

# Essay

*June 2016*



## THE ONLY WAY I KNEW

*A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

## SA'S "MEETING IN PRINT"

*Essay* presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. *Essay* is aware that every SA member has an individual way of working the program. In submitting articles, please remember SA's sobriety definition is not debated, since it distinguishes SA from other sex addiction fellowships. 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*.

Themes for upcoming issues are: Going to Any Lengths for Sobriety, Dealing With Mixed Meetings; Sobriety in Holidays, Living The Traditions, and As We Understood God

Closing date for articles is approximately six weeks prior to publication dates in March, June, September, and December.

Resolution adopted by the Trustees and Delegate Assembly in May, 2016: ***"Since each issue of Essay cannot go through the SA Literature approval process, the Trustees and General Delegate Assembly recognize the Essay as the International Journal of Sexaholics Anonymous and support the use of Essay materials in SA meetings."***



**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 lust 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.*

*Essay is the quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous*

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## EDITORS' CORNER

June, 2016

*Dear Essay readers:*

*When we arrive at our first SA meeting, the motivation is almost always a mix of fear and of pain.* That's what it takes to get our attention, it seems. When we sit in an SA meeting and identify with the shares of one another, the realization dawns that we can find freedom from the pain and the fears. Eventually, if we keep coming back, that awareness of freedom and serenity become more important than getting away from the pain and fears. Thus, the challenges that bring us into SA become the gifts of a new life.

Our goal as your editors is for the *Essay* to be similar enough to a meeting that you can find stories with which to identify and to hear hope to keep you coming back. The Warm Weather articles, the Meditations and Basics and Practical Tools sections focus on those goals. Let us know how we are doing -- and send along your writings and comments to help us do better. Progress, not perfection, is a shared experience.

The Editors (David, Kira, Kent)

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### New to SA?

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# June, 2016

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## Dear *Essay*

This is a letter of concern. As I travel internationally to SA groups and have international sponsees, I am becoming more and more aware that we are an international organization. As Bill S. said recently, “We will soon have more members outside of North America than inside.” Since this is true, we must become more intentional in our efforts to include participation at all levels of all members. Here are some suggestions:

**If the hand of SA is to be there for anyone who suffers from this disease, we must begin thinking inclusively.**

Committee phone meetings could include VOIP and rotate meeting times so that sometimes the US members are the ones to attend during the night.

Ability to speak English should not be a prerequisite to being a member of a committee, Delegate or Trustee. Perhaps we should be obligated to provide a translator if needed to any meeting.

Speakers for retreats, mara-

thons or conventions could include a non-English speaker with a translator.

Conventions could provide translation of major talks, etc. if the need was presented in a timely matter for a non-English speaker attending.

If we are holding “International” conventions then we must consider holding them in neutral countries sometimes so that anyone can get a visa and attend.

I am painfully aware that we are doing de-facto segregation by not thinking of the “other” language speakers. If the hand of SA is to be there for anyone who suffers from this disease, we must begin thinking inclusively.

David T, Lawton, OK

Dear Editors and New Team,

Peace and all good to you. Many thanks for your service to us SAs and for a bumper job in your first issue of our “Meeting in Print.” In your new Editor’s Corner you asked the question “What are your desires?” This gives me hope that maybe my voice as a loner SA may be heard.

Over the past 14 years I have written to *Essay*, SAICO, Delegates, and Delegate chairs and, with only two exceptions, never re-

Dear *Essay*

ceived a reply. What I desire as an SA member is a place at the table that I seem denied due to the fact that I do not have access to either the internet or a phone.

I feel SA has disenfranchised those of us without such technology by only providing email addresses for contact purposes, whether in the International Buddy

**I do not have access to either the internet or a phone.**

List or offers of opportunities for service. I believe this unfortunate and even life threatening situation of isolation has been behind my recent near relapse after more than 23 years of SA sobriety. I am denied contact with other sober members who may see “snail mail” correspondence as a possible tool for service and their own recovery.

I pray that one of you three editors may hear the cry behind this appeal. Please answer this matter, or at least address it. I feel not doing so damages SA’s effectiveness and integrity as a whole.

Yours in Service, Peter

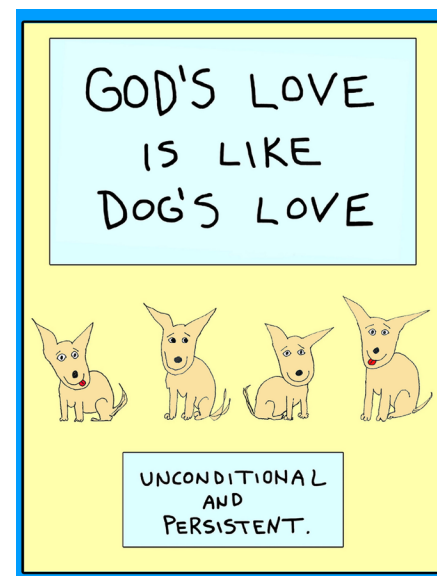
just read part of the March *Essay*. I really enjoyed having the short shares in the front. Thanks to all of you for your service in keeping the *Essay* alive!

I have some updated information about the International SA Sisters list. There are now 125 women from 28 countries. Interested women are invited to contact SAICO at 1-866-424-8777 or saico@sa.org.

There is one thing I would appreciate your removing: it is the word ‘desire’ in “What Are Your Desires for *Essay*?”

Again, thanks to all for your service. I would really miss the *Essay*. Keep up the good work.

Marie W, Co-manager of the International SA Sisters list



## In Memory...

*A Founder of SA in Australia is remembered...*

One of the co-founders of SA in my city Melbourne, Australia, died in May, 2015. John, along with myself and another member started SA here in December 1992. Our first meeting was us three with a White Book in a public park.

John used to say "God loves a trier." And John was indeed a trier. He struggled with sobriety in all his 12-Step programs. In

the final six months of his life he made it back to meetings after a long absence. Until his death he was still trying to practice recovery. His body was found with his daily meditation books and Recovery Bible open -- along with alcohol, another of his addictions. Sometimes it seemed like he was trying my patience; instead he was teaching me a lesson of patience and understanding. As I learn to be more patient and understanding of myself, I learn to

be more patient and understanding of John.

John would also say, "You've got to have a laugh." In 1995 I was at John's house when he was cooking about 10 lites of soup for the first SA conference in our area. He put too much salt in. He then tried to mask it with lemon juice and that didn't work, so out it went into the compost! We all had a good laugh and then

started preparing a new batch of soup. Laughter is a regular part of recovery for me: I take the addiction seriously, and I learn not to take myself too seriously.

I'm not sure I'd be alive today if John wasn't there in some

of my early SA meetings. It wasn't anything profound he said. He just suited up and showed up. He helped a new fellowship in town get off the ground. The history of recovery programs has many like John: those who never seemed to fully get it, even though they were doing the best they knew how. John gave what he could. John, thanks for sharing the journey with me. Rest in Peace, Brother!

Paul H., Melbourne, Australia  
[received in June 2015 and overlooked until now. Ed.]

Sometimes it seemed like he was trying my patience – instead he was teaching me a lesson of patience and understanding.

## In Memory...

*"He gave the power of example to a lot of people."*

We mourn the passing of Mike P., who left a legacy of service on the SA Correctional Facilities Committee. Mike joined the SACFC in the early years, when it was a challenge to recruit workers. At that time, he was recently out of prison himself, and for the remainder of his life he corresponded with many prisoners. One former CFC chair said, "He gave the power of example to a lot of people." Mike, a member of the Middle Georgia SA Group in Macon and Warner Robins, got sober in August 1997 and maintained his sobriety until his death from cancer on March 8, 2016.

### Galway Group Mourns Ian L.

A member Ian L. of SA in Galway, Ireland, went missing on the 9th of March 2016. He left a note. It was feared that he had drowned himself in the sea. After eleven days his body was recovered at Aughinish, on Galway Bay. The news shocked members in the Galway Group, in Europe, in the UK and the USA.

Ian first came to SA in July 2012. He was a regular member of the Galway Group, and attended conventions all over Ireland and UK. He attended his last SA meeting on March 7th. He made contact with

many members over those two days.

A month after he went missing, the Galway Group held a Remembrance Day. Seventeen members attended and four others participated by telephone from UK and Australia. Members shared their memories and feelings. We opened with a beautiful member composed fiddle music. We read a humorous poem from an American friend describing meeting Ian. Some members cried as they expressed grief and anger. One member shared that Ian was his daily renewal partner for over three years. Some recited very touching poems they had written, or read from inspirational books, or sang and played moving music.

He was indeed a character with a wonderful sense of humor. Friends remembered Ian talking a mile a minute, non-stop, while racing to the meeting in his customary yellow jumper, white trousers and runners. As the sharing ended we recalled that through the SA program we overcome darkness with light.

Ian was very much loved by the Galway Group, and he knew he was loved. We hope this tragedy reminds us to keep in touch with one another and bind us closer in fellowship. A member told about a gift from Ian that now hangs framed on his kitchen wall. The inscription reads in Irish: "Ní Neart go cur le Chéil" and in English "There is no Strength without Unity."

Farewell, Friend! Until we meet again, may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

--Keith N. and the Galway Group, Ireland

# MEDITATIONS

## God Keeps Me Sober

*God could and would if He were sought. (AA 60)*

One of the ways I continued in my addiction and acting out was by going to Sexaholics Anonymous meetings. (No, that is not a typo!) That was because going to meetings was all I wanted to have to do to stop acting out. I wanted an “easier,

**My surrender to God... seems to be the “conduit” by which God grants me the gift of sobriety**

softer way.” I wanted to design my own program, and that meant just going to meetings. But, going to meetings didn’t keep me sober.

Reduced down to the most basic statement, God keeps me sober. My surrender to God both in the specific moments and in the practice of working the Steps with a sponsor as a program of recovery, seems to be the “conduit” by which God grants me the gift of

sobriety and relief from the obsession and compulsion. My surrender is a conscious choice to connect with God through prayer in the moments of life as they come my way and to turn over to Him my difficulties and my will and my self.

Sometimes in prayer I imagine my open hands, and sometimes I actually get on my knees and reach up with outstretched and open hands; whatever it takes. I surrender, and then surrender again. And God does for me what I cannot do for myself.

*God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.*

Ron H.

### **Sobriety Comes First. It Is All I Have.**

*Everything begins with sobriety. Without sobriety there is no program of recovery. (SA 77)*

Recognize that the principles of the Twelve Step Program are found in other spiritual and secular traditions. Practicing honesty with ourselves and others; developing a relationship with a Higher Power; confessing wrongdoings; repairing harms done to others; passing on the gifts we have received in order to

keep them: these principles are all shared by other spiritual traditions.

However, because I am a sex addict, there is another neces-

### **I keep the door open to my new life.**

sary condition for spiritual growth. I must maintain sexual sobriety. I have little experience, strength, and hope to offer a sexaholic if I am not sober. When I commit myself to SA sobriety, I keep the door open to my new life. Each day of recovery allows me to explore a life without lies and boundary violations. Each sober day allows me to experience love, tolerance, and a depth of inner peace that I never believed possible. Everything begins with sobriety, and with every sober day my life gets better!

*God, let my desire for sobriety today be supreme.*

*90 Days of Meditations 78*

### **Finding Forgiveness**

*Until we can write out our Fourth Step, we apparently cannot see or face ourselves; until we give it away to another, we aren’t willing to let go of our wrongs and be free. (SA 110)*

Even though I was sober, serenity seemed to elude me in SA recovery. It wasn’t until I wrote out my Fourth Step inventory that I discovered why. I was still an angry person. I had surrendered my desire to lust, but I continued to wage a war of anger against my spouse, co-workers, friends, and anyone who didn’t see things my way. I had switched drugs from sex to rage and was a dry drunk. My moral inventory in Step Four convinced me that I was justifying my anger on the same basis that I had justified my sexual acting out: selfishly getting my way while denying I was in the wrong.

When I looked at the pages of my inventory, I despaired. My sponsor helped me see that the path of freedom from my anger led through Steps Five, Six, and Seven. As I worked those Steps and asked God to remove my defect of anger, I began to have hope that my life could improve and my relationships become more pleasant. It did not happen overnight, but it happened, and it began with facing myself in my Fourth Step inventory.

Serenity no longer eludes me; I find my Higher Power granting me the freedom, joy, and fulfillment I had longed for.

Today, I will face my defects, surrender them to my Higher Power so that I may experience serenity.

*90 Days of Meditations 63*

# WARM WEATHER CHALLENGES

## Warm Weather Phone Message

*Powerlessness in a park.*

**H**ey, this is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling because I am disturbed right now. I just left a message with my sponsor and he did not answer. I am calling until I get somebody live. No matter what, I need to talk about it. I am on campus while my girlfriend is in class. There was an angry street preacher here today and, of course, there were crowds yelling back and forth with him. I wanted to watch, but really I was just using this situation to lust.

Watching the crowd is really just an excuse for me to look at girls. Everybody is dressed very freely because it is so warm and nice out. Weather like this is a blessing and a curse because I feel great, but there is also a whole lot more to look at. I did not act out, but I feel guilty and ashamed about what I did do, which is stand around trying to act natural while also trying to scope out girls' body parts. I walked up behind this girl

and tried position myself to see down her shirt.

Talking about my triggers helps. I have just got to get lust off my chest. At first it was fun – I wanted to do it. By the end I was thinking “O God, why am I doing this? I need to stop this. I can’t do it.” I prayed and prayed and eventually the thought came to me that I needed to make calls. I thought of making calls earlier today and I have been putting it off. I need to

...eventually the thought came to me that I needed to make calls.

make an effort to put recovery first or situations like this happen.

I feel like I have slipped back to my old ways, like I am back to spending hours and hours looking at porn and masturbating. I do not like the way I feel and I want to change. Pain is always a good motivator. Hopefully something good will come from this. I don't want to beat myself up too much about it. I need to keep making more calls. Thanks for listening. Bye.

Anonymous

## WARM WEATHER CHALLENGES

### Warm Weather Challenges

*Respect at meetings, please!*

**W**ell, I like that SA is a mixed group. Sometimes, as a woman, I feel there are double standards in SA around how to dress in meetings, especially as the weather gets warmer.

In my area, dress code is pretty loose by SA standards, but it seems like some people push even

As a woman I feel there are double standards in SA around how to dress in meetings, especially as the weather gets warmer

our loose standards. I see a lot of men wearing shorts in meetings that ride way above the knee when they sit. I have known of women being asked to leave meetings for wearing shorts!

While that was probably the wrong response of the group leader, I got the message loud and clear. I have never worn shorts that

go above the knee to a meeting. Additionally, other articles of clothing I own would probably be inappropriate meeting attire. On days I attend meetings I try to dress according to what would be appropriate meeting wear. If I do wear something to a meeting I don't feel is appropriate, I'll bring a jacket to cover up and just sweat it out.

I would like people in general to be more aware and respectful in their attire at meetings. I am, also, grateful that I learned the tool of closing my eyes.

Anonymous

### Group Discussion Topics

What have been seasonal sobriety or Fellowship challenges for you or your groups?

Can you identify with the struggles and insights of the phone message?

In your experience, are there “double standards” in SA such as described above?

Our Meeting Guide suggests raising our hand if language or subjects are bothersome. Does this work in your group?

## Step 0 and Language

*Listening through the fears.*

When I first started attending SA, it was a breath of fresh air. After coming to meetings and listening others share, I was able to admit my weaknesses and faults. Before I could not admit I was a “sex, pornography and lust addict.” When I finally did, a great feeling of relief came over me. When I said I wanted to have what you have, you told me I had to “come to meetings, get a sponsor, work the Steps.” When I had the desire to act out, I was told to make calls. I came to meetings, I got a sponsor, and I started working the Steps. Soon I was getting what you had: sobriety.

But sobriety was not all I wanted. I wanted to be part of the groups. I wanted the fellowship and the opportunity to be accepted. So, I began working “Step 0” in the White Book. I went to early morning meetings and joined in breakfast with others before the meetings. I helped set up chairs. After the meeting, I helped to tear them down. I really like the people in my groups. They

are suffering addicts like me. They, like me, suffered our addiction for years. When they hit bottom, they sought the SA fellowship.

While the actions of Step 0 were helping me gain sobriety and some fellowship, there was something troubling me. I knew I needed to make some changes, or I was going to leave the groups I so desperately needed and probably start acting out again.

What bothered me? I resented the vulgarity outside the meeting. I did not like to hear swearing, God’s name used in vain, the constant f-bombs, the language of anger,

....sobriety was not all I wanted. I wanted to be part of the groups.

and at times bitterness towards wives, bosses, children, jobs, neighbors, etc. This language led me to isolation in the past. As a young person I would never use shortcuts of vulgarity or temper. I always felt that it was not what my Higher Power wanted me to use. I felt that swearing did not bring me closer to Him and, in fact, drove Him away.

As I thought more about the language used outside of the meetings, I realized that I did not need to be exposed to it. If I started to

### SOBRIETY CHALLENGES

try to fit in by using it, I would not be true to myself. I need not join in discussions when this language is used. I stayed out of conversations that talked about families, jobs, and bosses in negative terms. I walked away from off color jokes. I only talked about my family in terms of how SA had saved my marriage to my wonderful wife and that being part of the Fellowship allowed me to be with my family.

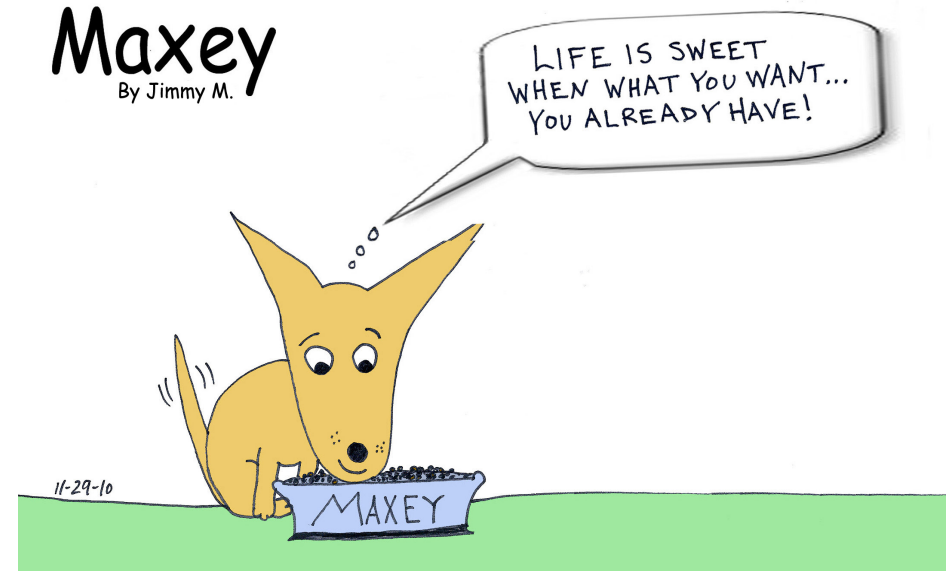
There were other parts of Step 0 I could be working. I came to meetings early and talked to friends in the rooms. I volunteered to chair meetings. I took on the roles of secretary, Intergroup Group Service Representative, retreat chairman and other positions as they came up. I started doing newcomer break out sessions during regular meetings for people coming for

the first time. I worked more with my sponsees.

I do not shun or judge those whose language bothers me. Unless they are really struggling with anger and resentments, their language is very much like mine. Recently a good SA friend called about frustration he was having with his wife. At first every other word was “f-bomb this” and the “f-bomb that.” As the anger and frustration dissipated, his language became less “colorful.” We discussed what was happening and his wonderful sense of humor reappeared. I knew he would be ok. It is important for me to listen. Although many times I feel language blocks my Higher Power, He still uses these wonderful friends to talk to me.

Tim D., Salt Lake City

Maxey  
By Jimmy M.





# OLD TIMER STORY

## The Only Way I Knew

*SA gave her what she needed*

When I was a little girl, about five years old, I remember sitting on my grandfather's lap and combing his hair. It gave me such happy, good feelings. My grandfather died when I was seven. From that time on, I had trouble in school. I couldn't concentrate, I would daydream, and I had headaches. I was a lonely child after I lost that special relationship. I didn't know how to get love like that from anyone else. So, I comforted myself in my fantasies where I was a fairy princess. My Prince Charming would come and carry me off. We would live in the land of happiness forever doing wonderful deeds and sharing our love.

I was a middle child. My older sister did well in school and was very dependable. My younger sister was very pretty and precocious, so people always gave her a lot of attention. I set out to be all those things my sisters were. I worried about how I looked, and I tried to make lots of friends. I never fit in with the really popular people, but I found I could always have a group of friends by going with the

less popular ones. I became very social. When I reached my teens, I found that if I flirted, I could also have lots of boyfriends. The feelings I found from all this attention were like the feelings I remembered from the days I spent with my grandfather.

Flirting was the only way I knew to communicate with the males in my world. I felt guilty and ashamed for flirting the way I did, but I didn't think I was smart enough to talk

**The excitement of the chase was followed by the heartbreak of being used and by obsessing about a person I couldn't have.**

about anything that might interest them. I was torn between wanting the attention and feeling guilty about the way I was getting it. I had a secret place between the church and my house where the clover was high. I would sit there and cry for hours. I felt so inadequate and lonely. The more inadequate and lonely I felt, the more my need for attention. The high I got from flirting kept growing. I found that flirt-

ing led to petting. Even though I felt high from the sexual feelings and the attention, I would feel even more guilt from my behavior. I would go to my spot and cry from loneliness and guilt. Looking back, I see that I was becoming trapped in a painful downward spiral

When I was seventeen, I met a guy who drank. I had never been out with a guy who drank in front of me. He got drunk on our second date, and I decided then and there that he needed a nice girl like me to help him not to drink so much. He was the first man I had sex with, and I got pregnant. We got married in a big church wedding. He came late and was drunk. I swore I would get a divorce after the baby came, but I didn't.

He was always gone with his drinking buddies. I felt angry and lonely much of the time. I tried to search for the God of my childhood to comfort me, but I didn't know how to find Him. I started flirting again and found I felt better. Flirting became my drug whenever I felt bad.

As the flirting progressed, again I started thinking that there was a Prince Charming out there who would make me feel whole. I progressed from flirting to hav-

ing affairs. Every time I had an affair, I would fall madly in love. The excitement of the chase was followed by the heartbreak of being used and by obsessing about a person I couldn't have. Guilt, shame, and remorse were feelings I had to cope with every day. I would promise myself I would stop what I was doing, but I couldn't. I was searching constantly for the love I needed, and hating myself for the men, the sex, and, not being able to stop, I would pray, and then I would curse God because I couldn't stop; I thought God wasn't listening to me. I felt so hopeless I wanted to die.

**Lust was so strong it was destroying me.**

I tried taking tranquilizers to stop the pain I was in, but it didn't help. I quit drugs and went to a psychiatrist, who helped me look at my behavior objectively. He said many people were doing what I was doing. If so many people were having affairs, it must be normal. I took permission from this rationalization to start searching again for my Prince. Just before coming into recovery, I became obsessed with one man.

I hated being so obsessed and constantly fought for control. This man and I were in a constant battle for supremacy. I could not get enough of him. Lust was so strong it was destroying me. I hated him. I

loved him. I needed to please him, but it was never enough. I felt like a junkie ready to come out of my skin when I didn't get a call from him. I hated the way I was living, but I could not stop. I felt so inadequate and alone. I thought I knew what hell would be like. Finally God answered my prayers by showing me a solution. I knew when I first heard about Al-Anon that it held an answer for me. My family situation had become really crazy. I had a daughter who was a drug addict, and my husband was an alcoholic. We went for help; all of us wound up in different treatment centers. The counselors told me I was going to treatment because I was codependent, but I knew my problem was men and sex. I had tried to stop my sexual behavior most of my life, but I couldn't control it. My problem controlled me.

**What used to be a life of mistrust has fallen away. I have no regrets and look forward to what each day brings.**

I worked the Al-Anon program one day at a time in an attempt to control my lust. I continued to flirt with other men. I thought flirting was alright, and my life did seem to get better. I didn't have the highs anymore, but I also didn't have the lows. However, I was still having problems with my feelings.

Then I heard about Sexahol-

ics Anonymous. Right away, I knew that I needed this program, but I was afraid of what I would have to surrender. I was on an emotional roller coaster the week before the meeting. At my first Sexaholics Anonymous meeting, I found that my flirting was a high. I would need to stop it if I was to be sexually sober. I learned that flirting and masturbation, followed by guilt, had kept me emotionally stirred up and had prevented me from knowing true recovery. When I became willing to let go, God did his part by relieving me of the obsession. He has given me relief from obsession and spiritual growth since my first day of sobriety in 1983.

God has worked miracles in my life through the Twelve Step programs of recovery. My husband and I are still married. We

understand the balance between taking care of ourselves for our marriage and giving of ourselves to the marriage. We have a relationship with God first because that relationship fills the emptiness that we were so frightened of and searching to fill. With the freedom we've found comes the ability to love each other in a new and exciting way. My relationships with my husband, son, and daughter are

warm and different and growing all the time.

My husband and I went into business to help recovering people. We put everything we had into that venture, both financially and physically. We trusted God to replenish our resources. We both believed in the recovery process offered by Twelve Step programs. We were dedicated to helping others find their way to these programs. Our daughter was also in recovery and involved in our business. We were able to help others for many years until retirement.

We have three wonderful grandchildren whom we see often. I continue to operate my hair dressing business, perhaps in honor of my grandfather. Our only son used to hate me for what I had done. Today he calls me and tells me his problems. I can say that the Promises have come true for me. My family has grown and developed. Fear of economic insecurity has left me. We have grown spiritually. What used to be a life of mistrust has fallen away. I have no regrets and look forward to what each day brings. God has removed much of my selfishness. He has given me peace in my belief that I will be taken care of and be given exactly what I need for my spiritual growth. My prayers have been answered because I am taking the steps that allow God to work in my life. I feel

that my hopes for finding love and doing good things for others are being fulfilled—one day at a time.

Sylvia J., Oklahoma, USA  
*Member Stories 2007* 120

## Group Discussion Topics

What are your experiences of powerlessness and unmanageability?

Are there ways in which you tried to control your lust even while sober?

How do you surrender lust triggers today?

The author identifies the Promises in her life -- how are the Promises going for you?

What have been your experiences with Old-Timers?

# DOWN TO BASICS

## A Step 1 Story

*Surrender in every moment works*

**B**y the time I was five I already had a developed capacity for sexual fantasy. I imagined having sex with the biology skeleton in the kindergarten classroom. I imagined sex with my kindergarten teacher. My Dad caught my little sister and me laying on top of each other when I was seven and she four. I remember playing doctor with her a year or two later. We did that a handful of times in our life.

I saw my first pornography at 9 or 10. I found a nudie magazine someone had dumped in the woods. I looked at every page.

My addiction was set in stone when I was 14. Mom and Dad had recently divorced and I was alone most of the summer because Mom worked full-time as a nurse. I had friends who loved porn, too. We found one parent's stash and sat in my friend's room masturbating the day away, smoking weed, cigarettes, and drinking beer when we could get any. I was using lust to fill the void left by my broken family and absent parents.

Two of my lowest points of addiction were when I was 12 convincing a friend's little sister to touch us more than once. Other low moments include searching and watching bestiality and anime rape on the internet. These images are burned in my mind.

By age 28 I had to admit I was addicted. For the longest time, I thought I could break the "habit" on my own. I joined a Church-based 12-Step program for sex addicts. I found what seemed like immediate recovery. I didn't act out for the next 9 months. Then I began looking at pornography again.

Finally, after years of repeatedly failing at lasting recovery, the ultimatum came from my wife. She said she would divorce me if I didn't stop. It was my rock bottom. I gave up and surrendered all of my life to God. I was powerless over lust. I determined to do whatever it took. We searched and found SA. My first meeting was hard – I didn't know if I belonged. I was shocked when the members each shared their addictive behaviors with fearless honesty. I had never been with

**Surrender in every moment of my life, not just those in which I face temptation or emotional turmoil.**

people who shared such things without censure. I resolved to start from the beginning and do it right this time.

I have learned one of the secrets to progressive victory over lust: surrender to God. His will – not mine – was the only way. Surrender in every moment of my life, not just those in which I face temptation or emotional turmoil. I don't want to just be in recovery, I want to be everything He wants to make me, and I know that requires all of me all of the time. I'm not there yet, but I'm definitely headed there. That's what matters.

David B,  
Columbia, South Carolina

## Ceased Fighting

*Living the promises works!*

**M**y name is Tom M. I have been in recovery and sober since December 2007. Recently I had a phase when many things bothered me. I was mad at people at work, my wife's requests didn't make sense to me, things at church annoyed me, and the list went on and on. There was turmoil and conflict in my mind as I tried to process and deal with these events. I was definitely not experiencing the peace and serenity that are promised if we are working the Steps.

My sponsor, after hearing me rant and rave about all the unreasonable, crazy, unfair people in my world, offered me some insight. He said to look in the Big Book where it says:

*But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got (Alcoholics Anonymous 66)*

*And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone... (AA 84)*

He also reminded me that this statement comes soon with Promises three and four:

*We will comprehend the word serenity and We will know peace. (AA 83)*

This immediately caught my attention. I had always loved reading the 12 Promises and seeing them come true in my life as I worked the program. But lately, I was not experiencing these promises in my life but wanted to. So I agreed to try applying this con-

**Peace and serenity began to return and I was so grateful.**

cept of not fighting for a few days. I soon began to experience relief from my turmoil and negativity. I stopped opposing people even if I knew that I was right. It just wasn't worth it. Peace and serenity began to return and I was so grateful. Now, as life happens, I face difficult situations. I try to remind me of this idea so that I can continue to enjoy peace and serenity.

Tom M., Florida

# PRACTICAL TOOLS

## Is There No Exception?

*We have a common problem...*

**M**y name is Brad and I am a sexaholic. When I say “I am a sexaholic,” I am admitting that I belong to a class of people for whom lust has become an addiction. I have finally accepted the truth that whenever my behavior is driven by an attitude of lust, there will almost certainly be consequences, pain, and humiliation. There is no exception to this reality. In the fog of lust, I falsely believe that the next time I act on my attitude of lust, it won’t hurt me.

In recovery I have discovered that my experience of negotiating an exception for myself is a symptom of my illness common among sexaholics. The exception that works is the spiritual awakening that occurs as the result of surrendering to the process of the 12 Steps. I approach my Higher Power and lead with my weakness instead of trying to conceal it, or negotiate it away. I am learning to accept and grow within the exception — the Solution — that God has already provided.

Brad M.

## “You Don’t Have The Internet!???”

*Out of touch can be okay!*

**A**fter I had about a year of sobriety, a friend of mine in the program asked me for a favor: Would I go with him to the local internet customer service center to be sure he would follow through with his decision to have his internet service disconnected?

I was happy to be of help, and I was very proud of him. He had had much trouble with his computer and porn sites, as did some others in our SA group; and he was doing the right thing.

Little did I know that some months later, I would “accidentally” discover how to access porn advertisements on my internet, being too cheap to pay for the real thing. I wasted so many long hours into the night and continually lost my sobriety. I finally asked him to go with me to do the same thing. With the help of meetings and my sponsor, I was able to get back into a healthy recovery process.

To this day, years later, people ask me for my e-mail address. I tell them I don’t have the internet or an

e-mail address. They are shocked that I am so out of touch with the modern world; “You mean you really don’t have the internet!” I tell them, “I was wasting far too much time on the computer.” That answer satisfies people most of the time.

I returned to healthy sobriety, according to SA standards, for several years.

One night when “I was hungry, angry, lonely, and tired,” I found how to access porn videos on my cell phone.

For free! I was as thrilled as a teenager in love with masturbation for the first time!

I went as far down as I could go, acting out to my favorite videos day and night. I began to replay my acting out with the computer of years before. I knew what my sponsor would say. So I prepared my addict’s response before I called “for help.”

Sure enough, my sponsor was as gentle and firm as always, accepting me as I found myself adrift in porn again. He said, “It’s time for you to get a new cell phone that does not include internet access.” He listened to my prepared reasons why I could not possibly give up my cell phone: Too much hassle with all my phone numbers, poor customer service, etc.

He then shared his special phrase for times when he too was tempted to go back to phone porn: “When the urge comes, any time you pick up your phone, or feel the urge to return to the videos, try saying ‘there’s nothing in this for me.’” He admitted that he needs access to the internet for his business. So we have both discovered, with time, that this mantra works, along with the accompanying daily phone calls with him and the constant surrender of my weakness to the hands of our Higher Power.

So far, so good and sober, some months into using the mantra and the White Book and my sponsor. Almost every time we talk, my sponsor reminds me about how cunning and baffling is our addiction to lust. We are walking the sober road together in trust.

Phil V. Tucson, AZ

*...my sponsor reminds me about how cunning and baffling is our addiction to lust*

## A Contract for Sobriety

*Sober One Day At a Time*

The contract starts by saying “God, I’m checking in.” Then I say the Serenity Prayer and the first three Steps. Next, comes the Third Step prayer. I repeat a line from that prayer until I really mean it — “Relieve me from the bondage of self” still

**I commit myself to one more day of sexual sobriety.**

loosens my chest every morning.

After that comes the actual contract: “I commit myself to one more day of sexual sobriety. No sex with myself. No sex with any partner other than my wife from now until \_\_\_\_\_.” Here I always name the same hour on the next day. This reminds me out loud that my sobriety is a gift only for today.

My contract ends with several explicit acts of surrender. These take the form of “God, I surrender to you my right to \_\_\_\_\_.” My “rights” have changed over the years from a detailed list of ways

I am powerless over lust to broad categories of my disease. Finally, I surrender any fantasies or lust images lingering in my mind. My contract for sobriety ends with the Seventh Step prayer. It takes only three minutes or less to do it. Having had days when I forget to do my contract, I can say it is the most important few minutes for my sobriety and recovery each day.

Anonymous

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*Essay*

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### July 2016

**2 - 4, Bogota, Colombia,** Fourth SA Congress of SA Colombia. Info at [sabogotacolombia@yahoo.es](mailto:sabogotacolombia@yahoo.es).

**8 - 10, Denver, CO, USA,** SA/S-Anon International Convention. [happyjoyousfree2016.org](http://happyjoyousfree2016.org)

**15 - 17, Drumcondra, Dublin, Ireland,** Dublin SA Convention, *Love and Service*. Info at <https://saireland.com> or contact [convention@saireland.com](mailto:convention@saireland.com).

**29 - 31, Hereford, UK,** SAUK Convention, *The Spiritual Toolkit*. Contact [saukconvention@hotmail.com](mailto:saukconvention@hotmail.com) for more info.

### October 2016

**14-16, Turner, OR, USA,** SA/S-Anon Regional Conference, *Willing to Go and Grow*. Info at [www.saportlandmetro.org](http://www.saportlandmetro.org)

**21 - 23, Pomona, CA, USA,** SA/S-Anon Unity Conference, *Progress Not Perfection One Day at a Time*. Info at [www.sasanonunity.com](http://www.sasanonunity.com).

**28 - 30, Harrisburg, PA, USA,** SA/S-Anon Mid-Atlantic Regional Convention, *A Change of Heart 2016*. Info at [www.achangeofheart2016.com](http://www.achangeofheart2016.com) or contact [achangeofheart.sa@gmail.com](mailto:achangeofheart.sa@gmail.com)

### November 2016

**11 - 13, Ben Lomond, CA, USA,** *SA Men's Retreat*. Info at [sabayarea.org](http://sabayarea.org).

**11 - 13, St Gilgen am Wolfgangsee, Austria,** Autumn Convention German Speaking Region, *We Will Know Peace*.

Contact info@[anonyme-sexsuechtige.at](mailto:anonyme-sexsuechtige.at) for info or English flyer available at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org). Meetings in German and English.

**13, Bayshore, Long Island, New York, USA,** SA Long Island *Intergroup Fall Conference*. More info to come.

# INTERNATIONAL

## Ireland Celebrates 20 Years of Conventions — Esker Convention Draws 42 Members

This year, from small beginnings, SA in Ireland is celebrating 20 years of Irish Conventions since its first convention in October 1996. This follows the sobriety of our longest serving member, Robert L. We now have three all-Ireland conventions per year, in spring (Esker), summer (Dublin) and in fall (Ballyvaloo).

A special thanks must go to Fergus who brought the SA message from USA to Ireland. The first meeting of SA in Ireland was held in late '95 or beginning of '96 in Waterford. Tom C. met another man through a priest, but he stopped attending. Other meetings started in Kerry, Cork, Kingscourt, Galway and Dublin in 1996. Inter-group Meetings were held in Athlone every month.

The first SA meeting in Galway was held on 18 November 1996 with two members present. Thanks also to Tom C, Robert L, Cathal McC, Tom L and also members from UK who all helped by their generosity and service to SA in Ireland.

The First All-Ireland Convention was held in October 1996 in “Grace Dieu Retreat Centre” in Waterford and 15 attended some from UK, USA and one from Australia. As Tom C. wrote in *Essay* magazine December 1997: “It is hoped that these conventions will be regular events throughout the year.” This hope proved prophetic. Conventions continued to be held at this venue until 2009 and then moved to Ballyvaloo, Waterford.

The spring convention was begun in May 1997 at Esker Retreat Centre, Galway. Twelve to fourteen attended including Nicholas, Raymond, and Walter from UK.

Conventions have taken place in Esker every year since then. Over 40 attended last year as they did again in 2016. This year our old-timer Robert L. set up an “Archive Stand,” bringing old folders, minutes and notes, letters from Roy K. and SAICO.

The Esker Convention is now usually held the weekend before St. Patrick’s Day, 17th March. It used to be held in May but the region, EMER, now host their convention in May (Ireland is hosting the International EMER convention in 2018).

March is proving a good time for our convention as the summer and autumn calendar in Europe is quite busy with events. The close connection with the Irish and UK SA fellowship prompted Belgium (Flanders) to ask to be part of the Irish-UK Intergroup. This led to the

forming of the region EMER in December 2011, which is now going from strength to strength.

The Convention in Esker is held on the beautiful, quiet grounds of an old Monastery of the Redemptorist Community in Esker, Athenry, County Galway. The grounds have beautiful wooded walks, and has proven the ideal venue for our SA conventions.

This year Galway Group look forward to celebrating our 20th anniversary on the 18th November. Next year in March 2017, we will celebrate 20 consecutive years of the Esker Convention. We invite you to join us for the anniversaries of our group and our growing convention in the west of Ireland. It would be marvelous to see you.

In Fellowship,  
Keith N., Galway Group, Ireland

## DUBLIN SA CONVENTION 15-17 JULY 2016

Purcell House All Hallows College Gracepark Road,  
Drumcondra, Dublin ([www.purcellhouse.ie](http://www.purcellhouse.ie))

Theme - “**LOVE AND SERVICE**”

Cost for weekend – €165 Book early – limited rooms!

Contact: [convention@saireland](mailto:convention@saireland)

Join us for a weekend of Joyous Recovery!



## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

### INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION July 8 – 10, 2016, Denver, CO, USA

Come join us in the Mile High City for friends, fun, recovery, as well as experience, strength, and hope. We have a wonderful assortment of speakers to encourage and spiritually uplift you. For more information, contact

[happyjoyousfree2016.org](http://happyjoyousfree2016.org)  
or [info@happyjoyousfree2016.org](mailto:info@happyjoyousfree2016.org)



### SA/S-Anon International Growth and Renewal in Israel 2017 Jerusalem ISRAEL — January 9-11, 2017

The SAICC & The S-Anon WSO accept the Israeli SA & S-Anon bids to host the first International Convention outside of North America. We are all very excited. For any questions, please contact us on:

**Web:** <http://www.growthandrenewalinisrael2017.com>

**SA help:** [sa@growthandrenewalinisrael2017.com](mailto:sa@growthandrenewalinisrael2017.com)

**S-Anon help:** [sanon@growthandrenewalinisrael2017.com](mailto:sanon@growthandrenewalinisrael2017.com)

## INTERNATIONAL

April 2016



### Sexaholics Anonymous

Europe & Middle East Region

#### Calendar

6 - 8 May	SA/S-Anon Convention "A Design for Living that Works"	Madrid, Spain	<a href="#">flyer</a>
28 - 29 May	SA Twelve Step Workshop with Nicholas	Warsaw, Poland	<a href="#">contact</a>
8 - 10 July	SA/S-Anon International Conv. "Happy, Joyous and Free"	Denver, USA	<a href="#">website</a>
15 - 17 July	SA Convention "Love and Service"	Dublin, Ireland	<a href="#">flyer</a>
29 - 31 July	SA Convention "The Spiritual Toolkit"	Hereford, UK	<a href="#">flyer</a>
28 - 30 October	SA Speaker Workshop with Shirley S.	Poland	
4 - 6 November	SA Speaker Workshop with Shirley S.	Spain	
11 - 13 November	SA Speaker Workshop with Shirley S.	North Wales, UK	
11 - 13 November	SA/S-Anon Convention "We will know peace"	St. Gilgen, Austria	<a href="#">flyer</a>
2 - 4 December	French-speaking Recovery Weekend	Luxembourg	
9 - 11 January	SA/S-Anon International Convention	Jerusalem, Israel	

#### A Design for Living that Works

*"What seemed at first a flimsy reed, had proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life had been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" that really works" (AA, 28).*

The Spanish Intergroup will host this years Regional Convention. In beautiful El Escorial, near to Madrid, we will meet again to celebrate "A Design for Living that Works", the theme for this Convention.

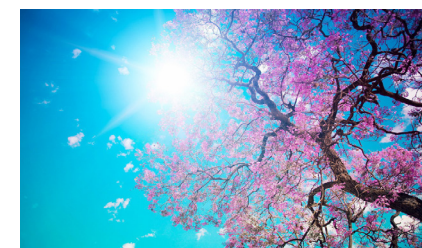
Prior to the Convention we will hold the Regional Assembly. Besides many other businesses, we will look for a new chair for EMER. Our current chair rotates out. But he did not so before he got engaged. And exactly this is the greatest news this year has brought so far (besides the birth of my son of course). If a sexaholic who had lost all hope for a useful life becomes, within a small number of years, chair of EMER, finds time to travel to Iran to give a series of workshops and while doing so proposes the woman he loves and gets engaged, it proves *here is the loving and powerful hand of God at work*. Congratulations to Luc and Yvonne!

#### Gratitude in action

The EMER Gratitude Week 2016 collected € 2288.23 for SAICO. Thank You!

#### Save the date - 9 to 11 Jan 2017

The first ever SA & S-Anon International Convention outside the USA will be held in Jerusalem. The joint Israeli SA & S-Anon Convention Committee has confirmed the dates and place: Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th of January 2017 at the Ramada Hotel, Jerusalem.



*"We don't claim to understand all the ramifications of sexual sobriety." (SA, 2)*



**SA Women's International Convention**  
**May 5, 6, & 7, 2017 • Washington, DC, USA**



Join women from around the globe as we break the hold that silence and shame have over us in this disease. Trudge with us as we seek healing through the bonds of love, peace, service and unity through the 12 steps of Sexaholics Anonymous.

[www.neveraloneagain2017.com](http://www.neveraloneagain2017.com)

### New SA Groups 2nd Quarter 2016

#### International:

Arnhem, The Netherlands  
 Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom (new meeting)  
 Inverness, Scotland, United Kingdom  
 Panama City, Panama  
 Preston, United Kingdom  
 Tampere, Finland  
 Rovaniemi, Finland

#### North America:

Aztec, New Mexico  
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana (new meeting)  
 El Paso, Texas (new meeting)  
 Grand Forks, North Dakota  
 Jackson, Mississippi  
 Kenai, Alaska  
 Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin  
 Muncie, Indiana  
 Ocala, Florida  
 Queen Creek, Arizona  
 San Angelo, Texas  
 Smithers, British Columbia, Canada  
 Tannersville, Pennsylvania  
 Wildomar, California, (new meeting)

### Delegates and Trustees – June 2016 (bold = Chair)

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#### South Midwest:

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SAICO Financial Update First Quarter 2016	
Donations	\$75,077
Other Revenues	\$21,521
Expenses	\$73,745
Revenues (less Expenses)	\$22,853
Total Prudent Reserve	\$277,747*

\*SAICO Operating Reserve for 6 months is \$147,000

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All articles must either be in English or have an English translation along with the original language. Please include an author name, address, telephone number, and/or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential.



## The Twelve Steps

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.

*The Twelve Steps and Traditions are adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("AAWS"). Permission to adapt and reprint the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWS agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in connection with programs which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.*

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

## The Twelve Traditions

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 membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous 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. Sexaholics Anonymous 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. Sexaholics Anonymous 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.

# The Serenity Prayer



**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.**