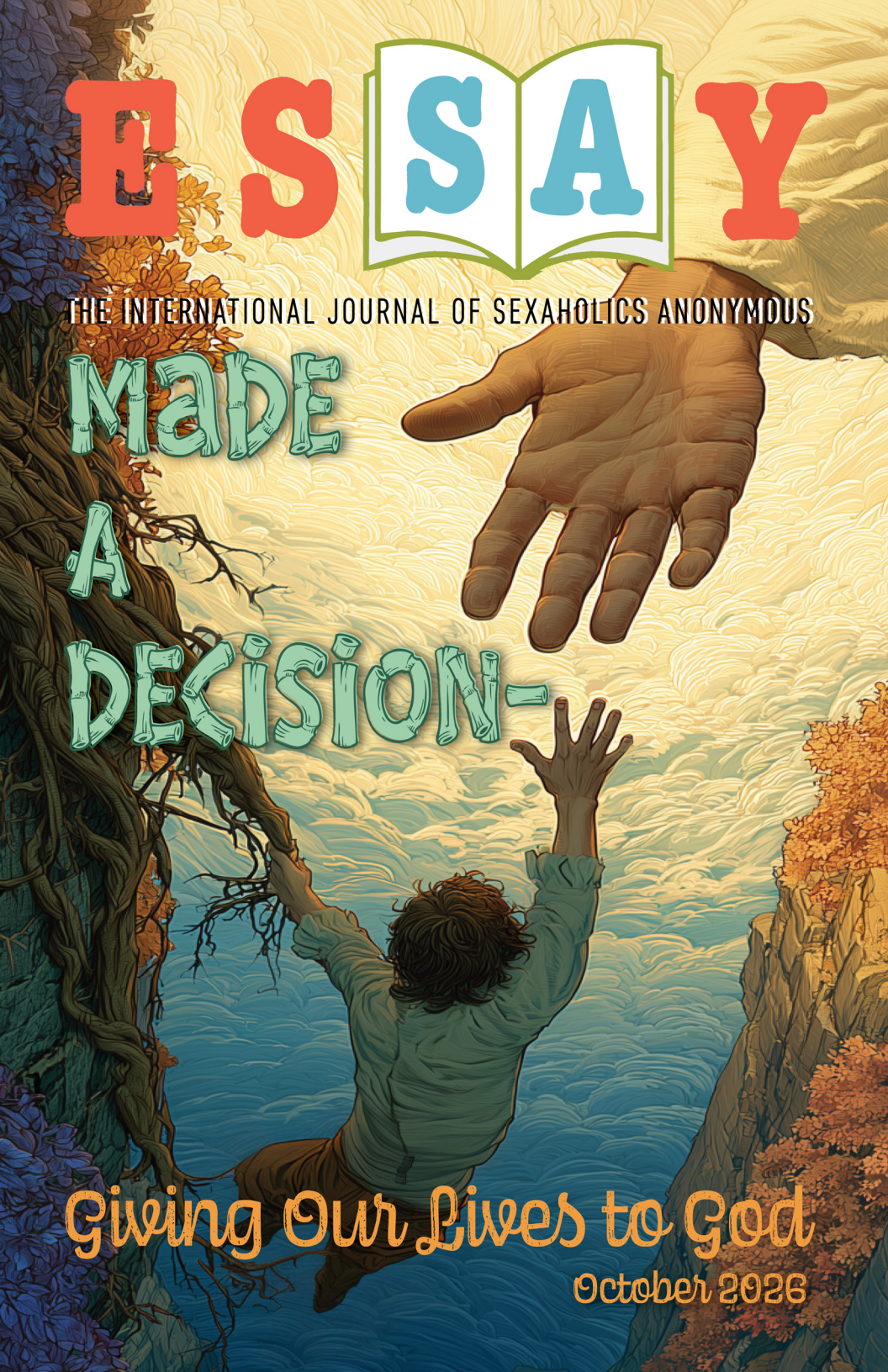
ESSAY

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SEXAHOLICS ANONYMOUS



Giving Our Lives to God

October 2026

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.

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 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

Editor's Corner

You are invited to read this "Editor's Corner" in your homegroup during announcements.



he October edition of the ESSAY

Magazine celebrates that wonderful moment when we said "yes" to the God of our understanding. The end of an old way of life gives way to a new one.

Applying humility generously to the inflammation of ego is how one member describes this deflating experience. Another member navigates his way through the day using the compass of yuck or yum. Following God's will led to the shocking accident of a loved one hearing an SA audio, and another discovered that selflessness sometimes means telling others "no." Also in this edition, an SA Trustee shares a report on the challenges women have in SA. Another member shares how Concept Five gives members the right to speak up when they disagree with a decision from the group conscience. Not only do they have the right to speak up, but they have the responsibility to voice their concerns even when feeling intimidated by the louder members in the room.

None of these experiences of recovery would have happened were it not for that simple yet giant decision. Join us as we trudge the Road of Happy Destiny!

In Fellowship,
The Editorial Team



Congratulations to Kathie S.
for winning first place and to Annika R. for winning second place in the Best Caption Contest. Both captions are featured in this edition.

October 2026

"Above everything, we [sexaholics]must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible."

Alcoholics Anonymous, 62

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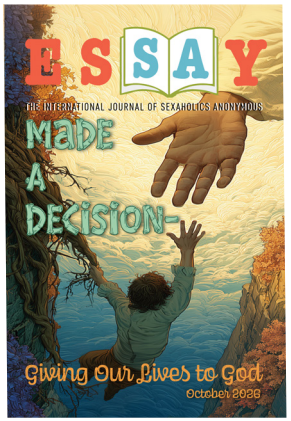
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ESSAY presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. Opinions expressed in ESSAY are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by ESSAY.

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: Surrendering to God meant giving everything about me to God: my addiction, my way, my wants, my will. In return, I am lifted up to a whole new life, better than any fantasy I could ever come up with.

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Dear ESSAY

FREEDOM GAINED BY FREEDOM LOST



DEAR ESSAY,

Hello, my name is Jason A., and I have been an active member of SA since 2020. I am also incarcerated in Illinois for a crime that was a result of my addictions. My old SA group has helped me stay connected since I started this sentence in 2023. I still need Recovery Continues, The Best of ESSAY, and perhaps a renewal of my ESSAY subscription. Once I am released, I want to get involved with SA and this ESSAY committee. In the meantime, I composed two articles for the upcoming issues. You can find them enclosed.

In Recovery,

Jason A., USA

"You're an addict." I had spent the night in a cold jail cell on the worst day of my life. My wife was the first to tell me this truth, which I instinctively knew had to be right. I was definitely addicted to something and needed help.

Continued on page 30

A Trustee's Report

In June, she presented Part One, the challenges of women in SA. Now she will focus on the solution as we know it today.

As a review, in **Part One** we looked at the following:

- Men feel threatened (fearful) by women in an SA meeting.
- Only 10% of SA members are women, compared to 30% in AA.
- Meetings don't have readily available resources at hand to support a woman.
- Many women in SA have experienced abuse from men, resulting in them being uncomfortable as the only woman in a room of men.
- Many men in SA have abused women and/or children, resulting in them being less comfortable around women in meetings.
- Many men have spouses not in recovery who object to women in the same meeting as their husbands.

Part Two:

Our founder, Roy K., emphasized the importance of mixed meetings. Please read "Mixed Meetings" on (*SA* 178-179). Also, as stated in "The SA Purpose" (SA 201), "SA is a fellowship of men and women...". Women in SA are not a special interest group; they are an integral part of the SA Fellowship. This is the ideal philosophy as established by Roy K. and the early members of this program.

Solutions:

- Pray,
- Discuss your fears with your sponsor; work your program,
- And read the Literature (SA 178-179).
- Discuss with other SA men who have experience with mixed meetings.
- Have printed material ready to give to a new woman, including another SA woman's contact information and the NEW printable brochure for the Women's Welcome Packet (found on sa.org website).
- Evaluate and consider changes to your meeting format. New women do not need to hear the nature of how men have acted out in their disease. Also, we should only share in a general way, not giving specific or explicit descriptions (*SA*, "Meeting Guidelines" 188–189).
- Regarding spouses who try to control and direct their husband's recovery by limiting what meetings they attend:
  - Spouses need support to find S-Anon or other recovery paths.
  - The sanctuary of a mixed meeting provides a safe place for men and women to learn to relate to each other in a healthy way under the scrutiny of others in recovery.

There are currently four resources specifically for women new to SA:

1. The official website: sa.org,
2. **NEW** Women's Welcome Pack et on the SA website at sa.org/women,
3. The **NEW PRINTABLE** Women's Welcome Packet Brochure at sa.org/literature/pamphlets ,
4. And SAICO office for a list of women's contacts.

There are currently two resources specifically to help groups welcome women:

1. The **NEW** Women and Men Together in SA pamphlet at sa.org/literature/pamphlets
2. The **NEW PRINTABLE** Women's Welcome Packet Brochure at sa.org/literature/pamphlets

My hope and prayer are that SA men and women can treat each other as fellow addicts on a quest for recovery. If a woman can be treated as a friend or sister by men, healthy relationships will be formed. I agree with Roy K., who stressed the importance of mixed meetings. I have learned from and benefited greatly from my association with both men and women members in the Program.

Peg V., SA Board Trustee
& Susie B., Idaho, USA





The only requirement for membership is the desire to stop lusting and jump out of this plane! . -JG

Worldwide Walls of SA

SA Meetings Can Be Held Just About Anywhere ...



The meeting place of the Umm Al-Banin group in Isfahan, Iran



Handing out sobriety keychains as part of encouraging newcomers.
Living in the Solution Group, Mexico

Share your photos.
Send your meeting place to essay.sa.org/get-involved. Remember to include your name, address, group name, and location of the meeting.

Practical Tools

Being attentive during the day and surrendering all to God before bed helps him rest in acceptance.

Can I stop a bird from flying over my head? No. Can I stop that bird from building a nest in my hair? Yes. It's the same thing with dreams. I can't control what my subconscious mind does, but I can control how I respond.

I can't get discouraged because of something I have no control over. I write out my thoughts and feelings (my dream), pray, and make as many calls as needed. I also pray before going to bed, giving my dreams to God. This doesn't mean that a lustful dream will never happen. I keep a journal of my dreams and thank God for reminding me that I am still sick.

Less stress leads to better dreams. If I notice myself only having negative dreams or even nightmares, I can consider seeking mental health care to address any underlying issue I may need to resolve.

The prefrontal cortex—or the part of the brain that makes sense of the wide array of stimuli I encounter while awake—shuts down while I dream. This leads to dreams taking on their bizarre, and sometimes nonsensical quality.

Many researchers believe that dreaming has a purpose, but what exactly that purpose is remains an open question. It's my personal opinion that dreams are the subconscious mind that I can't control. I don't have to beat myself up over something I have no control over.

A few things that help me:

1. I pray before going to bed, asking God to take care of my dreams.
2. I make sure I am not holding on to any lust before bed.
3. I immediately pray and surrender any dreams to God and another person.
4. I always put the Program first in everything I do.

In these ways, the power of lust is removed from the dark recesses of my mind by shining a little light on them.

I sincerely hope this helps. God bless you all.

Lloyd A., West Virginia, USA



Gone With the Setting Sun

Surrendering one expectation after another produced a cleaned slate at the end of the day.

One day it just seemed like nothing was going right, and I was getting angrier and angrier. I prayed the Serenity Prayer, and that helped some. Making a mental gratitude list helped as well by counting the things that were going right. Whatever I focus on increases, and now I was focused on the good rather than the bad.

That helped a lot. But when things started going wrong again, I realized what was really going on: I was focused on my old character defect of expecting things to go my way. And in that frustration and anger, I said to myself, "I'll just add it to the list."

It was in that sarcastic moment that I realized I had a way out of my frustration and anger and into the true freedom of surrender. Yes, add it to the list, but make it a list of surrender. Then I prayed to God, "Here is my list. You take it; I can't handle it."

Wouldn't you know it, things still seemed to be going wrong, but now I could just smile and say to myself, "Add it to the list." I had to do that multiple times throughout the day. Sometimes my character defects like to stay around and play.

Gradually, it worked. By the end of the day, I didn't have that mental list. It had gone away with the setting sun.

Ed R., Georgia, USA



Made A Decision-Giving Our Lives to God

An Effective Decision

Step Three remained ineffective until getting unblocked from taking Steps Four through Nine.

When I was new in the Program and confronted with the need to turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understood Him, I felt I was doomed. I had already turned my life over to God in my early twenties, and I came into the Fellowship of SA at age 54. For over three decades, that decision—while providing great benefits in many areas of my life—had little to no effect in helping me overcome my obsession with lust. If that was really the answer to my problem, I feared I was hopeless.

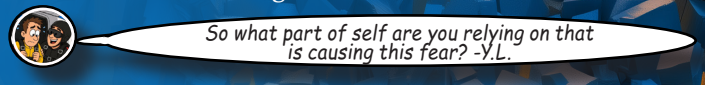
Fortunately, I was directed to listen to the series of AA talks. That was where I learned that, when it came to my addiction, I was blocked from the power of God that could keep me stopped. That's why my decision to turn my life over to God in my twenties was ineffective in dealing with lust, and why making another decision to do so at Step Three wouldn't be any more effective until I was unblocked. I further learned that the only means of being unblocked was the thorough, effective work of Steps Four through Nine.

Having done just that, I can now say that I have at times been able to allow God to be in control of certain situations. More and more, I'm able to accept life on life's terms, to accept that things are the way they're supposed to be, and to be okay with that. But when I'm not able, I return to Step Two and look for the flaws in my concept of my Higher Power—God.

It does work when I choose to work it.

Jim C., Pittsburgh, PA







Shrinking his inflamed ego became possible by generously applying the solution of humility.

PREPARATION H: HUMILITY

As a recovering sexaholic, I have always been an intense person. In my active disease, I demanded that the world revolve around my desires. When I finally hit the rooms and got a little sobriety under my belt, something wonderful happened; I started to look good. I cleaned up, my relationships stabilized, and the daily chaos stopped.

But right on cue, my old, cunning disease stepped into the mirror with me. My ego began to swell. I looked at my sobriety date and thought, "Look at my progressive victory! I'm really doing this thing." Before I knew it, I was back to playing God, trying to manage the future, and quietly judging the guy down the table who was still struggling. I quickly rediscovered the physical reality of a swollen ego: an inflammation that is incredibly painful.

When my self-importance becomes hypersensitive and engorged with pride, it becomes impossible for me to sit comfortably in the seats. Every comment from my spouse feels like sandpaper. Every minor frustration in traffic feels like a personal attack. I find myself burning with the "fever of life." To get relief, I have to open my spiritual medicine cabinet and grab a daily application of "Preparation H"— Humility.

For me, humility isn't walking around feeling humiliated. True humility is simply the cooling, soothing medicine that shrinks my swollen self-importance back down to its actual, human size. It's the willingness to look at a situation I can't control, let go of the kite string of my self-will, and say, "I don't know, and I am going to let God handle the outcome."

Just like any effective daily treatment, I've found this spiritual remedy requires a continuous maintenance program:

- I apply it in the morning to set my day right, starting with a quiet surrender.
- I apply it at night during my 10th-Step review, checking where my pride tried to creep back in.
- And I re-apply it throughout the day the moment my peace is threatened by resentment, fear, or a flash of lust.

The only thing I can truly take credit for in this Program is making the simple choice to apply the medicine—to say yes to God and no to my own inflated head. The actual shrinkage, the cooling of the irritation, and the serenity that follows are entirely my Higher Power's victory.

The actual shrinkage, the cooling of the irritation, and the serenity that follows are entirely my Higher Power's victory.

Today, when I feel myself becoming hyper-sensitive, defensive, or remarkably proud of my own recovery, I try not to panic. I just check my spiritual inventory, apply a little humility, and let the swelling go down. I've found it's a whole lot easier to walk the path of recovery when my ego isn't inflamed.

Theo D., Missouri,



THE WAY OF



SELFLESSNESS

People-pleasing and true selflessness were two very different things that were not compatible with each other.

My understanding of selflessness has changed completely since working the Twelve Steps out of the Big Book.

I used to think selflessness meant always doing what other people wanted. I rarely shared my own opinions or desires. I tried to become the person I thought everyone else wanted me to be. I now see that this was really driven by fear. I was constantly thinking about what other people thought of me and trying to keep everyone happy with me.

The surprising thing I discovered in recovery is that this was still self-centeredness. My attention was still fixed on myself—how I appeared, whether people liked me, and how to keep everyone happy with me.

The Big Book showed me something very different. It says that selfishness and self-centeredness are the root of our troubles, and tells us, "First of all, we had to quit playing God" (*AA* 62). I began to see that selfishness isn't about having preferences or doing things I enjoy. It's believing I know how life should unfold, how other people should behave, how they should see me, and what the outcome should be.

If selfishness is having a way, then maybe selflessness is not having a way.

If selfishness is having a way, then maybe selflessness is not having a way.

That doesn't mean becoming passive or making others happy at all times. The Third Step doesn't ask me to turn my will and my life over to the care of other people. It asks me to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.

Today, instead of asking, "What do I want?" or even, "What will make everyone else happy?" I try to ask, "God, what is the most loving and healthy thing to do right now?"

Sometimes the answer is sacrifice. Sometimes it means setting aside what I would prefer so I can be of service to my family, my friends, or those I sponsor. But sometimes the loving thing isn't what other people want at all. Sometimes love requires disappointing someone.

For example, if my son wants to spend the day at the zoo, but I have a physical therapy appointment, it might appear more selfless to cancel my appointment and take him instead. But if going to physical therapy helps me heal so I can continue to care for him well in the future, then keeping that appointment may actually be the more loving choice. Selflessness isn't about pleasing people; it's about seeking God's direction.

I've found that this way of living brings tremendous freedom. I don't have to force my way, nor do I have to live according to everyone else's expectations. My responsibility is simply to seek God's will as honestly as I can and trust Him with the results.

When I first came into recovery, I thought selflessness meant losing myself. Instead, I've discovered that it means being relieved of the bondage of self. I have become less occupied with getting my way or managing everyone else's opinion of me, and more available to God. From that place, love seems to come much more naturally. And for me, that has been one of the greatest freedoms the Twelve Steps have given.

Ash, USA



THE YUCK AND THE YUM

This test gives him the correct indication of being in God's will or in self.

There is an idea that changed my life. It is foundational to Step Three. It's the reason this program works.

"I am a conduit suffering under the delusion that I am a container." Self-delusion says that if I focus on filling myself up and getting what I want—comfort, control, attention, relief, pleasure, security—I will finally be happy. Wrong.

Turns out selfishness depletes me. The more I try to fill myself up, the emptier I feel. What actually nourishes me is when I stop trying to take and start trying to give. I'm a conduit. I can't be filled. I get nourished when I let God flow through me toward other people through love, service, honesty, kindness, and usefulness.

In short, love nourishes; selfishness depletes. That's the whole thing. This blew my mind because it means I should be able to scientifically experiment and discover whether I'm being loving or selfish simply by checking how I feel after I take the action.



Just look at the internal results. Do I feel nourished or depleted? At peace or irritated?
Yum or yuck? If the result was yum, it was love. If the result was yuck, it was self. I tried it, and so far it's been true 100% of the time.

It turns out God had been communicating with me my whole life.

This was an amazing discovery. It turns out God had been communicating with me my whole life; I just never knew the language-the yuck and the yum after I take my best guess at the next right action.

Today, when I need to make a decision and don't know what to do:

I ask God to remove self-seeking. I ask for guidance and direction. Then, I smile, relax, and start taking action as best as I can.

Afterward, the Director tells me whether I was moving toward Him or away from Him.

How does He tell me?

If I acted from love, honesty, surrender, and usefulness, I feel nourished afterward: peaceful, connected, energized. YUM. If I acted from selfishness, fear, ego, resentment, or control, I feel depleted: irritable, restless, dark. YUCK. In this way, life becomes simple: Lean into the yum. Lean out of the yuck. That's it.

As the Big Book describes in Step Eleven, as I listen to God's feedback and act as best I can, over time it becomes intuitive. My body just seems to know where the yum is in advance. I just seem to know what to do instinctively. The results of my actions become more harmonious and nourishing. It's so cool.

And when it isn't? I pray, I speak to a sponsor, and I try to listen to the Director's feedback.
Where was I being selfish? Why was it yuck?

Then I make my best guess, lean in or out accordingly, and keep moving forward. I hope this helps.

Mordechai W,
New Jersey, USA



The Two-Headed Beast



Taking other people's temperature was a gateway into lustful intrigue.

I had no idea what the phrase "quit playing God" from Step Three meant. I thought it meant quit demanding people behave my way, and that circumstances go my way. It definitely means those things, but oh, so much more.

I had to quit reading people's minds and watching their attitudinal dispositions. When someone said hello to me, I would study their facial expression, body language, tone, inflection, etc., to determine if they were happy, sad, mad at me, or afraid of me. I was taking their temperature to see how I was doing. I later realized that lustful intrigue works the same way: I would take note of someone's tone and facial expression, and interpret their words to mean they were attracted to me.

Images in my head could begin to emerge.

The Big Book says that we could not differentiate the true from the false. That was because I believed these constant guesses, assumptions, and intrigue about what I guessed was going on inside others. What was I to do?

I asked God to remove any lustful or codependent thoughts from my mind. I waited until my mind was blank. Then, I quit watching and reading into people's nonverbal communication. Step Ten says I should be watching what's going on inside me, not what's going on in others. Then, I listened only to what they are actually saying and doing, trying to take it only at face value. I asked and listened to how God would want me to respond.

Lastly, if it's codependent, I state with belief that I am doing the right or wrong thing based on how God would have me be, not on how people would have me be. For lustful intrigue, I state with belief in my soul the reality between that person and me, such as, "There is absolutely nothing between that person and me, and there never will be."

There is absolutely nothing between that person and me, and there never will be.

I have never been so mentally, emotionally, and spiritually detached from the two-headed beast of codependency and intrigue. What peace! Thank you God!

Anonymous



By: Moishe S.



A Decision That Deepened

Following the suggestion in the literature to accept outside help when needed was a deeper Step Three that drew her closer to God.

To write about giving my life to God, I would like to take as a subject one of the less-quoted passages of the Big Book: "If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also." (*AA* 87)

I joined SA as a refugee from a strict faith tradition that taught me God was the stereotypical judge, condemning people for the slightest mistake—especially sexaholism. This is not a criticism of any given faith tradition; I have friends and sponsees in many different faiths, and SA in particular certainly has NO opinion on any of them. But I came from a spiritually damaging background.

However, could I give my will and my life to that kind of God? I began at Step Zero, and worked my way forward. At Step Two, I completed the exercise in Step Into Action. Writing the last column, I found the God of my present understanding—a God who likes me as well as loves me, wants me to be happy, and loves my family. I cried buckets writing that column. I have found a faith tradition today in line with this understanding.

I have had major problems both with sleep and with the text—chat service SA uses. Last night I took the heavy bedtime medicine I have found hard to take. I went to bed at a sensible time, slept a full night peacefully, and woke naturally, early the next morning.



I gave my whole morning to God. I almost made it to my place of worship. I only circulated meditations and reflections. Not with my head, which has been on board since the 1980s when I joined my first fellowship, but through my deeply emotional heart and soul. I guess this is what they call a spiritual awakening.

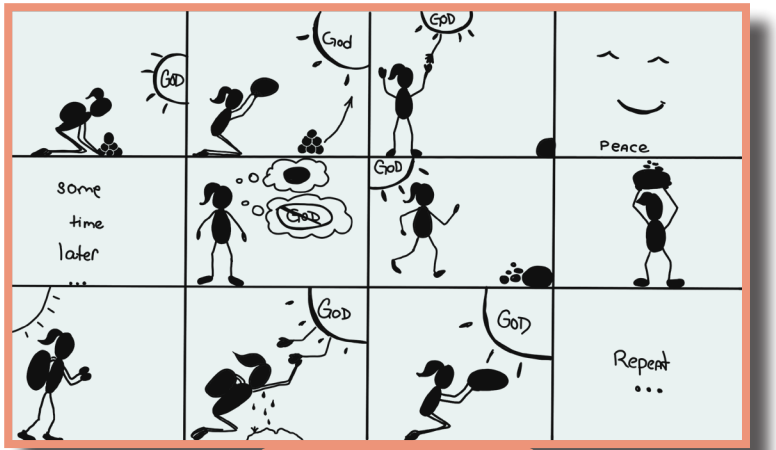
I have rearranged a couple of commitments to devote myself to emotional regulation, as recommended medically, with the use of a medical journal I have been given. As the Big Book recommends, I brought my health problems to practitioners, to enable my will to fulfill its finest requirement: aligning itself with God's will for me, as I understand it.

I am well aware that Step Three, as in the theme, giving my life to God, is only a decision. I took it some years ago after that Step Two chart. These last 2 days have deepened it beyond anything my unaided will could have achieved in 50 years.

Returning to page 87, I have recommitted to the "definite morning devotion", to set prayers of my particular faith tradition, and to Step Eleven in general: in the literature, combined experiences of people I have discussed it with, workshops I have attended, and stepwork I have done in three various weekend Step workshops. I am currently on Step Nine with my sponsor, who has been happy with the work I have completed to the best of my ability in Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve over the past 3 years.

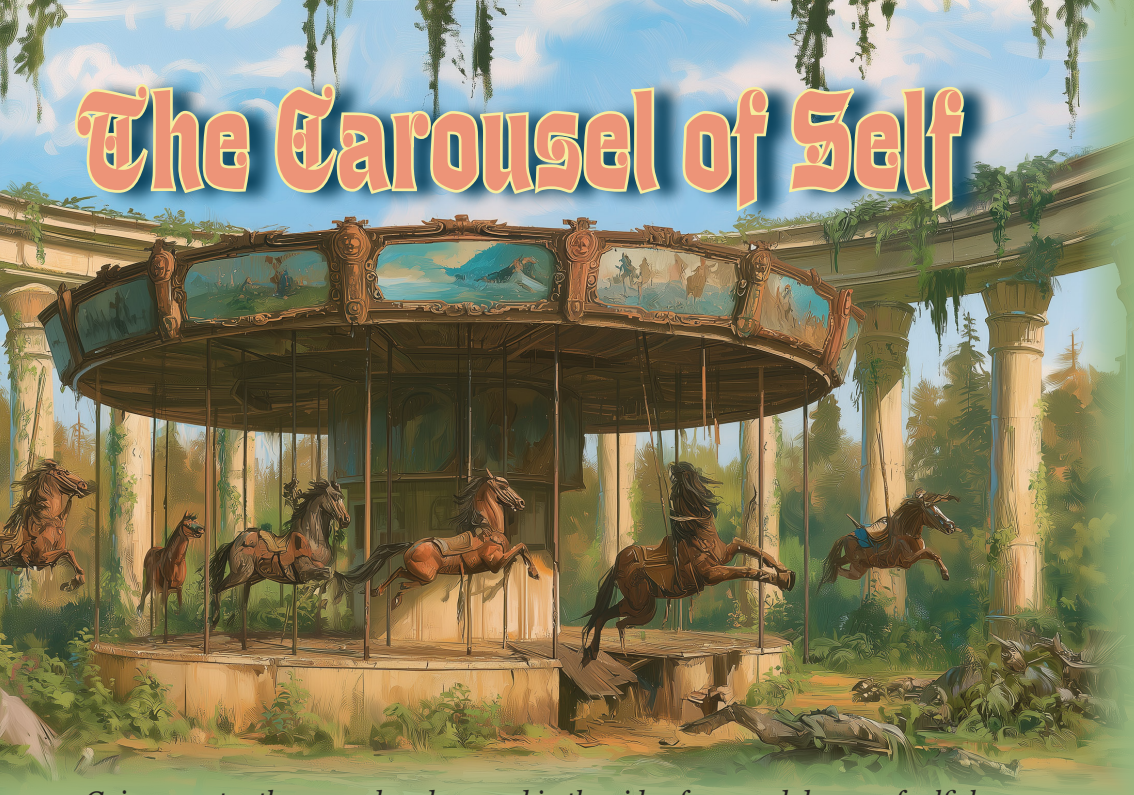
I do not know where this will lead. I only know that it feels more real than anything I have known in recovery, up to today. It is often said that, if it can be described, it is not God. This emphatically defeats description, and my only possible response is humble gratitude and passing it on.

Kathie S., Devon, UK.



Surrender by: Emily

The Carousel of Self



Going constantly around and around in the ride of ups and downs of selfish gains and losses was broken by a third option—getting off the ride through surrender.

I was meditating and praying while putting my son to sleep today, and a metaphor came to my mind for living in the bondage of self.

Living in the bondage of self is like riding a carousel. A carousel is an amusement park ride with fake horses that people (usually children) can sit on and ride. The horses are mounted to poles which move up and down while the entire circular structure spins around a central axis.

The motion of the horse up and down is similar to the emotional ups and downs of getting my way and not getting my way. I'm up when things are going my way, and I'm down when things don't. It's an endless cycle—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly—the cycle continues.

The circular motion of the carousel symbolizes the endless monotony and futility of my life run on self-will: constantly thinking that this year, or this spin, will bring the happiness and satisfaction I've always been looking for. Finally, I will get what I want and be happy. But what happens? I spin around again and find it is the same stuff as last time, just in a different form.

The things that I were seeking did not lead to the happiness I wanted, or it was short-lived, and now I need the next thing. I am still on the carousel, and there is nothing new: just the endless ups and downs as we spin around and around.

Having a spiritual awakening is like stopping the carousel and getting off. All of a sudden, life is open to me! There is a whole world of possibility waiting to be explored! New things and new experiences with old things and old relationships. No more of the endless "I want, I don't want; I like, I don't like; this is good, this is bad; this is right, this is wrong; this should be happening, this shouldn't be happening"—up and down, up and down. There is a newfound openness to life and experience. A curiosity about what God might be doing and providing in each moment. A freshness that brings light and brightness to an old reality. It was always here, but now, I am here too.

As we trust God and cease to be ruled by our fears and selfishness, all of a sudden there is opportunity for newness. No longer slaves to the same routines and the same boxes of fear, our self-imposed limits are shed, and the result is a freedom I never knew could be mine—a freedom born of surrender and trust in a God of love. A grace and freedom that was always mine but just now accepted.

No more round and round. Every day is new. Every day is fresh. It is not the same. It is alive, awake, and living!

The Twelve Steps hold the key to the door. This freedom and life are for all!

Luke H, Oregon, USA



DISCUSSION TOPIC

In Luke's article, "The Carousel of Self", he describes the back-and-forth, the ups and downs of living in selfishness. There seems to be no steady flow of peace in the attempt to always stay "up".

Can you identify with the constant emotional jolts that come with seeking the outcomes that you want? Even if you got what you wanted, could you stay in that "up"? And when you came "down" in disappointment, fear, anger, or loss, was it a soft landing or a crushing blow?

How has surrendering to God's will helped you in times of chaos to get off that destructive ride? What ESH do you have for those who are still hurting after turning to God's will many times?

Will you use this article for a discussion topic at your home group? Send a story of your own recovery journey to essay.sa.org/get-involved.



Don't worry you can pull the ripchord at any time and your Higher Power chute is always there.

Turning to God one moment at a time, one day at a time, is a way of life he is committed to with God's help and the Fellowship's support.

Made a decision. When I first came into recovery in 1998, I thought making a decision was a one-time event. Almost 30 years later, I've learned the hard lesson that I have to make a decision every day—sometimes multiple times a day. As my sponsor told me months ago, sometimes it's 25, 30, 40, 50 times a day or more. I'm faced with challenges every day.

My challenge is to stay sober and to recover in those moments. Making a decision to stay sober and to turn any anxiety, grief, trouble, or challenge over to my Higher Power works. It works every time. I just have to do it. I just have to get on my knees, get humble, and turn it over to God and let God take away the difficulty. God "could and would if He were sought." Let God give me the strength to endure the temptation, to endure the challenge, to endure the barrier or the obstacle to a sober, happy, free, and peaceful life.

The Big Book makes it clear that it's not just necessary to be a nice guy once in a while or to be a good Samaritan occasionally. I need to be assisting, helping, and charitable to other people, to be of maximum value to others every day, multiple times a day: "these are thoughts that must go with us constantly" (*AA* 85).

This seems like an ominous task, especially if we take on these burdens alone.

This seems like an ominous task, especially if we take on these burdens alone. The good news is that we have each other. If I keep Tradition One in mind, God will assist me and those I help. I just need to make that decision to turn my will and life to the care of God throughout the day, every day, one day at a time.

Joe D, Palm Desert CA





God's Will Booming on Speakers

Trusting God's plan for his disclosure led to many "God-incidences" that arranged the conversation perfectly.

Ever since joining SA, I've wanted to disclose to my wife. I was immediately cautioned to hold off.

After a few months, my sponsor agreed that we begin preparing. He had me call an old-timer to discuss the particulars, but this person didn't respond for two weeks. I was anxious and was becoming resentful.

Finally, on a Monday, I reached him! He gave me ESH and the go-ahead to share that very day. However, my sponsor said, "Let's complete the step work we've outlined for this week, and we'll discuss this next week." I was mad, but I kept my mouth shut.

Then, on Thursday at 6:11 PM, my sponsor called and told me to disclose to my wife the next day and what to say. I was shocked and asked, "What happened? I didn't think we'd be talking about this until after the weekend." He paused and said, "I'm not exactly sure. I feel that God is with you." We ended the call at 6:30 PM.

A little later, my wife asked me to drive her to the nearby shopping center. Every time I got into the car, I made sure to close what I was listening to or finish it beforehand, so it wouldn't connect to the speakers via Bluetooth. While waiting for her, I finished listening to an SA keynote speaker, and the audio ended right on time. At 7:00 PM, we headed for the car. I got in and started the car, but my wife needed help with the baby. I got out and went to help.

God chose that exact moment for the Bluetooth to connect. "My name is...and I'm a sexaholic," boomed over the speakers. I jumped to shut it, but it was too late. "What was that?" she asked. There were no mumbling excuses. We had the conversation right then.

Why did the recording begin replaying? Why did my sponsor call me? Why was the baby's car seat unclipped?

I had great ideas about when, where, and how I would deliver, but God had other plans. His plan was better than anything I could have dreamed up.

Trust Him. He knows what's best.

Motty W., New York, USA



In the Midst of the Fellowship

The Fellowship's Support and accountability helped her take responsibility for her recovery and embrace the Program.

I was an 18-year-old girl, broken and abandoned, who had experienced many destructive relationships. I was very confused about my career, education, and family, and felt hopeless about the future.

Masturbation wouldn't leave me, and the only good part of my life was my fantasies. Every time I tried to take a step forward, I would fail because I didn't know how to respect my limits or boundaries. I repeated the same mistakes, driven by resentment, anger, and intense emotions.

I was introduced to the Fellowship through a close family member, and I completely embraced the Fellowship's guidelines. I relapsed the first month, but then finally made up my mind to commit to the Program. I have been sober since September 16, 2023. Along the way, I changed several step guides and found friends my own age with common concerns and issues in the Fellowship.

I said goodbye to many of my colleagues and friends outside the Fellowship because they were jeopardizing my sobriety. I made progress in my education and income, and my goals became clearer. My relationships with my family, colleagues, and friends improved, and new, healthy people entered my life.

It is true that life's challenges never end, but I am learning to remain calm in the midst of them. I don't know what will happen tomorrow, but just for today I am grateful to God for being in the Fellowship.

Bita M., Isfahan, Iran



The Daddy I Never Had

He learned how to fire his old God and hire a new and caring one.



When I was a boy, I called out to God many times, especially when I was in pain. My father physically and verbally abused me. I begged God for him to die; I cried in prayer for things to be different.

But the abuse got worse. It is hard to understand why this happened, and some things I may never understand.

Before recovery, I debated God's existence. Maybe we are all just batteries that die, are finished, and get thrown away. Who said there is even a God? Look at all the religions with mutually exclusive claims.

There was just one big problem: my life wasn't working. When my wife discovered that I had been writing fantasies involving people she knew, she threw me out of the house. I was on the verge of losing my wife, kids, and everything I had worked so hard for.

I came to the Program and found a sponsor. He said I needed to have a relationship with a higher power to recover from sexaholism—there was no other option. My sponsor explained how my previous concept of "God" did not need to be the God I served today. He showed me how to write a letter firing my old God: the one that punished and hurt me, the one who was always looking to get me. My childhood led me to believe in a God that was like my father.

I needed a new God. The one I chose constantly seeks my good and takes care of all my needs. He is becoming the "Daddy" I never had—someone I can talk to, bring all my fears and worries to, and ask for guidance.

The greatest gift I received was a God refusing to let me live without a relationship with Him. It was only through sexaholism, which caused my family and me so much pain, that I received this most amazing gift. This gift is the pleasure of living with my Higher Power one day at a time. I am finally home.

Eli G., Bet Shemesh, Israel Fellowship

Steps, Traditions, & Concepts



MINORITY OPINION'S RIGHT OF APPEAL: CONCEPT FIVE

"Throughout our structure a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration."

Just because a minority exists does not mean that the minority gets ignored. Responsible recovery requires that we go out of our way to ensure that the minority gets ample opportunity to express its thoughts and feelings. We must avoid the tyranny of the majority. We must protect the minority. It is the responsibility and the duty of the minority to be sure that they are heard and are not intimidated through fear of being rejected. The process is that those expressing minority opinions are given another opportunity to speak. Then, the chair asks if anyone desires to change their vote. If so, a new vote is taken. After the new minority has had every opportunity to be heard, it ends (SA Service Manual 2026, chapter 12, page 2).

"Responsible recovery" means the minority's opportunity to express its thoughts and feelings must be protected. The minority has a duty to speak and not be intimidated by fear of rejection.

Starting with the last half, "personal grievances", we read "... and personal grievances receive careful consideration." A grievance is a complaint or cause for distress. "Consideration" means given careful thought or taken into account. The right of appeal applies to a personal grievance of a trusted servant so that he or she may bring a complaint directly to the Board of Trustees without fear of reprisal.

"Throughout our structure" refers to every level of service where decisions are made. Whether in a home group or at home in our families, we can apply Concept Five.

In Concept Five, the word "appeal" refers to the process of challenging the outcome of a vote (or decision), giving members with the minority opinion a second opportunity to express their views.

"Minority" refers to fewer than half of the voting members, or when substantial unanimity (two-thirds approval) is required, the one-third of members voting against a motion.

"Tyranny" – oppressive power, such as a government in which a single ruler has absolute control. SA Tradition Two clearly states: "Our leaders are but trusted servants. They do not govern."

"The process": Following a non-unanimous vote, the minority of voters are called on one at a time and asked if they would like to speak further in defense of their position. After each voter is polled, the chair asks if anyone wishes to change their vote. If so, a new vote is taken. If this changes the outcome, the new minority is allowed to be heard. There are many instances where hearing the minority opinion has changed the outcome of a decision.

Everyone benefits by getting a broader perspective.

Discussion:
The "Right of Appeal" is a process that ensures the voting body has as much accurate information as possible. Everyone benefits by getting a broader perspective. The majority and minority voters all get the opportunity to listen carefully and practice patience and tolerance for other viewpoints.

This step protects the minority opinion and allows all voters to pause long enough to check themselves for fear, prejudice, resentments, anger, or anything that might be in the way of good, kind, and loving judgment. The unwritten assumption is that Higher Power's will is found through the group conscience. Also unwritten is the idea that the final decision will be respectfully accepted and honored by all, with none harboring resentments or ill will.

The idea that those with the minority opinion have a responsibility to state their objections is important. However, as stated in the SA Service Manual 2026, it seems to be telling us how to feel, implying we can control the attitude and behavior of others. The unfortunate wording in the Service Manual states: "It is the responsibility and duty of the minority to be sure that they are heard and are not intimidated through fear of being rejected." I have the responsibility to respectfully disagree and speak my minority opinion in spite of feeling intimidated. I cannot control whether or not I am heard with an open heart. I cannot control the attitude of the majority.

Nevertheless, I believe the intent of this comment is to encourage and empower members in the minority to express their opinions. It's the responsibility of all the voting body to be sure the minority opinion is respectfully heard and that no one feels intimidated, whether that's the minority or the majority, when expressing their views.

Susie B, USA



SA CFC

The FIRE That Guides Me

SA has been a source of great strength and recovery during a time when all hope seemed lost.

"You're an addict." I had spent the night in a cold jail cell on the worst day of my life. My wife was the first to tell me this truth, which I instinctively knew had to be right. I was definitely addicted to something and needed help.

I spent a month in county jail, surrounded by men who seemed to need help. I will never forget the Fourth of July in jail. We could see fireworks from our day room, but my focus was on my fellow inmates. Their faces glowed with childlike wonder at every sky-filling color explosion outside our window. They weren't hardened criminals; they were someone's kid who had lost their way. They were being judged for actions taken on their worst day, or because of addictions they had fought for years. And now, I was one of them.

When I was bailed out, my ego kicked into high gear. "This addiction can be conquered" was my battle cry. I thought all I would need was to understand the addiction and get rid of it. I would learn I was painfully mistaken. I found a doctor who suggested I join SA, and together we found a group. The day came when I nervously crept in. I was welcomed, and in a few meetings, I had a sponsor and a White Book. Excitement overwhelmed me–finally, a way out of darkness!



Then COVID hit, and in-person meetings were canceled.

Then COVID hit, and in-person meetings were canceled. It was hard to stay connected, but I had positive momentum, and my sponsor kept me going. That is, until the White Book finally revealed that I was addicted to lust. Boy, did my ego have a problem with that word. My sponsor helped me understand that lust was not just about sex, but everything I craved and desired. My life had been controlled by depression, codependency, resentment, fear, and low self-esteem—creating a huge hole inside of me. I had looked to everyone and everything to fill that hole, objectifying those I wanted to have.

In 2023, my legal options ran out. I was left with a Catch-22. On one hand, I could accept a plea deal to charges that were much stronger than what actually happened. On the other hand, I could go to trial. I was advised that juries hardly ever side with defendants in these cases, and I would risk spending the rest of my life in jail.

However, I was in a better place mentally. SA taught me that holding onto resentment and anger was like drinking poison and hoping the other person dies. I had to let it go, say goodbye to my family and friends, and put my faith and future in my Higher Power. Today, guided by my Higher Power, I strive to be positive every day. My wife reminds me that this is happening for me and not to me, which helps when times are harder. I accept my role in this situation that led me to prison, and what I did and what I failed to do. I see this time in prison not so much as the case details, but as a result of the trust placed in me by my wife, family, friends, and the whole world. I am so sorry for my past, and I work hard daily to be better and stronger.

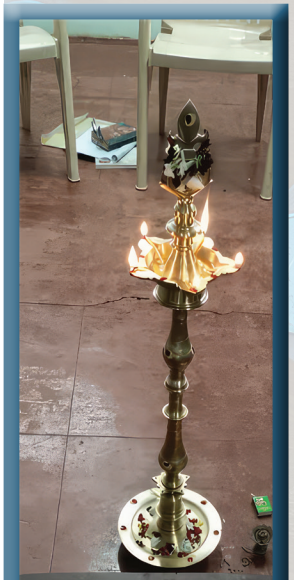
I feel called, as part of my amends, to work with addicts, victims, and prison/registry reform. I study SA literature, scriptures, meditate, and pray. We have a text app I can use to connect with my amazing wife, my son, my sponsor, mentors, a few relatives and friends, and an awesome therapist.

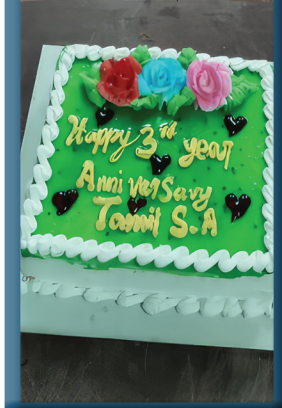
Prison is a small physical space where I have little control, and I have to stay a little while longer. My addictions kept me captive for 40+ years. With all I've learned, I am freer and mentally healthier than ever before. SA was the fire that guided me through the darkness into positive sobriety, and it continues to light my path toward mindfulness and peace.

To be continued...

Jason A, USA.

SA TAMIL GROUP CELEBRATION





The Tamil Sexaholics Anonymous Online Group celebrated its third anniversary with a two-day recovery workshop and fellowship.

The gathering was held on February 14–15, 2026, at Dhanam Foundation in Madurai, a historic temple city located in the state of Tamil Nadu in South India.

Sexaholics Anonymous is gradually gaining visibility in this region. At present, there are daily online meetings and two in-person meetings taking place in Tamil Nadu, reflecting the growing interest in recovery support within the state.

The anniversary event brought together members committed to strengthening their recovery through the Twelve-Step program, while reinforcing the importance of community, spiritual growth, and shared experience in overcoming addictive sexual behavior.

Approximately 14 members participated in the workshop, engaging in structured step work, reflection sessions, and peer discussions designed to deepen their recovery journey.

A Structured Journey Through the Twelve Steps

The workshop commenced on the morning of February 14 with a prayer and the lighting of a traditional lamp, symbolizing wisdom and spiritual guidance in Tamil culture. Participants were provided with step-work materials, including notes, files, pens, and prayer resources to support their sessions.

The program began with a discussion on the importance of "Step Zero" in Sexaholics Anonymous, emphasizing willingness, honesty, and readiness for recovery. A senior member guided the session, setting the tone for deeper engagement with the Twelve-Step process.

Participants then explored Step One, reflecting on personal experiences of powerlessness and unmanageability related to addictive sexual behavior. Members were divided into small groups of three, allowing for more intimate and honest sharing of their journeys.

As the workshop progressed, members collectively affirmed their commitment by taking a pledge for Steps One, Two, and Three, reaffirming their willingness to seek recovery and spiritual guidance.

Work on Steps Four and Five, which involve personal inventory and sharing, was conducted through one-to-one sessions, allowing participants to engage in deeper personal reflection within a confidential and supportive environment. A senior SA member then explained the remaining Steps in detail, helping participants understand the full pathway of recovery.



Importantly, the entire workshop was conducted in Tamil, the local language, making the Program more accessible and comfortable for participants who prefer engaging in their native language.

Fellowship, Gratitude, and Celebration

The second day, February 15, focused on fellowship and gratitude. Members gathered in a circle and participated in a candlelight gratitude moment, reflecting on their recovery journeys and the support they have found within the fellowship.
To commemorate the group's third anniversary, members celebrated by cutting a cake and sharing it, marking the milestone with warmth and camaraderie.

The event also included an open discussion session where members shared their Experience, Strength, and Hope (ESH)—a core tradition within the SA fellowship. Participants also shared feedback about the workshop and reflected on how the program had supported their personal growth and spiritual progress.

The gathering concluded with members joining hands to recite the Serenity Prayer, a foundational prayer in recovery fellowships. As a token of encouragement and remembrance, SA sobriety chips and slogan-printed keychains were distributed to participants.

Strengthening Recovery Through Community

The anniversary event highlighted the growing role of the Tamil SA Online Group in creating a safe and supportive space for individuals seeking freedom from addictive sexual behavior. By combining structured step work with fellowship and cultural inclusivity, the group continues to help members build sustainable recovery while fostering mutual support and accountability.

As the group enters its fourth year, members reaffirmed their shared commitment to living one day at a time, guided by the principles of the Twelve-Step program and the strength of fellowship.

The Tamil Group,
Tamil Nadu,India

SA NOTICE BOARD

THE BEST CAPTION

ARE YOU READY FOR ANOTHER CAPTION CHALLENGE?

We invite you to craft the perfect recovery caption for the cartoon below, centered on December's theme, "Amends: Straightening Out the Past". If your caption wins, you will receive a free print copy of the December 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!



"THE GAME"

The January 2027 season of The ESSAY Recovery Game is now open for registration!

Register to play here:
tinyurl.com/TheGame-Jan2027

FAQs can be found at:
tinyurl.com/TheGame-FAQs

You can find the rules here:
English:tinyurl.com/TheGameRules-English
Español:tinyurl.com/ReglasDel-Juego-Espanol
Русский: tinyurl.com/PravilaIgry-Russkiy
Arabic: tinyurl.com/QawaeidAlluebat-Alearabia
Suomi: tinyurl.com/Pelisaan-not-Suomi
Persian: tinyurl.com/GhavaninBazi-Farsi
Português: tinyurl.com/RegrasDo-Jogo-Portugues

Participation is not guaranteed and will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration is open until December 14, 2026. Late registration will be open until December 21, 2026.
All registering late will be placed on the waitlist and may not get the chance to play.

In Grateful Service,
The Essay Recovery Game Coordinators

COMING IN DECEMBER



NEXT EDITION *Our December edition will focus on making Amends- what that requires and the freedom that comes with this Step.*

I Am a Piece of Iron

He always listened to normal people for a solution. Meeting a Higher Power that drew him out of his addiction and brought him close to this Power was what changed everything.

Making Peace Before Goodbye

Through the Steps, and with difficulty, his heart began to soften towards his father before he passed. With his mother, however, it was a different experience.

Out of the Mud

Seeing an AA image helped him understand the relationship between his own efforts to be free and freedom through the Steps.

SUBMIT YOUR STORY

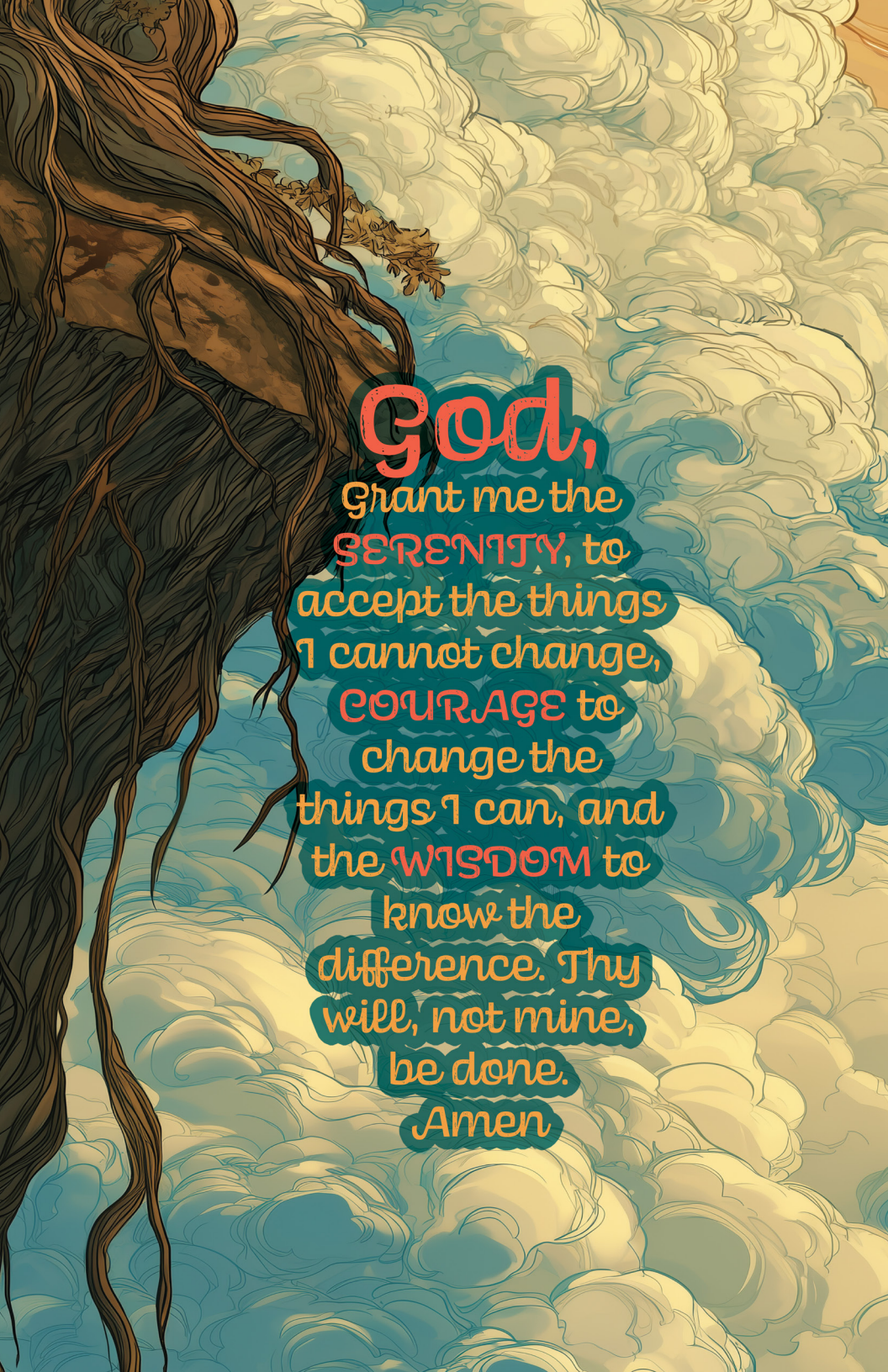
December 2026 edition: Amends: Straightening Out the Past (Stories due November 1) What is your experience with giving amends? How has Step Nine impacted your life in recovery?

February 2027 edition: Rocketed Into A Fourth Dimension (Stories due January 1) How has this deep spiritual experience revolutionized your whole attitude toward life?

April 2027 edition: HOW: Honesty, Open-Mindedness, Willingness (Stories due March 1) How has honesty played a role in your recovery? Was open-mindedness automatic? How did you become willing?

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 the WISDOM to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done.
Amen