

# ESSAY

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS

## A GREAT CAUTION IS ADVISED



FEATURING A NEW SERIES BY LUC D.

# 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 lust and become sexually sober. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. SA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sexually sober and help others to achieve sexual sobriety.

*Adapted with permission from AA Grapevine Inc.*

## 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 lust 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*

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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

## Editor's Corner

*Congratulations to Shmuly S. for winning first place and to the Galway Group for winning second place in the Best Caption Contest. Both captions are featured in this edition.*



*In this edition,* members share their experience disclosing acting-out behaviors to loved ones. They share lessons learned from making mistakes and the wisdom gained from following the guidance from Higher Power, our sponsors, or from SA literature.

Learn how love from an infant can shine hope in the darkness of despair, how taking time to discern prepares for a smooth amends, how Higher Power in SA can lift someone out of post traumatic distress caused by full disclosure, and more.

In Fellowship,  
The Editorial Team  
[essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org)



## HELP ESSAY CARRY THE MESSAGE ALL OVER THE WORLD!

ESSAY is looking for volunteers who enjoy reading, writing, and grammar in the English language. If you are looking for service in editing or proofreading, let us know at [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org), and thank you for your service!



[essay.sa.org](http://essay.sa.org)

February 2026

## February 2026

*We suggest that newcomers to Sexaholics Anonymous not reveal their sexual past to a spouse or family member... without careful consideration and a period of sexual sobriety...*

*Sexaholics Anonymous, 3*

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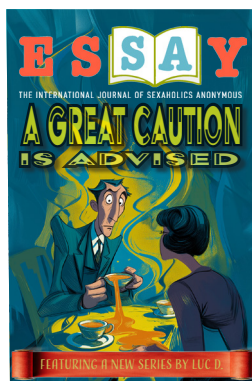
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ESSAY presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. Opinions expressed in ESSAY are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by ESSAY.

Regarding graphics, 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.



On the cover: "Spilling tea" or spilling our guts to loved ones about our acting-out behaviors can leave a mess behind. Our literature recommends giving ourselves time to sober up and discern God's will when sharing with our loved ones.

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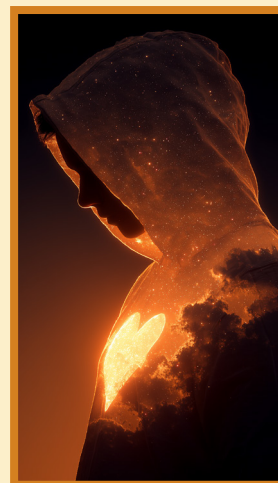
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## Dear ESSAY



*Reflections on the December 2025 edition, "Rigorous Honesty."*

## Peace Enters In DEAR ESSAY,

I warmly congratulate you on your invaluable service to the worldwide SA fellowship, a service that reaches far beyond borders and touches many lives.

Rigorous honesty does not arrive as a blow, but as a light. It does not come to accuse; it comes to reveal. In the Program, we learn that the most persistent lie was not the one we told the world, but the

one we whispered to ourselves.

To be rigorously honest is to stop running. It is to look at our own heart without fear of naming what hurts. When that truth is spoken softly before another, a quiet miracle occurs: isolation breaks, and fellowship is born. We discover that our story, when told truthfully, no longer separates us but begins to unite us.

Honesty is also the threshold of true amends. There can be no repair where pride still rules or where justification lingers. Only when the truth is offered, asking nothing in return, can harm begin to heal and peace find room to enter.

Today, just for today, I choose truth because within it there is no punishment, only rest. As the White Book reminds us, we are called to "develop a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty," and in that truth, step by step, freedom ceases to be a promise and becomes a home.

Juan E., Murcia, Spain



## No One Knew

DEAR ESSAY,

It wasn't until I first entered recovery that I heard of rigorous honesty. No one knew the real me. None of my closest friends, none of the women that I had dated, not even my wife, knew about my addiction.

The program of recovery made me realize that my addiction thrives in secrecy. I had one dark secret that no one knew besides God and myself. My sponsor asked if I had any dark secrets that I had never revealed to anyone. After telling him the story, he offered me grace and said he was not shocked by it.

My motives were always suspect when it came to my addiction. Now I realize that my motives can also be suspect when it comes to how I share in meetings, with my accountability circle, and with my sponsor. The program's Step Four says, "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." Fear, I think, is the most powerful character defect I have to deal with. The fear of shame cannot be allowed to paralyze me from action. It used to feel like this Program was brutal, but now I see it is rigorous. I want to continue with rigorous honesty.

Greg V., New Jersey, USA



## What's Going On In SA

# SA IS INCLUSIVE

*SA is making changes that allow meetings to be accessible to all its members, especially our brothers and sisters who are deaf, hard of hearing, or blind.*

The Accessibility Committee (AC) is committed to exploring, developing, and offering resources to make the SA message and participation in our program available to everyone who reaches out for it (adapted from the Accessibility Committee's Mission Statement). Inclusion is actions involving necessary changes to help another SA member participate fully in his or her recovery. It is about making meetings accessible to deaf and hard-of-hearing people, those who are blind, and those needing ramps to physically access the building. For the deaf and hard of hearing, a sign language interpreter makes the meetings accessible.

Regarding SA members experiencing blindness, the AC is in the process of producing *The Real Connection* and *Step Into Action* as audiobooks. The *Real Connection* audiobook will be available in early 2026. Notification of its availability will be published on sa.org when completed.

Currently, some SA meetings offer American Sign Language interpretation for SA members who are deaf or hard of hearing. ASL interpretation gives these SA members access to critical

recovery opportunities, including meetings and fellowship. Who among us doesn't need inclusion and fellowship?

Some members at meetings with ASL interpretation have raised concerns about anonymity being at risk. We wish to allay these fears with these reasons. Firstly, according to the ASL interpreter's Code of Professional Conduct, all information related to an SA meeting remains confidential. Additionally, the demand on interpreters to deliver immediate interpretation requires full concentration. Interpreters focus on what is said, not who says it. The last reason is that SA prioritizes carrying the message. Without an interpreter, deaf and hard-of-hearing sexaholics lose access to our groups and are denied the sharing of our stories, which is important to our requirement to carry the message.

For members who are deaf and would like to attend an online meeting with ASL interpretation, please contact our Accessibility Committee ([SAaccessibility123@gmail.com](mailto:SAaccessibility123@gmail.com)) to obtain the link to a meeting.

KB, Accessibility Committee

A map-based presentation of the Fellowship's meetings was unanimously approved for rollout on September 1, 2025. This is the first in a two-part Meeting Finder system. The second part will display virtual meetings in a schedule-based format.

### PLEASE CHECK THE [MEETING MAP](#) FOR ACCURACY

The primary goal of the Meeting Map is to get a newcomer to their first meeting.

Based on the many complaints coming into SAICO since the Meeting Map came online, some of the information in the Meeting Registration/Update system is highly inaccurate! Meetings are missing. Meeting details are incorrect. Meetings are showing up that no one in the area has ever heard of. This is bad!

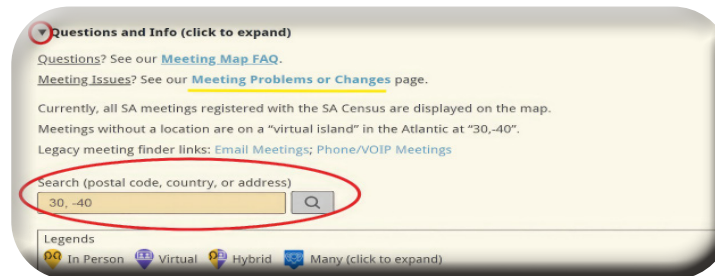
Now that everyone can use the Meeting Map to see the information in the Meeting Registration/Update system, let's all do our part to make it as accurate as possible. Our newcomers depend on it. Our Service Structure depends on it. Instructions on how to

start the process of fixing things are found on the Meeting Problems or Changes link at the top of the Meeting Map. Intergroups can request that SAICO send a spreadsheet of all their meetings to help speed the process of making corrections and keep information up to date.

It may take a couple of weeks for changes to the Meeting Registration/Update system to show up on the map. Please be patient.

Virtual meetings associated with some sort of location are displayed in that location. Virtual meetings with no location are displayed on "Virtual Island" in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. Enter coordinates 30, -40 in the ZIP / county / address search box to get the list of those meetings. You may need to use the sort menus to help you find your meeting. Not all features are working their best yet. For instance, the time zone list is in no particular order. Please be patient. Or better yet, offer to help! The IT Committee has traditionally been understaffed.

Jeff from Maine, IT Committee Chair



## THE MEETING MAP

Help us update the new Meeting Finder, which contains inaccurate information regarding registered meetings in SA.  
<https://www.sa.org/meetings/>

# Practical Tools



Luc D. traveled to Nashville in 2009 to attend 90 in-person meetings in 90 days in a desperate attempt to save his life after a relapse binge. He kept a journal during this time and shared it with other members. Below and in the following editions, ESSAY will be sharing parts of his journal.

What led my coming from tiny Belgium in Europe to the green state of Tennessee in the Bible Belt of the US? My acting out had worsened so much these last months that I had given up my job (for the twelfth time in 12 years), stopped going to meetings, avoided any contact with program friends, and had eventually gotten into a binge which lasted for two consecutive months. I spent around \$3,000 those last two months.

My ever-worsening insanity had been offering me two horrible lies: first, that if I were to end up in jail,



I would in fact enjoy it. The last week of this sheer hell was with only the drive to act out. I knew I had lost all control. I felt scared of what was going to happen. Suicide was becoming each day a more realistic way out. Today, I realize I could have died there. Only my Higher Power kept me alive.

When I desperately called my sponsor after two months of radio silence on my side and told him that the last two months had been one horrible and long relapse, he responded by saying that he would have been more surprised if I had kept sober and serene without the Program for two months. When I asked him timidly if he still wanted to sponsor me, he answered: "Don't deny me the opportunity of staying sober by sponsoring you." He suggested three options to examine: one, to go to a treatment

center; two, to take Depo-Provera (a tough medicine based on hormones that arrests lust); or three, to come to Nashville for 90 days to go to meetings and work the Steps. After phoning a trusted old-timer in the UK who encouraged me to go for it, I chose to do the latter and thus ended up here.

**Thursday, September 10, 2009**

Yesterday morning, I got out of bed at six am to walk an hour later to take the bus to the airport. I remember flying along the snowcapped mountains of Greenland. Seeing the Big Apple from the plane. Praying to my HP hundreds of times, "Please may I find in You whatever I am looking for in this or that woman." It became a long day. It was, only by His grace, a safe and good-going journey.

This morning, my tired, crazy, and ever-inventive mind whispered to me to act out. The disease always looks for our weak spots! Fortunately, my Higher Power kept me sober.

Pooh...I feel my nerves whirling around now. What am I doing here? Have I completely gone crazy? Let's get out of here! Will they accept me in the meetings? How will things evolve?

Calm down...I have, together with my sponsor and others, prepared this step-by-step. It will work out now, one minute at a time. Let's get out of my mind and be gentle with myself. Now, go for a nice breakfast, look for a SIM card, write my feelings down, phone my sponsor (who lives in Nashville, and I just heard that the phone in my room is free of charge for local calls). Go to the noon meeting: that's already a nice program for a jet-lagged recovering addict, isn't it?

After my very first noon meeting

here, a program fellow, a kind man, took me in his black Jeep to buy a Boost phone, a simple cell phone which I can charge monthly in order to phone and text unlimitedly within the whole US. He also lent me his second mountain bike to use for the whole three months here! It looks like my Higher Power is taking care of me: me doing my best in coming here, He doing the rest now.

At the meeting, I also saw my sponsor for the first time. When he was sharing in the meeting, I realized it was him! Funny...we have been phoning daily by intercontinental calls, and now the owner of this well-known voice was sitting there as a real person amongst these people. In my Walt Disney mind, I had imagined him very differently.

I got the instruction to go again through my First Step, which I had written out and told him five months ago, to see how I could give a short version of it to the group in 35-40 minutes.

To be continued...

Luc D., Belgium





*He realized that  
by only praying  
for God's will, God  
revealed his will  
and answered his  
past prayers for  
sobriety.*

## PRAYER TO INVITE, NOT TO PERSUADE

All my life, I thought prayer meant asking God for something I wanted—peace, healing, sobriety. If I said the right words, in the right way, at the right time, maybe God would say yes. Looking back, I see how my prayers were self-centered—about me trying to manage God.

But I couldn't stay sober, no matter how hard I tried. Then, in 2022, something changed. I have been sober since.

What happened? One night, I realized the word “prayer” really means invitation. To pray is to invite God, not to persuade Him. I invite God to do what He wills, not what I wish. That realization changed me. That's what prayer became for me: a moment where I opened my heart and said, “God, I invite You to use me.” Life became calmer. I have serenity to match calamities. I've learned that when I let God's will happen through me, even hardships become bearable.

Today, prayer for me isn't about asking God to change things; it's about asking Him to use me.

When resentment rises, I pray: “God, this resentment separates me from You. It keeps me from doing Your will. I invite You to remove it.”

When I'm afraid, I pray: “God, this fear blocks me from You. Please take it away so I can do what You will.”

**Today, prayer for me isn't about asking God to change things; it's about asking Him to use me.**

When my intention is to do His will, He answers. I also learned that I can't trick God. I can't pray selfishly and dress it up as surrender, like saying, “God, give me money so I can focus on You.” God knows my motives before I even speak. He's not fooled by words; He listens to the heart.

When I think about what prayer means to me today, it's this: “God, let me be used by You to do what You will.”

That simple invitation has brought me freedom, serenity, and conscious contact with the One who keeps me sober, one day at a time.

Anonymous

## A Great Caution is Advised

On the advice of our marriage counselor—before I ever entered SA—I told my wife the truth about my sexual acting-out. He encouraged honesty, though he didn't know the full extent of my behavior. We arranged for the kids to be out, and I intended to reveal only a little. But once I began, everything poured out at once, like a dam breaking. Wave after wave of deceit and infidelity spilled into the open. As destructive as it was, I felt an immense relief finally releasing the secret I'd carried for years. I had no idea how good it would feel to get it all out into the

open. What I didn't consider was the impact on my wife.

I was so focused on confessing that I was blind to my wife's reaction. When I finished, she went upstairs, closed the bedroom door, and didn't come out for two days. She didn't eat, sleep, or interact with our three children or me. She later described feeling overwhelmed and shattered, as if being cut with a kitchen knife and expecting a small cut, but then realizing the entire hand was gone. The emotional pain became physical, doubling her over with intensity.

Over the next days, her anguish deepened into despair so profoundly that she began planning her suicide. On the day she intended to carry it out, she went to check on our 20-month-old daughter. As she ad-

justed the blanket, our daughter stood up and said, for the first time, “I love you, mama.” When she repeated it, my wife suddenly saw the reality of what she was about to do—the end of her pain would be the beginning of our children's. That moment became the turning point.

From there, we began the long, painful work of rebuilding our marriage. SA and S-Anon became essential parts of our healing. I remain deeply grateful to my wife for choosing to stay, and to our youngest child—and a Higher Power—for delivering the right words at the right moment. My wife says she admires my courage in recovery, but her courage in choosing hope is far greater.

Fred M., USA



*A moment of love moved his wife from despairing disclosure to hope.*

## THE TURNING POINT



# NO DEFENSE FOR WHAT WAS SAID

*The power of God sustained her during the nightmare of hearing a disclosure.*

I first came to SA in January 2022. I knew immediately that I found people who could help me find true sobriety.

I was in a relationship with someone, though we weren't married. We tried to be respectful of the need to wait for sex until marriage, but we struggled.

A short time after my first SA meeting, my partner said he needed to tell me something. I had a feeling it wasn't going to be good, but I was completely unprepared for what happened. He had been acting out with many people for a long time. He went into detail and told me many things I never should have known. I kept asking for more details, and he kept giving them. It was like a living nightmare that I couldn't wake up from. My mind was so confused, and my heart was so broken that I

couldn't help myself. I was literally in shock for days.

That is what I've come to know as full disclosure. I was completely unaware of his behavior. I had lived in the lie that we were monogamous and fully committed to each other. I never suspected what was happening.

I had no defense for what he said. I had no safe space in my mind to cope with his words. I was lost between what I thought was a really good life and the truth of betrayal.

He left soon after telling me. I was even more hurt by that. It seemed that the abandonment was the final blow.

I kept going to meetings and found a woman who was willing to work with me. I miraculously stayed sober for about 18 months.



The power of God is so much bigger than I can even explain. Only God has the power to keep me sober. I ultimately relapsed as I became fully obsessed with his lustful lifestyle. I don't even have power over the lust of another person. Today, I am grateful that I put myself in the position to change my sobriety date. My dedication to the Program and every 24 hours is stronger for it. I pray never to fall into the grip of lust again.

I no longer have any contact with that partner, and I don't know how he's doing.

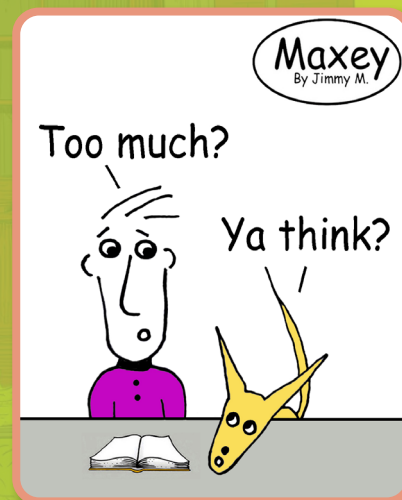
I do know that, having experienced the shock and strain of his full disclosure, I would never recommend anyone put their loved one in that most hurtful situation. It is absolutely a miracle that I have been able to heal from it.

I am grateful and amazed by the unity of the Fellowship, the deep love of sponsorship, and the power of God.

## The unnecessary damage I've gone through can be avoided.

If anyone has plans to tell their loved one all of the details, I suggest talking to longtime members for guidance. The unnecessary damage I've gone through can be avoided. It didn't help either of us as individuals, and it didn't set us up to succeed as a couple. The book Alcoholics Anonymous clearly states that we should never disclose something to someone who would be hurt by our words. There are other steps we use to clean up the wreckage of the past. The Steps work when we work them. Sober and grateful.

Anonymous





*This member reflects on all the different aspects of the Program that helped him to never fully disclose to his loved one.*

**A**fter 41 years of sobriety in recovery, I have still never fully disclosed my SA story to my wife. Even now, I ask myself how that could be.

I am not entirely sure of the reason. Perhaps I was too frightened. Perhaps I was following the guidance in the AA and SA literature. Perhaps my wife did not want details. Perhaps her Al-Anon sponsor advised her not to revisit the past. Whatever the reason, the simple truth is that I have never spoken to my wife in detail about my acting-out behavior.

We have been married for 64 years, and the last 41 have been lived in sexual sobriety. Somehow, our marriage has not only survived but flourished in recovery without my sharing the details of my past behavior. At times, my wife has heard me speak at conferences, where I acknowledge my history of sex with self and promiscuity, but I do not go into specifics.

As for full disclosure, I do not judge it. It is a tool used by therapists, but it is not found in AA or

SA literature. I, therefore, consider it an outside issue and do not take a position on it. What I do reflect on is the reality of our memory in early recovery. My sponsor used to say that God gives us a gift by allowing us not to remember everything we did too soon. Remembering too much, too early, could overwhelm us with shame and even lead to relapse. Even now, 41 years later, I sometimes recall behaviors I had previously forgotten. How then am I able to give even myself a full review of my acting-out behaviors early in recovery?

*Alcoholics Anonymous* says: "Whatever the situation, we usually have to do something about it. If we are sure our wife does not know, should we tell her? Not always, we think..." (AA 81).

*Sexaholics Anonymous* says: "A caution. We suggest that newcomers to Sexaholics Anonymous not reveal their sexual past to a spouse or family member who does not already know of it, without careful consideration and a period of sexual sobriety, and even then, only after prior discussion with an SA sponsor or

group" (SA 3).

From the onset of my recovery, I told my wife that I was in SA. I never kept my recovery a secret from her or from my family. I knew I had an illness, and just as with my membership in AA, my membership in SA was nothing to hide.

Does a spouse need to know if they may have been exposed to a venereal disease? In my opinion, yes. But the simple truth is often enough. My sponsor used to say that addicts either lie and say nothing, or they get diarrhea of the mouth and say too much. The simple truth means answering only the question being asked. Another honest response is simply, "I'm too uncomfortable to answer that right now."

Why do some spouses feel a strong need to know "everything"? I believe it is often because they sense the addict is still drunk—either not truly sober or still driven by lust. When we are genuinely sober, people usually can feel it, and they feel safe around us.

My job is to not try to convince my spouse that I am cured, but to remind her I have a chronic con-

dition that requires eternal vigilance, one day at a time.

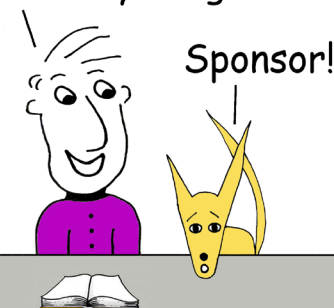
I am deeply grateful for SA and for surrendering to the guidance of my sponsors concerning disclosures. My responsibility is to remember that I have an incurable illness and can not trust my own thinking. I must use my tools today just as much as I did 41 years ago. I cannot rest on my laurels. I stay sober through the Steps, the Fellowship, and the God of my understanding, and through remembering I have a physical allergy to lust.

Harvey A., Florida, USA



**Maxey**  
By Jimmy M.

I'm going to tell her everything...





*The wives of these sex addicts spoke up to voice the damage that was done to them, but the complaints were not directed to the sexaholics.*

I started recovery by going to a famous treatment center for sex addiction. The program included “Family Day”. The “highlight” of Family Day was a process called disclosure, where I describe the wrongs I had done to my family, and the family gets to describe how my actions impacted them.

## I was not prepared for disclosure.

My wife came, and, although they were invited and encouraged, my daughters did not attend. I was not prepared for disclosure. When it came time for disclosure, my focus was on my bad behavior, while my wife was focused on how I harmed her and how I was not there for her or my family. I gave no thought to how my disclosure was going to impact my wife.

It was a very traumatic process, and my wife did not get the emotional support she needed. My wife was devastated and left the process be-

lieving things were much worse than she thought they were before. When I returned home, my wife asked me to give her an apology. I told her that that would come with Step Eight.

When I reached Step Eight about a year later, with a year of sobriety, I reviewed my amends to my wife with my sponsor, my therapist, and my fellows in group therapy. My amends were well received by my wife, and my wife has faith in my program and my commitment to recovery and sobriety.

Postscript: a year after treatment, my wife and I attended the annual reunion at the center. I attended a 12 Step meeting for sex addiction recovery, and my wife attended an S-Anon meeting at the same time. I could hear quite a commotion from the S-Anon meeting. Apparently, they were having a complaint session. Our spouses were telling the folks running the treatment center how bad the disclosure process was.

I truly believe what it says in the White Book: “Amends to family must begin with a sexually sober, changed attitude on a daily basis” (SA 3).

Jerry E., USA 

February 2026

*Wisdom has taught her that enthusiasm in early recovery did not always translate into appropriate sharing.*

After being sober for a few months, I decided to join a faith community. They held a community day every month, which I decided to participate in.

During my first community day, I got into a conversation with a couple, and we hit it off right away. They invited me over for dinner, and during that dinner, we got to know each other better.

Without hesitation, I laid my whole life story on the table: that I am a sex addict, that I have been in the depths of hell, what I have done, and that I am now recovering from my sex addiction. These people were very understanding and attentive, and they asked a lot of questions. And I answered every question with great pleasure.

Unfortunately, our friendship did not last, and I was very ashamed that I had told them so much. I was also afraid that they would tell the rest of the community.

The question I asked myself was: Why did I tell them that I am a re-

covering addict? And why in such detail? I thought about it a lot, and I think that the main answer is that my addiction defined my identity. This was who I had been for years: a sex addict. This was what I spent all my time on and where I derived my identity from. That didn't change in my first year of sobriety. I was still a sex addict, but sober, and so that was my new identity: I went to meetings, did the Steps, and made phone calls. It was still all I was. Nathalie, the sexaholic.

I thank God that they never told anyone and never used it against me. Luckily for me, recovery really works, and now I have more than just sobriety: I know who I am, and that is much more than being a sex addict. Today, it would be the last thing I would tell people. There is a time and place for everything, and the only true place for this is our SA Fellowship, for which I will never be sufficiently grateful.

Nathalie V., Belgium 

## My Life Story on the Table



# I WAS AT PEACE

*Instead of sharing everything to get it off his chest, he learned that if he hasn't worked the Steps on something, then he doesn't share it.*

**W**hen I first came into SA, I just wanted to share everything, to get it off my chest and take away the guilt of what I had done and where I'd been. I am really grateful that I read the caution in the White Book because I was going to destroy the people that were around me and set myself up for failure.

I listened to what the White Book said. I got myself a sponsor, and we talked about it. I realized, as I was working the Steps, that I wasn't at Step Nine yet: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others" (SA 123).

The first thing I learned from my sponsor was that I only share what I've dealt with in the Steps. If I haven't dealt with it or made some peace with it, I wouldn't share it right away. I made sure

that anything I disclosed, I was at peace with. The second thing I learned is that I would only share the material that wouldn't harm those people close to me, like my spouse. This applied also to those people further away from me, such as loved ones and those who are acquaintances, friends, co-workers, etc. So I wouldn't share anything that would harm them, but I would share with them what they already knew.

Once, while I was working, my boss sent me one of those sexual jokes that he thought was funny. He didn't know I was a sexaholic, so I spoke in general terms to protect him. I said, "Please don't send me sexual jokes anymore. I'm allergic to that kind of stuff." I paused in case he asked to know more. That's an example of the small stuff.

The more difficult material to share is with a loved one, espe-

cially a spouse. I didn't share about the affairs with my wife. I didn't share the things that would harm her that she didn't know. I did share what she already knew: I had viewed porn and masturbated. I also shared that I didn't want to do that anymore. I just wanted to have eyes for her. That was all the material I shared. I also told her that I belonged to SA. She didn't like that. I said that's what I needed to stop the porn and the masturbation. She tolerated that.

**It would depend on whether we were both in therapy and if we had full disclosure on both sides.**

But some people have done a complete disclosure. For me, it depends. It would depend on whether we were both in therapy and if we had full disclosure on both sides. It takes another sick person to be in a relationship with me because I am sick. Also, if the other

person is not in a program, then it would be very harmful for them because they don't have the tools or the resources to be able to deal with it.

If my spouse was angry, rightfully so; if she couldn't forgive, that was okay too. I kept changing for the better, and she didn't like that. I was more thoughtful. I wasn't angry. I wasn't easy to control. She didn't like that at all. That was okay because my getting better was a good thing to happen in our marriage.

In my experience, if loved ones don't start working on themselves, they get worse. And that is okay because everybody has to have their bottom, and I can't force that. That's their choice, and it is up to them. It's on them. I certainly forgave them for their indiscretion, their anger, and everything else. This didn't happen instantaneously. It took a while, but I got peace and serenity in my heart.

It's so important to get a lot of help from sponsors and a whole bunch of people, especially those in the Program, because they know that a premature disclosure can harm the relationship, recovery, and all sorts of things.

Anonymous



February 2026

## DISCUSSION TOPIC

In his article, "I Was at Peace", this member shares how he approached disclosing to his wife. He took a number of recovery actions before having that conversation with her. Have you read "A Caution" from the White Book,

page three? Have you given yourself time to take the Steps and gain some sobriety before approaching the subject?

If you have disclosed to your spouse right away and in detail, how did it go?

Do you think only disclosing what the spouse already knows is a way of protecting the spouse from extra

trauma?

What are some motives for disclosing right away without a time of sobriety and discernment? Are those motives God-centered or self-centered?

Will you use this article for a discussion topic at your homegroup? Send a story of your own recovery journey to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org).

*Her experience has taught her that gossip in the Fellowship can be a harmful form of disclosure.*

**S**exual intimacy is a way to communicate my commitment to my spouse. That is why it hurt deeply when my husband, while we were married, told me that he was having an affair. His affair communicated that I didn't matter to him. I became physically sick and didn't want to live anymore. I wish he had never told me because that information is permanently seared into my brain. I can't unremember it.

Disclosure is a serious topic, and after being sober in SA for years, I learned that disclosure has a close relative: gossip. It is a subtle foe. Sharing with one another in the solution is a long-established way of connecting. Gossiping in SA, however, can communicate contempt, criticism, judgment, and drive members out of SA.

An old-timer shared that gossip can be hidden in the form of anonymity, surrenders, or questions for Experience, Strength, and Hope (ESH). Even if a member's behavior is described anonymously, it is gossip if chances are good that members listening know who is being described. It is also gossip

if chances are good that the member being described will find out. I would need to get permission from that member before talking about them, or I would have to change the details to such an extent that no one can find out who is being referred to. It is also a subtle form of gossip if someone discloses to a member what others are saying about that member.

In the same way I can't unremember my ex-husband's affairs, the damage from gossip can't be completely undone. There's a story where a couple went to a man in their village and confessed to him that they gossiped about someone. The man told the couple to buy a chicken and walk from one end of the village to the other, plucking the feathers off the chicken and letting them fall down. Then the man told them to collect all the fallen chicken feathers. The couple told the man it was impossible to find all the feathers. The man shared that just as they could not find all the feathers they dropped, they cannot take back all the gossip that spreads from one ear to the next ear.

Anonymous

**a subtle foe**

February 2026



*Enthusiasm for recovery and a newfound willingness to be honest without careful consideration before sharing can lead to an awkward situation.*

**I**n early recovery, I was so thrilled about having found a solution for my problem that I wanted to share it with everyone. My wife already knew about my addiction because she caught me many times. I told a friend who is a coach and a psychologist. It was in addition to things we had already spoken about. A couple of weeks later, my wife and I met at her place, and she had a visitor who was also a coach and psychologist. That friend and I went to buy something by car. We spoke a bit, and I decided to tell her about my lust addiction and the solution of Sexaholics Anonymous. When we got back, I told our friend and my wife about my disclosure. Strangely enough, I saw some frowning faces. On the way home, my wife said, "Are you insane? You are disclosing to someone who is actually a complete stranger to you?" In my enthusiasm, I forgot that this kind of confession also affected her. This was another one of my problems: lack of boundaries.

I made amends to my wife and spoke about it with my sponsor. I

decided to be cautious and not reveal my sex addiction until I got a good amount of recovery.

**I had to be really careful about whom I told about my addiction.**

I had to be really careful about whom I told about my addiction. I told only a handful of good friends after my wife completely agreed. None of them judged me; they just accepted me. It feels good to be able to trust and share something so intimate. In a way, it deepened my relationship with those people.

Now I don't feel the need to tell people about my addiction anymore. I guess most of the people who really matter to me know about it. I think working the Steps helps restore me to sanity and to trust a power greater than myself. The Steps help me to know what actions to take and to know when no action at all is needed.

Joost V., Spain



# One Of The Fortunate Ones

*She realized that, following the guidance of our literature and of her sponsor, she avoided experiencing the tragedy of a premature disclosure.*

I consider myself very fortunate in the course of my disease and recovery. I was not discovered by my husband in an affair. I was never publicly exposed or humiliated. I was not arrested for anything related to my sex addiction. I was never confronted by the wife of a man I was inappropriately involved with. And yet, as I crossed one personal boundary after another, I knew I was not being the person my Creator wanted me to be. Mistakenly thinking an external boundary would stop my acting out, I believed getting married would solve my problems. About a year later, I found I was not content because I was used to

adrenaline, drama, intrigue, and the excitement of the forbidden. I did not know that I was still in the grip of lust addiction. And I knew I was not the wife or the person I wanted to be.

Through a group of people unrelated to SA, I heard the term “sex addiction” for the first time in 1989, and I could relate to the personal experiences I heard. I started slowly, learning more and seeking a solution—not wanting to quit my behaviors, but to change my husband, since I blamed him for my affairs. Eventually, I found an “S” program in 1991 that helped me get started on my journey of recovery. I believe I knew intuitively that when I shared with my husband about being unfaithful, I wanted to be able to say, “Here is what I have

done, and here is what I am doing to change my behaviors: Steps, meetings, sponsorship, and no contact with inappropriate men.”

## Working eight hours per day, four or five days per week, I spent the rest of my time on recovery.

Just as I started recovery, I got a sabbatical from my job and worked temporarily in a city about a 10-hour drive away from home for about 9 months. Working eight hours per day, four or five days per week, I spent the rest of my time on recovery.

When I felt ready, I arranged a sandwich call with my sponsor (calling her before and after I spoke with my husband). As I had planned, I was able to tell him about what I had done (past tense) and what I was doing about it.

I was very fortunate that he did not ask for details. He took care of himself by arranging counseling. He must have had a good counselor. He never wanted to know the details of my affairs. He was supportive of my efforts toward recovery from the beginning. Still today, he has a clear boundary: if I start verbally processing

something about recovery, he reminds me to talk with my sponsor instead. I had many stops and starts before finding SA, and he remains emotionally and materially supportive.

What I did right in disclosure (see page 3 of *Sexaholics Anonymous*):

- Had a period of sobriety first
- Carefully considered it with a sponsor first and had other support people in place for myself
- Was not trying to dump my guilt so I could feel better
- Was not trying to get back into good graces
- Was not making a show of willpower
- Spoke when and where he could access support for himself
- Did not disclose details
- Continued to make a living amends on a daily basis with changed behaviors and attitudes.

Susie B., USA



Maxey  
By Jimmy M.

Radical honesty  
feels good!

To you maybe...



## SA Stories

*She remembers a historical event by reflecting on where she has been and where she is today as a result of this Program.*

**O**n September 11, 2021, many commercials commemorated a famous attack. One commercial's words impacted me deeply: "Where were you on 09/11/2001 when the world changed?"

2001: At 12 years old, I was chasing a boy, sending him letters, fantasizing about him, even though he had told me, "I don't like you."

2021: There I was, 32 years old, involved with a cold, indifferent man who didn't like me.

I felt like I wasted 20 years chasing after men. I made a

heartfelt decision to change. For a few months, I didn't act out. I dedicated myself to my master's degree, living abroad. Deep inside, though, I was still waiting for Prince Charming—who would give me all his love, heal my wounds, and make me feel whole.

After arriving in a new country, I was in the same situation: chasing a man, waiting for his texts, crying because he only sought me for lust.

Willpower didn't work, changing countries didn't work, and being "empowered" didn't work either. Only the Steps and this loving Fellowship achieved what seemed impossible: giving me a peaceful life!

Today is September 11, 2025. I woke up sober and had a quiet, simple day. I don't stalk men or sexualize my image. Life is

not a heavy burden. I'm doing my Higher Power's will: staying sober and being a channel of His love. This Program has transformed my life. It rescued me from pain and misery. Today, I have many friends all over the world. I do service, and I enjoy joyful personal relationships.

"We no longer live in a completely hostile world. We are no longer lost and frightened and purposeless" (12&12 105).

Every day, my life story is being rewritten. I live the promises, and I have a new Employer. I am not defined by my past. It doesn't matter if I spent 20-50 years acting out. What matters is these 24 hours; I'm committed to doing my Higher Power's will. That is enough for today!

Evelyn T.,  
Colombia



*By focusing on his program today, and not his program yesterday, Higher Power's promises are both in the present and in the future.*



October 8's reading from *The Real Connection* brings to mind a member of my home group who was in a meeting many years ago, listening to another's share about acting-out behaviors. A member leaned over to the person sitting to his left and said, "At least I haven't done that." He immediately heard the one-word admonition: "Yet."

The story about the word "yet" that was shared that morning hit me hard because of where I am today. I'm sitting here with three days of sobriety after 18 years in this Fellowship, and I'm confronted by my deepest fear: that I am simply irredeemable, that I won't ever get sober and recover. And the fear is palpable that I will die a physical death before I experience spiritual rebirth.

I am choosing to believe that the word "yet" is not a period at the end of a sentence; it's an ellipsis—an ongoing message of hope. It is my Higher Power speaking through the Fellowship, insisting that my story is not over.

This defiance of despair gives me three actions for today.

First, I must let go of the ego that says, "You should be further along." I must humbly accept that my spiritual progress is not yet complete. The only status that matters is day three. This forces me to surrender the weight of the last 18 years and focus on the only moment where sobriety is possible: now.

Second, the fear of spiritual death is a future-tense problem. The word "yet" brings me back to the present. The solution is always today's surrender.

Finally, my belief in a loving God is reinforced by the simple fact that I am back in this room. If I were truly beyond help, I would have stopped coming back long ago. The fact that the solution still exists means I am not yet beyond its reach.

I'm grateful for the grace of my three days, and I'm grateful to use the word "yet" not as a cause for fear, but as a source of urgency to keep taking the next right action.

Anonymous


# WHERE WERE YOU?

*He learned to recognize true success by not focusing on the work needed to complete everything, but by appreciating the amount of work completed today.*



I took a break, I turned around. I was proud of my work. I took a picture, and I was thinking to myself: if I've only done this, I'm still proud of myself. This sense of pride is what I believe is meant by "one day at a time" and "I am a success today if I haven't taken a drink."

Even one day without taking any lust or promptly sharing it and praying about it if I have (I'm still human) is a success to look back on. It is worthy of taking a picture of it and is worthy of sharing it with others. To finish the story: an hour later, I went back and finished the igloo and was so proud of it. It was big enough for my wife and me. We went in and had somebody take a picture of us.

Yoely N.,   
Spring Valley, New York

**“I**’m a success today if I don’t drink today” (AA 415).

One winter afternoon in 2023, my brother and I were building an igloo. After three to four hours of work, we were cold, tired, and hungry. I took a break, but before

## ONE DAY AT A TIME



## Steps & Traditions



*He discovered that continuing to take Steps Six and Seven, he became more willing to have God remove his defects.*

**M**y first time working through the 12 Steps of SA, my thinking was all sequential. When I came to Steps Six and Seven, I thought, “I will knock these Steps out with the help of my sponsor and get on with Eight and Nine!” Years later, I’m still working Steps Six and Seven. Hello? In the ensuing years in Program, I’ve gained some wisdom and patience. Imagine trying to solve all my issues in weeks!

Over the years, my Higher Power has allowed circumstances that challenged me and to which I responded with my character defects. These character defects don’t exist in a vacuum. The “school of life” is my curriculum, and as problems came up, I was given a choice whether to clean up my act or keep on doing what I had been doing and getting the same unacceptable results.

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character” (AA 59 ) means I have to be ready to give them up. In my early years in Program, I wasn’t so willing. It has taken some time working the Program and making some

progress to be willing to give up some character defects. “Progress, not perfection” has been true in my life.

**“Progress, not perfection” has been true in my life.**

When I sat down with my sponsor and worked Steps Six and Seven, I made a start at having God remove them. Over the years, I have come back to my sponsor and shared that I had a “new” character defect to humbly ask God to remove.

“One Method for Working Step Six” has been a real help to me. About a year and a half ago, I read this section of Step Into Action. I became convinced that my Higher Power was calling me to look at a situation in my life. One particular character defect was part of the problem. I made the required chart and shared it with my sponsor. I prayed Step Seven and kept it in my prayers. My life has been better since then. I have more serenity.

Kirt B., Missouri, USA 

# A GREAT CAUTION IN AMENDS



While caution is suggested to the newcomer in the beginning of the *White Book*, similar caution can be found in abundance on Step Nine throughout our literature.

**T**he caution in the *White Book* is often directed to new members in our Program. However, several SA-approved readings refer to cautions applicable to the amends process in Step Nine.

One Ultimate Authority, Tradition Two

Prayer is the primary source of guidance in all decision-making exercises in our Twelve-Step program.

## A Caution

Repeated disclosures can prove very harmful despite the best intentions. Seeking to respond to my spouse's request for disclosure, I may overlook an important event, fail to remember it... or lie! Should additional details arise afterwards, expressing them may be problematic. More detailed disclosures are best left until I obtain some sober recovery and stability. Trust in a relationship is important, and re-establishing it will take some time. Honesty and awareness evolve over time as I work through the Program.

## Step Nine

*Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others (SA 123).*

Honesty, which does not have the best interest of the hearer at heart, is a cruel form of selfishness.

## Tradition One

*Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on SA unity (12&12 129).*

A premature disclosure without due caution can negatively impact the unity of the family. Unity in the family is an extension of Step Twelve, "practising these principles in all our affairs."

## Step Nine (Amends)

*Usually, however, other people are involved...She may insist on knowing all the particulars...We are sorry for what we have done and God willing, it shall not be repeated (AA 79,80).*

I spent much of my time lying to my spouse before recovery; a well-intentioned resolution to "tell the truth" can lead to unnecessary, hurtful consequences

for a spouse and others. Counsel from others and prayer are crucial to ensure the best spiritual path is chosen to minimize any further damage.

## Motives, Step 10

*...we should carefully examine our motives in each thought or act that appears to be wrong...But in other instances, only the closest scrutiny will reveal what our true motives were (12&12 94)*

I've found this writing on "motives" to be so helpful in many aspects of my recovery. I can rationalize my choices easily without the input and feedback of other members and professionals. I couldn't trust my motives, especially in early recovery. I confessed (not disclosed) some of my inappropriate activities to my spouse before finding SA. In hindsight, I believe I confessed to my unsuspecting wife in what the *White Book* refers to as "attempts to dump our guilt, get back into good graces...another show of willpower" (SA 2). This painful experience eventually led to our divorce.

Being caught is not the same as a planned disclosure that has been cautiously prepared with love and input from others.

## The List, Step Eight

*But we found it wise to discuss the list with our sponsor before taking any action, especially where spouse, children, and former lovers were involved (SA 124).*

Being a rebellious sexaholic, my inclination is to move forward on my own, even after 35 years in recovery!

## Into Action

*We have no right to save our own skin at another person's expense. Such parts of our story we tell to*

*someone who will understand, yet be unaffected (AA 74).*

My enthusiasm over a new life may not be shared by others, especially those I have hurt. The trap is thinking I am entitled to "better" treatment and forgiveness from my spouse and others once I have begun a "new life" in recovery!

Everyone's situation when being faced with a disclosure or any form of communication may be different. This is a program of progress and not perfection. "One size does not fit all."

**This is a program of progress and not perfection. "One size does not fit all."**

## Some final comments:

Spouses may press for an "honest" sharing or disclosure. Requesting a delay will allow me time to gain further sobriety, stability, and direction, and allow my spouse additional time to source their own support. An introduction to S-Anon is a possibility.

A check meeting with a few other experienced SA members can be arranged by the sponsor, which could help clarify the sponsee's motives in pursuing a disclosure. Such a discussion will assist the member in determining whether that disclosure should be undertaken and, if so, in an appropriate manner in which to proceed.

Vaughn W., Surrey, Canada 

Some members and I were discussing recovery, psychology, neurology, and technology. One fellow mentioned that he wished he knew as much as I did. That comment put things into perspective.

I've been in SA for over a decade. It took seven years before I achieved a year of sobriety. He's been in SA for three years and has been sober since day one. What he may lack in knowledge, he makes up for by applying the tools in his life.

## What is my wisdom-to-knowledge ratio (W2K Ratio)?

The White Book says, "Knowledge never gave us power" (SA 91). According to the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, wisdom is "the right use or exercise of knowledge." What is my wisdom-to-knowledge ratio (W2K Ratio)? How much of what I know do I use in my daily life? Let me first explain where the term W2K Ratio comes from. It is a combination of the "Y2K Bug" and "Signal-to-Noise Ratio."

The Y2K Bug was a concern in the 90s because programs stored years using two digits instead of

four. For example, the year 1990 was recorded as 90. Approaching 2000 was a problem because, to the programs, it would be 00 and that would mean the year 1900. Every software in the world using two-digit years had to be updated.

Signal-to-Noise Ratio measures the difference between a wanted signal and background noise. It's like trying to talk to a friend in a loud space. You want to hear your friend (Signal), but it is difficult to make out because of all the other interfering sounds (Noise).

What is the recovery application for this? Gaining more knowledge seemed like a way to victory in my life. Because of my lack of wisdom, I did not see that it would actually be a detriment. In recovery, I needed to do a lot of work to undo this misconception. Also, my brain can easily be overwhelmed with information I do not need (Noise), and it can lead me to fixate on things I do not need to pay attention to (also Noise). And when that happens, I lose what I do need: my connection to my Higher Power (the Signal).

My hope in recovery is that when I apply the program in my daily life, my level of wisdom will someday reach the level of my knowledge.

Harri H., Finland

## Wisdom-to-Knowledge Ratio

Exercising the principles of the program daily produces a wisdom that knowledge alone can never provide.

SA CFC

## FROM PRISON TO FREEDOM

I had to go to prison to be set free. For most of my life, I lived in a prison I built myself, brick by brick, with shame, secrets, and addiction. It was far more confining than any cell could ever be.

I grew up in a "Brady Bunch" family—stable, warm, loved. Life seemed perfect until fourth grade, when an older boy abused me. The shame burned so deep I told no one. I buried it and tried to erase it from existence. But my soul remembered. The happy, optimistic boy who smiled easily and trusted freely died that day. In his place stood someone else—introverted, scared, mistrusting everyone. That's when I started building my prison walls.

By fifth grade, I had pushed away every friend and locked myself inside, alone. In eighth grade, I found my brother's pornography. I was hooked instantly. I developed two selves: the mask I wore for the world and the addict I hid inside. Through high school and college, my addiction consumed me. I learned the dark art of manipulation—chase, groom, catch, discard. I hurt so many good people. People

who genuinely loved me. People I threw away like trash. With each person I hurt, I added another lock to my prison door.

Three years after college, desperate and broken, I thought marriage would save me. It didn't. When internet porn arrived, it swallowed my life whole. I grew angrier at my wife, blaming her for the monster I'd become. After 27 years, I manipulated her into divorcing me. As she walked out the door, she said two words: "Get help." I looked her in the eye and lied: "I will."

My addiction exploded. But I wasn't free at all—I was more imprisoned than ever. I crossed every boundary. Nothing satisfied the screaming emptiness inside. I pushed away everyone—my wife, my daughter, every friend. I couldn't keep a job. I was living in a hell of my own making, a prison of the self. I thought about ending it all. Then God broke down the door. In July 2020, when police burst into my room, my first thought was "Thank God!" Relief flooded through me—finally, it was over.

To be continued...

Shawn M., Illinois, USA



For most of his life, he lived in a prison built with shame, secrets, and addiction. Working the Steps with an accountability partner in prison and with the help of his sponsor by phone, he connected with God.



*Through the kindness of her fellow members, God provided her with the means to attend a deep and meaningful convention with opportunities to serve.*

**M**y experience attending an SA convention for the first time took place in Tequisquiapan, Mexico, in October 2025.

I was indecisive about going because it was a challenge to leave my daughter in others' care. However, my Higher Power gave me peace, and I was able to choose my recovery.

I travelled by bus for four hours. I then took a flight to Querétaro—toward the path of freedom. When the doors opened, a member greeted me kindly, and I felt a sense of joy. I recognized him from online meetings, and now I was meeting him in person. I began meeting other brothers and sisters. Virtual meetings allowed me to stay connected for more than a year—I don't have a local in-person group. Being physically present, sharing time with my fellows, was wonderful. The first gift of welcome from the convention was at the first meeting. We stood and recited the Serenity Prayer. I had repeated this prayer many times on screen, and now, it was said in the face-to-face fellowship, in that spirit of unity.

Months earlier, a call went out to those needing financial support to attend. I raised my hand, and Higher Power blessed me with financial support. I ask God to bless the hands of each member who chose to give so that I could continue in my recovery. Before the convention, I was invited to serve as a moderator and panellist during two sessions. Despite all my fears, I accepted. It was one of my best decisions, because there is no greater satisfaction than serving the Fellowship that has given me so much.

I never imagined the convention would be like this—so meaningful. I found pearls in the experiences of members, treasures that continue to support me. I am grateful to the Mexico Intergroup for their service. I encourage members who desire to attend a convention to place that desire in Higher Power's hands. God provides in unimaginable ways.

Cristy, Mexico 

*This member embraced the fellowship that lovingly walked with him in this conference to experience the waterfall of freedom.*

**F**rom August 16 to 18, I attended my first SA convention, in Fusagasugá, Colombia.

The theme was "Sobriety:

A Way of Life". Every talk planted a seed in my heart: from understanding emotional sobriety, relapse prevention, positive and negative sobriety, service, and continual surrender.

Talent night was a reminder that behind every story of struggle, there is a person full of gifts that had been overshadowed by the darkness of addiction.

This convention connected me with a brotherhood of people walking the same path.

I left Fusagasugá with a heart full of gratitude and with a clear certainty: I am not alone, and there is indeed a path to freedom.

## Walking to the Waterfall

On the last day of the convention, we walked toward the waterfall. Sunlight filtered through the leaves, the earth crunched beneath our tired feet, and each step felt like an act of faith.

At times, the path was steep, slippery, with treacherous roots—like those days when addiction dragged us down,

making us doubt if we'd ever reach anywhere.

But we were not alone.

We waited for one another, shared water, laughter, and silence. Just as in recovery, where brotherhood

is the bridge that holds us when our own strength falters.

And then we heard it: the growing murmur of water, the living promise of something beautiful and free.

We didn't see it at once, but we knew it was near—just as we learn to trust that healing is approaching, even when we cannot yet touch it.

When we arrived, the waterfall welcomed us with its constant roar and transparent dance.

It was wild and serene, like the freedom we seek: a life without secrets, without chains,

where love is not confused with hunger, and the body is no longer a prison, but a home.

We sat there, breathing deeply, and in that sacred moment, we knew we were exactly where we were meant to be.

Because every step brought us here, just as every meeting, every call, every daily surrender brings us closer

to that inner waterfall where the soul is cleansed and hope begins to bloom again.

Hugo M., Colombia/USA  



Hope Elevated: SA, S-Anon, S-Ateen International Conventions in Denver, Colorado

You are cordially invited to join us at the 2026 International SA, S-Anon, S-Ateen, which will be held in Denver, Colorado, on July 17-19. Our theme is Hope Elevated, and the Mile High City is the perfect location to experience this.

You will hear experience, strength, and hope from inspiring speakers in all three fellowships. Break-out meetings on a variety of topics will provide the opportunity to share and grow in your personal recovery. In-person fellowship at meals and between meetings will allow you to experience love, joy, understanding, and belonging.

Whether you are a newcomer, long-time member, or somewhere in between, the 2026 International conventions will offer something for everyone affected by Sexual Addiction.

Registration is now open for *Hope Elevated—Together with Courage, Hope and Recovery is Possible*. We hope to see you there! Discounted early bird pricing ends March 31, 2026, so don't delay and register today! Visit [denverhope2026.org](http://denverhope2026.org) for more information.

Dave E., 2026 SA Vice Chair



Scan to register

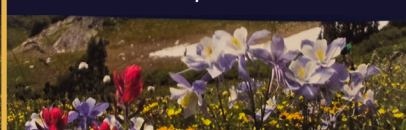


[DenverHope2026.org](http://DenverHope2026.org)

SA / S-Anon / S-Ateen  
International Convention  
July 17-19, 2026



Denver Marriott Tech Center  
4900 S Syracuse St  
Denver, CO 80237



## PROOFREADERS & ASSISTANT EDITORS NEEDED

ESSAY is looking for volunteers who enjoy reading, writing, or grammar in the English language. If you are looking for service in editing or proofreading, let us know at [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org), and thank you for your service!



## STEPPING INTO THE SOLUTION SA Retreat

MAY 22-24, 2026



Where: 4H CLUB BATTLE LAKE  
Westerose, Alberta, Canada  
For more information visit:

<http://2026springretreat.ddnsfree.com/>

To register contact:

[steppingintothesolution2026@gmail.com](mailto:steppingintothesolution2026@gmail.com)

# COMING IN APRIL



## NEXT EDITION

Our next edition's theme is "The Positive Sobriety." Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of taking the steps creates a desire to carry the message of recovery to others still suffering. This desire replaces the desire for gratification at the expense of others. We take actions rooted in a spirit of service and self-sacrifice to assist God's efforts to build up those around us. The results are loving relationships with God and others. Instead of lusting that created a destructive and false imitation of relationship, we experience real relationships founded on SA sobriety. With God, all things are possible.

ESSAY is your magazine. It is your experience, strength, and hope that carries the message of recovery to the still-suffering sexaholic. Please consider sharing your experience with the Fellowship by submitting an article to [essay@sa.org](mailto:essay@sa.org).

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](http://essay.sa.org).

## SUBMIT YOUR STORY


**April 2026 edition: The Positive Sobriety (Stories due March 1)**

How has taking the actions of love improved your relations with others or changed the way you see service in your program?

**June 2026 edition: The Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, Service (Stories due May 1)** What is your experience, and what promises have you received by practicing the principles in the Steps, the Traditions, or the Concepts?

**August 2026 edition: Raising Our Hand-Sharing in Meetings (Stories due July 1)** What is your experience with sharing in meetings that help you surrender while not overwhelming someone who doesn't yet know how to surrender?

Opinions expressed in the ESSAY are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by the ESSAY.

A vibrant, stylized illustration of a bowl of soup. The bowl is white with a blue floral pattern around the rim. The soup is a rich orange-red color. A silver spoon is positioned above the bowl, with a bright light reflecting off its surface. The background is a bright blue with yellow and orange flame-like patterns. The text of the Serenity Prayer is centered over the bowl in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font.

**GOD,  
GRANT ME THE SERENITY  
TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT  
CHANGE, COURAGE TO CHANGE THE  
THINGS I CAN, AND THE WISDOM TO  
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