

Essay

PLATE CXXV.

September 2014



Deaf, Sober, and Happy

A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

Image Source: Human Anatomy Ear. 1899. Deaver, John

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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September 2014



Sexaholics Anonymous

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

—Adapted with permission from the AA Grapevine Inc.

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

*Essay . . .
SA's Meeting in Print*

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Deaf, Sober, and Happy

My name is Pat and I'm a sexaholic. Last December I celebrated 17 years as a member of the SA Fellowship and 17 years of SA sobriety. I feel so blessed.

As a deaf person, I speak with my hands. American Sign Language (ASL) is my first language, but through SA, I have become comfortable reading and writing in English. Today I'm grateful to be able to share my story with our worldwide fellowship. I pray that my story will give hope to others—and especially to other deaf members like me.

From an early age, I was filled with fear. I don't know why. Perhaps it was because my dad was away in the military during World War II, and I was the only male living at home with mom and three sisters. Maybe my deafness caused me to be scared—but I'm not the only deaf person in my family. I come from a family of seven kids, and five of us were born deaf. All I know is that I grew up feeling constantly scared.

I remember one time, when I was around four, that I was lying on the living room rug while my mother and her hearing friends were sitting around chatting. I thought all their eyes were looking at me. I thought they were talking about me, and I started crying. I was scared.

As a child, I had a baby blanket that I carried constantly. I carried it everywhere; it became my Higher Power. My mother and sisters would tease me about the blanket, and after a couple of years, my mom hid it. I looked everywhere for that blanket, but I never found it. I was lost without my blanket.

I grew up in Kansas, in a religious family. We attended church every Sunday and every holy day. At school I was expected to attend a church-related class one evening per week. I thought I knew who God was.

From the age of five, I attended a state-sponsored residential school for deaf kids. It was a boarding school; boys lived in one dorm and girls in the other. The school had strict rules about things such as making our beds daily, standing properly in line, and following meal etiquette. If we broke a rule, we lost canteen privileges and the right to leave campus. Once I went to a classmate's home for the weekend without permission, so I lost the privilege to go home for awhile. For some reason, I assumed that God was punitive like my dormitory supervisors, and that's how I learned to be afraid of God.

I always felt awkward and frightened around the other boys.



I felt that I did not fit in. But, in spite of my fears and the penalties I received, I still loved my school.

I tried to cover my insecurities with achievements. I was smart and I got good grades, and those accomplishments helped me feel worthy. I was also involved in acting. I must have been pretty good at it, because I was frequently asked to recite poetry, tell stories, or appear in school plays. So that became my niche. I felt good about myself when I was on stage. But in real life I usually felt awkward. I felt especially awkward participating in sports, and my father—who had been a high school track star—was disappointed in my limited sports abilities.

When I was around nine or 10, one of the older boys came to me and asked, "Do you want to play dirty?" I didn't know what he meant; I thought he was asking if I wanted to play outside in the dirt. I didn't want him to think that I was a sissy so I said, "Yes." He said, "Fine. I'll see you in your dorm room tonight at 10." I had no idea what he was talking about.

That night, he and two other boys came to me in my bed at ten. They taught me how to masturbate and how to touch them. I was quite uncomfortable at first, but at the same time I thought, "Wow, this feels great!" It was a pleasurable experience and it became my new Higher Power. However, because of my religious training, I also felt

terrible guilt and shame. I wanted something to satisfy me, but I believed that what I was doing was wrong. And because this was not something I could be open about, I suffered alone.

After awhile, I began feeling that I had been used by these boys, so I decided it was my turn to use others. I didn't know how to lust after girls because they were in the other dormitory. So in the dark of night I would find other boys. I began to live a double life. My evening activities left me tired, but I was still a good student; I did quite well in school.

I eventually became so ashamed of my behavior that I had to find boys outside of my school to act out with. I would meet hearing boys at camp and act out with them. I also visited them at their homes. Sometimes I would ride the bus for at least 20 miles just to have my desire satisfied, and then I would ride back home. I felt very ashamed because I could not escape this thing. I think that was the beginning of my depression.

As a teenager, I wanted to leave the school I attended in Kansas and attend a religious school for the deaf in Cincinnati. I assumed that the school was a holy place. I wanted to escape the double life, and I thought that in a new location the struggle would disappear. But my parents said no. They did not know that I was hurting inside.

So I stayed in Kansas. I became

valedictorian of my class and passed the college entrance exams. I received many honors and awards. I looked great on the outside, but I did not feel good on the inside. I wanted to be holy; I wanted a different life. I was tired of chasing sexual satisfaction. But I could not stop.

So in 1958 I went off to college in Washington, DC. I was ready for a new start. My addiction was worsening, but I thought that if I was in a new environment, I would not have this problem anymore. Yet two weeks later I was back to my same old pattern.

I did not act out on campus, but I would lie to my friends and say that I was going to see a play or a movie. I would actually go see the play or movie until halfway through, and then I'd leave to search for men in parks or department stores. From time to time, a policeman would approach me and tell me to leave. So I would leave, and then 30 minutes later I was back searching for another man. I was insane.

In 1969 I moved to Connecticut to become a professional actor. I thought, "I'll have a new life now. I'll start my life over and be holy and pure." After two or three weeks, however, the insanity returned and I was back to acting out.

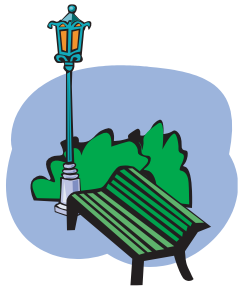
In 1979 I moved to Rochester to take a teaching job and to study

to become a deacon in my church. I thought that maybe this would cure me, but my acting out pattern continued for the next 17 years. As I became increasingly frustrated with my struggles with lust, I finally reached the point where I was tired of fighting. I went to see a priest as well as a psychologist for help—but it seemed that nobody could help me solve my problem.

The priest referred me to a church-based counseling center that used some of the AA Twelve Steps, and they helped people get connected to Twelve Step programs. So I started attending a program once a week. After I'd attended faithfully for three or four months, the facilitator cornered me one day and said, "You're a deacon.

Are you practicing celibacy? There's more to your story. Tell me more." I answered, "Oh no, I'm just fine." Then she said, "Your face and body language are showing discomfort. There's more to this story." I was in complete denial. I repeated, "Oh no, I'm fine." But after I left, her words were all I could think about for the next week.

The next week we had a different facilitator—and he asked me the same question! That was a turning point. I decided to tell him and the group the truth about my life-long struggles. So I explained about my sexual activities—all the years since



I was a little kid. I thought the group would have a collective faint, but everyone just sat there and listened. The date was December 21, 1996.

After that they called a man from upstairs to come down and talk with me. I wondered, "Who is this strange little man? What is he here for?" Then the two of us went into another room, where we used a computer to type back and forth to each other so we could communicate.

He told me he was part of a group of people who have the same addiction that I have—sexaholism. He asked me, "Do you want to give up lust? Do you want to surrender?" I said, "I cannot imagine how that is possible. Can I do that?" I was full of fear, but I thought that maybe this man could help me, and maybe I could stop the struggle. I thought to myself, "In a few days it will be Christmas. Why not? This will be my Christmas gift to myself." So I said, "Yes, I'm willing." And he became my sponsor.

The struggle inside me was not yet resolved, but this man gave me tools. He helped me through the Twelve Steps. This was quite difficult at first because I'm deaf and he could not sign at all, so we had to type back and forth in English (which I had trouble understanding). But even though our mode of communication was awkward, the program somehow worked. This man was quite helpful and I began to understand the addiction.

At first I told him that I struggled when I was driving down a street and would see someone, and my eyes would go to that person. He said, "Then look away, and turn it over to your Higher Power." I said, "I can't do that! I'm deaf; I need to use my eyes to look around!" But I took in what he said, and I started to pray whenever I saw a lust object. That's when I began to surrender voyeurism.

In May 2007 I went to an open SA meeting in Rochester and brought along a friend who is an interpreter. I was amazed to learn that I'm not the only person who struggles like I do. Several men spoke about their struggles with sex, as well as their recovery from the obsession, so I decided that I would share my own story. At that moment I got a bit of freedom like I had never experienced before.

As I gradually withdrew from lust, I became motivated to attend meetings and be part of the fellowship. But the local SA group wasn't ready for me. Some members were uncomfortable because we would need a sign-language interpreter to facilitate our communication, and the interpreter was not an SA member. They struggled with this for awhile. Then the group had to decide how to pay for an interpreter. That took more time. For eight months I waited. Then on August 15, 1997, I was finally invited to my first closed SA meeting

with an interpreter.

My new life of sobriety was a challenge. It was not easy to withdraw from the old life and avoid the familiar places: the bars, the parks, t or the bathrooms. But for the first time I had hope.

I remember looking at the White Book at first and struggling to understand it. It was difficult for me to read because it is not written in sign language! But as I went to meetings and interpreters signed the readings for me, I began to understand. Then I thought, "I've got to go to more meetings to get more of that."

When I first came to SA I thought, "I don't want to be with these dirty people!" But the more I went to meetings, the more I realized that I was in a room filled with entirely loveable people. Today I feel comfortable with everyone, because no matter what language we use, and no matter what the nature of our addiction is, we all have a common problem.

We also have unity. Unity keeps us together. Without this common understanding we have with one another, I could not survive. SA is the place where I can be myself and express myself, and I can truly listen to the pain of others.

Every morning when I wake up, I say, "Thank you, God! Thank you for this new day of sobriety, and for one more day of my life." I meditate

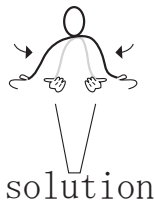
on Steps One, Two, and Three daily. Step One reminds me that I'm powerless. Step Two reminds me that there is a Power greater than myself Who can restore me to sanity. Step Three reminds me that I can I turn my life and my will over to Him.

For me, Steps Four through Ten are love in action—and this takes practice! It's not easy, but I've learned that when I make a mistake, I can admit it and then apologize. I no longer need to hide. This enables me to keep my relationships healthy.

I've become a student of our SA literature. I get together with a friend weekly and we write back and forth to each other on the computer. We read the literature together, sharing, doing the best we can.

That little man who brought me to my first surrender has been my sponsor this whole time. Even though he's hearing and I'm deaf, he's helped me develop an in-depth understanding of our literature. I've always looked up to him. We've become traveling companions, and the more time that has gone by, the more we've become equals.

What works for me today is going to meetings, seeing my sponsor regularly, praying and meditating, and doing service. My service has included chairing a marathon meeting, serving as a coffee maker, working with deaf sponsees, attending other interpreted Twelve Step meetings, and sharing



solution

my story. These tools have helped me to feel comfortable with myself. Because of SA I can enjoy being a deacon in my church, a college professor (now retired), an actor, a tutor, and—most of all—myself.

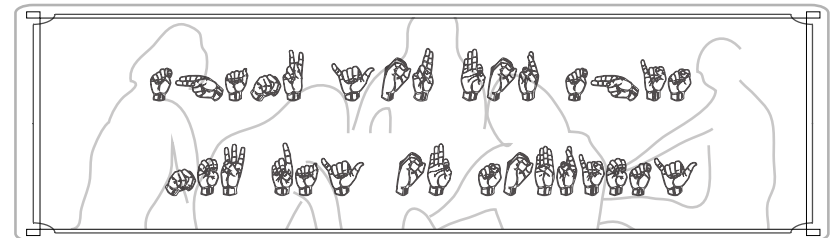
I travel frequently and have attended professional conferences all over the country. I would love to attend an SA International Convention one day. At times I feel sad that I don't have access to SA meetings in other cities, or to regional or international conventions, because there are no interpreters. I pray that one day that will change. I want to reach out to

SA members across the nation and around the world, especially to other deaf members.

I feel lucky that I ended up in Rochester. Who knows? This might be one of the few places in the world where an interpreter was available so that I could join the fellowship of SA. I'm so grateful to the groups here who offer interpreted meetings every week or month.

As I begin my 18th year of sobriety I look forward to what will happen next. And I'm happy to be traveling with all of you on the road of happy destiny.

—Pat G., Rochester, NY



Bent Iron Made Straight

My name is Bill W. and I'm a sexaholic. My sobriety date is November 26, 1995. Until I was 73 years old, I was a chronic relapser. My addiction was costly. I ended up a disgrace to myself, my family, my church, and the religious order to which I belong. I lost my license to function publicly as a priest. Some two and a half years into sobriety, I was accused of sexual

abuse on national television. That 24-hour news cycle was the lowest bottom I ever hit. Believe me, the taste of that kind of shame is bitter.

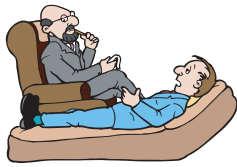
So how has SA helped me in my recovery? What have I received from the many meetings I have attended during the last 17 years? I always knew that what I was doing was wrong, but still I would act out. I spent most of my life



wrestling with this addiction. When I was 19, I read something by a saint that described me: "I am a piece of bent iron that must be bent straight." I was bent by lust. The lust in me was using a perfectly natural function (sex) to serve its own unnatural desires.

In the past in my struggle with lust, I would use the time-honored spiritual exercises of my religious tradition. All this spiritual activity helped, but I still masturbated and from time to time acted out with others. In the 1960s I went to a psychiatrist three times a week for two and a half years. This was helpful, and I had a couple of years of sobriety. But I was never free of the fear of falling. I always felt as though I was walking on a narrow path along the edge of a cliff—afraid that the ground under me would give way. And it did give way, over and over again.

In the mid-1970s, my spiritual director happened to be an AA old-timer working as an AA counselor at a rehab center. I began to see that my lust addiction was akin to alcohol addiction. I asked him to be my sponsor and tried to work the Steps with him. I took the first three Steps to the best of my ability, but still I kept relapsing. My Step Three effort to surrender never seemed to work. What was I doing wrong? Only when I started attending SA meetings



and reading the White Book did I find the answer. One sentence jumped out at me: "*Fellowship is where the action is*" (SA, 158).

My Third Step surrender needed something extra. I needed what I call a "Third Step Reality Check." For me, the Third Step means "surrender *plus*." The *plus* is what the White Book says:

Meetings, meetings, meetings, meetings, meetings.... That's what they told me. "Just keep bringing the body." "Work the Steps, work the Steps, work the Steps, work the Steps, work the Steps, work the Steps." Going to meetings and working the Steps. That's how I did it. That's how I learned to let "the grace of God enter to expel the obsession." (SA, 158)

Whenever I read those words, the English teacher in me cringes. They are too many words—redundant to the point of boredom. It all sounds corny. But working the Steps and going to meetings is what has worked for me.

In 1996, I went into a rehab center for five months and attended a Twelve Step meeting every day—150 meetings in a row. At my very first SA meeting, the speaker was a priest who held an important position in my church. He said that he had once travelled to a convention in a distant city, had acted out in the men's room when he arrived at the railroad

station, and was immediately arrested. I was astonished. Not that he had acted out, and not that he'd been arrested—but that he had the humility and guts to speak about the incident in public.

My second surprise was that there was no crosstalk from others in the meeting. The speaker did not have to defend or explain himself. It was enough to just bring that secret to the light. All the others in the room had only to listen, not give advice. There was a moment of silence, and then somebody else spoke up matter-of-factly about a different topic, or about something going on in his life. I learned two things right then:

- 1) There is safety and wisdom in the "No Crosstalk" rule, and
- 2) A Twelve Step meeting is a safe haven for a lust addict like me—in fact, it's a kind of sanctuary.

I soon learned that I am only as sick as my secrets. I have to bring my lust behavior into the light, no matter how shameful. I pictured myself standing in a ballpark at night with all the floodlights on, emptying my pockets and turning them inside out, exposing my all of my most shameful secrets—everything—for all to see.

In the past, whenever I acted out, lust was soon swept away by a storm of guilt and shame and a desperate resolve never to masturbate or act out again. My sense of guilt was always so strong that my conscience forced me to go

to confession. Going to confession after the act was fine, but it was not enough. For me it was "Too little, too late."

At meetings I learned I had to do something I found much more difficult. I had to get current, come clean, and bring lust to the light whenever it flared up. I had to get current in my next meeting—or better—call someone in the fellowship in the midst of the lust attack.

Lust for me was a kind of mind-altering drug. Whenever lust took over, I went into a trance-like state; a kind of mental paralysis. When I was in that trance, my telephone weighed 20 pounds. But now, if I call someone and get current, the call breaks the trance. I have learned that lust wilts if I bring it to the light. What a discovery!

In the past, lust would fester in the secrecy of my mind and imagination and torment me for hours and days on end until I finally masturbated or acted out with someone. But when I brought lust to the light, it evaporated. I would walk out of a meeting with the feeling that a terrible load had been lifted off my shoulders.

During those months of rehab, I began to see patterns in my behavior that I had not noticed before. I saw how I got trapped over and over again. For example, I had always thought of myself as a compassionate person. Being shy myself, I could

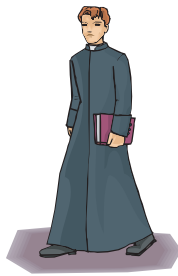
easily spot shy people who were ill at ease at public gatherings, so I'd go over and chat and try to put the shy person at ease. Sounds innocent, right? But I discovered that my compassion was actually only a stage on the way to passion. This was not easy to admit—but I learned that what I thought of as compassion was actually a cloak for lust. Being a wolf in sheep's clothing took on new meaning. I was a sexual predator. Those are ugly words, and quite painful to admit.

I also learned that I was guilty of what experts call "sex in the forbidden zone." This occurs when people who have power (such as doctors, teachers, coaches, or clergy) take advantage of the trust of those who don't have power (such as patients, students, clients, or parishioners)—by acting out sexually with them. Because of the nature of these relationships, my violations of trust were a kind of incest. For a clergyman like me, it was also an act of sacrilege—something that cries to heaven for vengeance.

While I always knew that what I was doing was wrong, I did not realize how damaging it was to the women involved. As I attended meetings, I discovered another embarrassing truth about myself. I can quickly get an adolescent crush on a woman. I began to realize that I was actually stuck at the adolescent stage of normal human development.

In my 70s that was hard for me to admit.

I also learned that—no matter how much recovery I have—my addict is always (as they say) in the next room pumping iron. For instance, just recently a friend was telling me her troubles: her father suffers from Alzheimer's, her mother had an operation and then a heart attack afterwards in the hospital, and my friend was overwhelmed trying to



take care of them both. I felt a strong urge to hug her and give her a big kiss the next time we met. Thanks to SA, alarms went off in my head and yellow warning flags began to wave. I called my sponsor and put out the fire.

Most of my life, I was a victim of bad habits. A habit is something that makes an action easily doable. If I keep feeding a Golden Retriever, it will grow into my best friend. If I keep feeding a wolf pup, it will grow into a wild beast that will turn on me and rip me apart. I have learned that every time I read erotic passages in novels, watch an X-rated film, stare at body parts or nude images (even in great works of art, paintings, or statues), and every time my eye looks inappropriately at a woman, I am feeding a wolf who lives to tear me apart.

In the past when drunk with lust, I was always on red alert. I was always mounting a kind of land, sea, and air search for what would satisfy

my lust. I've learned to stop feeding the addiction. If I stop feeding the wolf, the wolf will starve to death.

I discovered I was two people. One was fairly successful in a number of leadership positions. The other was a sexual predator. I had two memory banks: one good, one bad. In recovery, the contents of my bad memory bank began to fade. I was no longer on full sexual alert. My mind, my imagination, and especially my body quieted down. As I grew older, I actually did harm to my body trying to force it to keep up with the lust in my head. I finally learned that my addiction was in my mind, not in my body.

As my body quieted down and I stopped acting out in my mind, I came to realize that important

changes were taking place in my brain. I found that when I kept repeating my actions, my brain became wired to perform those new actions easily.

As I've kept coming to meetings and working the Steps, I've found that good habits are replacing bad ones, and the actions of recovery are becoming easier. Through SA I have begun to experience the birth of a reassuring new hope. If I go to meetings and work the Steps, I'm not doomed to fall off the cliff again. As one wise SA old-timer puts it, "The end to be achieved is to stay in the process." The piece of bent iron is gradually being bent back into shape.

—Bill W.

Upcoming International Convention

January 23-25, 2015, *Awakening the Spirit, Portland, OR*

What better way to start off a new year than to attend an SA International Convention? We chose "Awakening the Spirit" as our theme because a spiritual awakening seems to be the common result for those who have worked the Steps and continue to practice program principles in all of their affairs. While we cannot promise 70 degree weather here in Portland in January, we *can* guarantee a warm spiritual weekend filled with fellowship, recovery, and laughter. Also, for the first time, we have planned a Sunday morning speakers meeting that includes breakfast. This meal is included in the cost of registration.

The convention will be held at the Portland Sheraton Airport hotel. Discounted rates are available for those who register early: \$130 for reservations made prior to October 15th, \$160 prior to January 15, and \$175 on or after January 15. For more information, visit our website at awakeningthespirit2015.com.

We look forward to seeing you in January!

—Gavin C., Convention Chair



Sex and Intimacy in Marriage

The great blessing (or curse, as the case may be) of our condition is that unless and until we can give unconditionally and relate with others, the vacuum left inside us from withdrawal will never be filled. All along we had thought we could make the Connection by taking; we see now that we get it by giving. Our whole concept of sex begins to change. Sex finds a simple and natural place it could never have before and becomes merely one of the things that flows from true union in committed marriage. And even here, we've discovered that sex is optional (SA, 193).

When I got sober in SA, I had to learn what healthy sexuality is and how to experience true intimacy. I had never experienced either one for any prolonged period in over 30 years of marriage. My relationship was plagued with control and avoidance. My wife knew something was wrong, but for many years I denied it.

What I have learned so far, after four years of SA sobriety, is that any form of control undermines what God is after in my marriage—namely, true freedom. I can only love my wife if I am free to do so and if she responds to me freely, without fear. Therefore I must surrender all forms of fantasy and sexual control.

I've learned that when pornographic images or fantasies of other women come into my mind, I must stop any sexual intimacy until I surrender them to God and my head is clear. I don't explain this to my wife. I don't need to plant fear in her

mind. I simply stop, surrender the fantasy, work the Steps, and talk to my sponsor.

For me, fantasy is an attempt to control the mood of the experience with my wife, and I cannot allow the experience with her to continue with any such additive. I must also surrender control of what she will do, and of any kind of manipulation of the sexual experience. Any form of control undermines my experience with her. I only want her to engage in an activity she is comfortable with. I am invested in her freedom as well as my own. Formerly, sex was something I took from her. Lust is taking. But now, sex is something we share.

The White Book says that "sex was indeed optional" (204), and I can only remain free if orgasm is also optional. Formerly, any sexual involvement with my wife would mean that I had to have an orgasm. If I didn't get it, I would resort to



masturbation soon after. Before, I would feel robbed without orgasm, but now I have learned that whatever happens is okay. I have let go. How does this relate to my overall program? It is deeply connected to detaching from outcomes, and that means all outcomes—sexual ones included.

My wife and I now enjoy intimacy, even if it is imperfect. Before, I felt that I could not sit in a room quietly with my wife unless I controlled the conversation. I even felt she demanded that I "come up with something" to talk about. I have now let go of that too. If we are quiet, so be it. If she wants to talk, I try to listen. I have learned that I don't have to fix her unhappiness or take responsibility for it. We are

now just two people who freely choose to be with each other—people who choose to listen to each other. I have learned that if I can't get to that place, there is usually something wrong with me. Our goal is to be two people sitting in a room choosing each other, again and again. That is all and it is more than enough. It is also the best place to be. And we have discovered that we really like and really love each other.

Love, intimacy, and sexual expression all flourish in a place of freedom and honesty. This is a place where things can truly blossom. The SA program is designed to move me along on a spiritual path—but the benefits accrue to my marriage as well.

—Jay H., Jacksonville, FL

My Experience with Sober Dating

The best thing that ever happened to me was the day that my ex-wife threw me out of the house, near the end of 2006. I had been through rehab and in and out of SA, and yet here I was again, caught looking at porn online. My wife had had it. Thank God she was willing to give up on me.

I felt horrible at the time, but today I can look back at that first month when I was living out of my car (and bumming places to sleep from friends and family) as the beginning

of my freedom from dependency on romantic relationships. From an early age, I had accepted the lie that my self-worth comes from whether or not someone else is willing to be in an exclusive romantic relationship with me. I had to spend a long time after my divorce intentionally staying single, so that I could learn to be comfortable without a romantic partner.

In 2007 and 2008—while I was working on my Fourth Step and with less than three months of sobriety—I attended



“Sober Dating” breakout sessions at International conventions and marathons. Someone probably frankly told me that I ought to have more sobriety before starting to date, but I entirely ignored him. Someone else probably pointed out that I ought to be through all Twelve Steps before starting to date, and somehow I missed it. Eventually, in early 2009, my sponsor gently told me that I needed to have at least one year of sobriety and be halfway through my Step Nine amends before he would support my dating. I thank God that this time I listened.

I decided to treat dating the same way I treat all other parts of my recovery: I needed to be accountable. So I did not keep this area private from my sponsor or from the other SA members with whom I’m intimate. The “I-can-do-it-myself” attitude is no more useful here than anywhere else in my recovery. And with the abundance of misinformation in the popular media regarding dating, I probably needed more help in this area than in other parts of my recovery.

I was advised that the best way to find people to date was to get involved in activities I like doing (with no romantic angle), and see who God brings into my life. For me, those activities included serving in the nursery at church, joining a gym, getting together with people

to play board games, and joining a small group fellowship in my church. These activities gave me a chance to learn how to identify characteristics in other people that I find attractive. This was a significant change from my old criteria: if a woman was willing to tolerate my presence, I was willing to follow her to the grave.

I learned that there are spiritual and emotional personality traits that are more attractive to me than a nice physical appearance. God regularly reminded me that we will all get old and wrinkly, but a heart trained to seek His Will can last a lifetime (or longer, I believe). I’ve also found that simple tastes and humility can be a lot more important in a partner than a sense of humor or being a good conversationalist.

After much discussion with my sponsor and sober friends in the program, I finally asked a woman out on a date. She was one of the ladies from my church group, and at the time I had been sober just over a year. This was an enormous amount of work! Even before our date, I had to constantly surrender relationship fantasies. She hadn’t even said “Yes” yet and I was picking out curtains. Then after she did say yes, I still had to work hard to stay in the present with God.

The date itself was probably the easiest part. We were able to avoid a lot of the “keeping up



appearances” nonsense because we had been developing a friendship in our church group, and we knew quite a bit about each other. This was one of the first times when I was actually able to be myself, instead of acting the way I thought someone else wanted me to act. When I dropped her off, I realized that I was exhausted, and that I really did not want to do that again.

I called my sponsor because we had agreed beforehand that I would bookend the event. God took care of me through the process, and even enabled me to disengage decently when she began dating someone else and eventually married him. It didn’t feel good at the time, but the experience was good for me in the long run.

A couple of years later, I started dating another lady from my church. God managed to keep me sober through 16 months of dating and a five-month engagement. Because of SA, we’ll be celebrating our second anniversary soon (although we’re living one day at a time). We’ve found that taking the actions of love in our marriage is easy for us. Our habits of honesty and respect (which began before we started dating) have borne fruit.

I have come to believe that the romantic notion that there is one “perfect” partner somewhere for me—my “one true love,” my

soul mate—is an illusion. My Higher Power is my soul mate. He knows me the best, loves me perfectly, forgives me perfectly, and consistently gives me what I need. I’ve also come to believe that the state of being “in love” is pretty close to mental illness. I went through that phase in my previous dating process, when I could never see any faults in my girlfriends. I always thought they were “perfect.” But that’s not love; that’s infatuation—and infatuation always ends. This time, when I began to experience what I saw as my girlfriend’s faults, I had the chance to practice *real* love. Because of SA, I can choose to take the actions of love toward others regardless of their actions.

Another step I took, on my sponsor’s advice, was to get the addiction out in the open with my girlfriend fairly early. Through the church group connection, both of the ladies I dated knew that I was an addict, because in the group I would talk in general terms about the

Twelve Steps and recovery. (Of course I didn’t share the specifics about the compulsive masturbation or the thousands of hours spent viewing porn!)

With the woman I eventually married, I decided to disclose the more specific details of my addiction on our third date. This also involved many discussions with my sponsor and a lot of work



on letting go of expectations. My thinking was that my addiction and my recovery are a central part of my life, so keeping it from her much longer was dishonest. I was open to the idea that she might be catching a cab home from the date because she might not be interested in being around me any longer. I was a bit surprised when her response was to ask me what we were going to do on our fourth date.

On the fifth date, we talked about the issue of physical boundaries in dating. What worked best for me was to not go beyond kissing. We talked about this in clear terms, and we both honored this boundary until we were married. Could I have stayed sober and avoided lust if we had gone further

than this? Perhaps—but I didn't trust myself to do that. And by this time in my recovery, sex had indeed become optional and I didn't want to do anything to jeopardize it.

Today my wife and I are building a relationship together based on a foundation of honesty and trust. I

know that I still need to avoid lusting after her, and that sex is optional. But through SA, I have found sober sex within marriage to be quite rewarding, and so much better than addictive sex.

Because of SA, I'm able to submit to my Higher Power, to behave with integrity, and to be faithful to my wife. This is what SA has given me: a life far better than what I could ever have imagined.

—Robert Z., Peoria, IL



Members Share

I Am White Tiger

Mine was the first name to be called. As I walked onto the floor of the sports pavilion at our local university and stood before 3,000 spectators, I thought, "I can't believe I'm doing this!" Then I bowed to the judges and began the first move of the 24-Step Form of Tai Chi. This was a miracle of my SA recovery.

The road to that moment was a long one. Before starting Tai Chi in 2013, I

had never participated in any kind of organized or intramural sport of any kind—not basketball, football, or soccer—not anything.

I grew up in an alcoholic family, in a divorced home where I was subjected to emotional, physical, spiritual, and sexual abuse. There were no adult male figures around to teach me how to play sports. I was shy and extremely uncoordinated, and I was quite small



for my age—both physically and sexually. I had absolutely no friends. The only exception was a 15-year-old neighbor boy who befriended me the summer I turned 14. Within a few weeks he was molesting me, but I didn't mind. I thought it was a small price to pay, because he was the first and only friend I ever had. Thus my sex addiction was born.

That fall, my family moved from Kansas to California. High school gym classes and the locker room became nightmares of shame and humiliation for me; not only because I was clumsy at sports but also because of the small size of my genitals. When the boys in the locker room looked at me, I became the object of constant name-calling and degradation. The trauma of this humiliation has caused me deep shame throughout my life. I believe it is at the heart of my addiction.

After high school, I moved back to Kansas to attend college. I was pledged by a fraternity there—not because I was popular or had good grades or because I was athletic, but only because my father, my uncle, and my cousin had been members—so the fraternity had to take me. It was there that I discovered alcohol, and alcohol became my savior. Drinking gave me the courage to date and to dance, and I was somehow able to fake it and fit in. At all costs I had to look good—but when I couldn't look good, at least I did not want to look bad. Over the

next four years of college, I became an alcoholic and a sexaholic. I was drunk every weekend and masturbating constantly.

The college locker room and the fraternity shower room continued to be places of deep embarrassment, because of mocking from my peers. I was 22 when I had intercourse for the first time with a prostitute. This was a deeply degrading and shaming event. What I believed deep in my soul was that I was not a man. I knew what real men looked like, and I wasn't one of them.

After college I joined the military, and for 25 years I drank and sexed my way through seven countries. The military offered numerous intramural sporting activities, but I never participated in any of these. I only watched or umpired or refereed. At times, others tried to talk me into participating, or even tried to shame me into it—but I resisted.

When I was 28, I married the woman I'm married to today. And after 46 years (and only because of AA and SA)—I love her more than the day we were married. We have a beautiful daughter, and my wife considers me a great husband and father. That certainly was not true of me in my addictions, but that's how she sees me today.

When I was 45, at the end of my military career, I began having suicidal thoughts because of my drinking. It took me two more

years to get serious, but in 1985 I joined AA, and I have been sober from alcohol ever since. After I quit drinking, however, my sexaholism—which had been in the background—leapt to the forefront, and eventually I ended up in porn shops. At first I would just watch porn and masturbate, but before long I was acting out with men. My sex addiction continued for the next 22 years.

I came to SA in January 2000 because I found myself wanting to drink again. But for a very long time, I was only playing with the SA program. Thus, even though I did stay sober from alcohol, I could not stay sexually sober.

By January 2007 I had become deeply depressed. After all this time, I still could not stay sexually sober, my thoughts again turned to drinking, and once again I was having suicidal thoughts. But this time those thoughts scared me, so I finally surrendered to the SA program and to God, and I've been sober ever since.

In 2013, at age 73, I connected with a former sponsor and reworked the Steps. I also started seeing a counselor to work on old issues, including my early molestation and my shame related to the size of my genitals. As part of my spiritual growth, I also attended a retreat in May 2013 in Colorado—and there I re-injured an old back and hip

problem. Thus I found myself in a wheel chair at the Denver airport, and then at the San Diego airport.

Back home, I was referred to a physical therapist, who suggested that I consider signing up for Tai Chi to improve my balance, flexibility, and leg strength. My mouth said "Yes" but my mind said, "You must be kidding! There is absolutely no way I will do that! Tai Chi requires athletic skills."

Then God began to intervene. I heard that still small voice saying, "You can do it. I'll be with you. It will be okay." It took me five weeks to get up the courage to begin the search for the right Tai Chi school, but in August 2013, I joined a local school. The school symbol—a White Tiger—stands for confidence, worthiness, and poise. Before, I could never have applied those words to myself; yet now I participate in three group classes and one individual class each week, and I practice on three other days.

After the first month, I shared several things with my instructor: my absolute fear of sports-like activities, my fear of not being coordinated enough to do Tai Chi, the fact that I'm rated 50% disabled by the VA, and my overriding need to look good (or at least to not look bad). My instructor is one of the most gentle, guiding yet persuasive men I have ever known. He has gently pushed



me and encouraged me to advance in my qualifications, and I've been moved to tears at the results. It has been the God of my understanding—Who I found in the rooms of SA and AA—Who gave me and continues to give the courage to change.

The result was that after nine months, my instructor gently recommended that I enter the local Tiger Cup Martial Arts Tournament. I resisted. He suggested, and again I resisted. The third time he said, "This is not a suggestion, I want you to sign up. You won't believe the self-confidence and self-esteem you will gain from participating in this event." He sounded just like my SA sponsor, so I signed up!

So there I was on the floor of our local sports pavilion, performing Tai Chi in front of more than 1,200 students and 2,000 plus persons in the audience. My instructor had said, "Trust that you know the moves, you have practiced them hundreds of

times, and you are ready. Tune out the noise and listen to your inner self. Become one with your spirit." And I did just that.

When it was over, I was awarded fourth place out of the **13** total competitors in my level of experience. As I walked off the floor, I did an arm pump and said to myself, "Son of a gun, you did it!" And then, "God, we did it!!!" The gratitude for my recovery was overwhelming and tears were flowing down my cheeks.

Because of SA I had the courage to change, and all I had to do was to change my attitude and my beliefs about myself. This has been a true spiritual awakening, as the result of working my SA program. Today I know that I am a loving son of a loving God and a wonderfully made man, just as I am—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

I am White Tiger.

—Anonymous, California

Rigorous Honesty

I would like to share a few thoughts and feelings—strength and hope if you will—because I've heard that only by giving it away can I get to keep it. I recently had a magnificent transformation inside of me, and I really want to keep it!

I've found that for me, lust is like a mushroom. It grows in the dark and vanishes the moment

it breaks out into the light. A fantasy grows from within. I didn't cause it, I can't control it, and I can't cure it. But I can share it with other people.

In the past I went to therapy for same-sex lust. I tried to fight my same-sex lust and wished it would go away. At times I had periods when I felt free of it. This was usually



after I did some grief work with my therapist (related to my ugly past). But the relief only lasted for a short time, until the next “Big Fix” presented itself in the form of an attractive man. I was baffled. I couldn’t understand why this kept happening. I would fall into self-pity, guilt, and shame—and finally I would act out. Then I would just try to forget about it, until the next time.

In SA I found something that works: the magic of sharing my secrets—with rigorous honesty—with another human being. I don’t understand it, but I have experienced this freedom more and more—and through SA, I’ve been sober since December 23, 2012.

Just after I got sober, I listened to a recording of an old timer who spoke at a convention in Israel, and I heard him share the value of explicit sharing. He said that, in order to be free of lust, we must share even our deepest secrets with others. He said that whenever any of us picks up that phone to make a call to an SA friend, we should be explicit and share our struggles. We should first ask for permission from the other person, and then share it all. That was the beginning of my recovery.

Today, after working through the Steps and using other program tools, explicit sharing is what still works best for me for getting lust out of my head. My sponsor says I must have zero tolerance toward lust, because

I can’t work the Steps if I’m drunk. So I need to continue being honest and sharing my fantasies. I must be rigorously honest in order to stay sober.

But picking up that phone is not always easy. At times my disease tells me that “normal” people don’t have the feelings that I do; that I’m damaged. And some of my behavior has seemed too hard or too embarrassing to share. On those occasions, I write everything down on paper and then read it out loud to God and then to an SA friend. I read it word-for-word from the paper. I know that I must fully admit my deepest secrets. I must share my whole self, with nothing

to hide. And as I’ve made those calls over and over again with many different SA members, I’ve learned that I’m not so different and I’m not alone.

I’ve also found that when I talk honestly with people for whom I feel lust or jealousy, that also takes my shame out and sets me free. While others might look “perfect” on the outside when compared to my insides, once I share with them I find that they seem to have the same inner struggles that I have. I’m not alone anymore. That’s because we all share this disease of sexaholism. I only need to be honest in the moment of the lust hit, and pick up the phone.

Sharing my secrets hurts. It’s



“like pulling a thorn from our festering soul” (SA, 127)—but sharing helps me heal.

After sharing my lust with another friend, I usually pray for the person I’m lusting after. I say something like: “God bless him.” Or, “God, give him anything I wish for myself: true happiness, joy, real connection with you, family, and peace.” Or “God, save me from my lust, Your will be done.” Sometimes I add, “God, may I find in you what I look for in my lust.” I use all the prayers suggested in the White Book. This really works!

At times I still feel as if I’m re-experiencing terrible isolation and loneliness. But today I know

that, because of SA, I’m not alone. Another member can be present with me, whether on the phone or in person. And God is with us both.

So in SA my soul has found what it has been looking for: a deep connection with other human beings. This is a true spiritual connection, based on rigorous self-honesty and true fellowship. This is much more than I could ever have dreamed of. Actually, it might be exactly what I was always dreaming of, without really knowing it.

Thank you SA for saving my life. I feel like I am only beginning our journey, and I am forever grateful.

—*In fellowship, Aviad, Israel*

Offering My Temptations

Some years ago, while sitting on a park bench in a university town and reading a book, I saw an old monk walking toward me. He was wearing a medieval-looking dark brown habit, and as he approached me he asked if he could sit beside me and talk. As I had seen him approaching out of the corner of my eye and had hoped that he would talk to me, I was happy to say yes. Although I was totally immersed in my disease at the time, I had always been thirsty for spirituality, and I was curious about this man’s unusual appearance in that place filled with young students.



As we started talking, I disclosed to him how desperate and lonely I felt and how powerless I was over masturbation and sex with women I knew, as well as with prostitutes. He listened with a keen interest; then he talked without any judgment, but with a lot of compassion and love. And although I told him everything, I didn’t sense any disgust or judgment on his part.

He told me—with a child-like honesty—that he had never masturbated in his life. However, he did experience temptations once in a while, and he used spiritual tools to overcome them. I told him that I

didn't believe in the same God as he did, but he didn't mind. He said that each time I was able to give up any of my addictive urges to my God, then God and His companions would be dancing in Heaven.

My suffocating heart felt a glimmer of hope. He added that anytime I was able to surrender my urges to God, I also could use that surrender as an opportunity to pray for a person I loved. I couldn't grasp the concept at the time, and I was too self-absorbed to even "act as if" I could pray for anyone else's welfare.

I met with him a few more times in those months, until I fell so deep into my addiction that I avoided all contact with this holy person. When I tried to contact him again in the first year of my recovery, I was sad to learn that he had died some months before, at the age of 91.

After joining SA, I found a similar idea in "The Joy Response" (from *Recovery Continues*) of saying a prayer of gratitude whenever I'm tempted:

It occurred to me that I might try gratitude whenever I was tempted. The next temptation I had happened to be resentment-anger, and as I became aware of it, I thanked God for the situation and for victory over my resentment. Doing

that felt strange, but I thanked Him for both trial and victory *while feeling resentful*. I was immediately loosed from it. (RC, 39)

So I tried thanking God when I felt tempted, and I've found this practice to be beneficial in reducing my overwhelming fears of relapsing, as well as in bringing me to a place of more trust and acceptance. But the prayer felt incomplete.

Then one day I remembered the words of the old monk, and this motivated me to take the prayer one step further. I could actually thank my Higher Power for the temptation—because it is an opportunity to abstain from lust—and at the same time I could offer the prayer for someone I loved. So in the next lust temptation I said:

"Thank you God, for this temptation which I present to You as an offering for the spiritual health of my parents," or, "...for this fellow that I don't like."

In this way, for me, the circle feels complete. The prayer of gratitude is always helpful, but then also offering a prayer for the sake of someone else (even people I don't like) seems to turn the surrender into an even more spiritual act. Each time I do this today, this unnatural not-doing-what-I-want-to-do gets a whole new dimension—a new meaning. My worst struggles become



my greatest opportunities to do good for others. I am reminded that,

For if [a sexaholic] failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work,

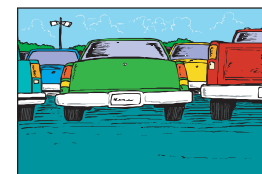
he would surely [lust] again, and if he [lusted] he would surely die. (AA 14-15)

I really don't want to lust again, so I must strive to enlarge my spiritual life.

—Luc D, Belgium

Camaraderie in the Parking Lot

When I arrived at my regular SA Monday night dinner meeting this week, I found that the restaurant where we usually hold the meeting was closed due to a neighborhood electrical outage. One member drove off, while three of us walked next door to a fast-food place to eat. I was feeling a bit distraught over losing my meeting, but as I walked back to my car around 7pm, I saw the meeting!



There at the east end of the parking lot—just beyond the purring electric company truck, and beyond the still unlit restaurant—I saw about 15 people. Half of them were sitting on a wall and one guy was facing them, reading "What Is a Sexaholic and What Is Sexual Sobriety?" (SA,

202) I was overwhelmed by the camaraderie and by the desire of our members to be together to have a meeting. With gratitude, I walked over to join the group.

As the sun was setting over the nearby freeway, we got to share our experience, strength, and hope with each other. We gave out two chips. Almost everyone noted the special circumstance, and what it meant to them.

By the time the meeting ended, the sun had set, and the parking lot was lit only by a few emergency lights. But many members stayed after the meeting to talk further, as if reluctant to let the meeting end. What a blessing!

—Joe A., San Diego

Have You Found the Freedom?

Recently, I was driving to a neighboring town to meet my mother and sisters for dinner. I was on a recovery call when my cell phone



battery died, and I had lost my car charger. I felt isolated. I like the security and support of having a working cell phone and I thought about stopping

to buy a new car charger. I arrived at the restaurant early and had time to find a phone store close by, so I decided to go and get a car charger.

As I walked into the store, I was greeted with a bright and cheery, "How can I help you?" I held up my old dumb phone and stated, "I need a car charger." The young man saw my old phone and energetically stated, "You need a smart phone." My response was confident and clear: "I am a sex addict; porn makes me crazy. I need a dumb phone." The clerk looked a bit shocked, and then he smiled as he said, "That was honest." We both laughed.

As I was completing my

Introducing New Trustee Chair

The Inverted Pyramid of Service

I'm George, a sexaholic. I've been sexually sober since June 12, 2001. Before I found SA, I spent all of my working hours acting out with my cyber girlfriends in chat rooms across several time zones. I was totally consumed by lust. I had a short affair with one of my customers, and I only wanted more.

One of the casualties of my disease was my work ethic. It had gone

purchase, he began to ask questions about sex addiction and recovery.

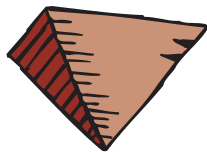
When the transaction was nearly finished he looked at me and gently asked, "Have you found the freedom?" I responded, "Recovery has saved my marriage, my career, and my life."

I don't know if this clerk had a problem with lust, or if my frank admission was a kind of Twelve Step call for him. I do know that I have found the freedom that can only be found when I am working my recovery program, and today I'm letting my Higher Power drive the bus. Recovery is a beautiful thing.

—Jon, a grateful recovering sexaholic

down the tubes with everything else. When I came into recovery, I quickly figured out that my work hours were for working, and it took me a long time to regain what I had lost. But today I can thank SA for saving my life and my neck. My intention ever since has been to give some of what I've received back to the fellowship.

Thus, I have felt privilege to be able to serve as an SA Trustee since



July 2011, and this past July, I was elected as Trustee Chair. I am grateful for this opportunity to serve the fellowship. That also puts me—in terms of SA's inverted pyramid of Service structure—at the very bottom of the pyramid.

I was once inside one of the pyramids at Giza in Egypt. A bunch of us climbed down a narrow V-shaped tunnel and back up the other half into the center of the tomb, which is the burial chamber. As I lay down in the spot where the Pharaoh had been, I started humming different pitches until I hit the resonant note of the chamber (I'm a musician and also a geek!). In my mind's eye, while everything in the room was vibrating, I could sense the weight of that mountain of hewn stones on top of me. It was eerie.

I like to visualize concepts, and when I think of SA's Inverted Pyramid of Service, I could see those different levels full of people, from the Groups at the top, the Intergroups just below them, the Regions below them, the General Delegate Assembly next, and the Board of Trustees at the bottom. Then I remembered my Egyptian escapade and realized that I was once again at the bottom of the mountain. For a moment, I could sense the weight of the SA fellowship upon me. Then I remembered that I am still absolutely powerless over everything in my life, and that I need God to do for me what I can-

not do for myself. So I asked God to step into my spot to help me to serve under the immense weight of the SA fellowship.

In my role as Chair, I believe that my responsibility is to stand next to Him and be as useful as I can to my fellows. It's a lot like when my son was a toddler. If I was carrying a big heavy box, he would run up and grab the bottom corner of it and say, "I'll help you, Daddy!" Of course, he was really no help at all, but I wasn't about to stop him! And now I am like that toddler standing next to God, who is doing all the heavy lifting.

As a trusted servant at the lowest level of service, I need to be willing to be servant of all. From my vantage point, I only have to look up to see every member of SA above me. I must work my program in such a way that I may be of maximum usefulness to my fellows. I am just another Bozo on the bus—there is nothing special about me. I just happen to be here at this time to serve this Fellowship as best I can, and I am very grateful for the opportunity to do so.

If you need to reach me for any reason, I can be contacted through SAICO. I am, after all, at your service!

—Love in Fellowship, George F., San Diego



May 2014 EMER Convention in Israel

Last May I attended the Europe and Middle East Region (EMER) Convention and Regional Assembly meeting in Israel. From the time I left my home in Ireland until I returned, I was in fellowship almost the entire time. This was the trip of a lifetime!

The first morning after we arrived, a few of us attended a local English-speaking SA meeting. I was amazed to be in an SA meeting in Jerusalem with so many Orthodox Jews in attendance. We also connected daily with other SA members. One member gave 10 of us a guided tour of the Old City of Jerusalem. Because of the city's strong religious connections, I felt an ease in connecting with a Higher Power.

On the first evening of the convention, I attended an early bird meeting. More than 30 members attended, including eight of us from Ireland. The fellowship was great, but when retiring that night, I had a burning desire to share my difficulties with codependency and same sex-lust. I prayed, wrote a Step Ten, and then prayed that I would meet the right person to share it with.

I went to the lobby, but as everyone was in conversation, I paused and again prayed. When I turned around, another SA member was standing right next to me. We started

talking and we were soon identifying with each other on the very thing I had written. So I asked if I could I share my Tenth Step with him, and I did—and I felt welcome acceptance that he could identify with my problems.

On the first morning of the convention, I needed some “me” time, so I decided to visit the Holocaust Museum. After this experience and the previous night's activities, I felt quite emotional. For the next couple of days, I felt both gratitude and sadness and I had many tearful moments. However, I've learned from other members that it is important for my recovery to express my feelings. I cried as I was hugged by a kind member who encouraged me to accept the discomfort of my same-sex lust and to see this as a deep need in me wanting to heal. I was encouraged to see myself being cradled by God in His loving arms.

The convention was exhilarating: meetings, speakers, and fellowship throughout the day. Then came the entertainment—just what my Higher Power ordered: a singing/dancing fest of Israeli music with other men in a safe and loving environment. This was quite healing for me.

I also felt emotional at the closing ceremony, as the representatives of the Regional Assembly from many countries shared their joy of



being involved in the convention. One member, when asked where he was from, pronounced from the microphone, “Heaven,” and a nearby Jewish member uttered, “Of your understanding!” He then invited all those with a year or more of sobriety to stand. As I stood and looked around the hall, I felt grateful for everyone present.

When the convention ended, three of us Irish members joined members from Spain, England, Israel, Poland, and Belgium to spend one night at a 10-day Recovery Camp on the shores of Galilee. Upon arriving, everyone helped set up camp—a wonderful experience of fellowship!

The following morning we had early prayers and ate a light breakfast. Camp duties were next, and a number of us were then given the task of cleaning the public toilets. Part of our program was to leave places in a better condition than when we arrived, and with enthu-

siastic fellowship, even this proved enjoyable—we were even late for a 9 am meeting!

Afterwards I participated in a meditation exercise. We met in a circle, read Step Eleven, and recited the Serenity Prayer and the St. Francis Prayer. Next, we went for a short walk—walking slowly, silently, and mindfully. When we returned we shared our thoughts on the experience. There was a great feeling of togetherness. Afterward, we still had time for a dip before the 11:00 meeting. After lunch we prepared for our flight home to the Emerald Isle.

Thank you Israel for fellowship, love, and such a warm welcome; for the enhanced fellowship with my Irish buddies; and for the opportunity to connect with members from other countries. This entire trip was quite healing for me. Most of all, I thank God for the time of my life.

—Anonymous, s/d 7-15-12

Want to Connect With SA Members Around the World? Join SA's International Buddy List or Sisters List

The Buddy List is a directory of 350 SA men from around the world who wish to share their experience, strength, and hope with one another. To join the Buddy List, please contact sabuddylist@gmail.com. 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. There are currently 92 women from 24 countries on the list. To be added to the list, contact SAICO at 1-866-424-8777 or email saico@sa.org.



Let's reach out to others in our global fellowship!

Report of the General Delegate Assembly

July 11-13, 2014, Detroit, MI

Dear Fellow SA Members:

The General Delegate Assembly (GDA), which meets quarterly, held its annual face-to-face meeting July 10-11, prior to the July convention. All regions were represented except the Persian-Speaking, Russian-speaking, and Australia/Asia regions. Also present were the Trustees, Trustee candidates, representatives from SAICO, and observers.

General Delegate Assembly Actions

- Re-affirmed three Trustees for another year of service: George F., Laura W., and Mike S. Four Trustee candidates were interviewed and elected to office: Gene T., Dave H., Bill S., and Mitch A.
- Adopted the 2015 budget (summarized on the opposite page). New authorized expenses provide for hiring a part-time SAICO staffer to assist with shipping and for travel to assist the International Committee in serving our growing worldwide Fellowship. Although the budget is prudent in all respects, projected expenses exceed anticipated revenue, and we remain dependent on the continued support of our members as we strive to meet our primary purpose: to carry the SA message to sexaholics who still suffer.
- Approved a new brochure, "Am I Too Young to be a Sexaholic?"
- Directed Regional Alignment Committee (RAC) to begin a study to determine the number of meetings in each region, the average estimated attendance at each meeting, and the identity of contact persons for each meeting. This information will be used for internal purposes and not for publication, as we seek to understand the present level of development and service needs of the Fellowship as a whole.
- Approved the inclusion of Roy K.'s last letter to the Fellowship, "Searchlight of the Spirit," in the SA Service Manual.
- Received Committee reports, including the status of work-in-progress to revise the Service Manual; work of the Literature Committee in completing a 366-day meditations book and editing and publication of *Step Into Action* as a single volume; work of the Corrections Facilities Committee (CFC) in providing literature to inmates and preparing new literature for those entering and leaving correctional facilities; and activities of the International Committee in providing speakers to conduct workshops and provide information in developing areas of the fellowship; and the work of the conventions committee in assisting those hosting International conventions.

Recognition of Members Rotating Off

The Assembly extended its thanks to retiring Delegates Ed R., Terry O.,

Glenn J., and retiring Trustees, Bob H. and Jerry L. for their many years of service to our fellowship.

Our next meeting will be by teleconference on October 5, 2014. I remain in awe of the great service work done by so many to assure that whenever anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, the hand of SA is there. It is a great joy to me to be a small part of this work.

— Gary L., GDA Chair

SA Financial Snapshot YTD 2014

	Budget Item	2014 BUDGET Jan-June	2014 ACTUAL June YTD	2015 BUDGET	
Revenues	Contributions	75,000	89,086	155,000	
	SACFC	5,000	6,938	13,000	
	Convention Donations	10,000	20,134	22,500	
	Literature Sales	37,500	53,627	74,000	
	Literature Volume Discounts	(3,250)	(5,583)	(7,400)	
	Essay	4,400	5,427	13,800	
	Credit Card Recovery	1,250	2,331	900	
	Cost of Goods Sold (COGS)	(12,250)	(17,415)	(23,000)	
	Interest	600	204	1,800	
	TOTAL Revenues	118,250	154,747	249,800	
Expenses	Bank Charges	100	17	200	
	Credit Card Fees	4,400	4,209	10,500	
	Accounting	2,900	3,281	6,000	
	Liability Insurance	1,150	841	2,300	
	Taxes and Licenses	300	419	600	
	Legal	250	0	500	
	Compensation				
	Payroll and Benefits	69,210	66,918	152,500	
	Professional Fees	2,950	2,950	5,900	
	Overhead				
	Office Supplies	1,550	4,443	3,100	
	Printing	2,250	601	5,000	
	Postage and Freight	6,325	6,318	13,000	
	Telephone	2,250	3,258	6,500	
	Internet Services	1,300	5,768	3,600	
	Facility				
	Rent	9,550	9,389	19,500	
	Repairs and Maintenance	250	2,935	500	
	Travel	16,500	17,174	38,000	
	TOTAL Expenses	121,185	128,047	275,900	
	Revenues-Expenses	(2,935)	26,700	(26,000)	

Note from the Finance Committee Chair

Dear SA Fellowship:

I am grateful to the fellowship for stepping forward in your contributions to SAICO this past year. As shown on the previous page, our net revenues have increased by \$29,600 over budget so far this year. Literature sales were 37% over budget, aided by the new "90 Day Meditation Reader" and increases in Essay circulation. The Nashville Convention boosted net revenue greatly. Fellowship contributions were 20% over this year's budget.



Thank you all for your generous contributions to our fellowship.

—Carlton B., Finance Committee Chair



— Luc D.

New SA Groups

USA and Canada

Denver, CO (additional mtg)
Brighton MI (additional mtg)
Corpus Christi TX
Englewood CO (Women) (additional mtg)
Dalton GA
Deland FL (additional mtg)
Fremont OH
New Braunfels TX

Port Angeles WA
Santa Maria CA
North Tampa FL
Winnipeg MB Canada (Additional)

International

Buenos Aires, Argentina
Johannesburg, South Africa
Bet Shemesh Israel (Additional)
Tsfat Israel (Additional)
Jerusalem Israel (Additional)



Delegates and Trustees September 2014

Gary L., <i>GDA Chair</i> Tom K., <i>GDA Vice-Chair</i>		Literature, Legal (Chair), COMC Conventions (Chair), Nominations
Region	Delegate	Committees
North Midwest	Scott S. Dimitri P. John H.	Information Technology, Conventions International (Chair), Conventions RAC
South Midwest	Joe M. Steve L. Dave T, <i>Alternate</i>	RAC (Chair), Legal Finance, Nominations Conventions, PI
Northwest	Brian W. Yvon L. Kathy R., <i>Alternate</i> Scott W., <i>Alternate</i>	Literature, CFC CFC, Conventions Literature
Southwest	Eric S. Steve C. Jim C., <i>Alternate</i> Cal H., <i>Alternate</i>	RAC, CFC PI, Service Structure Finance, Conventions, IT
Mid-Atlantic	Carl N. Mike S., <i>Alternate</i> Ben L., <i>Alternate</i> Hugh S., <i>Alternate</i>	H&I Nominations Conventions, IT
Northeast	Gary M.	Finance, Conventions
Southeast	Art S. Manse B. LB B., <i>Alternate</i>	CFC, Literature Finance, Conventions Literature, RAC
German spkg	Hans L.	Literature, CFC
EMER	Francis C., Ireland Cathal M., Ireland AJ A., Israel Daan L., <i>Alt.</i> , Netherlands Luc D., <i>Alt.</i> Belgium Artemes, <i>Alt.</i> Spain	H&I, International, Literature PI H&I

Trustee	Committees
George F., <i>Chair</i> Mike S., <i>Vice Chair</i> Mitch A. Bill S. Dave H. Gene T. Laura W.	IT, Finance COMC, Conventions, Service Structure IT, Service Structure Finance, International, Serv. Structure, Nominations Finance, Legal, RAC CFC, International Literature, H&I, Conventions

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

Calendar of Events



October 2014

3-4, San Antonio TX, USA: *Days in Recovery.* Contact: 210-849-5673 or 210-771-7214

10-12, Irvine CA, USA: 25th Annual Unity Conference: *25 Years: Fostering Experience, Strength, and Hope.* Contact sasanonunity.com or Registration@sasanonunity.com

10-12, Plano IL, USA: *Made a Decision.* Contact chicagosa.org

11, Greensboro, NC, USA: *Recovery in the Fall.* Contact: 336-833-1591 or servingtheliving@gmail.com

17-19, Wichita Kansas USA: SA South Midwest Region Fall Retreat: *The Twelve Promises - Recovery Continues.* Contact wichita2014retreat@gmail.com

17-18, Scarborough Ontario Canada (Toronto): SA 18th Annual Ontario

Marathon; *Change, Live & Grow.* Contact 416-410-7622, saontario.org, or events@saontario.org

17-19, Pittsburgh PA, USA: SA/S-Anon Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention, *A Change of Heart.* Info at www.acoh2014.org, or acoh2014pgh@gmail.com. Register online at www.acoh2014.org

18, Jacksonville FL ,USA: SA Marathon, *Common Solution.* Info at JaxMarathonSaySA@gmail.com

26, Stamford CT USA: SA One Day Workshop, *Serenity in Stamford.* Contact saico@sa.org

28-30, Spanish SA/S-Anon Convention, Logroño, Spain. Contact camotora1707@yahoo.es

31-Nov. 2, Biezenmortel, Netherlands: Dutch-Belgian Regional SA Workshop: *Culture of Sobriety.* Contact emerworkshop@gmail.com

31-Nov 2, Moscow, Russian Federation: Fourth Annual All Russia SA Convention. Contact +7(905) 553 96 81 or intsamos@gmail.com. Meetings for English speakers available.

November 2014

2, Lake Ronkonkoma, NY USA, Fall 2014 SA Conference. Save the date.

7-9, Dublin, Ireland: Regional SA Workshop, *Culture of Sobriety.* Contact fjcofm@yahoo.com

14-16, Hattingen, Germany, 30 Years in Recovery (30th anniversary of SA in Germany, after Roy gave a workshop in 1985). Contact asbochum1985@gmail.com

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To submit events or for more info, contact saico at saico@sa.org or visit sa.org/events.

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.

Upcoming International Conventions

January 23-25, 2015, Awakening the Spirit, Portland, OR, Sheraton Portland Airport hotel. For information or to register, contact awakeningthespirit2015.com

July 10-12, 2015, Chicago, IL, Crossroads of Recovery. For Info contact crossroadsofrecovery.com or info@crossroadsofrecovery.com

January 15-17, 2016, Reflections in San Diego, San Diego, CA, USA. For info contact www.reflectionsinsandiego.com



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God grant me



the serenity



to accept the



things I cannot



change; courage



to change the



things I can; and



wisdom to know



the difference.