

Essay

March 2016



Yr. 25

Yr. 12

Yr. 9

Yr. 4

Thirty Years Sober: Still Surrendering Fantasy

A quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

SA'S "MEETING IN PRINT"

Essay presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. The Essay is aware that every SA member has an individual way of working the program. Within the bounds of friendliness and good taste, we hope the Essay will enjoy freedom of speech on matters directly pertaining to Sexaholics Anonymous. 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,

Warm Weather Challenges;

Dealing With Mixed Meetings;

Sobriety in Holidays

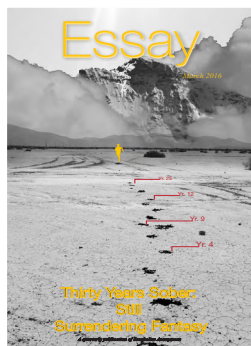
As We Understand God

Personal stories on Steps and Traditions are much needed!

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

Contact us at essay@sa.org

March 2016



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.

Essay is the quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous
Essay@sa.org

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

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New to SA?

North America toll-free 866-424-8777
Outside of the USA call +1 615-370-6062
E-mail us at saico@sa.org
Or visit the SA website at www.sa.org

Why I Need Fellowship

Finding God in Fellowship

The fellowship gave us monitoring and support to keep us from being overwhelmed, a safe haven where we could finally face ourselves. (SA "The Solution")

One morning after an SA meeting, my sponsor invited me to fellowship with him and other group members at a nearby restaurant. "No," I replied, "I am going to the gym instead." I had no interest in getting to know anyone in the Program. I was in SA to stop looking at pornography and stop acting out with prostitutes. The rest I could handle on my own.

Then my sponsor gave me an ultimatum: show up with the group or find another sponsor. I sat in my car clutching the steering wheel, furious at him and debating if I really

needed SA at all. After a few minutes, sanity kicked in and I realized he was right; I needed to join the group. I isolated myself too much. That was a turnaround for me. Today, fellowship is a regular and major part of my recovery.

To enjoy a meal with SA members allows me to get to know them beyond their brief sharing in meetings. I become a friend and care about them. We share some of our outside interests. I can speak honestly with them without fear of rejection or my need to look good. Fellowship gives me a genuine connection with others, and most importantly, a feeling of belonging.

Thank you for helping me to take Good Orderly Direction

From 90 Days of Meditations, from SA 2013 Page 56

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 over 400 SA men (from 56 countries 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 over 90 women from 24 countries on the list.

To be added to the list, contact SAICO at saico@sa.org

My Take on Meditation

*Clear mind and lovely peace
in meditation*

Does meditation impact my recovery? Absolutely! I meditate in order to formulate how to complete each Step. I find meditation to be helpful to new members to simplify the Step process. After reading the White Book and attending meetings, meditation helps me pursue recovery in a slightly different manner. For example, if a Step does not state “God” or “Higher Power,” I can meditate on how I will ask for God’s help to complete that Step.

How do I meditate? Do I follow a specific format? Do I kneel or sit? Do I have to be in a church or other religious center? I don’t believe that God cares about those things. I believe that He just cares about the content and how sincere I am. I have found that it is possible to meditate for just a few seconds. For example, I like to swim laps at my local gym. When it is time for me to turn around and complete the lap, I push off from the wall and glide for a few seconds. This is an incredibly serene moment for me. For those few seconds, I’m simply gliding through water without a care in the world.

Do I meditate specifically for the purpose of communicating with God? Not always. Sometimes I experience other benefits from looking inward. For example, Steps

Four, Five, and Ten specifically relate to our moral inventory. Taking the time to meditate has had a significant impact on how I’ve completed these Steps—whether for a few moments or for a lengthy amount of time.

In summary, this is how I meditate

1. I can meditate in a very short amount of time, say hello to God or something that you can say quickly.
2. I can meditate for a lengthy amount of time, and it can be anywhere. There is no format or time limit that I must adhere to.
3. I don’t always meditate specifically for the purpose of talking to God. I also meditate and look inward. This has been beneficial in completing Steps Four, Five, and Ten in particular. Meditation also helps me clear my mind so I can be at peace, even it is just for a few moments.

The “Submission Prayer” (on page 83 in Step Into Action, One, Two, Three) is the most powerful passage in the SA literature for me to date:

Higher Power (or God),
I give this day to you.
Establish the work of my hands,
the steps of my feet,
the words of my mouth,
the direction of my gaze,
the thoughts of my mind,
and the attitude of my heart.

Respectfully yours, John

A Use for a Desire Chip

Firm limits were good for him!

Not long ago, I did it: I put a Desire chip in my mouth. And no, it didn't melt.

Earlier that day, I had attended a meeting with a newcomer there. We gave him an SA desire chip with the familiar instructions, "When you get a lust attack, put this in your mouth. When it melts you may act out." Within an hour after leaving the meeting, I was in a full scale lust attack, and the words came back. Having nothing to lose, I gave it a try.

As I said, the chip didn't melt. In fact, it didn't change at all. It just stayed there: round, hard and slightly uncomfortable. And because it didn't change at all, a change or two happened in me.

The chip was a little like: God. A lust attack that to me was overwhelming didn't distress God a bit. Nor did God decide to become any softer or more comfortable just to accommodate me. The full force of my lust

washed up against that chip, and its boundaries were firm (how unlike mine).

After a good ninety minutes, the lust attack receded. I was impressed. Something (someone?) far more stable than I had brought me through and taught me a lesson on the way. I was grateful to God, and to the Program and its chips.

Will W., Portland Oregon USA
from *Essay, Issue One, 2003*



Be Careful What You Pray For!

Prayer taught him about his selfishness, too

I have always been amused by the phrase, “Be careful what you pray for—you might get it!”

Recently I had a somewhat humorous experience which, on more thought, demonstrates a serious defect of mine. I live right behind the University of South Carolina where many students rent houses. Out my large window are lovely young co-eds who like to sunbathe in the fall and spring, providing me a ready supply of triggers. I try not to look, and....

Being a humorous guy, I told my group I had been praying for lots of rainy days. They laughed along with me. But when classes began, it rained every day or two for a couple of weeks and I joked about it being providential. Then came a hurricane that caused record flooding in my state. I grew tired of driving 200 miles on my daily courier route in the rain—in fact I became a little resentful and was tempted to pray for sunshine.

Driving one day, a “vision” came to me: it was God laughing and saying, “You prayed for rain and I sent it—now you want sunshine. Would you make up your mind?” It hit me right in my addiction— I still want everything to be all about me. I want rain when it is convenient and sunshine when I desire it. I don't care that my rain or my sunshine might ruin somebody's picnic or aggravate their sensitive skin.

The solution? Keep working my recovery and be careful what I pray for!

—Anonymous

SA Talks to “Johns”

Recently I had the great good fortune to speak at a joint woman’s shelter/District Attorney’s program for men arrested in Prostitution stings. They don’t want to be there. They don’t like coughing up another \$1,000 for the class on top of whatever other court and legal costs the arrest has caused. And, they certainly don’t want to be told that they might be sex addicts!

Given this context, the men are understandably a tough audience. I have spoken to them three times now and invariably I’m met by stony faces. So it is a surprise to me that once I start talking, and later when it’s over, I get so much of a sense that my Higher Power spoke through me. I prepare my twenty-minute talk as an outline and follow it roughly as I speak. I’m amazed every time at how many thoughts come out of me that weren’t thought out ahead of time. The shelter staff have told me that they find what I have to say very powerful, especially the emphasis on pornography, sexual acting out, and other hallmarks of sexual addiction. These are things that the “students” just don’t get at any other time during their 1-day class. I’m careful to tell them up front that I’m not there to judge them, and that I’m not paid or coerced to be there. When I start talking about the theory of addiction and how it applies to sex, I can see it gets their attention. When I tell them I haven’t looked at pornography in ten years, there’s a look of disbelief in their faces that tells me I’m hitting them where they live. When I’m wrapping up, I give them a Newcomer pamphlet stamped with our local Intergroup website address and phone number. I ask them to read it through, and to pay special attention to the test section which discusses whether or not they might be sex addicts. This pamphlet is so important for them to have, and I hope it reminds them later of what I said.

I have no idea how many of them have come to SA as a result. I hope some have. My Intergroup covers a lot of meetings, so I may not see them. I’m happy if they come and talk to my brothers in sexual recovery. I rejoice in my part which may open the door for them.

Neal B., Vancouver WA

One Day At a Time

*Always a place for love
and kindness*

These days seem so hard at times; I keep looking for a text that will never come, a phone call that will never be made. I miss the smile and laughter I once heard and the kindness I once felt. I find loneliness is a reality and missing my soul mate has become the hardest thing my life has come against yet.

Still through all of this my hope is not gone. My desire to help others is still present, and God's need for me to remain is evidence that I am not done in this place yet. For there have been days I prayed to die, for so many have gone before me now and I find myself missing them so much.

I cannot mend a broken heart nor find a replacement. I am unable to shut the door and open another. Yes, sometimes even the

darkness needs light upon it to show its worthiness. I do not know what lies ahead nor do I seek to change what has been already.

Yes, sometimes even
the darkness needs
light upon it to show its
worthiness.

My life is an open book. It has been read and shared, the pages are torn, and there is slight wear on the outside. Yet, it remains. It shows it has been used many times from its wear and tear; yet it continues on and is read daily. For, until I am called to surrender my soul, I will do what I can for those still remaining with love and kindness.

Ron W.

Practicing These Principles In All Our Affairs: Flip Turns

Every day what we DO is what counts!

“I want to quit” is in my mind nearly every time I go a pool to swim laps. I have learned that “I want to quit!” means that I’m doing something that matters and that finishing it will benefit me. Only when I’m doing something important does my “I want to quit!” thought come to my head.

Just the other day I went for my usual swim. I swam through the “I want to quit” feelings, and decided to swim at a fairly leisurely pace instead of pushing myself. To my surprise, I found myself intermittently doing flip turns at the end of laps. In fact, after doing twenty laps I had done more flip turns than since I was in college decades ago.

As I got more tired from swimming, I found myself being critical that I was not doing a flip

turn every time. Then I realized I was violating my own cardinal rule to only count the times I DO something and do not count the times I DON’T DO something. Instead of being thrilled that I had done so many flip turns that night, I was being negative about the turns I had not done! That is ridiculous, of course.

Often I have done the same thing with sexual sobriety. Instead of counting the lust-free hours,

days, and years,

I focus on the most recent body part or fantasy in my brain. Instead of gratitude for another day of

sobriety and being useful, I worry about something I did not do for my wife or work. Like the AA Big Book story “Acceptance is the Answer,” I am viewing things through my magic magnifying mind instead of rejoicing in how I have succeeded each day.

“only count the times I DO something and do not count the times I DON’T DO something”

My sponsor said to wear our SA program as a loose coat, not a strait jacket. We also can appreciate the changes we actually make in our personal and family lives instead of taking off on a barrage of self-criticism. This is an easier, softer way and also the path that allows me to maintain my conscious contact with God rather than focusing on my failings or vulnerabilities.

I am so grateful to do any flip turns while swimming laps. I will let God decide how many I can do each time and just relax. If I can have such a psychic change while swimming, I am sure I can have one like that while living life each day. Especially if I keep practicing these principles in all my affairs.

Anonymous
Portland, Oregon USA

“New” Editors Corner

Your three new Editors are so pleased to follow the wonderful nine year editorship of Barbara F. and her Essay team. We hope to continue the fine editorial and aesthetic standards she established for Essay.

As our SA “meeting in print,” we plan to include articles and items that present a wide range of experiences in the Fellowship. We also plan to include Practical Tools for Sobriety, a Benefits of Meditation, a Tradition Corner, a significant Member Story, Letters to the Editors, and quite a bit of International News. From time to time we will also include discussion questions for group use.

WHAT ARE YOUR DESIRES?

What would you desire for Essay? Please contact us at essay@sa.org to let us know what Essay content might help -- or hinder -- your SA sobriety and recovery.

MEMBER STORIES

Addicted To Sex And Lust: The Battle Within

Part of me knew from very early on that I was a sexaholic. Part of me didn't want to admit that or accept it. Part of me wanted to be rid of "the addict." Part of me wanted to give into that and just enjoy my acting out. Wow, that's a lot of "parts," all doing battle within me! No wonder life had become unmanageable.

My own "pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization" turned out to be the very thing I needed to shift my thinking. It was during that time when I felt completely alone, lost and hopeless. All evidence pointed towards the undeniable fact that I was a sexaholic, a fact that was not going to change. I could go on compartmentalizing myself and trying to fight the part of me that I saw as "the addict." Or, I could finally just stop fighting, surrender to the fact that I am a sexaholic (and always will be), and completely embrace that truth.

Then I can get the same help and Power that those other sexaholics had obtained. Some of them really had attained "happy and joyous freedom," so it must be possible for me, too.

I had to surrender. I had to surrender to being a sexaholic. I had to surrender to God. I had to surrender to the Steps of the programme as directed by a sponsor. I had to stop the fight and stop the struggle against a power (lust) that is

**“When I started
surrendering lust and
myself to God,
he took care of the lust
and of me. ”**

so much greater than me. I had to stop the fight and stop the struggle against a Power (a loving God as I understand Him) that is so much greater than me. When I started surrendering lust and myself to God, he took care of the lust and of me.

I am way past the mid-point of my life. And it took all those years of struggling and fighting a battle I could not win so that I could finally experience the freedom that comes instead from simply surrendering. But the first Step for me included a complete acceptance that I am a sexaholic. Without that acceptance, I would have never found sobriety, recovery and freedom.

[From the European website]

Humility and Honesty

*Discovering it is okay to
surrender his self-centeredness*

My natural tendency is to vacillate between pride and shame. Maybe I hit moments of humility somewhere in between. It occurs to me that both pride and shame are dishonest states of being, while humility is completely honest. That's why I can slip into a false humility quite easily, because it is dishonest and still being prideful. It's

still about me, and not about God and others.

When I see myself honestly as who and what I really am, particularly in relationship to God and others, I can then practice humility in how I think about and act toward others. Without that honesty, I can't imagine having true humility.

When I see myself honestly in relation to God, I realize that I am of great worth to Him because of how He chooses to love me and extend His grace to me. It's about Him and not about me. I need not be ashamed when I honestly look at myself, even with my wrongs and real guilt, because I believe that I am loved, forgiven, and accepted.

This belief in God's inherent goodness not only keeps me from living in shame. It allows me to begin to have humility, because it is all about Him and others, and not about me.

Ron from Taiwan

Thirty Years Sober: Still Surrendering Fantasy

*Thirty years is still
one day at a time*

It was July 31, 2015, and I was in the shower. Without warning, in the space of about a minute and a half, three different lust images came through my thoughts. Soon after I let the first one go—20 or 30 seconds later—here came another! Soon after I let that one go, there was a third! That one went the way of the first two. They followed close upon each other, but they were all different images.

I know it was July 31, because August 1, 1985, is my sobriety date. If I stayed sober until midnight it would mark 30 years of sobriety. I allowed myself a little smile there in the shower. My sponsor tells me to thank God for lust thoughts and impulses: they're reminders that I'm not cured—that I still need God every day, every minute.

My mind goes back to July 1985. After decades of despair—of

obsessing and acting out in ways destructive to myself and others—I was feeling hope that July. That feeling of hope came about in a way I never could have predicted. A man had approached me after an open Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that I attended regularly and started to tell me about his problem with masturbation. That's not the sort of after-the-meeting fellowship talk I ever would have expected. Why had he picked me to reveal his problem to? I wondered if he was trying to pick me up! Nevertheless, I responded cautiously that, yes, I had that problem too.

Then he told me that there were people who called themselves sex addicts and held Twelve Step meetings. For the first time, I realized there was a name for me besides "pervert." I was an addict! I had been trying to figure it out for myself over all those years and never got anywhere. Now I had an explanation for my insane, out-of-control thinking and

behavior. Now I knew why I had continued to go to A.A. meetings for ten years, why A.A. was one of the few places I felt at home—although I'm not an alcoholic.

The only meeting of sex addicts my informant knew of was 100 miles away. I got directions from him and started making the 200-mile round trip every Wednesday night. Now this was not a Sexaholics Anonymous group. They were not affiliated with any national fellowship, but they used materials from SA and from another "S" fellowship—or

“My sponsor tells me to thank God for lust thoughts and impulses: they're reminders that I'm not cured”

from whatever source the leader for the night decided to bring into the meeting. Likewise for their sobriety definition: each member decided on his or her own definition. I was confused. I was

used to A.A., where the fellowship established the definition.

I prayed to God for help. I asked, What is sobriety for me? It came to me that I already knew the answer. During the previous ten years attending A.A. meetings I had seen the change that chemical sobriety brought to alcoholics. They had what I wanted. Now, they said that the first drink made them drunk. What was my first drink? Sometime during those years, I realized that it was sexual fantasy that made me drunk. I would get a sexual image or thought—what I often call a “fantasy start”—and build a story from it. That was my first drink. I would be drunk with lust before I even thought about masturbating.

But if fantasy was my first drink, I just knew I was doomed to fail at sexual sobriety. I had been trying to control those sexual fantasies for years and failing miserably; they simmered and bubbled in my head from first waking until I fell asleep, and I'd wake during the night to fantasize and masturbate myself back to sleep again. But that July, from the time the man Twelfth Stepped me, their frequency had declined.

Then, near the end of July, I experienced a period of four days with no sexual impulses whatever—such as I could not remember ever having experienced before. I took this as an answer to my prayer, as a sign that I must surrender sexual fantasy if I were to be sexually sober. So I embraced failure. I picked up a white chip at the next Wednesday night meeting and told the group I was going to try to surrender each fantasy start as it came.

From that evening, I have not acted out. I was not freed from sexual thoughts and images; my perception is that God let me see the lust thoughts for what they were as they appeared. He let me see them coming. Before, the thoughts and images tumbled around in my head helter skelter, and I couldn't separate myself from them. Now I could spot them from the start.

When I picked up that white chip, I didn't say I would stop masturbating, yet the desire to masturbate soon left me. Sexual fantasy truly is my first drink.

Early in my sobriety, when I would become aware of a sexual thought or image, I had a choice.

I could engage with it and build a story in my head, or I could let it go. Prayer helped me to let it go.

What if the lust came back? What if it threatened to overpower me? I would make a phone call. To the sexaholic who answered, I might say something like this:

"I just got a flashback to an acting-out episode, and I want to grab hold of it and build it into a story. All my experience tells me that if I do that, it will make me insane. I'm calling you as a witness to God that I'm powerless. This call is a prayer to God for surrender."

Until this day, that has worked every time. It has kept me sober.

Making the phone calls was not easy at first. How did I make it easier? I practiced. That's right, I forced myself to keep making calls until they got easier. It's a matter of habit. In my acting-out days, I lived in habits of in sobriety; now I cultivate habits of sobriety.

The lust hits come far less frequently these days. That's an important part of my message today: it gets better. I still make

phone calls. I call newcomers. I call members who are struggling. I call to maintain my emotional health.

I'm not cured of my addiction. One night recently, during the period when I was composing this essay, I awoke from a sexual dream. It was powerful. In the first brief moment of half-consciousness, it seemed like lust was the only thing that existed in the world. I slid out of bed onto my knees—because I'm in the habit. I asked God to give me the willingness to surrender lust. Then I got to my feet and, in the dark, went to the computer and clicked on Skype. I called another sexaholic five time zones east of me, where the morning was well advanced. It was a call

like I had made hundreds of time before. After I talked with him for a while, the world felt like it was back in proper proportion. I was a sex addict starting another sober day.

Art B., Macon, Georgia

Group study questions to consider:

What solutions to despair have worked for you?

What are some of the sobriety tools used by Art B.?

How do you surrender lust triggers today?

What changed about the author's higher power or
"God as he understood him"?

Are you able to accept that we have a disease?

Tradition Two Works

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.(SA 7)

I once thought that the Twelve Traditions of SA were boring—dry bits of organizational rules that did not have much to do with me. My sponsor showed me otherwise, explaining how I could apply them to my personal life.

For instance, Tradition Two teaches me how to practice humility. In my former self-centeredness, I used to state an opinion on everything because I thought that would cause others to admire me. The Tradition teaches me to take the focus off of me, be patient, open minded, and listen to others in the group. When I do, I always learn and grow, finding new ideas and unexpected solutions.

Unlike the business world, Tradition Two states that in SA there is no boss, except “a loving God.” The leaders in SA are our trusted servants who abide by God’s expression in decisions made by the entire group, called

a “group conscience.” As we share together, we finish our business with no rancor among members. It is a rewarding moment when I link my humility to a responsible group decision.

As I enter an SA discussion, I will be humble and open to what God has in store for us.

From 90 Days of Meditations from SA 2013 Page 66.

Questions to Consider:

How have you worked the 12 Traditions in your recovery?

Are you comfortable following a leader?
Being a leader?

For your recovery, what is the place of humility in your life today?

In the AA Big Book we are told that “we cease fighting anyone or anything -- we have to.” Are you able to do this today?

San Diego 2016 Convention Reflections

The recent 2016 SA International Convention in San Diego, California was my first experience of such a gathering. My first years of SA consisted mostly of phone meetings, working with a phone sponsor and attending lots of other recovery group meetings face to face. I worked with the Step into Action books that were instrumental in making the progress of recovery to grow into the present four and a half years of sexual sobriety. I am truly grateful for SA and all the Fellowship, tools and resources that have been great sources of blessings in my journey.

At the International Convention I met a number of fellows who had longer years of sobriety than me. I was struck by their peace and demeanor when I asked them questions about recovery and what their experiences were. I appreciated their generous and gracious shares and suggestions for me to consider moving forward in recovery. I felt hope in my encounters with both SA and S-Anon fellow members throughout the Convention.

The speakers' stories were powerful, again from both SA and S-Anon members. I am humbly reminded when listening to S-Anon shares of the effects and injury I have inflicted on family, friends, co-workers and the community at large because of my disease. I realize the many years of its progressive and destructive ways. The clarity with which the speakers spoke reminded me of the glimpses of insight, recognition and realization of the graces that God has granted me in working my Steps, staying close to the Fellowship, following the guidance of my sponsor and trudging along the Way. I do this one day at a time, humbly aware and humbly grateful to God who keeps me sober and sane. I heard and saw the Promises becoming real and alive through the testimonies of several fellows.

I met a number of fellows who personally knew Roy K. This is new for me. Only on occasion I hear Roy's name mentioned at the Intergroup meetings and Twelve Step SA retreats. On the local meeting level, I don't hear his name and our SA story as a whole. I met members who were blessed in having shared times and experiences with Roy and other early members of the Fellowship. They also enlightened me on the different developments of SA, sometimes hope-filled, at other times challenging, such as the issue of sexual sobriety.

One special moments involved a particular Tradition. The co-chair of a session shared how while working this Tradition over nine months, he changed in his perspective and use of this Tradition in a practical way. Never have I heard of working a Tradition in such a personal way. The Traditions remind me of the "We" nature of our Program and how we can live the Traditions. I came away from that particular session eager to continue my Step work. I look forward to working the Traditions, again under the guidance of my sponsor.

I came away from this International Convention more aware of the Fellowship at large. I heard that half the SA membership resides in North America and the other half is scattered throughout the rest of

*"As a Fellowship, what we have freely
received as a gift, we choose
to freely give away as a gift."*

the world. I am glad to know that an SA International Convention in 2017 will take place in Israel. There were questions of how to "carry the message" to other suffering sexaholics and the connections and collaborations we make with those members of the fields of medicine, of religion and of media.

As a Fellowship, what we have freely received as a gift, we choose to freely give away as a gift. I come back to my local home group and the Intergroup committee with renewed and deepened experience, strength and hope.

Frank S. Southern California

European Trip Report

I'm Bill, a sexaholic from the USA. Last August I arrived in Warsaw for a weekend retreat. We had nearly 50 SA members from Poland, Slovakia, Finland, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain for a discussion of several principles of recovery from sexaholism. Half a dozen women members were in attendance. Topics included powerlessness, the allergy and the obsession, breaking the cycle of addiction, creating a culture of recovery, protecting our fellowship by the Traditions, and the program as a design for living.

On Sunday, a group of us took the train to Cracow. Six of us shared a compartment for several hours, and we had an unbelievably wonderful time on the way. Monday night we attended the regular meeting with the Cracow fellowship. On Tuesday and Wednesday, there was a discussion of portions of the AA Big Book, and the program of recovery that has worked for alcoholics and sexaholics.

On Thursday morning, I flew to Munich, Germany. After a couple of days resting, and seeing some of

the sights of Munich, we gathered two dozen SA members in Friesing and spent the weekend discussing the Twelve Step program of recovery. I found the same eagerness for directions about working the Steps of recovery in Germany that I had encountered in Poland.

I traveled to Bremen, Germany for a retreat with 34 attendees, two of whom were women. Again, I found a strong interest in learning about the directions for working the Steps found in the Big Book.

Some personal reflections on this trip: We have an International fellowship. Persons of different nationalities, religions, and other categories can join together in our 5th Tradition primary purpose.

Our SA International Central Office tells us that a majority of sexaholics are in groups outside North America. International travel is much more fun when you are visiting SA friends. The more I try to pass on, the more my Higher Power gives me. For me this is truly a road of happy destiny. Bill S.

Russian Convention Moscow 2015

Three Personal Stories

She is surprised by joy and freedom in her recovery

The 5th convention of Sexaholics Anonymous was held in Moscow with the theme "The 4th Dimension Of Existence." Participants were from Ukraine, Belorussia, UK, Germany, USA, Iran and Russia. There were about 70 registered participants: 50 men and 20 women. The average age of Russian-speaking sexaholics was 25-40 years. The groups of Sexaholics Anonymous began in Russia only in 1999. Foreigners sober 15 to 20 years were much older in sobriety than Russians. So the foreigners were something special to share with us. Their spiritual experience was much brighter and richer.

I was surprised seeing a lot of women recovering from this addiction. There were a lot of speakers' meetings where long-term sober people shared their Experience, Strength and Hope. The speakers made an emphasis on what life had

been before the program – how they had suffered from obsession of mind, desperation and hopelessness. The spoke of what had brought them to SA and what their current life and feelings in sobriety were. They also shared insights about the Step work.

The atmosphere of the convention was warm and friendly disposing to openness and sincerity. I was striving to absorb all the information like a sponge. But I was wary of adhering to some male-object. For that reason I strove to communicate more with women. There were a lot of attractive young men. But God gave me sanity and my attitude to them was friendly. I treated them like anonymous brothers and sisters, like people who have the same problem as I have. I was interested in relapse prevention and what actions I should take in order to avoid relapses and not to return where there is no return. I realized I have a lot of denial and I underestimate my

disease despite having done the 12 Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous.

The convention became an impetus for me for further recovery from sexaholism. People are ashamed to talk on the subject matter of sex. It is not easy to work the SA program for those Russians who were born in the USSR, when this topic had not been discussed by anyone anywhere, even in the family with close people. However, the times change and there is more freedom of word in Russia nowadays. It is possible to talk openly and frankly about the most intimate and hidden things, even when you are heard by a lot of people. And also not being misunderstood and mocked at the same time. I am really grateful to the Higher Power, that She gave me this disease, which gave me an opportunity to grow spiritually, and led me to happiness, joy, true love and freedom.

Darya A.
(Severodvinsk, Russia)

*Unexpected friendliness
and warmth!*

“Hello! My name is Oleg K and I am a recovering sexaholic from Toliatti, Russia. I was really blown away by such an amiable and a warm atmosphere during the Moscow SA Convention, which I had never expected to get anywhere else. I really appreciate all our brothers and sisters coming from distant cities and states. I will do my best in my work in the Info Committee to set up a Convention 2016 in Moscow as well. And you are all really welcome to join us in the mutual party! In fellowship.
Oleg K (Toliatti, Russia)

A Member Of AS From Ukraine, Odessa

*She really only needs
to become herself!*

[“AS” is Sexaholics Anonymous. Other than edits for clarity and length this powerful article is printed as submitted. Ed.]

Greetings! My name is Galya and I am a member of AS from Ukraine, Odessa. I have been sober for 11 months and 23 days.

I became a member of the AS group one year ago, my recovery began with the Zero step, with attending a Skype group "Freedom". Almost at once, Greater Power helped me to find about an AS working group. My greater power and the group gave me a chance to be helpful, to serve, and it played a major role in my recovery. In half a year I took part in convention, arranged in Moscow in November, 2015.

The first thing that impressed me was that I was met at the railway station and saw my name written on the poster. I could not help admiring, because the poster was drawn with colored pencils. I felt that I was worth being waited for and I was glad to be seen in Moscow.

One of the most important events for me became the moment of meeting with my sponsor. Finally I saw my sponsor face-to-face, and not via Skype. Thirty minutes before the convention began, I had told my sponsor about my Second Step. There were other girls from AS

from different cities in the room. While being involved in such a process, God gave me courage and trustworthiness, and I felt united with those people around.

While participating in the convention, I volunteered a little. I registered the participants, wrote their names on the badges, and gave food coupons. One person offered to relieve me so I could listen to the Speakers,

The process of praying changed my heart and it filled with humbling and warmth.

but eventually he did not appear. At that moment I thought, "I could sit

here and just become angry, but I also could try to pray for him." Being angry was more habitual and understandable. But possibly a half a year in the program caused a real miracle and I chose a prayer. I got a real gift from God while praying. I caught myself thinking that the most important things were happening with me, while I was communicating with my greater power. I needn't to be worried about having missed something. The most precious and important things were happening while I was praying. The

process of praying changed my heart and it filled with humility and warmth. It helped me to look at this situation anew and feel gratitude to the person that never came to relieve me. I was basking in the sun's light that came across the window; I felt the presence of the God and his care.

I knew there would be guests from different countries but I didn't think how I could communicate with them or register. I am not an English speaker so everything I could offer was only my smile and gesticulation. I even do not know what they thought about it.

I had to always look for someone to translate for me. The greater power cared about this and constantly sent to me people who were ready to help with interpreting. I am grateful for such an experience as it helped me to comprehend I do not have to be perfect and to know everything. The only thing required was that I had to surrender, recognize myself powerless and find the courage to ask for help. I hope I was helpful the way I am for people and God during the convention.

During one of the meetings, I had to speak about a 0 step as there were guests from other countries. All the speaking sessions were translated into English and mine little speech also. It provoked some new feelings and emotions, because I have been never translated before. As a rule, only very experienced speakers are translated. At that moment I felt embarrassment, excitement, guilty, uneasy with God, as he did not teach me to speak foreign languages. But I spoke from my heart and he helped me to listen and see the unity of us.

One speaker impressed me with his natural grace and freedom as he was looking directly into our eyes openly and with tenderness. I still hide my look while talking about myself at the group. My inner critic and judge do not yet let me live free and be glad. But seeing those pioneers, hope appears in my heart, the hope for freedom. Right now I know that God forgives me and I am his pretty child he cares about.

I just need to be Galya.

EMER: EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST REGION



February 2016

Sexaholics Anonymous

Europe + Middle East Region

Calendar 2016

4 - 11 February	Gratitude Week	EMER	donate
20 February	SA/S-Anon Maraton Meeting	Düsseldorf, Germany	flyer
11 - 13 March	SA Convention	Galway, Ireland	
8 - 10 April	SA Convention	Mühlhausen, Germany	flyer
15 - 17 April	SA/S-Anon Convention	Edinburgh, UK	flyer
6 - 8 May	SA/S-Anon Regional Convention	Madrid, Spain	flyer
8 - 10 July	SA/S-Anon International Convention	Denver, USA	
4 - 6 November	SA Speaker Workshop with Rich K.	Spain	
11 - 13 November	SA Speaker Workshop with Rich K.	North Wales, UK	
2 - 4 December	French-speaking Recovery Weekend	Luxembourg	

Gratitude Week 2016

The first 2 SA meetings, for the first time announced as “Sexaholics Anonymous”, were held on 4 and 11 February 1979 by our founder Roy K and a bunch of fellows he never saw again. Only 37 years ago!

In the mean time SA has been spreading over so many countries all over the world!! Our membership is probably exceeding 15,000 today. And we all owe this to the work of the first SA members and the continuous work of SA’s International Central Office (SAICO), which is the daily beating heart of SA! Without SAICO there would be NO coordination, NO sending of literature to new groups, NO swift email correspondence (letters by post in those days), etc.

You are invited in this week to express your gratitude towards SAICO and donate online directly to SAICO. All the money raised goes straight towards carrying the message to the newcomer.



Sexual sobriety opens the door to recovery. (SA, 33)

I just made a tangible donation and it would be great if you would like to join me. Let’s please make a special effort to [give SAICO](#) a little bit more for Gratitude Week. (www.sa.org/donate.php)

“We feel better physically, emotionally, and spiritually when sober and when the principles of the Steps are effective in our everyday lives.” (SA, p. 33)

2016 EMER Happenings

There are monthly telephone EMER Speaker Meetings on the 4th Monday of each month. Call in numbers for Belgium, France, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, United Kingdom. And more! See Meetings at www.sa.org for more contact information.

2016 May Regional EMER Convention Madrid "A Design for Living that Works"

www.sexaholicsanonymous.eu

sa.eventos@saespana.es

118 attendees so far, and two months to go! Make sure YOU join too! From Germany, Ireland, Belgium, Russian Federation, Netherlands, Costa Rica, USA, Slovakia, Poland, Luxemburg, United Kingdom, Austria, Finland, Croatia and Spain! The Spanish Intergroup we would like to encourage you to attend this memorable event.

CONVENTION'S A. / Spain EMER 2016
DATES: 6-8 MAY 2016

PRICES UNTIL 31st JANUARY 2016
Registration 20€ + Double room 157€ (room included) per person = 127€
Registration 20€ + Single room 127€ (room included) = 147€

PRICES FROM 1st FEBRUARY 2016
Registration 20€ + Double room 127€ (room included) per person = 147€
Registration 20€ + Single room 147€ (room included) = 167€

FINAL REGISTRATION DATE: 15th APRIL 2016

REGISTRATION
WWW.SEXAHOLICSANONYMOUS.EU
UPCOMING EVENTS EMER 2016 -
SA/SPANION CONVENTION REGISTER NOW

ENQUIRIES:
SA.EVENTOS@SAESPANA.ES

"A DESIGN FOR LIVING THAT WORKS"

CASA DE ESPIRITUALIDAD SAN JOSÉ DE ESCORIAL
Address: Casa de Ejercicios "San José"
Avda. Reyes Católicos 12
28290 EL ESCORIAL (Madrid)

SPAIN

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION

Next Year In Jerusalem? *January 2017*

When we heard that the January 2017 International SA/S-Anon Convention is to be held in Jerusalem, our first thought was, "Wow! That's big news for both fellowships: the first ever SA/S-Anon International Convention outside of North America..."



The Fellowship in Israel has a lot of experience with hosting large gatherings. And they are promising that this one could be huge. At least 400

members from Israel alone are expected. In addition, there could be 200 or more from Europe and another 200 from the United States.



P.S. Could be a good time to check that your passport is in order too. Expirations dates must be at least six months beyond the departure date for most nations.

SAVE THE DATE!

TOGETHER & NEVER ALONE AGAIN



What: Women Only
International SA Convention

Date: April 28-30, 2017

Location: Washington D.C., USA
Westfields Marriott • Chantilly, Virginia
Nearest Airport • 10 minute drive
Washington Dulles Airport (IAD)

Email sawomensconventions@gmail.com

to be the first to know when
registration opens.

Ask us about service opportunities!

We are committee of 15 women (and growing) working to build a 2017 convention to the standards of an International S.A Convention. We welcome new members to our weekly teleconference calls.

When will Registration open?: April 2016 on the SAICO Registration site

How much will registration cost?: \$200-\$250

What we need from you? Serve on these committees:

IT Program Finance Literature
Meals Sound recording Entertainment Registration

Who do I contact?: Email: sawomensconventions@gmail.com

SA World Calendar of Events

April 2016

1 – 3, Wilkenson, WA (Seattle area), USA, Northwest Regional Spring Retreat, Humility, Grace, and Hope. Info at pugetsoundsa.org. Flyer available from saico@sa.org.

1-3, Wrocław, Poland SA--S-ANON Convention on the River Oder. Register online, using the form at <http://goo.gl/forms/lAw7iDHW6l>

8 – 10, Mühlhausen/Thuringia, Germany, SA Spring Convention, Faith and Recovery. Flyer available from saico@sa.org. English translation available.

15 – 17, Edinburgh, Scotland, Scottish Spring Convention, New Beginnings. Info at sauk.org/events/ or contact essay.edinburgh@hotmail.co.uk. Flyer available from saico@sa.org.

29 – 1, Mansfield, Ontario, CAN, SA Ontario Spring Retreat, These were the Steps We Took. Info at 2016springretreat.eventbee.com or contact events@saontario.org. New venue.

30, Southlake, TX (Dallas area), USA, DFW Area SA Roundup, Spring Day of Recovery. Contact 214-628-4352 or email dallaessay@gmail.com for info.

May 2016

6 – 8, Madrid, Spain, EMER Regional Assembly and Convention 2016, A Design for Living that Works. Info at sexaholicsanonymous.eu/events or sa.eventos@SAespana.es. Meet with the international fellowship in beautiful Spain.

7, Richmond, VA, USA, 2016 Annual Marathon. Contact sarichmond@outlook.com for info.

13 – 15, Big Bear, CA, USA, SA Men's Retreat. Details to come.

June 2016

3 – 5, Sydney, Australia, SA Australia Conference, Facing Life Successfully. Info at saoz.net/Sydney or contact australia@sa.org.

July 2016

2 – 4, Bogota, Colombia, Fourth SA Congress of SA Colombia. Contact sabogotacolombia@yahoo.es for info.

8-10 Denver, Colorado USA International Convention

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

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 for your entertainment and thoughtfulness. For more information, contact happyjoyousfree2016.org or info@happyjoyousfree2016.org



Happy, Joyous, and Free

**SA & S-ANON
INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS**

July 8, 9, & 10, 2016



**The Renaissance Denver Hotel
3801 Quebec Street
Denver, Colorado 80207**

www.happyjoyousfree2016.org

Note from the Finance Committee Chair

The preliminary financial results of fiscal 2015 were all good news. The budget began with a possible shortfall of \$26,000. With good year end results, this became a \$17,000 surplus instead, in spite of many computer repairs and necessary updates to SAICO office equipment. This surplus goes directly into the Prudent Reserve for future projects.

—Carlton B., Finance Committee Chair

SAICO Financial Update Fourth Quarter 2015	
Donations	\$225,845
Other Revenues	\$52,109
Expenses	\$262,419
Revenues (less Expenses)	\$15,535
Total Prudent Reserve	\$200,045

New SA Groups 1st Quarter 2016

International:

Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom (additional meeting)
Inverness, Scotland, United Kingdom
Panama
Preston, United Kingdom
Rovaniemi, Finland

North America:

Baton Rouge, Louisiana (additional meeting)
Queen Creek, Arizona
San Angelo, Texas
Wildomar, California, additional meeting

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WE INVITE YOUR SUBMISSIONS TO ESSAY

Your writings are invited, although no payment can be made. All articles submitted are assumed intended for publication and will be edited. Materials submitted become the property of Essay for copyright purposes. Please do not reference unadjudicated illegal activities. We invite articles of different lengths, from 200 word anecdotes, to 400 word meditations, to 1000 – 1500 word member stories. We prefer electronically submitted manuscripts sent to Essay@sa.org. Articles be may sent by postal mail to SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024 USA and should be printed, double-spaced. Handwritten manuscripts should be written clearly on only one side of each sheet.

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.

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In order to serve the members of the SA fellowship, a print or digital subscriber to an Essay issue is granted permission to make ten copies of that issue to be shared with members of SA. Such copies may not be further copied, shared, or altered.

We encourage all who are capable of a paid subscription to do so, as your financial support is critical for this “Meeting in Print” to make our Solution known to all seeking freedom from the bondage of lust.

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.

