

# ES SAY

**March 2017**

A quarterly publication of  
Sexaholics Anonymous featuring:

**Member's Story**

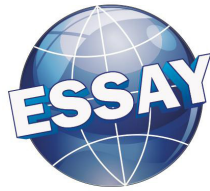
27. The Sweetest Words

**Meditation**

'My Real Family'



GROWTH  
&  
OUTREACH



Our 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: Willing to Go To Any Length; Anonymity; Dealing With Mixed Meetings; Living The 12 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 – STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (Sexaholics Anonymous, last sentence, page 2). In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (Sexaholics Anonymous 191-192). (Adopted 2010)

The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober according to the SA sobriety definition.

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to SA sobriety definition may call themselves an SA group.

Meetings that do not adhere to and follow Sexaholics Anonymous' sobriety statement as set forth in the foregoing Statement of Principle adopted by the General Delegate Assembly in 2010 are not SA meetings and shall not call themselves SA meetings.

**Permission to Copy Essay:** 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.

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

Adapted with permission from AA Grapevine Inc.

**Essay is the quarterly publication of Sexaholics Anonymous**

[Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)

# EDITORS' CORNER

March, 2017

Dear Essay readers:

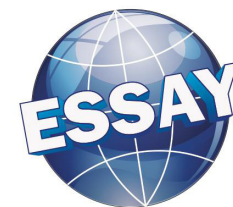
Welcome to *Essay*, your SA meeting in print -- or, welcome back to *Essay*. We hope you will subscribe to *Essay* to benefit from our meeting in print every quarter.

This issue includes stories about our SA growth and outreach. The electronic pdf version will have more pages and expanded articles on the same theme. We also introduce Mystery Covey. We use the SA web site ([sa.org/essay/](http://sa.org/essay/)) for longer and recent articles. Please do check them out from time to time.

Our June 2017 theme is Willing To Go To Any Length. Have any experience, strength and hope for us in that area? Let us hear from you!

The Editors (David, Kira, Kent)

Artists: (Michael J\*, Christian M., Jimmy M.)



Our Meeting in Print

\*special thanks to Michael for a year of art!

**New to Sexaholics Anonymous?  
Contact our International Central Office**

Visit the SA website at [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org)  
North America toll-free 866-424-8777  
Outside of the USA call +1 615-370-6062  
E-mail us at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org)

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# Dear Essay

Dear *Essay*,

I have read "Sleep Issues" shared by Scott from Utah (December 2016 Essay.) My experience is different. In recovery my sleep life has also has sexual dreams, although the frequency now has diminished to only about two or three per year.

In talking with my sponsor, I accept that "lust is the driving force behind our sexual acting out." Each time I have a sexual dream, I sit down with my journal and review the previous day or days, and ask myself 'where is the unsundered lust?' I was not always able to pinpoint it at first. As I persisted, I have for several years been able to identify the lust that triggered the sexual content of my dreams. My 10th and 11th Step journaling the day before going to bed has greatly helped. One time I identified lust in my journal and revisited it in my dreams. I learned from this that it is not enough to identify the lust; it also has to be fully surrendered, to God.

A second lesson has been to broaden my definition of lust. At first, I thought that lust was only pornographic and that fighting it off was victory. Lust is anytime I want the world to be different than what God is presenting to me at the moment. For example, I decide to eat at a restaurant rather than cook a meal at home. What are my motives? Am I looking forward to

the company and the food, or am I seeking the opportunity to watch people and be seen? If it's the latter, it is lust, although there was no pornography.

Scott's experience with sleep issues also raises another important issue. That is my degree of culpability for night time emissions. My experience is to prevent them with a rigorous definition of lust and surrender. If a nighttime emission occurs, should I reset my sobriety date? For me, the answer is simple. If I wake up and an emission has already occurred, I do not reset my date, since it happened in sleep. I identify and surrender the lust and talk about it with my sponsor and renewal partners. If on the other hand, I wake up before the emission, and continue the behavior, that is willful assent, and a reset is in order.

Scott talks about an in-between state without language. My experience is that I do not need language to turn to God. I just turn to a state of wanting help. I challenge my sponsees about their awareness that they are touching themselves or thrusting into the sheets. I tell them I am not a "little" aware. I am either aware, or I am not. Nobody else can decide whether or not I was awake and aware. Only I can make this determination. I do not need eloquence to turn to God, I only need willingness.

Brian

Dear *Essay*

Dear *Essay*,

Thank you for a copy of the *Essay*. May I forward it to a few newcomers or interested people [here] in Greece (up to a handful)?

I also just read the "Deaf, Sober, and Happy" on the [sa.org](http://sa.org) *Essay* website and I liked it very much. So I can send that. - Alex

Dear *Essay*,

As cold weather was setting in I became worried about being stuck indoors. So I prayed for the knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry it out. One day I started to draw. God gave me my art back. My artistic ability had been stifled years ago. Through my art I have been able to release the toxic pain that I have lived through my husband's disease. This was service work to me and has helped me greatly. By sharing my gift for SA's, I have ripped some of the wounds off of my soul. I thank you for printing my art. If my art is "medicine" to another human being then I have done what my Creator has wanted.....help another. A.

# Literature Corner

**STEP INTO ACTION**  
WORKING THE TWELVE STEPS OF  
SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**NEW!**



This book is a practical guide to working the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous. Each Step in this book begins with a section that explains the Step from the SA perspective... the next section is Members of SA Share. These short stories offer a glimpse into how various members experienced that Step... The next section is Step into Action, the "how to" part. We suggest that members read and study the Recommended Readings before working the Step... One Method of Working the Step is described. This is not the only way to work that Step.

The last section, Some Questions to Consider, is a list of questions related to the recovery principles covered by that Step.

Order this new book for \$10 USD from [www.sa.org](http://www.sa.org) online store.

# MEDITATIONS

## Grateful for Anonymity

*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. (SA 7)*

**W**alking down the street to my first SA meeting, I was ashamed and afraid everyone knew where I was going. Yet the relief I felt at that meeting was wonderful. I found a home where I could share the dark side of my life, feel accepted, and find hope for recovery from lust. I felt safe because the meeting was only open to those pursuing their own recovery from lust. The group also protected the identity of its members. This is important because the public often does not understand or sympathize with recovery from sexual addiction.

Since then, I have developed a richer appreciation for anonymity. I believe it applies as much to relationships among members as to those in the world outside of our rooms. Anonymity is the gift that allows me to put aside the many ways I ordinarily identify myself—career, gender, race, family and religion—and to lower the masks I usually wear for prestige. Instead, I simply join with people whose primary purpose is to stop lusting and become sexually sober and help others do the same. I guard their anonymity as they guard mine, primarily by not talking with non-members about who is in the group or what is shared at our meetings.

Perhaps the greatest benefit of anonymity comes as I practice it; for then I become humble. In humility, I put the common good of SA above my own desires. No wonder that anonymity stands as the core of our SA Program.

*God, thank you for a sanctuary where we can share our secrets and find Your help.*

*90 Days of Meditations Page 62*

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### What if? (Beginnings)

**W**hat if today's the day I meet several life-long friends? What if the community I am joining at my school is beyond my wildest imagination? What if today is the first day I get to act on a life-long dream? What if today starts something that cannot be stopped and has already been finished? Something transcendent, holy, and exquisite?

What if God is saying, "Fasten your seatbelt, my son, and hang on for the ride of your life!" What if God has no limits whatsoever on what he plans to do in me over the next four years; He looks at me and sees limitless potential for love, meaning and healing?

What if I am standing in the doorway of the greatest adventure -- the grandest opportunity -- that life has ever gifted me? And God is clutching my hand as we step on in.

### My Real Family

*We cannot put this strongly enough: Experience has shown us that we must be a part of others or we cannot maintain effective surrender, see ourselves rightly, or work the Steps. Without regular participation in the fellowship, there seems to be no recovery. (SA 64)*

**I** have discovered that my real family is the SA fellowship. In recovery, I learn to keep the focus on what I can change in me. I am powerless over my family. If my family hinders my growth in recovery however, I have to limit my contact with them. My sobriety must come first.

My new family—the one that is always there for me—is the SA fellowship. My group understands and accepts me, supports my spiritual growth, and gently helps me see when I need correction. I appreciate the opportunities for service, and the regional and international conferences that the fellowship offers. I have good friends in the group whom I trust and with whom I enjoy coffee breaks, concerts, hikes, bike rides, and other social events.

I love my parents and siblings. I have forgiven them and made my amends to them. The real support for my sobriety and happiness, though, comes from the SA fellowship where I find unconditional love and acceptance.

*Thank you, God, for the family that gave me my start in life, and for the family now that helps me stay sober and serene.*

*90 days of Meditations Page 87*

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### What if? (God Waiting)

**W**hat if God longs to bless me but He's waiting for me to ask? What if there's no such thing as unanswered prayer, but instead God doesn't usually answer in the way I expect? What if all of history is God's singular attempt to win my heart?

What if God's plans for me today are for joy, transcendence and love? What if I was to say "yes" to those plans?

What if where I am in the moment -- physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually -- is exactly where I am supposed to be? What if all my life experiences to date were not only necessary but sufficient for the bringing

about God's purpose in my life?

What if, when God looks at me, He sees me outside of time? What if He sees the eternal, whole me — and that is all He has ever seen?

What if God stays up all night, every night, singing over me? What if every near-miss and every wake up call are my limited perception of the angels watching over me? What if I was aware of God's involvement in every aspect of life? Would I ever doubt His sovereignty? Would I ever question His care for me?

What if the worst this world knows is the very present reminder that God saves through suffering and one day He will save us from it?

## GROWTH & OUTREACH

In 1988 there were SA meetings in Germany, Washington D.C., Simi Valley and the LA area, San Diego, Nashville, Oklahoma City, Salt Lake City, Portland (Oregon), Seattle, Chicago, New York City, Boston, St. Louis, Rochester, and a few other cities. At that time Nashville had six meetings per week, which we believe was the most per capita in the world! Today SA has meetings around the world, on all continents except Antarctica. The first International Conference of SA - SA non outside North America took place in Israel in January, 2017. About 750 registered for the three days. Strong Regions and Intergroups exist in North America, Europe, Germany, Taiwan, Australia, Israel, and Iran. The Regions have conferences as well as the Intergroups. Translation of SA literature into a variety of languages occurs with and without coordination with SA International Central Office (SAICO). The February Europe Region (EMER) Gratitude week led to the following note from SAICO: *"Thank you to all the members who donated to the SA Fellowship during Gratitude Week. We received donations in US Dollars, Canadian Dollars, Euros, British Pounds, and Polish Zlotys, The total of all donations is Euros €2486.67 or US Dollars \$2641.80. We wish you well in your continuing SA recovery."* This is an exciting time for Sexaholics Anonymous!

### GROWTH & OUTREACH!

At the Jerusalem European Region meeting reports were received from: Finland; Flanders; Francophone IG; Ireland; Israel; Netherlands; Poland; Spain; Russian-speaking IG; United Kingdom.

In Israel the German-speaking IG was well represented. A representative from Iran spoke by Skype link to the entire convention. In the weeks following, peripatetic Dave T. met with SAs and a counselor group in Egypt and began conversations with two Arab-speaking SA groups. Both Israel and Australia are discussing becoming Regions.



Service Badge from the Israel Conference.

## Nashville SA - Our Story of Growth

Recently we had 80 people attending our Saturday morning meeting. Tears of joy welled in my eyes recalling the first meeting I attended over 32 years ago. There were only two of us. After the meeting my mind reviewed the activities we used that led us today to having at least 49 meetings a week in our area.

Here are the observations I have made which I believe led to the growth of SA in the Nashville area:

Many of the early members maintained sobriety without relapse. There are at least three of us still attending meetings in Nashville who have over 30 years of sobriety. There are also two of our original group with approximately 30 years of sobriety who no longer live in Nashville but have helped build strong programs in the communities they moved to.

We emphasized AA approved literature as our basic text with the SA materials as icing on the cake.

Members were willing in those early years to break their anonymity to do significant outreach.

For about a two year span early in our history, once a week we put SA brochures in envelopes to send to social workers, psychologists and clergy in our community.

We decided to put meeting locations on our answering machine to make it easier to find

and attend our meetings.

Our emphasis was on starting as many new meetings as we could. We emphasized having 6:30 a.m. as well as noon meetings so people who had families could be home in the evenings.

We worked closely with sex therapists in the community.

We brought meetings to alcohol and drug treatment centers.

We fostered members attending regional and international conferences. We had scholarship funds to help people attend these conferences.

We had social events for SA members.

We emphasized sponsorship.

We brought distant SA members with long term sobriety as guest speakers.

On a personal level I made a conscious effort, as the oldest sober member in the Nashville fellowship, to let go of trying "to run the show." After my first few years of sobriety, I stopped attending Intergroup meetings so that my controlling character defect would not hamper the growth of our fellowship. Through trial and error I tried following Tradition 2 to become an "elder statesman" rather than a "bleeding deacon."

I feel so blessed to have a Nashville SA recovery community that I can always depend on and I will never be sufficiently grateful for such a blessing.

Harvey A

## SA Meeting “Renaissance” in Washington, DC

SA members in Washington, DC, are celebrating the 25th anniversary of an SA meeting that opened its doors in November, 1991, and has met weekly at the same location ever since, Capitol Hill United Methodist (CHUM). Members are grateful for the Friday evening meeting that sets a spiritual tone at the end of the work week with the SA program and Steps. These SA evening meetings initially benefitted from clergy required to attend as part of a nearby residential addiction treatment facility. The clergy worked the SA Program conscientiously. They gave First Steps, got sponsors, participated at all levels of service, and stayed sober. We relied on them to open the meeting on time, set up the literature and facilitate the meeting. They no longer attend, and dwindling membership at the CHUM meeting and at other Washington DC meetings has group members taking meeting health inventory. Even at 25 years, the CHUM meeting is the youngest evening SA meeting in the city. Two of these evening meetings date to the mid-1980s. All have decreased attendance in recent years.

Much of the meeting inventory

has centered on what amount of time and energy sober SAs should expend in trying to keep struggling meetings alive. Meeting attendance is God’s issue, not ours, some argue. Efforts to keep the doors open can be seen as a form of promotion or control. Moreover, meeting attendance is determined by changing demographics. This may no longer favor evening meetings in urban areas.

Truth be told, some of us would like to see certain SA meetings go dark. Then we could attend meetings that are supported by well-motivated members. Letting struggling meetings die a natural death would also eliminate the risk of newcomers finding their way into SA meetings that have few or no sober members and perhaps mistaking insobriety to be standard SA.

**On the other hand, how do we claim knowledge of God’s will if we haven’t tried everything?**

On the other hand, how do we claim knowledge of God’s will if we haven’t tried everything? Is there something we haven’t

tried?

Members who no longer support evening meetings in DC have not abandoned SA. Meetings have opened in the Virginia and Maryland suburbs. These new meetings model healthy growth from the inside out, maturing as they grow in numbers, in sobriety, and in adherence to the Steps and Traditions.

Here’s where the “Renaissance” comes in. Members are asking if we can make projects of the ailing meetings? Perhaps our Intergroup could Adopt-a-Meeting? If meetings are “the hospital beds of SA,” can we capitalize on the existing facilities and church relationships? Sober members could pay “sick calls” on ailing meetings, just as we visit hospitals and institutions. Two or more members with comfortable sobriety attending a meeting can share with newer members or sponsees their experience with opening and leading meetings, sharing about performing Step work, and how a Twelfth Step call is done. If ailing meetings get back to basics they might revive -- and at in the same effort support the sober member’s recovery.

Letting SA meetings go dark in our nation’s capital should be as unthinkable as the prospect of an AA meeting in the Bowery closing for lack of interest, or a Gamblers Anonymous meeting in Las Vegas going dark. With a little willingness and organization, low attendance could be used to our advantage, and possibly even overturned.

## Monthly Married Speaker Meetings

EMER proudly presents meetings which will be held on the 2nd Monday of each month, being promptly at 19:30 London time and ending at 20:30

The meetings are open to all SA

members, but speakers will be those who who are married and sober according to the SA definition. The meetings will be held in English only and will also be recorded, so that we can listen to them again or share them with other fellows. We use the usual EMER teleconference number.

The first meeting will take place on Monday 13 February. Our first Married Speaker will be Claire from Israel. Looking forward to this new opportunity of sober & joyous sharing!

Added Note: The first Married Speaker Phone Meeting took place February 13 and the share was outstanding. Although scores of members did attend, many more of you missed out! Join in next month!

## Virtual SA Groups

The secret is out! There are already a number of flourishing online SA Groups where members share experience, strength and hope via text message and make and receive calls, find sharing partners, etc.

The Flying Piggies is a WhatsApp group for men in SA, which is already bursting at the seams and is likely to breed piglet groups very soon.

SA Women Through the World [see page 28] is another popular WhatsApp group. In Iran, thousands of members are in touch with each other via Telegram.

## The SA “White Room”

I attended my first SA meeting in June 2010. I was broken mentally. I had nowhere else to go. I had failed. I agreed with my councillor that I couldn't stop using porn. When I attended my first meeting I did not feel judged or pressured by the members. There was no dogma, no form to sign. They just shared their experience of living with an allergy to lust. When I heard “What Is A Sexaholic” for the first time, I knew

I was home. I asked one of the sober members present to sponsor me, he agreed and I started working the steps immediately. His message was simple. Work the steps, attend meetings like my life depends on it, become willing to believe that a Higher Power will remove the obsession, and remember that anything I put before my sobriety I will lose. This was something very different.

After some time I started looking toward my religion to deepen my spirituality. I met a religious girl from my home town on a pilgrimage soon after and I decided my Higher Power had chosen her. I started obsessing over her. I shared with her that I was a Sexaholic.

She recommended a deliverance immediately and got a religious friend to pray over me. As you can imagine this didn't do much for my addiction and did even less for my self-esteem!

I was confused by the religious dogma of my friend. I tried to explain the 12 steps to her, how it worked spiritually for me and how it was not religion. The best way I could describe SA was as a “white room”, a refuge, where all I need is a desire to stop

lust - religion was separate from this. She did not understand this concept and I got confused. I had started obsessing over my religion and I was in turmoil. I had shifted my religion in front of my program and drove my SA group members crazy with my obsession. With the help of my sponsor, I started to see my insanity. I started spending more time with recovering lust addicts and I began feeling more and more at home again in the “white room” of SA. I did not know God until I found SA. I now understand a personal Higher Power that often reduces me to tears with profound gratitude.

I have attended conventions in Ireland and Europe since

2010 and recently attended the International Convention in Jerusalem. I was mesmerised by the cultures present. I was welcomed so warmly by so many people from all over the world. I realized that I was a part of something remarkable indeed. This all occurred at the convention as I regularly surrendered paranoias, anxieties, and generally being a fruit cake with anyone in SA who would listen. I am excited for the future of SA, excited at the prospect of one day sharing with SA members from all cultures in all regions - all connected and recovering from the disease of lust in the white room of SA.

Jude, Ireland

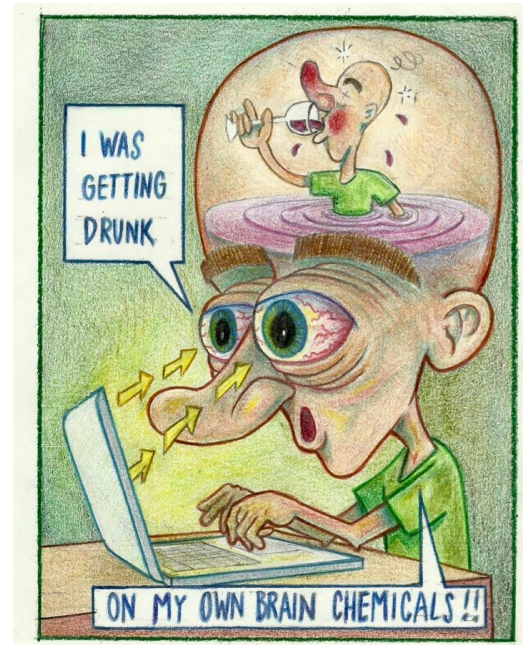
## Love and Service Is Our Code

*nicholasesay@gmail.com*

Here are a few simple service opportunities for your kind consideration: Encourage the growth of SA on a huge continent by joining the tiny Africa Skype Meeting. Assist a female member to attend her first ever international SA Women's Convention in May, 2017. Check that your home group is on the SAIC World Meeting Map and send corrections to any details if needed. Call a loner and encourage her/him to join the Sisters' List/Buddy List, if they are not already a member. Inform a married member that a new telephone meeting, featuring sober married speakers, will be starting in 2017 (see page 13). Send a donation to SAICO with a thank you to those lovely service workers who worked so tirelessly for us all in 2016.

FUNDS FOR TRAVELLING ON SA SERVICE If your home group is on the fringes of Europe or the Middle-East Region (EMER), you may be able to benefit from EMER's Speaker Travel Fund. Established in 2015, to help convey long-sober SA speakers to isolated lone groups, this fund currently stands at over €1,000. SA's International Committee (SAIC) assists the travel of long-sober members to out-of-the-way countries. Kenya, Russia, Iran and South Africa are some recent examples.

The Jerusalem International Convention was an outstanding success! Over 750 SAs, S-Anons and S-Ateens attended. The largest overseas contingents were from (1) the US and (2) Germany.





## 4th Birthday Celebration in Israel

Hello everyone ! My friends in recovery ! Thank God we still have emails... After I use WhatsApp so much, it's as if who doesn't have it - isn't around at all. Thank God it's only my sick head ;-)

I was so happy and excited to see some of you here in Jerusalem at our beautiful Int'l few weeks ago. I was privileged to experience this with you all and it was really something special. Can't wait for the next Int'l in Europe!

And now for the celebration. I am celebrating my 4th SA Birthday. This time I shared at the Jerusalem English speaking group so my sponsor could listen and also for you all ! My friends around the world.

I will leave you with this - what I shared via WhatsApp earlier today. And I am grateful to have you all with me on this spiritual path of happy destiny.

As I shared at the Friday meeting in Jerusalem, I believe it is \*my duty and my privilege\* to share with you my story. What it used to be like, what happened, and how it's like now.. in recovery.

So I'm attaching the link to my recording. If you wish to listen to it. That would be great. And remember

(a) Aviad is a Sexaholic and cannot manage his own life.

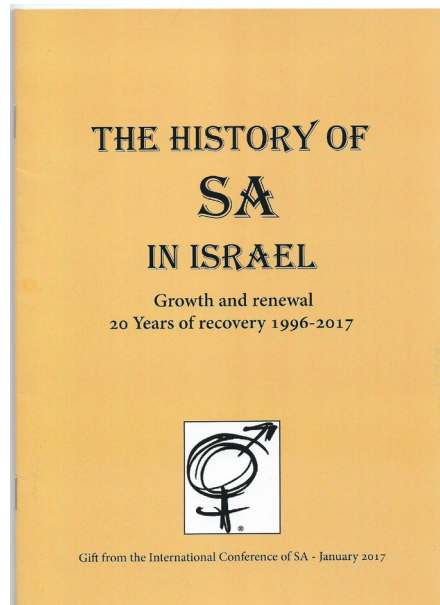
(b) probably no human power can relieve him from his sexaholism.

(c) God could and would if He were sought.

I will let you judge for yourselves what was the results of my seeking of Him, while I took your 12 steps...

In Fellowship, Aviad

January 22, 2017



**Booklet in Hebrew and English given to each SA registrant in israel. A remarkable twenty year journey for Sexaholics Anonymous.**

Aviad's Anniversary Talk Lin:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B6bOB7L2SrhINEx4N00xQTRGeWM/view?usp=drivesdk>

## Married Speakers' Telephone Meeting 13 February 2017

Hello, my name is Claire, I was created in the image of G--, and I'm a recovering sexaholic. By the grace of G-- my sobriety date is Wednesday, July 3rd 2002. I have a sponsor and my sponsor has a sponsor. ... Early on my sponsor told me that any time I feed my addiction

**...Abstinence in marriage is not a simple matter. Both partners have to feel that it's the right thing for them and their marriage.**

from any direction, it strengthens my addiction in every direction. I have found that to be true. The opposite is also true. Any time I work any aspect of my Program, it strengthens my entire recovery.

... I am not going to go into my acting-out behaviors before marriage. I was out of control and my life had become unmanageable.

...two years after my divorce I married my current husband, who is also a sexaholic but had been in recovery for several years before we met. ...I felt that since we were both in recovery we would be able

to understand each other in ways that others could not. Now that we have been married for some time, I still think that is true. It's also true that we do not work Program in the same way and one of the ways that I need to work my Program is to do my best to stay out of his Program....

Acting-out and making love are two different things. People new in Program often don't get that. I talk about that with sponsees, singles and marrieds. Often enough, people ask, "What's the difference?" ...Abstinence in marriage is not a simple matter. Both partners have to feel that it's the right thing for them and their marriage.

...I love my husband very much. In recovery I've learned that we can be two different people who don't always agree but we can respect each other and give each other space to live and grow and develop each of our unique personalities.

I work my Program together with my sponsor, my husband, friends in the fellowship, and with my loving Higher Power. I keep coming back and it really does work when I work it.

**This edited talk may be read in full on the Essay web page at [sa.org/essay](http://sa.org/essay)**

# OLD TIMER STORY

## The Sweetest Words

“Hi, my name is ----, and I’m a sexaholic.”

Those are the sweetest words in the world to me. I’ve been a sexaholic for over fifty years, but it has only been in the last 15 years that I have been free to talk about it or do something about it. To start at the beginning, I need to say that my parents did the very best they could with the parenting skills handed down to them. I was frail as a child and had all the childhood illnesses twice. I felt I was to blame for the high medical bills. I contracted rheumatic fever and missed half of third grade, all of fifth grade, and part of seventh grade. My bed was moved to the dining room each of those times. I was the freak in everybody’s hair. Not even being allowed to walk to the bathroom meant no real privacy for anything.

I was home alone all day, every day, for an entire school year. About this time an older man, a neighbor, started paying a lot of attention to me. Eventually he molested me. It was wonderful to have someone who wanted me. The physical feelings introduced me to a whole new world of excitement. The secrecy of these

meetings added to the mystery and intrigue. I now had something new to add to my fantasy world. I was already escaping into the world created by the radio and Saturday matinee. Cowboys, Indians, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and Tarzan, mixed with comics, made fertile ground for my escape.

Other events added to my acquaintance with sex. My older brother sodomized me. It was a frightening experience, but there was excitement too. About the same time, my father caught a number of us neighborhood boys when we were supposed to be camping outside. We were playing doctor. He sent all the boys home and told me to go to my room. Nothing was ever mentioned about the incident again, so I learned that

some things were not to be talked about. Later, when I tried to tell my mother about the molestation that had happened to me, all she heard was something about masturbation and said that everybody does it sometimes and not to worry. Some things were not to be mentioned, ever.

I started hanging around the local park restrooms, went searching for a youth leader I had heard about. When I had my driver’s license, I

returned to my abuser. My father died when I was in high school, and I became the object of emotional incest by my mother. Masturbation became a regular occurrence: at home, school, church, camp—even driving. Anytime that I was alone became an opportunity to do it, and the riskier, the better. Instead of dating, I wife-shopped and married, but nothing was as good as my fantasies and masturbation. I even told myself that I was not being unfaithful to her because I had never been with another woman since we married. All my extramarital sex was with men.

The guilt of having a secret life was overwhelming. Even with these feelings, I could not stop any of it. God knows I tried. I continued to cross boundaries. Going and doing things I said I would never do. Buying things I would then throw away, only to dig in the garbage to retrieve. Going to strangers’ houses in the middle of the night for anonymous sex. Everything I encountered became fodder for my addiction. Everything had a sexual connotation. Nothing was beyond my perverted activities. Not animal, mineral, or vegetable. My mind was consumed with sex. What I would do, when and where I would do it, with whom or what—all of this was constantly on my mind. And when I was not thinking sex, I was into resentment about the idiots I worked with, the stupid administration, my ungrateful family, or incompetent sales people.

I had three children and two foster children and was not emotionally available for any of them. My marriage ended in divorce. Doctoral studies ended abruptly. I quit my job rather than be fired; I was too hard to get along with, and I was causing problems with the staff. A thousand miles from my children, living alone in unhealthy surroundings, indulging my fantasies—my life was a wreck.

**The guilt of having a secret life was overwhelming.**

Ten years later I had a job, belonged to a church, was buying a home, and had money in the bank. But I was still miserable, doing the same things and not having fun doing them. Suicide was on my mind much of the time. If only I could figure out a way to do it and still be around to see how sorry they would be when I was gone! I made an appointment with a counselor. At the first session I told things that I had never told anyone, things that had been secrets for more than forty years, everything. I really dumped.

With his help I found a Friday night open meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous. I had to act out before I went to the meeting. The next meeting was Saturday morning, 115 miles away, but I went—and sober. I did not act out on the highway or stop at a rest area. I did not act out getting ready to leave for the meeting. I was sober. The next meeting was on Tuesday, and I was still sober. That was a miracle because Monday night I had to stay in a motel. I did not do any of those crazy things that

## OLD TIMER STORY

I always did in motels. One day at a time I was staying sober. newcomer has ever come back to bite me.

That was in 1990. This program had put me in touch with a Power greater than myself. I had tried to do this on my own, and it had never worked. Through faith in this fellowship and my Higher Power, I was able to accept my first-year medallion. I had a sponsor, worked Steps One through Three, and was working on Four. I attended at least four meetings a week, made coffee when possible, chaired meetings, attended an international convention and two regional retreats, and fellowshipped a lot after meetings. My first-year medallion took 30,000 miles of driving to and from meetings and \$180 in turnpike tolls, but it was worth it. I wasn't in pain, wasn't doing things that I didn't want to do. I had made the real connection. I was home.

Where am I now? I am not controlled by lust. A thought can come in my mind, and I do not have to do anything about it except to send it away. I have freedom from the obsession, the compulsion.

I am not proud of my past, but I don't have to hide from it. I can acknowledge it, knowing that it is in the past. In sobriety, I can share that past with other sexaholics along with the joy of the present time. Nothing I have said in a meeting or with a

I can see how sharing my experience with others helps them as well as me. When I share with my sponsees and they with me, there is a hedge around me, protecting my sobriety. Sometimes a sponsee calls me just when I'm thinking I need to make a phone call.

One way I handle problems is to call my sponsor. He often comes up with something I would not have thought of in a hundred years. As a sponsor, I sometimes am amazed at things that I suggest to sponsees. It has to be my Higher Power talking to them and me.

When I first came into the program, I thought that life was boring sometimes. I now understand this to be serenity. I don't have those wild mood swings, those deep depressions, or those adrenaline highs. Life has excitement and variety, but now it is more subtle.

I can now be alone in my house without any TV, radio, or CD playing, alone with God and at peace.

Before, I could only think about me. Now I am remembering birthdays and anniversaries and sending thank-you cards. I have good relations with my children. My grandchildren have only seen me in sobriety.

In recovery, I started a new business. I used up all my savings, and things were tight for a couple of years. To be able to trust my Higher Power to provide took something I learned within these walls. I have been able to pay back some of my savings. I am comfortable giving time and money for worthy causes. I do not expect rewards or a return dollar for dollar.

I let my Higher Power direct what I was trying to direct. It works out so much better this way. In my disease I would sometimes say, "Hey God, we've got three choices, and I really want the first one." He would say, "Are you sure?" "Yes, I am sure." When He would give me that choice, it would usually turn out badly. When I came into SA I learned that I could say, "Hey God, just for today, I will let You make the choices." And God would respond, "I'm so glad you finally let me choose. You know that time that you gave me three choices? I had 672 other choices for you. You only saw three of them, and they were the bottom three on the list."

Over the period of my recovery, I

have had to look at every single thing in my life and ask, "Is this true, is this appropriate, is it relevant for my life today?" I am amazed at the trash that has been weeded out of my life and the flowers that have bloomed.

Yes, God is doing great things for me—when I let him. I am able to travel the world, see strange and wondrous things, and meet some very special people. I am doing things that I never dreamed of doing. I don't have to do things on my own anymore.

From: *Member Stories*, Page 76

### Group Discussion Topics

What secrets led you into sexaholism?

What secrets are you keeping inside?

How do you talk to God in prayer?

Is your way of praying working for you? For God?

Would you be able to identify with "I am a sexaholic" as being the "sweetest words?"

Do you like Old Timer stories in the *Essay*?



# STEPS

## Step Eleven

### Sought Through Meditation

**T**wice a month SA members in the Sacramento area gather for a meditation meeting. The Eleventh Step in the 12x12 describes the direct linkage among self-examination, prayer and meditation. Our practice is simple: we read SA or AA literature and then spend about 20 minutes together in silence using our breath as a focal point.

We sit upright and commit to breathing continuously, not pausing between inhalation and exhalation. The sensations of the breath provides a way out of the maze of mental noise into connection with the present moment. We accept any stray thoughts as integral to this process, for “what we resist persists.” When we recognize we are absorbed in thinking, we gently return attention to our breathing. This is an opportunity to return our minds to Presence and the care of a Higher Power.

We may become aware of inner pain and seek to avoid discomfort by escaping into thought. We are reminded that “pain is the touchstone of all spiritual progress.” (AA 12x 12, 93–94) For continued spiritual progress, facing the pain is required. Little by little, we curiously explore this inner discomfort. We breathe with and into the discomfort. We unconditionally accept our feelings.

Breathing and remaining present can loosen stored emotions and allow us to experience the Whole. This is not a time for intellectualizing. We avoid any story of why and how we came into this pain. Feeling is healing.

We use questions from the reading after our breathing. Then our minds are best able to engage in calm and honest self-appraisal, thus interweaving meditation practice with self-examination. For example, we have talked through Fourth

Steps, writing a few words about who and what and our feelings and judgments and shortcomings. We seek forgiveness of others and self. A quiet mind is a forgiving mind.

One member described the process in meditation of forgiving self as embracing a child stuck in inner darkness. A newcomer shared the terror of facing and entering into the silence that lies beneath the thinking mind. “Meditators are like pioneering skydivers,” he said, “stepping out into the unknown to dip into the stillness and face that which one is unwilling to face.” Another member described sitting in a room with an open door and watching thoughts pass by that door. Some thoughts would start to enter and then leave while he watched. Yet another member described a barrage of thoughts and coming to a place of surrender in which emotional turmoil dissipated with the cool breeze blowing on his neck from the

open window. Finally, one described bags full of sticks on his shoulders being let go, which he would pick up and let go again and again until they finally were removed.

Unified in stillness and silence, we keep coming back to the breath.

Steve D.

## Step One I Am Powerless

When did you realize that you were powerless over lust and that your life had become unmanageable? Was it a sudden realization or something that you arrived at over the span of months or years? For me, it was an epiphany brought about from the threat of a second divorce. It was a sudden realization of the kind of person that I had been over the past 30 years. I looked back and saw how much pain I had caused. I was in a constant fear for months knowing I was probably going to be divorced. It realized that I could lose my wife and small children. I hit bottom. As I saw it, there were two choices available to me. Either remove myself permanently from my loved ones and from life or become something more than I had ever been. Thus began my new life as a recovering addict.

I realized that I had the perfect symbol of what a new life meant permanently etched in ink on my back. It is a Phoenix. A Phoenix represents a rebirth or resurrection arising from the ashes of a former self. Previously I got the tattoo

because I wanted to celebrate having a new life with my second wife and our two kids. I was given another chance at being a good husband and father. Instead, I nearly abandoned my wife and kids, and I did not know God. I first began my new life as a recovering addict. At first it didn't seem like I rose from the ashes, but added to them. From page 29 of our White Book: “Living inside our illness, we were blind to it. In recovery, the addiction begins to lose its hold over us, but it is necessary that we never forget what we really are.” I am a sexaholic and like the

**I was given another chance at being a good husband and father. Instead, I nearly abandoned my wife and kids.**

Phoenix, I am reborn yet again. I have been given another chance at being a better husband, father and man. Through counselling, SA fellowship, and a newfound relationship with God, I finally have hope.

Remember that while we have grievously wronged others, including those we love, we are brothers and sisters in recovery. We matter. We are loved. Rely on SA and on God who surely wants us to be happy, joyous and free. One day, one hour at a time.

Yours in recovery, John S

# PRACTICAL TOOLS

## What to do with the Big Beach Ball?

**M**y dysfunctional family and religious tradition taught me to fear and shame, particularly surrounding “impure thoughts” and “touching yourself.” These feelings were very intense and too painful to bear, and I escaped them in a way that became a very deeply-ingrained pattern of thought and behavior.

I struggled to suppress lust in adolescence, failing again and again. I’ve heard this struggle likened to trying to hold a big beach ball underwater – the harder I pushed down, the harder it pushed back. That’s how I experienced my attempts to be lust-free. I did not know it but the big beach ball was inflated not only with lust, but also with fear, resentment and all my other character defects. Lacking the tools to manage this, I became overwhelmed to the point of despair and emotional decompensation.

My “solution” was to give in to lust and ditch the moral code, reasoning that shame was the

byproduct of attempting to play by rules that were not right for me. After all, I was different, wasn’t I? Naturally, this mindset led to more and more isolation. My shameless actions did not dispel my inner shame. They only blotted out any sense of connection with my Higher Power, whom I call God. By traveling through the mud and muck over and over and over, I created a wretched and seemingly inescapable rut in my life.

Finally, my wonderful wife gave me a life-changing gift. She held me accountable and offered 2 clear options: change or lose her forever!

So I entered the SA program, saturated with shame and indescribable pain. At first I felt isolated at meetings, unable to interact with others or to share during the meeting. But I kept coming back because I saw that some of the people there seemed happy and free, and I wanted that for myself. The journey is at times very slow and difficult. Sometimes it feels like I am going backward. My obsession with lust and self is so deep-rooted that I’ve only gradually been able to surrender them, tiny bit by tiny bit.

**I’ve heard this struggle likened to trying to hold a big beach ball underwater – the harder I pushed down, the harder it pushed back.**

me accountable and offered 2 clear options: change or lose her forever!

Along the way, I’ve found that, for me:

- Sobriety is using the tools of the program, with God’s help, to stop digging the rut deeper and start pulling myself out.
- Recovery is using the tools of the program, with God’s help, to understand and surrender my character defects, learning how to connect with others by giving rather than by taking.
- Sobriety is giving up the thoughts and behaviors that so effectively numbed me, making me a stranger to myself.
- Recovery is a journey of self-discovery.
- Sobriety is ceasing acts that create shame and feelings of enslavement.
- Recovery is learning to experience freedom, and even some of the time, joy!
- Sobriety is struggling to surrender lust.
- Recovery is discovering that life without lust starts to feel good and natural.
- Sobriety is learning not to act out in response to feelings that seem overwhelming.
- Recovery is learning to identify and surrender feelings long before they become overwhelming.
- Sobriety is starting out in a state of fear that I might not be able to suppress lust.
- Recovery is approaching a state of faith in God’s presence

and provenance.

- Sobriety is learning to simply hand the big beach ball to God.
- Recovery is gradually deflating the big beach ball and developing an awareness of a loving God, living in harmony with His will.

Mike G., Florida

## Marriage and Sobriety

**M**y name is Tom and I am a recovering sex addict, gratefully sober for eight years. I am constantly reminded that I still need the program, including the Steps, my sponsor and the Fellowship. Recently in a local SA meeting I reflected on an Essay article about masturbation that we read and shared. The SA sobriety definition is partly described as “... having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse ... [and] also includes progressive victory over lust” (SA p. 191-192). For my progressive sobriety, the phrase “form of sex” is more than what goes on physically,

it's what happens in my mind. It is easy for me to keep sexual fantasies hidden because they happen in my mind and can become secrets. Sexaholics Anonymous says:

*We have found that more important than the mere length of sobriety is its quality and our own personal integrity... Better to acknowledge where we really are than to hide behind the badge of our sobriety date, cheat ourselves, and threaten our union with another. SA p192*

Personal integrity has to do with who I really am, what I am doing when no one is looking, what I am thinking. If I am allowing sexual

**If I am following SA's definition of progressive sobriety, then I cannot enter into, or tolerate, fantasy in my life.**

fantasy to live in my head, not only am I interfering with my recovery, I cannot really think of myself as a person of integrity. I believe in SA's sobriety definition and I believe that when I pursue it in its complete and intended form, it allows me to experience growth, recovery and restoration.

What about my relationship with my wife? How does the sobriety definition help me with that? I find two aspects for me: First, in my marriage sexuality should result in mutual pleasure and at a deeper

level, in greater intimacy between us. Sex must be with my wife and not with myself. Intimacy must be mutually acceptable at the moment and does not work well if we are mad at each other. I must be okay delaying intimacy if we are not getting along. Masturbation short-circuits intimacy. This is the time I must dig deeper into healing. I need to nurture our relationship and avoid doing and saying things that either hurt or offend her. These actions develop into an "upward spiral" where both of our needs are met, we both feel good about our relationship, we treat each other better, and our sexual intimacy is better and so on!

The second aspect relates to fantasy. If I am following SA's definition of progressive sobriety, then I cannot enter into, or tolerate, fantasy in my life. This is especially true in our physical relationship. If I fantasize about someone else, I violate my progressive victory. If I want true intimacy with the woman I love, I must be rid of this fantasy element, making my connection about HER and keeping intimacy between US.

If I can consistently practice these sobriety principles, then the result should be a better, more intimate and satisfying relationship with my wife. I am thankful for a program of recovery that can help me with this.

Tom M, Florida

## Spiritual Connection and Lust in Marriage

**W**hen I went through my first 90-day abstinence period, my sponsor suggested that one purpose for this abstinence was to discover that sex was totally optional. My wife and I have done several abstinence periods, from 45 to 90 days. Each experience brought a deeper understanding about ourselves and this disease.

Here is a principle I practice for being physically intimate: If I need it, I can't have it. I cannot be physically intimate with my wife to relieve stress, find comfort, or to have a connection with her. Once I discovered that sex is totally optional, I discovered why optional is so important for me. Initially I wanted to starve out lust by not feeding it. Later, more importantly, I learned that I wanted to stay spiritually connected to my wife. I surrendered and God's presence and power and joyous freedom came flowing in. If I took a lust drink, I disconnected from God like a balloon that pops. He did not leave me. Rather I was back in SELF. I have learned that when I am in SELF, I cannot experience God's presence. The joy leaves and I am left with Me. The dark clouds roll in and my insanity returns.

When I surrender and my wife and I are spiritually connected. It brings me more joy and closeness

than I ever did. During my first year I discovered that selfish intimacy left us separated. We could act like we were okay, but it was apparent the next day that we were separated. Though not fighting or angry, we were just not spiritually connected. The same separation would occur even with a hint of lust when we were physically intimate.

However, when we are spiritually connected, enjoying each other fully and lust is absent, we bond closer after physical intimacy. We want to

**when we are spiritually connected, enjoying each other fully and lust is absent, we bond closer after physical intimacy.**

be with each other, to talk, to walk, to look into each other's eyes, go to the museum, or sit close snuggling on the couch. Lust-filled sex is not worth losing that closeness.

So if we are considering being physically intimate, I ask myself, am I needing this? Am I wanting this for a connection, to relieve stress, or find comfort? If the answer is "no" to those questions, then I can enjoy what God gives me as a gift at that moment. I use this in my marriage to eliminate any form of lust. If I fall short from my "Ideal" - and I do - I lose what is now so precious to me: a spiritual connection with my wife.

## Spirituality of Service

In Sexaholics Anonymous, service and recovery go hand in hand. Most SA members first experience the benefits of service in their home group, where we find others who answer our phone call, greet us at the door, facilitate meetings, collect donations, offer us program literature, and of course, the person who offers to be our temporary sponsor.

Performing service can be challenging, especially since we have lived lives dominated by various forms of selfishness. But once we start, the benefits we experience can be immediate and profound. Service gives our lives a new sense of purpose and meaning, a form of spiritual awakening. Service offers us the opportunity to work with others, in a spirit of unselfishness and love, toward achieving our primary purpose: to carry the message of our recovery to the sexaholic who still suffers (Tradition Five).

When we are elected to trusted servant positions in the Fellowship we are granted an opportunity to advance in spiritual maturity. Service to the Fellowship becomes a spiritual practice, guided by a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

Service means working for and with members who have different stories, life experiences, hopes, fears, and expectations, all to help fulfill a primary purpose that binds us together. We have learned that we cannot recover in isolation.

The Step Twelve “spiritual awakening” propels us to “carry the message to sexaholics.” In service, we reach out to do the work of SA, to help the newcomer, and to preserve and maintain the structure that enables our recovery. However, if we act from ego or lust for applause, recognition, or an illusion of power, we have lost the spirit of service. We have left God out of the process and have forgotten anonymity, “the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions.” Anonymity means self is subordinated to the good of the whole and is the fruit of our recovery from sexaholism.

Love is the key. When love inspires service, the polarity changes from self-centered to God-centered. We are doing whatever it is for God, out of

**Service gives our lives a new sense of purpose and meaning, a form of spiritual awakening.**

gratitude for what we’ve been given; for our fellows, surrendering the demand to get anything back from them. We leave the results up to God.

Finally, the grace of God enables us to carry service into all our affairs: practicing it first with the suffering sexaholic, then in the lives of our recovering families, and then in our work and public lives. Our relations with others enter a new dimension. We become a living sign of God’s grace. The words of the Third Step

Prayer become real, as victory over our defects bears witness to those we would help of God’s Power, Love, and Way of Life. Victory over sexaholism by the grace of God.

*General Delegates Assembly, SA Service Manual*

## Stopping Myself, Not!

I’m a sexaholic which means I’m powerless over lust and lust will always win the battle if I try to stop my diseased mind from lusting. Powerlessness means the battle is already lost. There is no point in trying to struggle any longer. I have nothing left to do but unconditional surrender.

When I first came to SA, I was looking for a little something to add on to what I already thought was true. From my culture and religious tradition I had a fairly well-formed idea of God and right and wrong. SA simply needed to fit in with what I already knew, and everything would go just fine. I would stay sober, and God would be happy with me. But it didn’t go just fine. It didn’t work at all. I didn’t stay sober or find freedom from lust and sexual acting out. It didn’t work because I still needed something I thought I already had. I needed a right relationship with God, a God that was “for the sexaholic,” a God who “could and

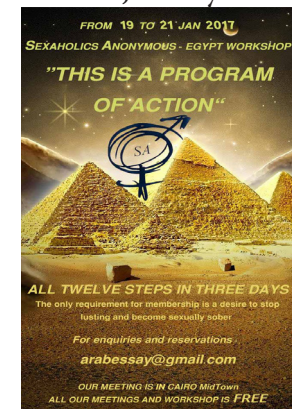
would do for me what I could not do for myself.”

I kept thinking that I needed to take care of my sexaholic problem myself, and then I’d have a right relationship with God. God had a different idea of how this was going to work. My way didn’t work. His way did. My way was based on a high view of myself (pride and false humility) and my strength (to fight lust). His way required my real humility and His power over my lust. His way worked because He is God, and I am not.

I learned this through the experience of working the 12 Steps of AA/SA under the direction of a sponsor. Maybe there is another way it can work, but my experience and the experience of many other sober and happy and free SAs is that the SA way works when nothing else we tried did.

Sexaholics Anonymous, Taichung  
October, 2016

Poster from January 2017 Egypt!



Mystery Covery



A man finds out he has an inoperable brain tumor. It's so large, they have to do a brain transplant. His doctor gives him a choice of available brains. There's rocket scientist brains for \$15 an ounce, regular scientist brains for \$10 an ounce, and sexaholic brains for the sum of \$800 an ounce. The man asks, "How come the sexaholic brains are so expensive?" The doctor replies, "Because they've never been used."

A long time SA member, Joe R has lived to a very old age. One morning while lying in bed, an angel of God appears to Joe.

Joe asks, "What have you come for, Angel? Is it my time?" The angel responds, "Joe, God has sent me to deliver two pieces of news to you." Joe says, in anticipation, "Please go ahead."

The angel says, "I have come to tell you that we have SA meetings in heaven." Joe exclaims, "Thanks be to God - that's great news! What's the other news you have?" "Well, you're chairing tonight's meeting."

If a sexaholic says something while in the forest and there's no S-Anon there to hear him, is he still wrong?

Directions to SA: Just go straight to hell and make a U-turn.

SA in the World

REAL WOMEN  
STORIES OF freedom

TOGETHER AND NEVER ALONE AGAIN

Meet Marie W...from Tacoma.  
A Mother . A Grandmother. A Sister . A Friend.

*What does it mean to be free of lust?*

Marie: Being free from lust means I can give instead of take. When I see a woman who looks tired or unhappy I acknowledge her by saying 'Hello' or giving her a true compliment. Seeing the change in her is a joy and I never have to lie again!

*What was it like when I wasn't living in this freedom?*

Marie: When I was 11 I started masturbating, what a high, soon it was not enough. Pornography & encouraging my older brother to do whatever he wanted to do to me worked for awhile. Using animate and inanimate objects, acting out in public and having sex with 25 different men in 6 months wasn't enough. I still needed a greater high. Then I figured out the highest high I could have and realized it would kill me. I was 64 yrs old.

*How did you finally experience freedom?*

Marie: I finally experienced true freedom when I realized the high I so wanted was an attempt to cover my deepest sorrow of not feeling connected to anyone. Working the SA program with a sponsor, my first connection, started me on my journey to freedom in recovery.

*How did S.A. members help you in your journey to freedom?*

Marie: SA members help me in my journey to freedom: by being my sponsors who told me what to do and made sure I did them, being in mixed meetings helped me see men as brothers not sex objects, members listening without comments helped me feel safe. Retreats & International Conventions helped me see the possibilities for service.

*What would you like to say to the women who will be at 'Together, and Never Alone Again this year?*

Marie: Go to as many meetings as you can. Chose the ones that make you want to cry. They will be the most healing. Take care of your physical and emotional needs. Get as many women's contact information as possible. Enjoy the experience!

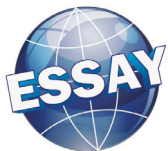
"We began Practicing a positive sobriety..... We were making the real Connection. We were home." *Sexaholics Anonymus, 205*



*Together &  
never alone  
Again!*

**S.A. Women's  
Convention  
Washington D.C.,  
USA  
May 5 – 7, 2017**

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 bond of love, peace, service and unity through the 12 Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous. Accommodations at the Hilton Garden Inn Dulles North 22400 Flagstaff Plaza Ashburn, VA 20148 Hotel Phone (703) 723-8989 Free airport shuttle (15 minute drive) from Washington Dulles (Airport code: IAD). Please note that there are 3 airports called Washington. Hotel Rate: \$99/night plus tax for 2 queens or one king (includes 2 breakfasts per room).



Our Meeting in Print

The convention rate will be available 3 days prior and 3 days after the convention. Reservations at this rate are available until April 7, 2017. .. Convention Speakers & Schedule Friday, May 5, 2017 1:00 pm to Sunday May 7, Noon

**SA Women  
Connecting**

The international SA-Convention in Jerusalem gave us, women in SA, the chance to gather together.

We were certain that we wanted to meet, share and connect more often with each other.

We will do so in a women's only telephone meetings in English. There is also the opportunity to get together for Daily Sobriety Renewals.

Furthermore each woman has the opportunity to invite or be invited to non-regular, spontaneous telephone meetings.

If you are interested to join us or learn more about the network, please contact: [essay-women@web.de](mailto:essay-women@web.de)

Many thanks to the organizers of that delightful convention in Jerusalem!

Grateful in fellowship,  
Judith

## EVENTS CALENDAR

### March 2017

#### 10 - 12, Athenry, Co, Galway, Ireland,

SA Convention, 12 Step Workshop. Celebrating 20 years at Esker Retreat House. Flyer available at [saico@sa.org](mailto:saico@sa.org).

#### 17 - 19 Helsinki, Finland:

"Love & Service - Sponsorship and Sponseeship in SA"  
[anttionantti@gmail.com](mailto:anttionantti@gmail.com)

#### 17 - 19, Wichita, KS, USA,

SA South Midwest Regional Retreat, Living Beyond Unworthiness & Shame. Info at <http://www.okcsa.org>

#### 25, Glen Ellyn, IL, USA, Chicago area SA

One Day Marathon, Stepping Into the Light. Info at <http://www.chicagosa.org> or email [marathon@ChicagoSA.org](mailto:marathon@ChicagoSA.org).

#### 31 - April 2, Zavelstein, Germany, German Region

SA Spring Convention, Let Go and Let God. Info at info@[anonyme-sexsuechtige.de](mailto:anonyme-sexsuechtige.de).

### April 2017

#### 1, Edinboro, PA, USA, SA Northwest PA Intergroup

Marathon, Living Your Best Life Today. Info at <http://www.orgsites.com/pa/northwest-pa-intergroup>.

#### 7 - 9, Sumas, WA, USA, NW Regional SA/S-Anon Retreat,

Making The Real Connection.  
Info at <http://www.savancouver.org/events.html>

#### 7 - 9, Edinburgh, UK, SA & S-Anon Edinburgh

Convention, Living in Recovery.  
Info at [essay.edinburgh@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:essay.edinburgh@hotmail.co.uk).

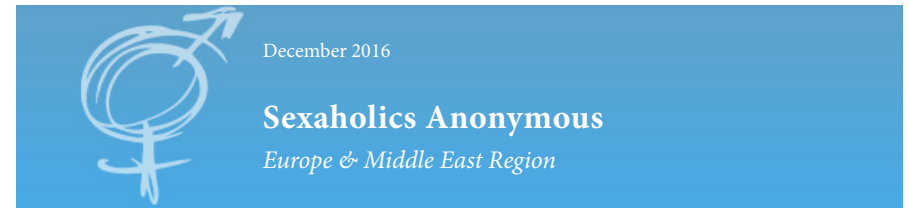
#### 8, Walnut Creek, CA, USA, California

Spring Conference, Spirit of Unity. Info to follow, save the date.

#### 21 - 23, Gdansk, Sobieszewo, Poland,

SA/S-Anon Polish Convention, Happy, Joyous, Free. Info at <https://tinyurl.com/hdhnktw> or email [zlotsobieszewo@gmail.com](mailto:zlotsobieszewo@gmail.com).

## Newsletters from the EMER region



December 2016

### Sexaholics Anonymous

Europe & Middle East Region

Quarterly newsletter of the EME Region of SA. To contribute, subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact [emeregion@gmail.com](mailto:emeregion@gmail.com)

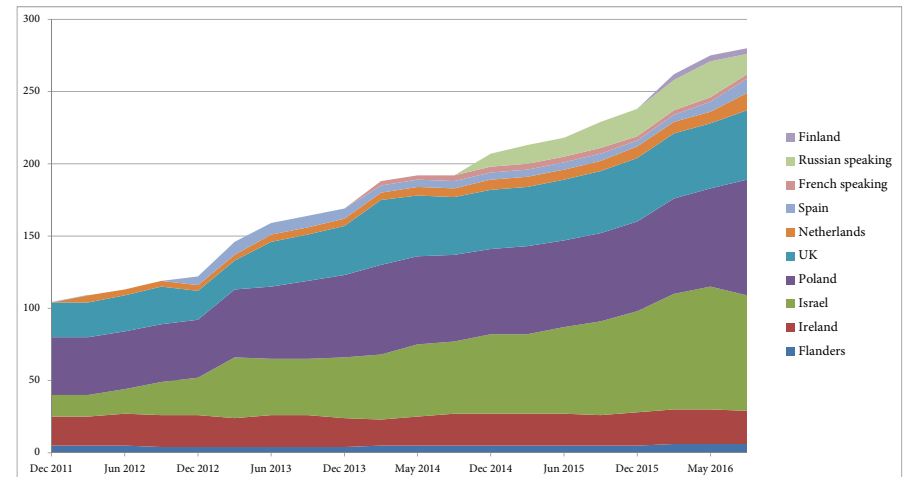
#### Calendar [\(view Google calendar\)](#)

9 - 11 January	Jerusalem, Israel	International Convention "Growth and Renewal"	
4 - 11 February	EMER	Gratitude Week	<a href="#">donate</a>
18 February	Düsseldorf, Germany	3rd Düsseldorfer Marathon Meeting	<a href="#">flyer</a>
10 - 12 March	Galway, Ireland	Irish Convention	
31 - 2 April	Zavelstein, Germany	German-speaking Convention "Let go - let God"	<a href="#">flyer</a>
7 - 9 April	Edinburgh, UK	Scottish Convention "Living in Recovery"	<a href="#">flyer</a>
30 - 2 May	Barcelona, Spain	SA Workshop with Harvey	
5 - 7 May	Washington, USA	SA Women's Convention "Together & Never alone again"	
6 - 7 May	Stuttgart, Germany	SA Workshop with Harvey	
13 - 14 May	Düsseldorf, Germany	SA Workshop with Harvey	
20 - 21 May	Munich, Germany	SA Workshop with Harvey	

#### Celebrating Five years

EMER came into existence 5 years ago, in December 2011. It started with 5 Intergroups and a total number of about 100 meetings. Since then, 5 more

Intergroups have joined, and the total number of meetings is now about 280. That means that EMER has nearly tripled in its first five years! For that, we can surely be grateful.



1/2

#### 22, Richmond, VA, USA,

Area One Day Marathon, Together in Recovery. Call 804-639-7699 or 540-809-6960 for more info.

#### 28 - 30, Mansfield, Ontario, Canada,

SA Ontario Spring Retreat. Theme/ registration TBA.\_

#### 29 - May 1, Barcelona, Spain,

SA 12 Steps Workshop, The 12 Steps. Info at <http://sexolicosanonimos.org/events-12-steps-workshop-with-nicholas/>

#### 30, Mahwah, NJ, USA,

Orange & Rockland, New York Intergroup, The 12 Steps: Our Path to Recovery (part 1). Also May 7. Info at <http://ourpathtorecovery.com>

#### May 2017

5 - 7, Ashburn, VA (DC area), Intl. Women -- See Page 28

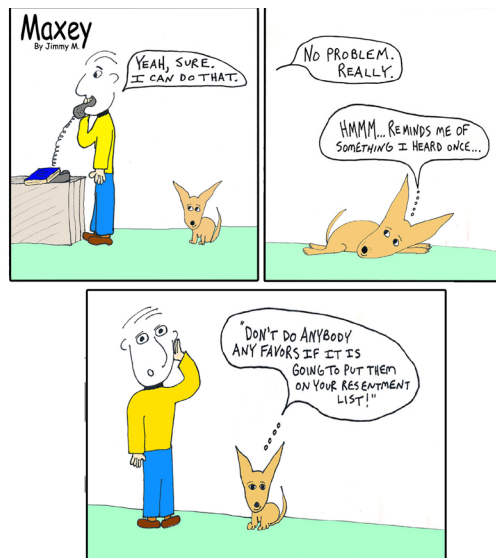
#### 7, Mahwah, NJ, USA,

Orange & Rockland, New York Intergroup, See April 30 above.

#### June 2017

#### 9 - 11, Battle Lake, Alberta, Canada,

Edmonton Area SA & S-Anon Spring Retreat, Humility, Hope, Honesty, & Healing. Info: [sasanonedmontonretreat2017@gmail.com](mailto:sasanonedmontonretreat2017@gmail.com)



Essay



February 2017

Gratitude Week 2017

Sexaholics Anonymous

Europe & Middle East Region

Quarterly newsletter of the EME Region of SA. To contribute, subscribe or unsubscribe, please contact [emeregion@gmail.com](mailto:emeregion@gmail.com)

Calendar (view Google calendar)

4 - 11 February	EMER	Gratitude Week	<a href="#">donate</a>
24 - 26 February	Marianka, Slovakia	SA Workshop with Luc D.	<a href="#">flyer</a>
10 - 12 March	Galway, Ireland	Irish Convention	<a href="#">flyer</a>
31 - 2 April	Zavelstein, Germany	German Speaking Convention "Let go - let God"	<a href="#">flyer</a>
7 - 9 April	Edinburgh, UK	Scottish Convention "Living in Recovery"	<a href="#">flyer</a>
5 - 7 May	Washington, USA	SA Women's Convention "Together & Never alone again"	<a href="#">website</a>
14 - 16 July	Newark USA	International Convention	<a href="#">website</a>

Show Your Gratitude

Hello dear fellows and friends in EMER,

When I opened the door to my first SA Meeting, I had no idea I was coming home to a new family. A few friendly fellows welcomed me, as if it was quite OK to have a problem with lust and sexual acting out. They shared their stories, in which I heard my own. I left that meeting lifted up with joy and hope. I knew that there was not only a problem, but a solution to that problem too. In the following weeks I kept coming back. I began to see that, behind that entrance door, was a hidden treasure: not just recovery but a new way of living for me.

[One man's willingness to start a meeting for sexaholics desiring victory over lust](#) gave a great treasure to the world 38 years ago: the fellowship of Sexaholics Anonymous. Though fragile and weak at first, it survived well enough for me to hear about it and to personally experience the miracle of it.

Let's celebrate this precious gift in our lives. And let us not stop offering the joy of recovery to other sexaholics who are still suffering.

1/1

Every year, EMER encourages you to express your gratitude for the SA fellowship by making a special donation to SA International Central Office (SAICO). SAICO does so much to support our fellowship and reach out to those still suffering from lust addiction. Without them, many would never find a solution that works.

If you're grateful for our fellowship and for what the program of SA has done in your life, please donate today, so that SA can continue to help those who still suffer.

- Send a personal donation [using this link](#).
- Invite members of your group to send a donation - maybe this week's 7th tradition.
- Remind your Intergroup that now is a good time to pass on any surplus funds.

And maybe this week can also be an opportunity to share your gratitude with others, telling them all that recovery in SA has brought to you.

Ives D  
Chairman, Europe & Middle East Region



July 14-16, 2017,  
Newark, NJ, USA  
Jersey Strong--  
Experience, Strength, & Hope

Info at [www.jerseystrong2017.com](http://www.jerseystrong2017.com)

A wonderful spiritual atmosphere of recovery and fellowship!

Friday, July 14, 2017  
12:00 - 7:00 PM - Registration  
2:00 - 5:00 PM - Meetings  
6:00 - 8:00 PM - Dinner & Speakers  
8:30 - 9:30 PM - Birthday Celebration  
10:00 - 11:15 PM - Night Owl

Saturday July 15, 2017  
7:00 - 11:45 AM - Meetings  
12:00 - 2:15 PM - Lunch & Speakers  
2:30 - 5:45 PM - Meetings  
6:15 - 8:30 PM - Dinner & Speakers  
8:45 - 10:00 PM - Talent Show  
8:45 - 11:00 PM - Night Owl

Sunday, July 16, 2017  
7:00 - 11:30 AM - Meetings



SA / S-Anon / S-Ateen  
International Conventions  
Please join us in  
San Antonio, Texas  
January 12-14, 2018

12 Steppin'  
Deep in the Heart of Texas

There exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. - AA Big Book p 17

[www.texas12step2018.org](http://www.texas12step2018.org)  
or email us at [info@texas12step2018.org](mailto:info@texas12step2018.org)

January 12-14, 2018,  
San Antonio, Texas, USA,  
SA / S-Anon / S-Ateen  
International Conventions  
Please join us in San Antonio,  
Texas January 12-14, 2018

San Antonio 12 Steppin'  
Deep in the Heart of Texas  
There exists among us a fel-  
lowship, a friendliness and an  
understanding which is inde-  
scribably wonderful. - AA p 17

[www.texas12step2018.org](http://www.texas12step2018.org)

[info@texas12step2018.org](mailto:info@texas12step2018.org)

March's speaker on the EMER Monthly Married Speaker Meetings will be Ed M, who will share with us his experience, strength and hope in his marriage. Monday 13 March 19:30 London time and ending at 20:30. EMER's ICT Committee has created a NEW NUMBER by which you can call in by phone or over the internet!!

Contact: [emeregion@gmail.com](mailto:emeregion@gmail.com)

**NEW SA GROUPS  
1ST QUARTER 2017**  
Europe and Asia  
Ulverstone, Tasmania, Australia  
Kiev, Ukraine

**North and Central America**  
Corinth, Mississippi  
Lake George, New York  
Lehigh, Utah (additional meeting)

## **SAICO Finance Committee**

The preliminary 2016 year end SAICO financial results are a direct reflection of the Fellowship's expanded service to spread the message to the still suffering sexaholic and the Fellowship's generosity to support this service. The Finance Committee sees this growth not just in the dollars and cents numbers. International service growth means SAICO is now doing transactions in seven different currencies. SAICO continues to process more Fellowship registrations at convention and regional events. There will be additional revenue streams from new Fellowship literature and e-books. The SAICO web page is being upgraded to become mobile friendly and deliver more and fresh content. The PI and H&I committees are developing new video content for the medical and social service professional communities. SAICO will be updating the Fellowship's trademark registrations. We are grateful for the Fellowship's service and contributions.

Carlton B, Finance Committee  
Chair February 7, 2017

## **SA Correctional Facilities Committee International Convention Report**

SACFC had a good presence at the Israel convention. [Your chair] addressed the entire conference on the first night, encouraging members to participate in the CFC work either by volunteering or by requesting that a CFC chair position in their locale.

About a dozen members attended the open business meeting. Members from the US, Israel, Canada, Belgium, Poland, Ireland, and Germany had participated and shared their ES&H. We provided the overview of the ongoing CFC projects, as well as offered direction for future work. International members reported being empowered to continue this important service. Poland requested that a SACFC member participate in the local convention in Poland (via Skype) to share ES&H with them.

The Sponsor-by-Mail workshop was very lively, with discussion and questions going back and forth. Members from Britain and other local fellowships engaged me in conversation about the CFC. Much has been learned from the experience of the Israeli fellowship, especially regarding project Silkworth (engaging a non-sexaholic to advocate on behalf of CFC).

For the 7th tradition, the Israeli convention collected \$323, forwarded to SAICO.

## **SUBMISSIONS TO ESSAY**

**Y**our writings and art are invited, although no payment can be made. All articles submitted are assumed intended for publication and will be edited. Articles are edited to maintain their essence and meet *Essay* word length and content limits. Materials submitted become the property of *Essay* for copyright purposes. Please do not reference unadjudicated illegal activities.

The *Essay* welcomes artwork and humor -- graphic art and funny stories enhance each issue. For artwork, please remember it will be printed in black ink. 300 dpi is preferred.

We invite articles of different lengths, from 200-400 word anecdotes or memories, to 400-600 word Practical Tools or Meditations, to 1000-1500 word Member stories. We prefer electronically submitted manuscripts sent to [Essay@sa.org](mailto:Essay@sa.org)

Articles may be sent by postal mail to SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024 USA and should be printed, double-spaced. Handwritten items should be written clearly on only one side of each sheet.

All articles should have an English translation along with the original language or be in English. Whenever possible we will publish in the original language as well as the translation. 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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# SEXAHOLICS

## 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.

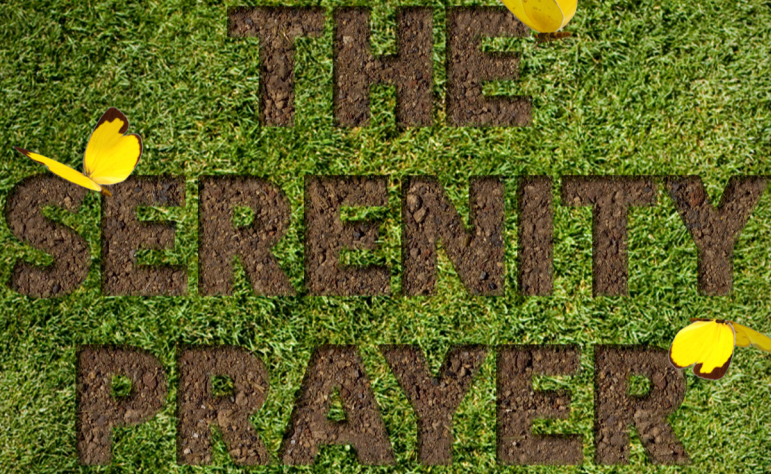
*The Twelve Steps and Traditions are adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. ("AAWS"). Permission to adapt and reprint the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWS agrees with the views expressed 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.*

# ANONYMOUS

## 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.**