC International, IT, Literature COMC, Literature International
Joe M. Steve L. Glenn J.	South Midwest	RAC, Finance COMC, PI International, Conventions, PI
Hans-Friedrich	German Speaking	Literature, SA CFC
Francis C. Mark P., <i>Alt</i> Luc D., <i>Alt</i>	EMER* Ireland UK Flanders	H&I., International, PI Literature, International, Public Info International *EMER = Europe & Middle East Region

Trustee	Committees
Bob H., <i>Chair</i>	PI, RAC, Service Manual
George F., <i>Vice Chair</i>	IT, Finance, COMC
Betsy T.	Legal, Service Manual
Jerry L.	Nominations, Literature, International
Nicholas S.	International, IT, RAC
Laura W.	Literature, H & I, PI
Mike D.	COMC, H&I, PI



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

Calendar of Events



September 28 - 30, 2012, Southern CA Unity Conference 2012, Irvine, CA. *We Won't Regret the Past Nor Wish to Shut the Door on It.* Info at sasanonunity.com or Registration@sasanonunity.com

October 6, 2012, Middle Georgia SA Marathon, Macon, GA. *Acceptance.* More info at saico@sa.org

October 12-13, 2012, SA Fall Marathon, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. *Carrying the Message: the Tradition of Sponsorship.* Info at 416-721-1220 or sa.mississauga@gmail.com

October 14, 2012, Twelve Step SA Workshop (Steps 1-8), Bellevue, WA. *The Wave of Recovery.* Info at 206-548-9538 or puget-soundsa.org

soundsa.org

October 26 - 28, 2012, A Change of Heart 2012 Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention, Harrisburg, PA. *Use of Twelve Steps to Change the Attitude & Disposition of my Heart* Info at: achangeofheart2012.com or sainfo@achangeofheart2012.com

November 3, 2012, Courage to Change Marathon Quad Cities SA, Rock Island, IL. *Stepping to Freedom.* Info at 563-320-5987 or QCSA-Iowa@juno.com

November 9 - 11, 2012, Northwest regional Fall Retreat, Turner, OR. *We Are Going to Know a New Freedom.* Info at saporlandmetro.org

November 23 - 25, 2012 Second Annual All Russia SA Conference, Moscow, Russian Federation. Info at +7 (9905) 553-96-81 or sa-msk@yandex.ru

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

Submit info to be listed in December 2012 Essay by November 15, 2012. Please submit dates, theme, place, and points of contact. Please contact an international operator for guidance on making International calls.

Upcoming International Conventions



January 11 - 13, 2013, Atlanta, GA. *The Courage to Change.* Join us for a weekend of recovery in Atlanta sponsored by SA / S-Anon members of the Atlanta area. The host hotel, Sheraton Gateway Hotel, is located 1/2 mile from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport. A complimentary 24-hour airport shuttle is available to take you directly to the hotel. Sheraton Gateway

Hotel, Atlanta, GA 30337. For more information visit our website at www.couragetochange2013.org.



July 19 - 21, 2013, Baltimore, MD. *Change on the Chesapeake.* For more information, visit our website at www.changeonthechesapeake.com or email us at info@changeonthechesapeake.com

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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. Essay 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.***