

USA 17

USING THE LITERATURE OF THE PROGRAM

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS



OCTOBER 2024

SA.ORG

SA Purpose

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

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RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of SA always to be there. And for that, I am responsible.

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* 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 by the General Delegate Assembly.*)

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 the 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. (*Addendum to the Statement of Principle passed by the General Delegate Assembly in July 2016.*)

ESSAY is a publication of Sexaholics Anonymous

essay@sa.org

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RESOLUTION: "Since each issue of ESSAY cannot go through the SA Literature approval process, the Trustees and General Delegate Assembly recognize ESSAY as the International Journal of Sexaholics Anonymous and support the use of ESSAY materials in SA meetings."

Adopted by the Trustees and General Delegate Assembly in May 2016

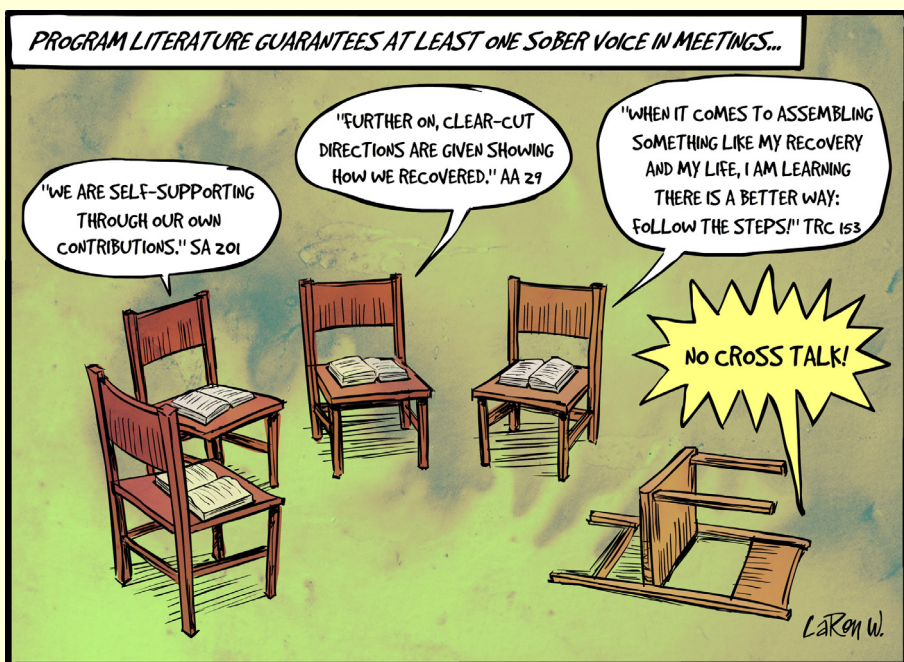
In the chapter "Overcoming Lust and Temptation," the

White Book emphasizes the vital role that both AA and SA literature play in sustaining our sobriety and recovery, ensuring that there is at least one sober voice at meetings. These texts offer key insights into ourselves and a deeper understanding of the recovery principles. Roy states very clearly that *Alcoholics Anonymous* and the *Twelve and Twelve* constitute the basic texts of the original Twelve-Step program (SA 77).

Over the years, the SA Literature Committee has developed 40 different titles—books and pamphlets—focusing specifically on recovery from sexaholism, and more titles are in development. You can also learn about the SA Translations Committee, which ensures that the proper procedures are followed to produce "approved literature" for SA meetings that are held in languages other than English.

A young Finnish member shares how the Program's literature offers spiritual guidance in his life making each day brighter. A long-time member from the US has been using the literature for over 30 years to guide sponsees worldwide. And a female member from the UK shares her powerful testimony, crediting the Program's literature for saving her life and helping her find God in its pages.

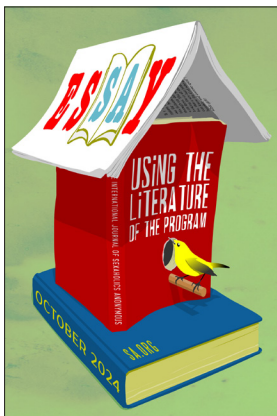
India hosted its first-ever SA event, bringing together 34 participants from across the country in Bangalore where they came together and truly experienced a sense of family. Discover more about this event and many other stories in this issue.



October 2024

While our literature has preserved the integrity of the AA message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship.

AA xxiv



On the cover: The life-giving literature of the Program has built a strong and welcoming home for individual members, local groups, and the Fellowship as a whole across the globe.

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Any resemblance to real persons is purely coincidental, as all images in ESSAY are handmade, bought from Shutterstock, or made by means of Midjourney AI.

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. 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.

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Dear ESSAY

DEAR ESSAY, I WANTED

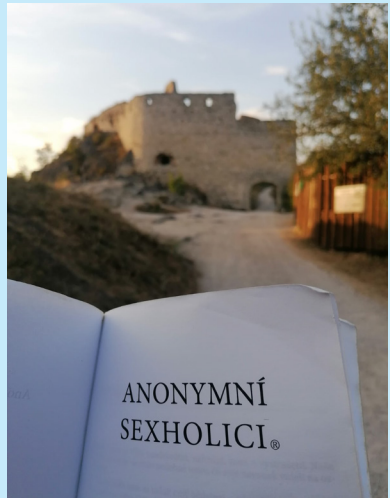
to share these photos of an unconventional meeting location.

I am a grateful member of the Žilina SA group in Slovakia.

One of our fellows was instructed by his sponsor to attend at least two physical meetings per week. He sometimes

travels to distant members who don't have nearby meetings.

I myself attend the meeting in Žilina almost every week, but it's at least a two-hour trip. On the initiative of the fellow, our group conscience agreed to hold an extra meeting in my



village. However, in the end, only one other member could come.

The three of us walked to the ruins of the Čachtický hrad ("hrad" means castle, left photo) and had a wonderful SA meeting on a little hill inside the castle walls (top photo).

Beáta M., Slovakia



Share your photos

Send your meeting place to essay@sa.org. Remember to include your name, address, group name, and location of the meeting.



DEAR ESSAY, EARLY IN recovery, it was instilled in me that, in order to recover, I need to be H.O.W. (Honest, Open-minded, and Willing).

Without honesty, I am left only with OW! [for many English speakers, this is what we say (or yell) when we get hurt]. I am

focusing more on honesty now because I'm tired of the pain that results without it (the OW!).

Please pray for me, the fellow at the door, and anyone who wants our solution.

Richard D., UK



HIGHLIGHTING THE SA LITERATURE COMMITTEE

I knew from the start of my journey in SA that our founder, Roy K., wrote *Sexaholics Anonymous* (the “White Book”) and then later learned that he also wrote *Recovery Continues*, *Discovering the Principles*, and several SA pamphlets. However, for many years, I wondered who writes all our other wonderful SA literature and what’s involved in the publication process. Then the opportunity arose to do international service, and I volunteered to join the Literature Committee (or Litcom as we call it).

I’ve since learned that each new project has a Sponsoring Editor, an experienced, long-time sober SA member who writes the book or pamphlet on the chosen subject. This person is appointed by the Literature Committee (Litcom) and approved by the Trustees. The Sponsoring Editor chooses whether to write it on their own or have a committee to help.

The term “program literature” refers to publications that have been through a rigorous, formal procedure in Litcom, which includes up to 17 distinct and separate steps to review, comment, and suggest any alterations or corrections to each draft document. These reviews are carried out by Litcom, the Trustees, and a selected group of readers along the route to finally be approved for publication by the General Delegate Assembly (GDA), which is the group conscience of our whole Fellowship (see Concept Two). All of this is why we can have confidence that our Program literature has been thoroughly scrutinized and approved by group conscience. We also know it’s suitable to give to a newcomer.

There are about 40 different titles (books and pamphlets) now available, with several new ones in the pipeline. SA has also formally approved all Alcoholics Anonymous conference-approved literature, which has been through a similar process.

Our literature was written by sexaholics for sexaholics, by those who have been through the same struggles and have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. The writers have found a way out that works, and they give us valuable examples of what they’ve done to end the destruction in their lives and how they live a happy, productive, and peaceful life. As addiction is a forgetting illness, these writers’ experiences remind us what it was like, what happened, and what it’s like now.

Addiction is also a very lonely illness. In the literature, we see our own stories, our thoughts, our fears, our obsessions, etc. We realize that we are no longer alone.

No matter how long we have been sober in the SA Program, the literature continues to provide us with Program tools and constructive ideas for dealing with any difficult or painful circumstance. It carries a reassuringly consistent, positive, and proven message for recovery and growth in that recovery. It contains a message of hope, a solution—the Solution.

RAYMOND H., Leeds, UK
Litcom Chair



If you have 5 years of sobriety and are interested in joining the SA Literature Committee or the SA Translations Committee, contact SAICO at saico@sa.org

SERVING ON THE SA TRANSLATIONS COMMITTEE

Step Twelve reminds us to carry the message of SA to sexaholics around the world. An important tool for my recovery has been service work on committees such as the SA Translations Committee (TC). Since 2020, I have been a liaison between the worldwide level and those who translate material into Spanish and Portuguese.

A significant resource for recovery is our literature like the White Book, pamphlets, and audiovisual media. These materials are still not available in some languages. To help non-English speakers seeking to recover from lust addiction, SA formed the TC. There are at least 50 languages with 40 million speakers around the world; today, the TC supports 27 of those languages.

TC members serve as liaisons between regional groups that do translation work, SAICO, and the Roy K. Trust. Our objective is to ensure that the proper procedures are followed to produce “approved literature” for use in SA meetings that are held in languages other than English.

Members anywhere can begin translating the literature of the Fellowship, but it’s not considered official until it has gone through the SA approval process. A person or region heading up the translation should contact the TC through SAICO to get the needed documents for the approval process.

Once the translation is complete, a second review is conducted by someone verified as independent of the original translating group. This is to confirm that the translation is accurate and represents the original message.

This translation work is very rewarding! I have gained new insights into the SA message which have strengthened my continued recovery. It has also given me great opportunities to fellowship with members around the world by lifting linguistic barriers. I’m calling on members of SA everywhere to consider service work on the Translations Committee to help the sexaholic who still suffers in languages other than English. We will all benefit from your experience, strength, and hope.

ANTONIO S., *Tennessee, USA*



Practical Tools

Today, this Canadian fellow is leading others along the way to the Solution by working it first and foremost himself.



t took me a while to understand and put this into my daily program:

... the ex-problem [luster] who has found the solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another [sexaholic] in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be

accomplished (AA 18).

I had been reading it in every meeting for over three years before my wife walked in on me with another woman. Maybe I needed that to happen to realize I wasn't working the Program the right way. I was working it my way. The white-knuckle way. Which definitely is the absolute wrong way.

This passage from the Big Book has brought me to where I need to be. Attending meetings now, I try to lead with my weakness (see SA 186, 187, 189). This is huge progress for me.

I'm showing the newcomer that I had the same difficulty, but I'm now a

man with a real answer. I talk to new members and help guide them in the Program and share what works well for me. I try to guide and show them how to live in the Solution as they work their own program. I find myself staying after meetings to talk with others and give them guidance from my own experience. It's great to be able to help others who are struggling and offer tools to help them live in the Solution as I have.

As a sexaholic, I've learned that many in the Program battle the same things I've battled: relapse, lying, hiding stuff, etc. Working with others is a necessary component of my personal program. I've asked myself many times what I have to do to keep sober and why I keep relapsing. These are all things I've worked hard at over the past few months to make myself better.

For almost four years before I got sober, my wife kept asking why I repeatedly acted out, was dishonest without changing my behavior, broke

my promises, etc. I had a hard time giving up lust. But when I hit my bottom when my wife caught me in the act, I saw lots of things I needed to do to make life better for her and show how I could change without expecting anything in return.

I tried to commit suicide, but my wife found me and saved my life. I often asked why she didn't just let me die, thinking, I don't deserve to be here. Her reply was, "You're not taking the easy way out." Now I often think of that during my prayers in the morning and evening. I'm grateful she saved my life and gave me the opportunity to see what it's like to live life happy, joyous, and free.

In my disease, I was a totally different man. I was in this addiction since I was 5 or 6 when I found magazines in my dad's night stand. I would sneak in and look at them whenever I could. I soon figured out that he got a new one every month. I lay in wait for each new issue by continually checking the mailbox. I'd save the plastic wrap to put it back in so I could return it to the mailbox having looked through it first.

Things only progressed from there. Though I managed at one time to go 10 years without acting out, I still lusted heavily after women, which for me, wasn't much different. Then the Internet happened, and I spiraled faster than ever.

If I never took the first look or typed the first words in a chat, it wouldn't have become what it did. I did this right in front of my first wife, though. It was so bad that I could lie to her and make her think it was her fault. I'm ashamed that I caused her to believe she was the problem.

The first look/drink of lust was my downfall when I wouldn't surrender it, make a phone call, attend a meeting, or use my tools. If I don't do these

things quickly, I go down the rabbit hole again. It's just the way the vicious cycle goes if I don't work the Program the right way.

The solution for me is looking to people in meetings who are living in the Solution and reminding myself that I, too, can live in the Solution if I use the tools shown to me by others. It's really that simple!

My spiritual awakening came when my wife discovered me for what felt like the 100th time. For some reason, this time, I realized I needed to make changes to how I was working my program, and so I did. I have a Higher Power that I use more than ever. Hitting yet another bottom was the only way I could begin working the Program properly. It shouldn't take that many times, but it did with me.

The reason I had no control over my lust is that I just couldn't stop! I'd take two, three, four looks in lust or wait for the woman to lust after me. I was hopeless and did nothing to stop. I can be slow, but I learned a very hard lesson when I was caught the last time. It got me to wake up and make some drastic changes: stay much closer to my sponsor, redo my Step work, reach out to other members, etc.

Since I've had what I call my spiritual awakening, it's been a whole different life for me. I feel so much better about myself, my personal program, sharing at meetings by leading with my weakness, volunteering to lead meetings I haven't been to in a while, and showing empathy for my wife like I never have before.

I realize now that I must work the Program for me and nobody else and keep it like that. Plus, I must help others along the way by leading them to the Solution.

DAVE R., *London, Canada*





SA Is Not a “Fellowship”

K

nowledge and pride have been big obstacles in my working the Program. “Knowing the Truth,” as mentioned in our White Book (SA 91), has been another obstacle. As I accumulated calendar sobriety, I was unsure why I kept feeling anxious about lust.

Blindly following others and hoping their recovery would somehow magically rub off on me didn’t work out for me so well, because I kept the scared, lonely parts of myself hidden and untouched. Thus, I needed to do service, to do what didn’t come naturally and become willing to put others first. The Fellowship gives me strength and support and when I accept it, I receive love.

I had to ask myself whether I was engaged in a “followship” or the Fellowship, which is spiritually working on my defects and learning new attitudes, motives, and skills. I had to get clear on my purpose for meetings and group involvement, which is to help clear away my inner obstacles to have a Real Connection.

I had to identify my weaknesses and with Higher Power’s guidance, develop enough courage to leave them behind and develop each weakness’s opposite virtue. I had to start doing service, to do what comes unnaturally and to become willing to put others first.

I continue to need this deeper level of surrender, which will deepen my humility and courage. Only when I do this can the Fellowship teach me discipline, honesty, integrity, and practical tools to become saner and well.

ERIC S., *California, USA*



Highlighting the SA Store

Check out the updated [SAICO Store](#) on our Fellowship's international website [sa.org](#), where you can order a variety of SA materials, including our 11 SA books, 20 SA pamphlets, 9 pieces of e-literature, 5 items of literature translated into Spanish, and 2 audiobooks—perfect for you and your home group.

✓ NO ACCOUNT REQUIRED

You may purchase products without creating an account but will not, however, be able to view your order online without an account.

✓ SAVE ON INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING

We offer print-on-demand versions of the White Book and Recovery Continues. Shipping is included in the price, and can be cost-effective for small orders shipped internationally.

✓ VOLUME DISCOUNT

We offer a volume discount on large orders over \$200 (20%) or \$500 (30%).

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The beautiful, full-color, [36-page print version](#) of the ESSAY Magazine is shipped worldwide directly from our Central Office. With six issues published each year, you can choose from one-, two-, or three-year subscriptions.

✓ WANT TO HELP ANOTHER SEXAHOLIC?

The ESSAY is an excellent Twelfth Step tool! Give a print subscription to a sexaholic in need or who can't afford it. Perfect for sponsees, newcomers, prisons, rehab centers, doctor's offices, giveaways, group celebrations, intergroup and regional events.

Encourage your group, intergroup, region, or SA friends to get involved!



Using the
Literature of
the Program

Seeing Myself In the Mirror

Program literature offers spiritual guidance that enriches his life, making each day more enjoyable and fulfilling.

Before getting sober, I was not a book person. In fact, I had never read a book cover-to-cover. I almost finished one book in school because it took me into a fantasy world, away from reality. Most reading for me, though, was distressing and pointless.

My religious tradition encouraged me to read, study, and meditate. I sometimes read scripture so as not to incur disapproval or feel left out, but I missed the most important part of reading: applying its principles. I saw reading only as a box to check off.

My disinterest in reading hasn't

been for lack of encouragement. Both my wife and therapist suggested several books that likely would've been helpful. My therapist even printed book excerpts for me so I didn't feel intimidated by a whole book in my hands. After rare instances when I got hold of myself and read a little something, I was like a man looking into a mirror, but when he walks away, he forgets what he saw. If I were to effectively read something, I'd have to face myself and look within. I was too uncomfortable being myself let alone having to examine with my reasoning, my motivations, and my emotions.

Everything changed when I came to the Program. I was so desperate that I was willing to do anything—

even read. Even I was shocked at this! I started with the White Book because I knew I needed it, and I saw that it was working for many other sexaholics.

With the help of the Program, a change began to occur within me when I started reading the literature with the intention to absorb and apply it. I got a sponsor, started working the Steps, and I participated with others in the Fellowship.

The first thing that affected me was the word “sexaholic.” It helped me understand what my problem was and, most beautifully, what the solution was.

For the first time, I began to remember a dim glimmer of my reflection in the mirror. My thanks goes to the Program and to Higher Power for this miracle.

This text now resonates with me deeply: *When we came to SA, we found that in spite of our differences, we shared a common problem—the obsession of lust, usually combined with a compulsive demand for sex in some form. We identified with one another on the inside. Whatever the details of our problem, we were dying spiritually—dying of guilt, fear, and loneliness. As we came to see that we shared a common problem, we also came to see that for us, there is a common solution—the Twelve Steps of recovery practiced in a fellowship and on a foundation of what we call “sexual sobriety.” (SA 1-2)*

This passage reminds me that I am not alone or hopeless. I can now apply what I’ve learned by participating in a fellowship, helping other sexaholics, and working the Program one day at a time. I finally get to be part of humanity. My differences do not exclude me from recovery or connection. They only give me an opportunity to share my unique experi-

ence, strength, and hope.

The Program slogan that got stuck in my head right from the start was “One Day At a Time,” which I keep remembering and for which I am very grateful.

When I came to my first meeting, I had been acting out for nearly the previous 24 hours straight. The Program taught me this foundational truth: the past cannot be changed, but

The disease is a forgetting disease. My illness is spiritual and needs to be treated that way by working the Program in a spiritual way.

it doesn’t need to control the present; I don’t have to correct my whole life in a day but just focus on the present moment and do what’s helpful and right.

The literature brings spiritual guidelines to my life. One of them is that by taking certain steps, at any time, I can see what’s hindering me from doing the will of Higher Power. I regularly try to read SA-approved literature to shed a more pleasant light on each day. I get to choose (as I check in with HP) which sections best apply to me at that moment. This disease is a forgetting disease. My illness is spiritual and needs to be treated that way, by working the Program in a spiritual way.

There are still days when I don’t have the willingness to apply what I read and do “the next right thing”

(see *Step into Action* 44, 120, 154, 178). But then I pray, ask for that willingness, and trust that the feelings will follow when I take this action.

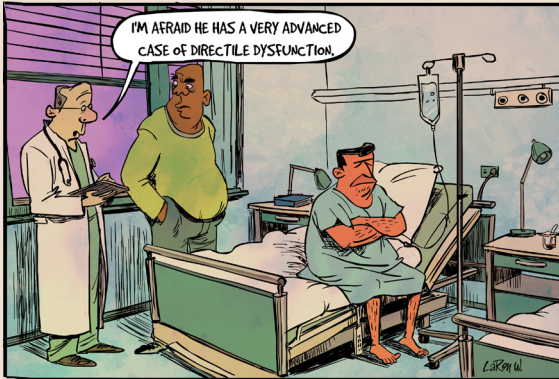
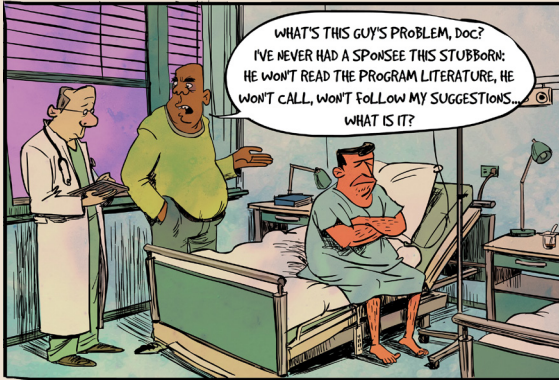
I never thought I'd say this about

any printed text, but I'm so grateful that we have the literature of the Program.

JOA K., *Porvoo, Finland*



Are You Willing To Go To Any



For over 30 years now, Bill has been using the literature of the Program in his diligent work with sponsees from all over the world.

At my first meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous, I heard someone read "The Problem," and I knew that I was in the right place. In the White Book, Roy wrote:

8. Use the literature of the program.

The Twelve and Twelve and Alcoholics Anonymous were my first guides in working the Steps. Again and again, I found what I needed in those original documents that launched the Twelve Step program. Many of us now find that working the principles outlined in our SA literature adds another dimension and is very helpful (SA 161).

In my experience, the White Book describes my sexaholism in a way that allows me to identify myself as a sexaholic. Reading the Big Book (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) with a sponsor allows me to see the similarities between my addiction to lust and the alcoholic's addiction to alcohol, and shows me a program of action that will expel the obsession and enable me to live happily and usefully whole.

When I start with a newcomer, I have them start reading the White Book from the title page through chapter 1, "To The Newcomer," and the section "Lust" on pages 41 & 42. Then, we review the reading line by line and I ask if this describes their problem and relationship with lust. Do they feel inadequate, unworthy, alone and afraid? Is sex with self or partners other than the spouse progressively addictive and destructive? Are they a sexaholic, as described in the book?

If the answer is no, I encourage and help them to find the Fellowship (SAA, SLAA, etc.) that shares their problem.

If the answer is yes, I have them read the chapter "The Sobriety Definition" (SA 191). I explain (as the book does) that our experience has taught us that this is the solution that works for sexaholics in SA. We have no "plan B," no successful experience with any other solution.

Now I ask the critical question: "Do you want what we have, and are you willing to go to any lengths to get it?"

If the answer is no, I encourage them to seek someone who has been successful with another solution.

If the answer is yes, I have them read the chapter, "Overcoming Lust and Temptation" (SA 157), underlining or highlighting every prayer they

find. Then, we review the chapter together and I have them describe precisely how each of the 18 points applies to their sexaholism. For example: #1 Describe their compulsion; #2 How do they feed their obsession? etc.

Then I have them write each of the prayers that resonate with them on an index card, laminate it, and car-

Reading the Big Book, with a sponsor, allows me to see the similarities between my addiction to lust and the alcoholic's addiction to alcohol.

ry it everywhere they go. Whenever they are tempted, I suggest they pull the card out and begin praying *before* they start drinking in the person, image, etc. *This is the first serious test of their willingness to go to any lengths.*

If they follow the instructions in the 18-Wheeler, they are now equipped with the tools to keep them sober long enough to work the Steps to have the vital spiritual experience sufficient to overcome sexaholism.

Next, we begin reading "The Doctor's Opinion" in the Big Book. I ask them if Dr. Silkworth's description of the allergy, the phenomenon of craving, describes their experience with lust. I share my own experience with the craving for more and more lust,

once I take the first drink.

Then, I have them read “Bill’s Story” and “A Personal Story” and ask them to note any similar experiences, especially similar feelings. I ask them to note if there is anything Bill and Roy did to recover that they are not willing to do. If there is, I ask them if they prefer the misery and eventual death from their sexaholism to taking the actions of our program of recovery. Personally, I am willing to move forward with an individual who is ready to take the next step. I recall that when I was at Step 1, I was terrified by the prospect of God, but after working Steps 1 and 2, Step 3 was less overwhelming.

At this point, I ask them to read Step 1 in *Step Into Action (SIA)*, and begin writing Step 1 as outlined, using the questions to guide their preparation of the inventory. I ask them to read the chapters in the White Book: “The Problem” and “The Solution” through to page 88 as they begin writing their Step 1 inventory. We also read together chapters 2 and 3 in the Big Book, which describe the obsession. When they have completed writing their First Step inventory, we review it, and I encourage them to share it with their home group in a special First Step meeting. This may be a breakout meeting in a larger group, or a special meeting before or after the regular meeting for a small-

er group. The details are a matter for the group conscience.

I also use *SIA* for Step 2. I found the process helped me see where I acquired my old ideas about God and develop a new conception that might allow me to recover. Once we have reviewed the instructions and they begin writing the Step 2 exercise, we begin reading chapter 3 in the Big Book and Step Two in the White Book. When they have completed the writing, we review it and I help them write a concise description of their conception of the Power that will guide them in their new life. They are now ready for Step 3.

From this point, the instructions in *SIA* and the Big Book are nearly identical. I find the questions in *SIA* help identify the manifestations of self that each Step is addressing. By using the White Book, the Big Book, and *Step into Action* together, a person can see how to work through the program of recovery developed by Alcoholics Anonymous 80 years ago and apply it to overcome sexaholism. Sponsoring others keeps me going through the literature regularly, and answering questions from my sponsees pushes me to re-examine my beliefs and strengthens my connection with my Creator.

BILL S., Tennessee, USA



DISCUSSION TOPIC

How are you using the literature of the Program?

The author of this article shares how he guides his sponsees through the 12 Steps, carefully following the program literature. This practice helps him

stay engaged with the material on a regular basis.

How are you incorporating our literature into your own recovery? How

has it supported your recovery? Do you use it when working with your sponsees?

Send a story of your own recovery journey to essay@sa.org



hen I joined SA in the autumn of 2020, I was broken but willing to take direction. That's because I was so desperate. Many years of experience in AA did afford me some advantages though, including countless book study meetings and a good familiarity with the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. I even remembered some passages, like page 417 about acceptance, which I could still recite word for word. The stuff I memorized still serves as a kind of mental reference library.

All this knowledge did absolutely zero for getting me sexually sober, though. That is, until someone suggested SA, which I surrendered to—desperately.

I immediately began looking for a female sponsor in SA and attended meetings daily. I also attacked the literature as I had in AA. I underlined

impactful passages with colored pens, which turned each book into a personal workbook. When my inner sexaholic does her thing and torments me, I now have another personal reference library close at hand. My White Book is so heavily underlined, highlighted, and annotated that it's almost unreadable in places. All the prayers are notated in the margins with the page corners turned down. There was a time I'd go through each of those folded corners and pray all the prayers in my quiet time.

I was blessed with a sponsor who taught me to read a passage each day, write freestyle impressions about it, and send her what I wrote. We worked together that way through much of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Sexaholics Anonymous*, and the *Twelve and Twelve*. I will be ever grateful to her for showing me how to live with that firm foundation to my recovery. She taught me, "whenever I'm troubled, the literature has solutions." This fit well with my view of Program literature being my personal reference library. I remember

FINDING GOD

In the Literature

This UK female member testifies that she is still alive today because of the program literature.



that time with my first sponsor fondly.

I'm reworking the Steps with a new sponsor, and she's having me follow the SA book, *Step Into Action*. For each Step, it suggests several passages to study in other books. This is a slower approach to working the Steps, but

I firmly believe that when I study recovery literature and write, Higher Power communicates with me.

it's laying another sound foundation to my recovery.

Although I had freed myself from most social media and tech gadgetry, a mentor suggested I get a chat app that many SA members here in the UK commonly use—I had no idea such things existed. Then, because the world was in lockdown when I joined SA in 2020, I embraced online meetings and made contacts all around the world. I enthusiastically threw my lonely self into all the technological connection I could find. I took to heart that, "The 'unconnected' sexaholic is a *misconnection* waiting to happen" (SA 34). I came to understand "unconnected" to mean unconnected more from God than from fellows. This was a very meaningful realization for me.

The core of my success in recovery is leaning heavily on Program literature: it's helped me understand and deal with my inner addict, I grow in my personal program because of the literature, and it helps me grow in all aspects of life when I, "practice these principles in all [my] affairs" (SA 143).

My main source for knowledge consumption was once digital media with its constant barrage of bite-size chunks of questionable information. Not only had it stolen hours from each day, it became the lens through which I viewed my life. Replacing that digital lens through which I focused most of my time and thought with the new lens of approved literature of SA, I find life so much more worth living. I thank my sponsors for this huge perspective shift as I try to pass on my love of the literature to my sponsees.

I suffer from chronic pain and a sleep disorder, so I'm frequently awake for long hours at night. I love the silence, and I love consuming the literature and recording my thoughts and impressions in study journals during those quiet hours when I can hear HP's influence a little more clearly. I can take a recovery perspective with

I can look for encouragement to be good for myself, and to feast on the experience, strength, and hope of those who have gone before me and enshrined it in writing.

my pain and sleep problems by enjoying my immersion in the literature until I'm able to sleep. I can look at these medical problems, then, as a gift from Higher Power. I can look for encouragement to be good to myself, and to

feast on the experience, strength, and hope of those who have gone before me and enshrined it in writing.

I firmly believe that when I study recovery literature and write, Higher Power communicates with me. It's my form of meditation. When I do this, I have a good day. When I don't, I don't (nor do people I come in contact with). It really is that simple for me.

When I write, I discover afresh what my heart really believes. And when

the ESSAY publishes something of it, I get to pass my experience on so it might help someone else. I see the ESSAY as one sexaholic talking to another, a real "meeting in print" (*SA Service Manual*, ch. 15, p. 1).

Our program literature is why I'm still alive today—happy, joyous, and free! I will never be grateful enough.

KATHIE S., *Devon, UK* 

ESSAY

Enhances Our Meetings

I've had the pleasure of attending quite a few SA meetings since 2020 when I first joined the Fellowship. In some of those meetings, we used ESSAY magazine articles in our literature rotation. I'm writing this to highlight how two articles from the ESSAY were very impactful in meetings I attended.

One of the oldtimers in the meetings I was going to was very excited to suggest to us, who were mostly young in the Program, a certain article he thought we could use in a future meeting. However, he had difficulty remembering the exact title or when it was published. He knew that he had read it in the print version of the ESSAY years before, but didn't know where it was now. He said he'd made several copies and given them away and now it was maybe in his car or his house ... but maybe not, too.

He really loved the article, though, and as he told us about it with great enthusiasm, we got excited, too. Our curiosity grew and grew, and we wanted to see it, so off we went on the hunt!

We brainstormed about how to find the article, and slowly some details started coming back to him. Miraculously, one of us managed to find "[Sex and the Single Sexaholic](#)" (ESSAY December 2012) written by Shannyn H. from Nashville, Tennessee. It's on the ESSAY website now (essay.sa.org), and we discovered it right before our next meeting. Finally, we got to read it together in a meeting where we each shared how it impacted us.

It was so good! So good! So worth the build up! Working the Program as a single sexaholic is its own multifaceted experience, and the article did an amazing job conveying what that's like. The author really cap-

tured how lust shows up as cunning, baffling, and powerful, specifically for the single sexaholic, especially those who intend to sober date until marriage. The author also accurately described what it's like for the single sexaholic to practice being in the Solution (as defined in the White Book), to stay in the Solution, and to feel gratitude for the Solution.

Several of us had worked to find this article, and we felt so good about the impact it clearly had on so many in the group. The enthusiasm extended to the "parking lot" (informal chatting in a Zoom room after the meeting formally ends) and even to a WhatsApp group chat over the next several days.

The very next day, I couldn't resist sharing it in one of the women's Zoom meetings I attend (it's called, "Women Bozos on the Bus"). Several of the women in that meeting, like myself, had been single sexaholics since they started the Program, and it meant a lot to us that the author was also a single woman. We had an amazing discussion about the article, and I'm so glad I was able to be of service by spreading its message of hope and recovery.

I'm also very grateful to the man who suggested the article, that we were finally able to find it, and that it connected us better by helping us see ourselves more clearly.

On Tuesdays, the daily Bozos on the Bus meeting does a special reading, and the literature in rotation at the time was from the ESSAY. I led the meeting the day we read "[Music as a Spiritual Experience](#)" (ESSAY August 2023) written by Marshal M. in California, United States.

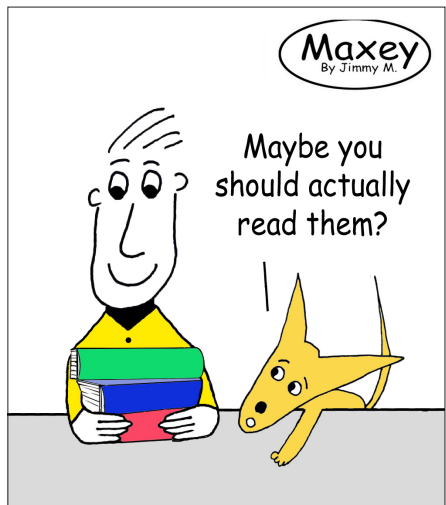
In this article, Marshal shares many ways God uses the talent for writing and playing music He gave him

to further Marshal's own recovery while being of service to others by showing them how to live in the Solution.

This piece really resonated with the group that day. We even extended its effect by sharing recovery-related music in our WhatsApp group chats, which is now a regular, ongoing feature there. My own use of music has really enhanced my recovery, too. I'm very happy the article prompted my fellows to share music that is Higher Power- and recovery-related.

I want to mention my immense gratitude to the translators of my first ESSAY submission, "[God Replaces Old Memories with New Ones](#)" (ESSAY, June 2023, E14. They helped translate my article into both Spanish and Dutch. It was a great honor to be considered for translation at all, let alone to hear how the translators themselves related to my story. I was even more touched when I heard my story was used in Dutch where it sparked discussion that promoted group unity and better recovery.

ANN R., Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Steps & Traditions

In the beginning of the war, I was trying to sleep in our common hall on the cold floor. Many cruise missiles were over my country. I woke up and was extremely tired; realizing that somehow I survived, while other people might have some injuries or even could have died.

That morning, I was triggered by everything: my father who came and shouted something, my stomach which was noisy like an orchestra, me—being so sleepy and exhausted. I experienced all parts of HALT in that time. A few moments later—I relapsed. I had a thought that I'll feel much better, I just need something to relax me and then I will feel relief. But guess what? There are no situations which relapse might make better.

I called my sponsor: "Bra-a-ah, it was such a difficult night. I couldn't sleep well, I didn't eat anything for such a long time. I was tired, I was irritated by my father and rocket strikes. EVERYTHING irritates me. I hate the world, I hate day and night, I hate this war and many other things, so that's why I relapsed." He listened to me patiently and said in a sober way: "Millions of people all around

the world didn't sleep well, didn't eat enough food ... somebody irritated them—but they DID NOT ACT OUT. You acted out because you are a sexaholic!"

Yes I am. This is the key motto for me, every day, "I'm a sexaholic." That's my Step 1. The only thing that can help me is recovery. Step 3 is about understanding that my Higher Power is helping me to be sober right now; helping me to rebuild my relations and my life and to get through any emotions I may experience. Even to get me much closer to Him by means of those emotions.

Since that time I've come to see that on my own, if I would like to act out, I will do it. I have no insurance for that. I've further realized that there is only one thing I need to remember: no matter whether the war is over there or near me, whether I have electricity in my apartment or not (it has disappeared during rocket strikes for a few hours); the one thing I need to remember is my ongoing recovery.

I need to work my Step 11 on a daily basis. I need to have a deep understanding of who my HP is—on Whom I can rely. It has been vital to find that Power, believe in It and rely on It. Now I know God is in charge. He is taking great care of me, much better than me. There is no way of lusting anymore. No need for that. I deserve to be happy, joyous and free. Without God, I can't; without me, God won't.

ANONYMOUS



GOD

Is in Charge

ESSAY talked with Nancy S. from Columbus, Ohio, USA. She has been sober since December 15, 2004—One Day At a Time.

When she first encountered the Twelve Steps, she exclaimed, “What a great way to live!” Today, she has been sober in SA for almost twenty years, she’s actually living the Program like she said, and she’s an immense help to others in SA.

CONNECT WITH ME AND MAKE ME WHOLE

When asked why she came to SA, she answers spontaneously, “Because I had lost my connection to Higher Power.” She tells how she spent her whole life hopelessly searching for connection with other people.

“I never felt guilty about acting out with myself. But I did feel guilty when I had a long-term affair with another woman outside my marriage. I had an incredibly difficult marriage. The problem for me was where the White Book says, “connect with me and make me whole” (SA 203), that’s the way my addiction works—I turned to others for validation, and I got farther and father away from HP.”

Nancy goes on with her story: “Right after I got married, I joined a Bible study group without ever thinking there’d be a temptation to act out with someone. It turned out one of the women in the group was working through the women, grooming them to be open to sexual relationships

with her. I didn't realize it. She took her time . . . it was five years before I knew what she wanted. I knew something wasn't right, but when I realized what she wanted, I couldn't get out of it anymore. I was already dependent on her and afraid to lose her. *Who will I have then that wants to know me and likes me and who wants to be around me?* I came to see that I let her manipulate and abuse me.

"I said no but then stayed stuck like a kid sticks to an abusive parent. Over time it just ate away at me. It destroyed my relationship with God; it was terrible. My husband didn't discover what I was doing, I never went through that kind of shame. Most of my acting out was with self, but that's not where I lost control. I lost my connection with God, and I couldn't stand it anymore. That's what brought me to SA."

WHAT A GREAT WAY TO LIVE!

"I had been hospitalized in a psychiatric hospital. I couldn't take it anymore. That's where I saw a Twelve-Step poster hanging on the wall. I got so excited thinking, *This is what I want! What a great way to live!* A staff member asked why I was there, why I really wanted the Twelve Steps. She seemed to look right through me. I didn't yet know I was a sexaholic, that I had a lust addiction. I knew I had other problems, maybe I was just hypersexual. The hospital had me in AA. No one asked if I drank, they just let me participate. Eventually I ended up in SA. People were going around the room, giving their bottom lines. I was stunned at how honest and open sharing was. But I knew I was safe, that I was home.

"I worked Steps One through Three. Unfortunately, in my home group there were no good examples of how to continue after Step Three. No one

had significant sobriety or an understanding of sponsorship. When I was three years sober, someone in my group took me to a convention, and thank God, I learned there how others work the Program! I started going to lots of conferences because that's where I could meet other women. I'm so grateful for that!"

FEMALE NEWCOMERS

"When I discovered it was about working the Steps, I made another meeting my home group. I drove two

Pray, pick up the telephone immediately to discuss it with someone, and then resolutely turn your thoughts to someone you can help.

hours every week. In that group, we did a "Rapid Stepwork Weekend," we did DSR calls, we did what most people in SA do. That's when I learned how to work the Program."

Today Nancy is very active in Step Twelve work. She actively works with sponsees, whom she considers absolutely "indispensable" to her own recovery. She also helps female newcomers. She takes her time on calls with them, talks them through difficult phases, answers questions, and guides them to meetings.

"The Big Book says: Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove

them (AA 84).

“Pray! Call! Serve!—this is what I tell newcomers right away. I tell sponsees the same thing: pray, pick up the phone immediately to discuss it with someone, then resolutely turn your thoughts to someone you can help. I find my problems get easier to handle when I apply this formula, so I teach it to somebody if it’s their very first day, and I share it with folks that’ve been around for 20 years.

“I also tell sponsees that they will sponsor others sooner or later. When I came into the Program, you had to wait for years before you sponsored someone. But look at how Bill W. and Dr. Bob did it. Sponsorship is so important!”

DATING IN SOBRIETY

One of the most frequently asked questions by newcomer women is whether they can ever date again. Nancy gives this advice:


“In AA, they say to wait a year. I’ve heard, because this is an addiction about relationships, about connection and disconnection, that it’s better to wait two years. That’s two years of

sexual sobriety, not just being in the Program. Everyone’s circumstances are unique, though. To most sponsees, I say that sex is optional and she should wait until she and I feel she’s ready. I don’t usually stick a one-size-fits-all time length on it. It depends from sponsee to sponsee.”

ONE DAY AT A TIME

We asked what Nancy’s favorite Program slogan is. Her answer was quick, “It has to be, One Day At a Time (or ODAAT in text messages). Yes, it has to be that! Because so much of life can be overwhelming or so humongously exhilarating that if I focus on it being more than ODAAT, I can’t handle it. If I’m not in the moment, I’m not enjoying where I am. Then I get overwhelmed thinking I’m never going to get better. That’s why I want to stay in this moment, and just enjoy where I am.”

Today Nancy, like all of us, has the tools to stay consciously in the moment. She’s working and living the Twelve Steps, which are truly proving to be “a great way to live.”



What Made Sobriety Happen?

I sat there all alone one afternoon in a stunning location in Hawaii. And all of a sudden, a realization came over me. I understood

that if I didn’t stop acting out now, I would be lost—for the rest of my life. I would never make any meaningful connection with anyone, and I would

descend lower and lower into moodiness, self-centered bitterness, cynicism, and despair.

I had spent the year trying unsuccessfully not to act out. When I traveled for work, I'd call ahead to hotels from the airport and request the staff to remove the television from the room before I checked in. If the device was still in the room when I got there, I would act out. I had done my part, I reasoned—I tried, but the TV was still there. I took this as a green light from fate to act out.

I had been compulsively chasing women all year, too. I was obsessed with a woman in my company (she wasn't interested!). I slept with another woman I met in a random city, and I'd frequently call her for phone sex. Like so many before her, I used her for self-gratification. I tried to seduce every attractive woman I met.

There were two other guys in the company that year who were consummate ladies' men. The women fell all over them. I was eaten alive with envy and wanted their nonchalant attitude about it all. It was all fun to them, or so it seemed to me. They'd set 'em up and knock 'em down, and if they were rejected they'd shrug it off and move on. When I was rejected, it felt like a mortal wound.

I had also been going to other 12-Step sex addiction programs for several years. I tried 'em all. I had been to a meeting of SA, but it felt too puritanical for me. Besides, I knew I couldn't give up masturbation. And I wanted to be better at lust, not give it up—I wanted to be the womanizer I saw in my workmates. I acted out with another woman toward the end of that year. Turns out she was using me, too. It was an odd experience for me, and of course, went nowhere.

By the end of the year, I left that

company and took a Hawaiian vacation to clear my head. At the end of a week, I sat there in that beautiful location, not feeling lonely, not particularly hopeless . . . just a quiet, subtle understanding that if I didn't change, I would be lost.

The next day, back in Los Angeles, I was on my way to a meeting of another S-program and ran into a friend. I asked where he was going, and he said, "SA." I said, "I'm going with you." That was almost 30 years ago. I've never watched porn or masturbated since.

What happened? I had suffered enough, I suppose. Or maybe Higher Power just stepped in for me. I did nothing to create that change or bring it on. I wasn't working the Steps. I didn't do it. Something else did. A switch was flipped.

I did do a lot of work after that, though. I did service, I went to meetings when I didn't want to, I got to know everyone in SA in the LA area (even Roy K. and some of the other founders). Mine was a path of service as I got out of myself. Something in me just knew I had to practice service to others to overcome my extreme self-centeredness.

Was it all perfect? No. I had one more affair after two-and-a-half years of sobriety, still chasing the idea that I could satisfy lust. It didn't work. But the Program was working for me.

I also had another change. When I met the woman who was to be my wife, there was no lust at all. I didn't want lust anymore. We've been married for over 22 years. What changed me? I don't know. Not me. I just took the actions of spiritual growth and kept showing up at meetings. All I know is I'm extremely grateful.

RICH L., *New York, USA*



KEEPING A POSITIVE ATTITUDE



One of my friends in prison informed me that he is going to be paroled soon. He asked for advice on what he should do upon release. I asked him where he plans to live and sent him a list of meetings in his area with contact phone numbers. I asked if he had transportation to his location. If not, I suggested that he find a local bus service or transportation service.

It would be helpful if he could find someone who can drive him to the area where he plans to reside. If he has a family that he can live with, that is helpful so long as his parole restrictions allow him to live there.

It is also advisable to contact the welfare office so he can start collecting welfare and receive food stamps. He should find the local food bank where he can get food.

If he does not have a place to stay, I suggested that he contact the local Salvation Army and see if they can find him temporary shelter.

He should start looking for day la-

bor work or community service programs. Also, I suggested that he look for job training programs primarily in construction or warehouse work. Other areas of employment could include local delivery and working in a kitchen. Jobs that require contact with the public may not comply with his parole restrictions.

The most fundamental thing, for him, is to keep a positive attitude. The best way to do so I have found is by going to SA meetings. SA meetings offer the best opportunity for emotional support and a network of friends and contacts. Additionally, daily phone calls to share what's going on with me have been essential for my mental and emotional balance.

Besides prayer and meditation, daily readings from our basic books *Sexaholics Anonymous* and *Alcoholics Anonymous* are crucial.

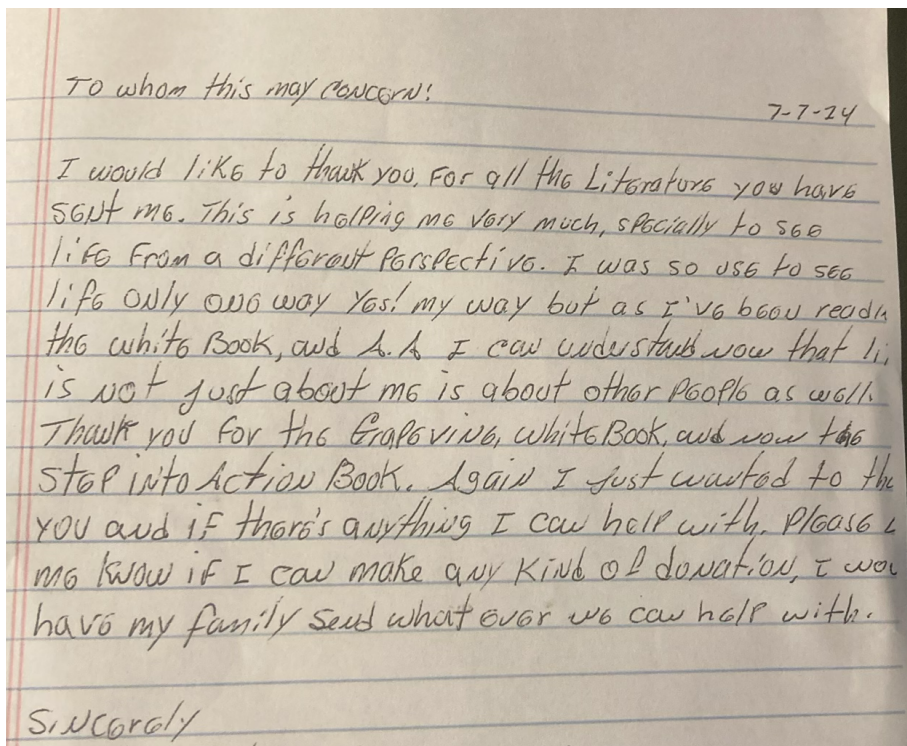
By doing meetings, phone calls, reading, prayer and meditation, SA has truly become the substitute to my addiction, just as the Big Book promised on p. 152.

PAUL Z., Georgia, USA



OUR MEETING IN PRINT!

This touching letter was sent by Arturo G., one of the many friends in prison who gets free Program literature from SAICO, as well the bimonthly ESSAY magazine. Arturo gave his permission to publish this letter as a way to express his gratitude to the Central Office, the CFC, and the whole SA Fellowship. His desire to be of help testifies of the “spiritual awakening” (SA 143) he has experienced as a result of working the Steps.

A photograph of a handwritten letter on lined paper. The letter is written in cursive and is dated 7-7-24. The text of the letter is as follows:

To whom this may concern:

I would like to thank you for all the literature you have sent me. This is helping me very much, specially to see life from a different perspective. I was so use to see life only one way yes! my way but as I've been reading the white book, and A.A I can understand now that li is not just about me is about other people as well. Thank you for the Grapevine, white book, and now the step into action book. Again I just wanted to the you and if there's anything I can help with, please let me know if I can make any kind of donation, I would have my family send what ever we can help with.

Sincerely

Like Arturo, many friends in prison get the beautifully printed bimonthly editions of the ESSAY magazine sent by SAICO and call it their lifeline. Many consider ESSAY their “meeting in print” because the articles and photos give them the closest connection they can have today with members from all over the world, members living the same one-day-at-a-time, working the same solution to overcome their daily lust temptations and character defects.

Read all about the SA CFC (Correctional Facilities Committee) on our Fellowship’s website: sa.org/corrections/

Please consider carrying the message by giving a print subscription to a sexaholic in need: essay.sa.org/get-involved/carry-the-message/



BECOMING A FAMILY

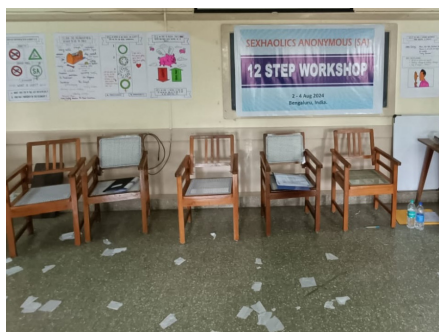
34 participants from all over India came together in Bangalore for their first-ever SA event and all got a free ESSAY copy.

Different forces propelled us to the first-ever SA India Workshop Weekend in Ashirvad, Bangalore. These forces included life-threatening spiritual bankruptcy, absolute failure of moderation and self-control, and a serendipitous string of events amidst desperate seeking.

We were 34 in number, of diverse ages, sexes, vocations, tongues, and places. Most diverse of all were our stages of surrender and recovery including wavering willingness, chronic relapse, fear-tinged resistance to surrender, and painful struggle with SA's sobriety definition. Diverse as we were, our desire to stop falling

prey to lust united us.

We came as strangers to this workshop, some having had fleeting on-line interactions. With deep-seated

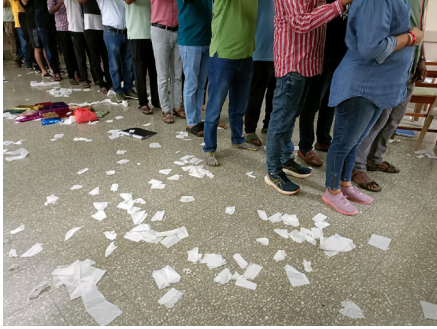


A banner was made and all the Steps were illustrated with drawings on the spot.

fears of judgment, broken anonymity, and the demoralizing disease of lust, we held guarded hopes of be(com)ing free. But we left as a fam-

ily—with loving smiles, renewed hope, and lighter hearts.

The 3-day workshop proved incredibly sobering (pun very much intended). As I struggled with a string of 15-day streaks, the workshop lead-



The paper scattered on the ground were the “Twenty Questions” (SA 8) which we tore off one and threw to the ground if we answered Yes to it. Here you see a group dynamic exercise demonstrating the interconnectedness of the Fellowship.

er’s 15-year sobriety seemed like 15 lifetimes. Naturally, I expected a miracle saint, but to my surprise and delight, he was human, sexaholic and flawed, just like the rest of us. Neither accent nor cultural differences proved a barrier. He helped us feel so at home that we forgot he was a foreigner visiting India again after 30 years. Further testament is how comfortable two women felt among all us crazy male sexaholics.

Kicking things off with an ultra-honest share on Day 1, the leader led with vulnerability. Gently, we were led into Step Zero about surrender, and then rigorous, shame-free honesty. Then followed two days of serious Step work—that felt like play thanks to the fun string exercises, group bonding activities, creative poster-making, and humor. The shares, Step work, prayers, string play, and group exercises were carefully designed and tweaked.

What better testament to the effectiveness of this experience than some deeply cathartic Steps Four and Five? The hours flew by in silent solo-reflection as we penned our Step Four inventories. We did this among Ashirvad’s beautiful gardens, silent alcoves, and pristine chapel. We shared our inventories one-on-one in deep vulnerability, and we received the same with a deeper mute witness.

The last day was all beaming smiles and heartfelt hugs. I think everyone wanted to stay, serve, and grow in sobriety—together. But within weeks, the results were apparent:

✓ A Chennai Public Information (PI) session followed the Bangalore PI.



The amazing string exercises designed by the late Dave T. were passed on and proved to be a unique way to visualize the Steps in a creative way and to unify and bind the group.

✓ Six new in-person meetings sprang up like hot geysers across India.

✓ Record-high 7th tradition contributions flooded in.

✓ Program calls of surrender

among fellows felt more welcome and familiar.

✓ Daily Tenth-Step reminders began popping up.

✓ ESH turned deeper, humbler, and more thoughtful.

✓ New proposals, initiatives, and ideas rained in.

✓ Thanks to a new print-on-demand proposal, the SA literature might soon be locally available—all in Higher Power’s time.

The workshop reinforced the “we” in sobriety and recovery. Many also seemed to feel the relief of deeper faith in SA, the 12 Steps, the Fellowship, and Higher Power.

Yes, this disease is chronic and debilitating, but recovery’s gifts drastically outweigh the apparent “costs.” The hope that we’d someday be able to moderate and enjoy lust died for many of us. But the hope that a deeply fulfilling lust-free life is possible (and within reach) only grew stronger.

All we must do is stay humble, work the Steps with rigorous honesty, attend meetings, be in the Fellowship, give freely of what’s given to us, and keep our houses in order.

NEERAMITRA A., *Bangalore, India*



SERVICE

Opportunities in SIP

Did you know that Supporting Institutions and Professionals (SIP) is an official committee of SA? Its purpose is to reach out to helping professionals (therapists, clergy, doctors, etc.) and institutions like rehab centers, hospitals, the Salvation Army, or the Veterans Administration (VA). We introduce them to SA and share our stories so they can confidently refer the people they work with. The need is great!

You probably know there are countless sexaholics out there who are still suffering. When someone turns to their clergy or a professional about this problem, it’s still unlikely that they’ll hear about SA. Our main goal on the SIP committee is for the helpers to share that SA has a solution.

We need volunteers in every intergroup. Would you like to help?



Our committee is here to help your local intergroup create your own SIP subcommittee and advance this work in your own area.

To learn how you can do service in an SIP capacity in your area, visit our [Google Drive folder](#), which houses all the needed documents you’ll need. Scan the QR code below or reach out to us for advice at SIP4help@outlook.com



In One Boat Towards Serenity

I joined my home group in Amman, Jordan a year ago today. Back then there was 12 of us, and we had no in-person meeting. We participated remotely in meetings held in Egypt.

Gradually, our group began to grow, and our voice of recovery grew louder. We established our first in-person meeting, and three months from now, we will celebrate the first anniversary of our meeting—a place where miracles happen and where joy and freedom reside. One member celebrated his first year of sobriety, another celebrated six months, and I recently celebrated ten months.

In our physical meetings and in our WhatsApp group, I get to see my fellows strive for sobriety, stumble, and then get back up and continue. I feel a great sense of joy when new members join our group. I am very happy seeing newcomers attend their first meeting all nervous and shy and then courageously open up about their past, begin asking for help, and offer it in return.

Now, we meet twice a week, once remotely on Tuesdays and once in person on Fridays. We are still learning about business meetings and, with Higher Power's guidance, we strive to cultivate a conscientious spirit as we prepare the room to welcome all the newcomers God is leading to us.

YAZAN A., *Jordan*

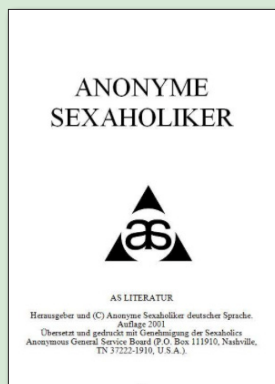
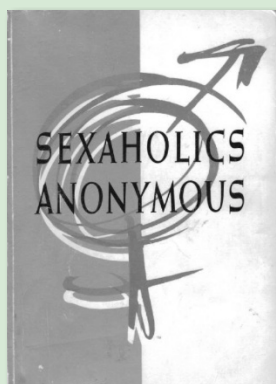
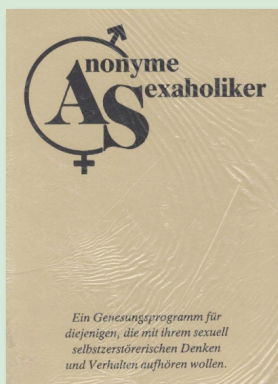


SURRENDER, DEEP IN THE OF TEXAS



International SA / S-Anon Convention
Dallas, Texas July 25, 26 and 27, 2025

The Birth of SA in Germany



Left photo: By the end of 1985, the first German translation of the first edition of the White Book was ready. By the end of 1986, about 500 of them had been sold. Middle photo: New and revised English edition, July 1989. Right photo: First edition of the revised White Book in German, 2001.

In the early 1980s, the seeds of SA were sown in Germany, marking the beginning of a transformative journey for many sexaholics. This writing will tell of some pivotal moments and key players that shaped SA in Germany, highlighting its growth and impact.

FIRST STEPS: 1983-1984

In the autumn of 1983, an American friend of Walther L. introduced him to SA by saying something like, “there’s this self-help group in the United States...” This introduction sparked interest among Walther’s staff, who was the director of a medical clinic in Bad Herrenalb. One employee, deeply moved by the material, sent his First Step to Simi Valley, California, initiating a transatlantic exchange that would lay the foundation for SA in Germany.

By February 6, 1984, the first SA member in Europe emerged in West Germany. This milestone was followed by the establishment of the first German SA group in May–June 1984 at Walther’s clinic. This group later relocated to Karlsruhe in October 1984, becoming the first SA group outside America that still exists today (September 2024 as of this writing).

BUILDING THE FELLOWSHIP: 1984-1986

The translation of the SA handbook into German began in April 1984, a project that took over a year and a half to complete. This effort culminated in the publication of the first German edition of *Anonyme Sexaholiker* towards the end of 1985, with 500 copies sold within a year. The availability of this handbook played a crucial role in spreading SA’s message across Germany.

The Karlsruhe group, initially formed in October 1984, became a hub for SA activities. Weekly information meetings back at the clinic in Bad Herrenalb significantly contributed to the Fellowship’s growth. By April 1987, 13 registered SA groups were active in Germany, and by November 1988, this number had grown to 22.

EXPANDING HORIZONS: 1985-1987

The mid-1980s saw a flurry of activity and expansion. In January 1985, the SA group in Hanover was founded, followed by groups in Bochum, Bremen, Cologne, Freiburg, Mainz, and Stuttgart. The first SA conference in Germany took place in Karlsruhe on June 14-15, 1986, with about 25 members representing various groups. This convention marked a significant step in unifying the German SA fellowship and establishing a service committee to oversee its activities.

Roy K. visited Germany in October 1985, and conducted an open seminar at the Bad Herrenalb clinic. His visit inspired many and reinforced the connection between the German and American SA communities.

CHALLENGES AND RESILIENCE: 1986-1988

With its rapid growth, the Fellowship faced some challenges. Internal disagreements led to the formation and subsequent dissolution of a separate group in Karlsruhe in 1986, but the original Karlsruhe group continued to thrive, introducing separate meetings for newcomers and maintaining a robust meeting schedule.

The second SA-Germany convention in Cologne on November 8-9, 1986, saw increased participation, with 28 members from various groups attending. This convention further solidified the Fellowship's service structure and commitment to its principles.

A LEGACY OF HOPE: 1988 AND BEYOND

In 1988, I visited Roy K. Following the visit, I wrote:

While on a business trip to the United States, I visited Roy K. in Simi Valley for the first time around the spring of 1988. Roy informed me during this visit that he was working on a new extended edition of his handbook, which was printed in 1989 as Sexaholics Anonymous, known to us today as the White Book. Roy asked if we in the German-speaking SA community would be willing to translate this new manual into German as soon as it was available.

On my return to Germany, I made a proposal to the Service Committee, of which I was a member, to set up a translation team dedicated to the task of translating this new, extended edition of SA's primary text. With close contact with Roy K., the translation team was formed and operated during 1988-1991 when the project was completed.

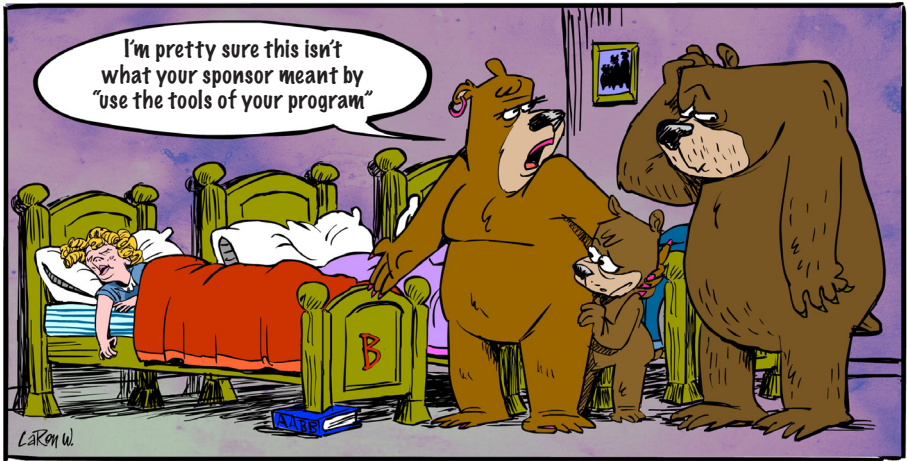
I believe the growth of SA in Germany is a testament to the power of shared experiences and mutual support. From its humble beginnings in the mid-1980s to its established presence today, the German-speaking SA fellowship has provided a lifeline to countless individuals seeking sobriety, recovery, and hope.

I also believe that the founding and growth of Sexaholics Anonymous in Germany highlight the resilience and determination of its members. Through translation efforts, conventions, and the unwavering support of key figures like Roy K., the Fellowship has flourished, offering a beacon of hope to those in need. As the SA community continues to evolve, its legacy of recovery and unity remains a source of inspiration for all.

Helmut M., Bochum, Germany



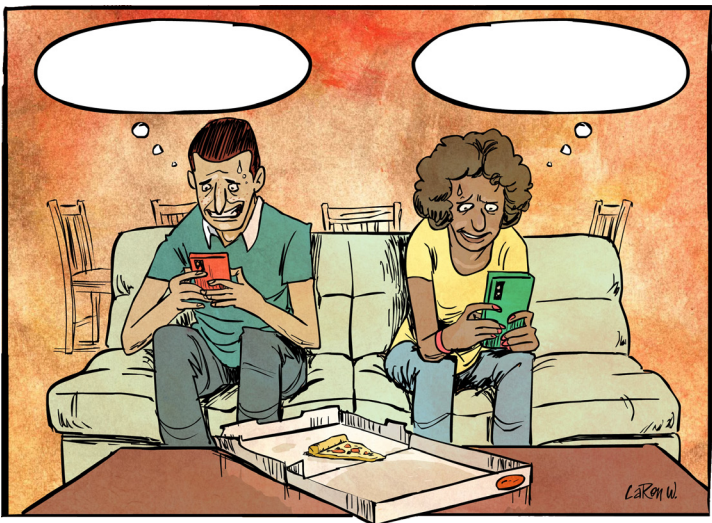
WIN A FREE ISSUE BY CRAFTING THE BEST CAPTION



Once again, selecting from the many outstanding submissions was a tough challenge. The winner of August's contest is **Daniel B., USA**, with the caption above. He'll receive a free copy of the October issue of the ESSAY.

Attention, dear readers! Are you ready for this edition's challenge? We invite you to craft the perfect recovery caption for the cartoon below, centered on **December's theme, "Sober Dating."** If your caption makes us laugh, it will be featured in the December ESSAY edition.

Don't miss out—the submission deadline is November 15. Send your entry to essay@sa.org. Unleash your creativity, and may the cleverest caption win!



COMING IN DECEMBER



Sober Dating

NEXT EDITION

The December edition will feature articles on sober dating written by members from around the world.

Happily Married

The decision to embrace SA sobriety guided a young Slovakian man towards sober dating and marriage.

Dating in Malaysia

A female member gladly shares her experiences with sober dating in Malaysia.

Tips and Tricks from Sponsors

A collection of helpful guidelines and precautions based on the experiences of sponsors guiding sponsees in dating.

Hope in Morocco

Because of SA, there is now hope for the sexaholic who still suffers in Morocco.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

December 2024 edition: Sober Dating (Stories due Nov 1) Experience, strength, and hope on sober dating from fellows from all over the world.

February 2025 edition: God As We Understand Him (Stories due Jan 1) This phrase is perhaps the most important expression in the AA vocabulary as it frames an open door to recovery for everyone.

April 2025 edition: Rule 62 (Stories due March 1) Humorous anecdotes and stories from members about the iconic AA slogan “Don’t Take Yourself So Damn Seriously.”

June 2025 edition: Happy, Joyous, and ... Single (Stories due May 1) Single members share how they enjoy a happy and fulfilling life in sobriety beyond their wildest dreams.

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.

While we provide all articles in English, as well as six selected articles in 9 other languages, on our website at no charge, ESSAY is not free to produce. To support the ESSAY magazine in carrying the SA message worldwide, please make a contribution on essay.sa.org.

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.
THY WILL, NOT MINE,
BE DONE.

