

ES SAY

May 2019

A periodic publication of
Sexaholics Anonymous featuring:

Open Mindedness

I Open My Mind (Abro Mi Mente)
Being Teachable
Surrender Brings a Miracle

Member Stories

I'll Stand By The Door - Roy K.
Why I Love Recovery
I Got This!

Practical Tools

Forgiveness is Worth the Effort
Six Word Limit
Lust Goes Deeper



open
mindedness

SA Purpose

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

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Responsibility Declaration

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

Sexaholics Anonymous Statement Of Principle

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

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

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to 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 on July 2016.*)

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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 Delegate Assembly in May, 2016

EDITORS' CORNER

May, 2019

Dear *Essay* readers:

This issue of *Essay* includes many stories on "Open Mindedness." Our next issue in August 2019 will focus on *SA At 40 Years!* Please send in any stories or short articles on your experience with *SA At 40 Years!* Future topics are October, 2019: *Freedom Behind Bars*; December, 2019 "Miracles In Recovery" Let us hear from you at essay@sa.org

Our desire to be a global Meeting in Print continues. Translations of *Essay* in Spanish and Farsi and Hebrew are happening. There are new Regions and new intergroups forming worldwide. As of May the free downloads of *Essay* were 1,564 for the February 2019 issue and 1,927 for the December, 2018 issue. Articles in Posts were downloaded over 4,310 times from *Essay* in April alone! The five 2018 issues February, May, August, October and December of *Essay en español* were downloaded hundreds of times. Each of these are at sa.org/essay

We encourage groups and individuals to order mailed subscriptions for those who find *Essay* easier to hand to newcomers and to use for meeting discussions. The print edition of SA has fewer pages than the electronic version due to mailing requirements. Print or electronic, each version of *Essay* can serve you as a Meeting in Print. Thank you for being readers of *Essay!*

The Editors (David, Kira, Kent, Kirsten)
Artists: (Christian M., Jimmy M., Jon)

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Are you new to Sexaholics Anonymous?

Find out more about us:

* Contact our International Central Office * Visit the SA website at <https://www.sa.org> * Call us toll-free at 866-424-8777 or * E-mail us at saico@sa.org Outside of the USA call +1 615-370-6062



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Choosing to stay changes everything



In 2017 a sponsee and I started SA in Cortez, Colorado USA. We have 4 other members (some who come and stay, others come and go)
(Send Essay a photograph of your meeting space!)

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Dear Essay

To *Essay*:

I just wanted to write and express my thanks to you for putting Dick O's story *Free As A Bird* in the online *Essay* May 2018 and on www.sa.org. What an honor! I only wish Dick were alive to see it.

Re-reading some of those lines made me cry again. Especially, "If it took all that to get me here it was worth it—every day and month and year—for the peace and serenity and freedom from shame I have today." Dick was also known for saying, which he didn't put in the story, "Pray like hell." And if you asked how he was, the inevitable reply was, "Sober, thank God!"

His recovery was truly miraculous. A great testimony to the power of the program. I pray that his story may bring hope to many who fear they are past help. And especially to members of the clergy. Heaven knows we need to let people know that recovery is possible! Just yesterday in our local newspaper there was a big exposé about sexual abuse fifty years ago at a Catholic school here--so this story is very timely for us. To see his story on the *Essay* page was very moving to me. Again, heartfelt thanks to you and your committee.

Mike F., New York, USA



Our Meeting in Print

To *Essay*:

The February 2019 *ESSAY* told the beautiful story of a Dutch fellow who was able to restore the relationship with his father. It inspired me to write my own recent encounter with my parents.

My relationship with my father had continuously worsened including rage outbursts from puberty until my early 20s. I called him bad names and stood in front of him with my fists. I slammed doors, crying out he wasn't my father anymore. I fantasized about killing him when he was laying drunk in his garden chair. Although he paid for five years of higher studies (which I quit without a degree), I never thanked him for it. Instead for twenty years I didn't go to any family gatherings, including birthdays and Christmas. I would just visit them a couple of times per year for a few hours, without even phoning them to ask if the day suited them.

Before I came into SA, about ten years ago I tried (while not being sober) to make a kind of amends on my own terms, but my father didn't even want to start a conversation. Perhaps he felt my self-willed and unspiritual energy.

After three months of sobriety and having worked Steps 1-8 in SA with my sponsor, I went to my father's home and asked again if I could make amends. This time he accepted. I was able to speak the couple of sincere sentences I had prepared. I felt inspired to tell him that it had taken me forty-two years before realizing that I was glad he was my father.

Later I came to a surprise party in honor of his birthday. He was even

Dear Essay

more surprised to see me there. He sat next to me the whole evening. The most incredible thing happened: I realized that since that evening the biggest chunk of resentment towards my father had been lifted by my HP!

I hadn't been able to tell him I loved him though. In the next years I thought of it, but it never happened. At the end of December 2018 my wife and I traveled 1300 km to a family gathering. Two siblings became very drunk and started ridiculing my father. They went on and on and it seemed like my father became smaller and smaller at the dining table.

The next day he woke up later than usual and looked really bad. The shame and self-loathing were visible on his face. That morning I told my wife that I felt so bad about my siblings' comments and wanted to tell him I loved him. My HP granted me a moment alone with him and I was able to look him in the eyes and say: "Dad, I know I have been a troublesome son to you. I love you and have always loved you." I laid my hands on his 86-year old shoulders, said it again and hugged him, while I felt him sobbing a bit.

Half an hour later I was able to say the same to my mother. When we drove off, they both stood on the sidewalk waving at us until we were out of their sight. I was so happy I had finally been able to tell them this. I thank my HP for His choreography, my wife for her support, and SA for its constant fellowship.

Luc D, Barcelona, Spain

To *Essay*:

It now seems we do everything with our smartphones except talk on them. One thing sadly remains constant throughout my years in SA. The fellowship encourages us to reach out and make phone contact with fellow members. Often, however, that man--or woman--may be a newcomer fresh off the street or a sober, recovering member of SA who has given you his phone number. What happens? *He won't return your phone calls.*

I'm not saying SA members must answer every single call they receive. If I get a call on my personal phone during work hours, I can only return it during breaks or lunch or after work. But, return them I do, even on vacation.

The bottom line is if you really believe that "*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,*" return members' calls, would you? Even just a text can suffice in a pinch. Nothing says "I don't care about you" more than refusing to return an SA member's call. If you cannot or will not return phone calls, do SA a favor and do not give out your number in the first place. Then try to justify to your sponsor why you will not do so. Of course, that's assuming you will return his calls.

Paul T., Sparks, Nevada USA

ensayo en español

Descargue el *ensayo* en español en www.sa.org/essay
Download the five 2018 issues of *Essay* in Spanish at www.sa.org/essay

PRACTICAL TOOLS

Forgiveness Is Worth The Effort

Three thoughts on forgiveness

#1: Why Forgive? The first, and most important, concerns why I forgive people. In a nutshell: *I forgive because it helps ME.*

In recovery, I learned about forgiveness from Alcoholics Anonymous. When I'm in a state of non-forgiveness in regards to another person, I give that person control over me. They have their hooks in my brain, and they are able to dictate my thoughts and feelings to some extent. When I give that power to others, it's pretty much impossible to stay sober.

I don't forgive because it's the proper or right thing to do. I don't forgive for

I forgive because it helps ME.

the sake of the other person. I don't forgive that I may be forgiven. No, I forgive so that I can get that other person out of my head, experience peace, take control of my actions, stay sober, and be free.

Twelve Step recovery is full of cases where we end up doing the right thing for purely self-serving reasons. Sexaholics Anonymous touches on this when it mentions our "own enlightened self-interest." What it comes down to, however, is that I must forgive if I want to be sober and free.

#2: What is Forgiveness? It's a common misconception for people to think that forgiveness means that what the other person did was okay and all is good. This is a lie. The definition of forgiveness that I learned in recovery

is more pragmatic:

Forgiveness is when you get to the point where the harm done by the other person no longer lingers in your mind or controls your thoughts or actions.

Forgiving a person does not indicate that what they did was okay, nor does it excuse their conduct. It just means that you no longer dwell on it. It isn't erased from your memory, but you've forgotten it with the in-the-moment part of your mind. There is longer any associated fear, anger, or resentment.

Let me give an example from my life. In the next section I share about how I came to forgive my father. Yet I found that even after that happened, I didn't particularly like him as a person. I mean, he was my father so I loved him, but he wasn't really someone I wanted to hang around with. He refused to admit he'd done anything wrong, or even that things had been bad. He hadn't changed much. He hadn't recovered. He wasn't the type of person I wanted as a regular presence in my life, but I was no longer angry at him. And, most importantly, I found I could deal with him in an appropriate manner once the anger was gone.

#3: How to Forgive Alcoholics Anonymous says we must find some way to get rid of resentment and forgive. There are many methods, but the one suggested by the book is to view the person who harmed you as being ill. They may be spiritually sick, or they may have an actual mental illness. If you can adjust your thinking to see them as being sick, not evil, it's easier to forgive them. Here is an example.

I had a significant round of forgiveness toward my father. Let me preface this by stating that I was extremely angry at him. The first time I got in touch with my anger, I started out by being furious at every person in the world. That anger quickly morphed into being focused solely at him. Anger that was big enough to encompass 7,000,000,000 people was directed at him. Let that sink in for a moment.

Forgiveness is when you get to the point where the harm done by the other person no longer lingers in your mind or controls your thoughts.

It was very hard to get over my anger and forgive him, even with all the 12-Step techniques for doing just that. I got some relief when I did my 4th Step. I got more relief when I did my 8th Step. But the final step was a long time coming. I'd done enough therapy and recovery to understand many of my core problems. One day it came to me that my father had some of the same issues that I did, but he didn't have 12-Step programs or therapy to deal with them. He'd been trying his best to manage, just like I had, but without all the assistance I'd received. That was the turning point. I was finally able to completely forgive him. From start to end it took about eight years for me to get to that point.

I hope my experience will help you get to that place of forgiveness more quickly. Even though I had a lot of guidance, it was a long, hard process. Much of what I've shared with you had to be learned the hard way. But if I can leave you with one thought, it would be this: Forgiveness is worth the effort.

Chad C. Florida, USA

Lust Goes Deeper

Half surrender avails us nothing

After five years of sobriety and co-ed religious formation, I thought I could be like normal people and have healthy friendships with the opposite sex. I had made many female friends in the previous years, women I hoped I could see as sisters and live in freedom. There was no lust, as I understood lust, in most of these relationships, no sexual fantasy and crossing physical lines. In some, there was sexual attraction and I knew that I should be careful. I hoped I could ignore the disturbances I felt were neurotic scrupulosity and continue to do as I pleased.

I now believe these inner disturbances tell me that lust is present... Something is not surrendered.

I thought I wasn't engaging in lust with these female friends. Why then did I continue to experience such disturbance and spiritual noise? For years I furiously denied that lust was present in these friendships. If so, I might have to give them up. But the pain became intolerable. I finally became willing to be honest.

Today I have come to understand that lust truly has corrupted the "very fabric of my being." Lust has corrupted my emotions and my social instincts, especially when it comes to the opposite sex. Even though I am not fantasizing about sex with my female friends, I engage in what I now see as a form of relationship lust. "Please connect with me and make me whole."

My God-given social instinct and

desire for connection becomes supercharged with NEED for a high, a NEED for relief, a NEED to be made whole, an escape from my lonely world. If I don't get this connection, I'll die!

I now believe these inner disturbances tell me that lust is present – often of a more subtle form. Something is not surrendered. My Higher Power has shown me that He must be the one to make me whole. While I was not meant to live in a vacuum, Woman had become my higher power. Mis-dependency. My Higher Power does not want me lonely but he also wants to free me from mis-dependency. He will lead me to make the REAL connection that I need.

It's amazing that after years of sobriety I continue to see that lust goes deeper than I thought. Gratefully, so can my recovery.

Zak Br, USA

A New Attitude and a New Heart

A new operating system for life

Attitude is a word I thought I understood when I first arrived at Sexaholics Anonymous, but really I did not understand it at all. A new heart was something that I thought I did not need when I arrived at SA, but I was wrong. I had to keep an open mind and be willing to do the work (the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous) in order to have that change of heart and attitude. I could not explain the change as it was happening. Only by looking back can I say, "Oh yes that is what you meant by change of heart and attitude." I also know there is still more room for me to grow in this area.

Today I realize that a new heart and a change of attitude were at the very core of my recovery. *Alcoholics Anonymous* says that an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial is the only thing that can defeat me (AA, 568). *Sexaholics Anonymous* says "Lust [is] an attitude demanding that a natural instinct serve unnatural desires." (pg 40). That means that I am powerless over an attitude. Wow. Why can't I just be addicted to porn or masturbation or prostitutes or chat rooms, or some other form of acting out? But being powerless over an attitude - how do I "put the plug in the jug" of an attitude?

"I" is an attitude demanding something. Prior to recovery, I would wake up with a demanding disposition, and things just got worse. Sometimes my attitude looked like self-centered self-preservation, and other times it looked like self-



pity. Either way it was based on my old ideas that life was not fair, people were out to get me, and I had to protect what was mine above all else. I thought that the only pleasure I could get out of life was self-generated. “Demanding” was the default setting of my perspective on life.

The absolute miracle for me today is that I no longer have to live in the old attitudes that drove me to destruction. By working the SA Twelve Step program, I have been given a new operating system in life. As a result, the old forms of acting out that drove me to Sexaholics Anonymous have little appeal today. I see that my past behaviors were false solutions. I

“I” is an attitude demanding something.

realize that acting out was not my core problem, my core problem was me. I had a heart of stone and a personality full of self-centered attitudes.

The White Book tells me there is no such thing as surrender in the abstract. I thought attitudes were abstract so how could I surrender an attitude? The White Book also tells me that an attitude is a “spiritual action,” and I have come to believe that is true.

Today I try to start my day by taking spiritual action. I intentionally give and receive love (proper use of the will), which is the essence of my Higher Power and of my “new” heart. I do the “Whatever” prayer: “God, whatever you have in store for me today, I’m all in.” And I do the “What Can I Do?” prayer: “God, what can I do to be of service to others today?”

Today I am constantly in the process of surrendering harmful attitudes and anticipating my Higher Power’s better ideal for me. And one other

new attitude: I never surrender anything without faithfully relying on something better heading my way from Higher Power

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.eu/attitude>

Six Word Limit

Fear in the open loses its power

I can bury the truth under an excess of words. When writing a Fourth Step or a Step Ten inventory, I allow myself only six words to identify my discomfort. When I use much more than six words, I may be trying to hide something.

Today, in my Tenth Step inventory, the first resentment I listed was against my wife. “She didn’t ask for or remember the time we were supposed to arrive at a party and how people would look at me because we were late”—27 words.

My self-righteous tone was as much a clue as the number of words. I shortened the resentment to, “How others would perceive our coming late and I couldn’t blame the tardiness on my wife”—16 words. Then I wrote, “How people would look at me for choosing an irresponsible mate”—11 words.

I kept erasing and rewriting until I found the root: “I fear others’ opinions of me”—6 words. Fear, not resentment, was causing my discomfort. I had buried the fear under the words. Unconscious fears keep me restless, irritable, and discontent—just how my addicted-side wants me to be.

The forced economy of words uncovered the fear. Now I can take the action suggested in the Big Book—humbly rely on my HP to help me match calamity with serenity (AA 68), in other words, help me handle any outcome.

Higher Power, help me to find what is really upsetting me, for only then can I find solutions.

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Open Mindedness

I Open My Mind To What This Day Offers

Light at the end of the tunnel

[Translated from the Spanish]

The eternal discontent with my life is part of my illness. I cannot find myself. My life I do not like. I need something more. That enormous expectations that I had or that I have (for worldly success, recognition, pomp and honor, etc.) seems to be the reason why I feel empty.

What can fill that emptiness? Sometimes I think that it is not enough to do the Fourth Step, to make the changes, if I do not like my life anyway. What to do then? It may even happen that I am sober and I still do not like my life. Something is missing?

Lust is for me like a store of succulent sweets which I have renounced. I could go in to eat those sweets, entertain myself by practicing my sweet and painful addiction, but I would not be satisfied. I would find myself at the end of that feast completely alone and disappointed. I would try to get out of the store, but in such a drunken state I would not find the door or the key. In the end I would feel lost in my own addiction (I have already tried everything or almost everything). I would make signs through the window to the people who go outside to help me out, and even scream, without being heard. They would see my face on the other side of the window making absurd and incomprehensible gesticulations without understanding my strange despair, and they would go on. And more and more dull and stuck in obsession, not seeing my sorry state, I would continue eating the sweets that hurt me so much.

Do I want that? Of course not. But I do not want my life to be boring, which I do not accept. So, what do I want? I need to have a spiritual awakening. For this, I need to open my mind. Realize that what keeps me in that fixed position and leads me to suffer is not my life in itself, but the opinions and judgments I have about it, the inability to trust and accept it as it is (to take care of what I should do in each moment), without making comparisons. This life is what I need here and now. I do not have to harbor self-centered expectations of a mind closed in on itself. I even think that if any of those eccentric expectations were fulfilled, after enjoying it a little over time, I would again feel as empty. Because I would always wish for more and more.

So when I see that my human discontent is usually a form of egocentricity, an extraordinary form of stupidity that keeps me unhappy and suffering, I begin to renounce that attitude, and see the light at the end of the tunnel: I open my mind: I need to be grateful. I need to remember everything that has been given to help me get out of myself (the program, the sponsor, etc) I need to stop waiting for something outside myself to satisfy me, becoming an illusory hope of satisfaction. I need something real. I need to begin to give, to render service. Then, at some point, after the authentic renunciation that expects nothing, I discover the promised joy, which has nothing to do with the destructive pleasure of my addiction. A joy that is beyond words, because it takes me out of my own limited mind.

Then I see clearly. My life as it is in sobriety and recovery is not an error, it is not wrong, it does not lack anything. I am the only one who is wrong. I open my mind to what this day of sobriety offers me, to the grace

of God when I recognize that I am the only one who is wrong. Then, at that moment, the door of the candy store opens. And I'm outside. I'm not alone anymore I am no longer locked in my own mind.

Rafael from Colombia

Abro Mi Mente A Lo Que Ofrece Este Día

La luz al final del túnel

El eterno descontento con mi vida es parte de mi enfermedad. No me hallo, mi vida no me gusta. Necesito algo más. Esa enorme expectativa que tenía o que tengo (éxito mundano, reconocimiento, pompa y honor, etc.) parece ser la causa de que me sienta vacío.

¿Con qué lleno ese vacío? A veces pienso que no basta con hacer el 4 paso, hacer las enmiendas, si de todas

maneras no me gusta mi vida. ¿Qué hacer entonces? Incluso puede suceder que estoy sobrio y aun no me gusta mi vida. ¿Falta algo?

La lujuria es para mí como una tienda de dulces succulentos a los cuales he renunciado. Podría entrar a comer esos dulces, entretenerme practicando mi dulce y dolorosa adicción, pero no me saciaría. Me encontraría al final de esa comilona completamente solo y decepcionado. Trataría de salir de la tienda, pero en tal estado de borrachera no encontraría la puerta ni la llave. Al final me sentiría perdido en mi propia adicción (ya lo he probado todo o casi todo). Haría señas por la ventana a la gente que pasa afuera para que me ayuden a salir, e incluso gritaría, sin que me puedan escuchar. Ellos verían mi rostro al otro lado de la ventana haciendo gesticulaciones absurdas e incomprensibles sin comprender mi extraña desesperación, y seguirían de largo. Y cada vez más embotado y atrapado en la obsesión, para no ver mi



Open Mindedness

estado lamentable, seguiría comiendo los dulces que me hacen tanto daño.

¿Quiero yo eso? Por supuesto que no. Pero tampoco quiero mi vida aburrida, que no acepto. Entonces, ¿qué quiero? Necesito tener un despertar espiritual. Para ello, necesito abrir mi mente. Darme cuenta que lo que me mantiene en esa posición fija y me lleva a sufrir no es mi vida en sí, sino las opiniones y juicios que tengo sobre ella, la incapacidad de confiar y aceptarla tal y como es (ocuparme en lo que debo hacer en cada momento), sin hacer comparaciones. Esta vida es la que necesito aquí y ahora. No tengo que albergar expectativas egocéntricas propias de una mente encerrada en sí misma. Incluso pienso que si cualquiera de esas excéntricas expectativas se cumpliera, después de disfrutarlo un poco al pasar el tiempo volvería a sentirme igual de vacío. Pues siempre desearía más y más.

Así que cuando veo que mi descontento humano suele ser una forma de egocentrismo, una extraordinaria forma de estupidez que me mantiene infeliz y sufriendo, comienzo a renunciar a esa actitud, y veo la luz al final del túnel. Abro

mi mente. Necesito ser agradecido. Necesito recordar todo lo que se me ha dado para ayudarme a salir de mí mismo (el programa, el padrino, etc...). Necesito dejar de esperar que algo afuera de mí mismo me sacie, convirtiéndose en una esperanza ilusoria de satisfacción. Necesito algo real. Necesito comenzar a dar, prestar servicio. Y entonces, en algún momento, luego de la auténtica renuncia que no espera nada, descubro el gozo prometido, que no tiene nada que ver con el placer destructor de mi adicción. Un gozo que está más allá de las palabras, pues me saca de mi propia mente limitada.

Entonces veo claro. Mi vida tal y como es en sobriedad y recuperación no es un error, no está equivocada, no le falta nada. Yo soy el único que está equivocado. Abro mi mente a lo que me ofrece este día de sobriedad, a la gracia de Dios cuando reconozco que soy el único que está equivocado. Entonces, en ese momento, la puerta de la tienda de dulces se abre. Y estoy afuera. Ya no estoy solo. Ya no estoy encerrado en mi propia mente.

Rafael de Colombia

Open Minded Meetings

Getting the most from the fellowship

We attend SA meetings to share our personal experience, strength, and hope. We share how the Steps and Traditions help our acceptance of life's difficulties. Meetings are not a dumping ground for our problems. They are not a substitute for working the Steps with our sponsor. In meetings we limit our sharing to allow time for everyone to share. We stick to the topic

and share only once until everyone has had a chance to share. We are mindful of the fact that we are not really as important to others as we would like to think we are.

As one SA member wrote, attending meetings:

Gets us out of our isolation and our heads,

Educates us in the principles of the SA Program,

Puts us in touch with newcomers so

Open-Mindedness and Being Teachable

Awakening to freedom and serenity

Early in Sexaholics Anonymous my sponsor said that “the most important quality for recovery is being and remaining teachable.” After thirty years his statement still lingers in my thoughts every day.

The Big Book says in Appendix II Spiritual Experience: “We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.” (AA P567-568) In a recent article in the AA magazine Grapevine (3/2019) an 80 year old alcoholic is quoted saying: “It’s better to have the program in your heart than in your head.”

We need to remain open-minded and teachable in order to nourish and sustain our relationship to God (or

Higher Power) and to SA. One common slogan for us is “my best thinking got me here.” My thinking brain often lies to me! Our program of necessity connects to our emotional as well as our thinking brain. Knowledge of our program cannot save us. Listening to a sponsor or sponsee, or sitting in an SA meeting, is the way God connects to my teachable and open-minded self.

Accepting the world (wives, bosses, neighbors, politicians, etc.) as it actually is rather than as we want or demand it to be is an important aspect of 12 Step Recovery. When I am open-minded and teachable, I will experience that acceptance. The reward for doing so is serenity and freedom. I find it’s worth the cost. The return on my investment of time and of attention for getting spiritual recovery is literally beyond my imagination.

David M., USA

that we can keep fresh the memory of what our lives were like before sobriety,

Puts us in touch with more experienced members and exposes us to new ideas so that we can begin to change our thinking and behavior,

Allows us to pass on to others what we have been given—the primary purpose of the SA Program and a key to a happy and peaceful sobriety,

Relieves the inner pressure of our

character defects through the subtle atmosphere of recovery and a Higher Power present at meetings,

Gives a message to ourselves that we are choosing recovery,

Allows us to participate in the fellowship of the SA Program,

Permits sharing and listening to help us learn to relate to others and to understand there are other viewpoints and perspectives beyond our own.

Step Into Action, 189-190

At Last! An End To Chronic Relapsing

It works if we work it

The Foreword to the Second Edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* says that “Of those who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on showed improvement.”(AA xx)

I had been a chronic relapser in the bottom quartile in SA for more than 15 years with little improvement. I was constantly exhausted and in pain. Even during sober days I felt miserable, toxic, fatigued beyond endurance, and I had no life to speak of. Each day seemed interminable and pointless, at best. I knew I should be grateful, but I was angry and felt cheated, as if I had done my part but God hadn’t done his.

With decades of sobriety in AA I thought I knew the program, the Steps, and what to do. So, I was puzzled why I wasn’t getting anywhere in SA. My approach to the Steps had worked perfectly on my alcoholism, and I had used them to quit smoking too, so they seemed to be tried and tested. But they just weren’t working on lust addiction, and I had no idea why not.

I had been thorough in all my Step work. I attended meetings, logged on to telemeetings, listened to talks on CD, and did what service I could. I switched sponsors, tried all the different S-fellowships, read more literature, did more meditation, attended more church services, and on and on. Nothing worked, nothing made any difference. I continued to relapse growing ever closer to “the bitter end.”

So what made the difference? I recognized two things from the Big Book: Urgency and limited opportunity. The 12-Step program, as outlined in the AA Big Book, carries peppered throughout with words and expressions such as “at once,” “quickly,” “now,” “immediately”, “we waste no time”, etc. It also appears that we have a limited window of opportunity to affect our recovery—between one week and one month.(AA24) That is how long before our own defences run out and we most likely act out again. During this brief period “we must find a spiritual basis of life – or else.” (AA44) It was certainly so with me – two to three weeks was the longest I could ever remain abstinent – never more than a month.

The 12 Steps need not take months or years. They can be completed in a week or so. A newly-arrived fellow who admits powerlessness can certainly move immediately to Step 2. “We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. ‘Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?’” (AA 47) This is Step 2, in its entirety. There is no need to wrestle for weeks or months about the nature of God. This is a yes-or-no answer.

Step 3 can be presented as a job offer - “We had a new employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.” (AA 63) The job requirements are that “we keep close to Him” (Steps 4 – 11) and “perform His work well” (Step 12). Again, this is a yes-or-no proposition – do we want the job or not? How we go about this is revealed in the subsequent Steps, which might be looked at as on-the-job training, and need not concern us at this stage.

Assuming we have said “yes”, then we follow our sponsor’s instructions to complete Step 4. Remember that this decision on Step 3 “... could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.” (AA 64) All of this can be achieved in one day, and the inventory completed over the next two or three days. Step 5 requires a few hours to be set aside, can be followed immediately by Steps 6 & 7, and the protégé can then be asked to write out his or her Step 8 list. The amends process of Step 9 can then begin the following day after this, and continue for as long as necessary.

By now, we glimpse the Step 10 promises - “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol (or lust). For by this time sanity will have returned.” (AA 84) From here on, Steps 11 and 12 can be practised on a daily basis, using Step 10 as a course correction exercise as needed. All of this can be achieved within one week or a little longer, which is how long our window of opportunity is likely to last. So the promise of Step 2 can come to pass within the space of about a week.

Remember that Dr Bob made his amends on his first day, and his first 12-Step call on Day 3. Bill Wilson completed the first 11 Steps as far as possible while still in the hospital detoxing. We need to work these Steps as though our hair were on fire, because it is. As Bill says, “These were revolutionary and drastic proposals.” (AA 14). How desperate are you?

Then we must work with other sexaholics. That is why all the monumental effort I made before availed me nothing. Taking Steps 1 - 11 without immediately trying to carry the message is faith without works. We need only have a spiritual experience as the result of these steps to carry

this message. We don’t need a year of sexually sober or more.” In short, it appears that in order to get sober and remain that way we need a total reversal of polarity, from taking to giving, from constantly saying “Help me” to “Let me help you.” Elsewhere, in one of his Grapevine articles, Bill W wrote “My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.”

What is it like for me now? Once I put all the above into practice, I recovered pretty much overnight. I certainly experience the promise that “Joy at my release from a lifetime of frustration knows no bounds.” AA 128) I still get tempted by thoughts and images, but now I recoil from them. The weight has been lifted—it’s just gone; now there’s a spring in my step. I still experience some fatigue and toxicity, but they are fading away, and I experience a zest for life such as I have never had before recovering from lust.

Steven, Buxton, England



Surrender Brings A Miracle

Coming to sobriety in India

I began acting out at age 14. After 30 years, I was fed up. I acted out three times on the day my father died - this was unmanageability. Then I cried out for help. It was a deep cry from within which communicated to my Higher Power and to the universe that I honestly and desperately needed help. Grace followed and I found the SA fellowship.

For the first time I realized that I was not alone. There are people like me all over the world, suffering from the disease of lust addiction. Emails from some SA members, and their sobriety

I honestly and desperately needed help. Grace followed and I found the SA fellowship.

dates, motivated me to remain sober for 24 days - for the first time in my life.

Then I slipped. As there was no SA meeting here in Mumbai, India, and I had no SA literature either, a member suggested that I attend AA meetings and read AA literature. One day at a

time, I tried working on my character defects, such as greed, anger and resentment but I continued to relapse. Eventually I came to realize that I needed the help of an SA sponsor, though there was no one suitable in my country.

So I prayed and surrendered again to my Higher Power...and a miracle happened. A sober member of SA agreed to be my sponsor and even came to India with some SA literature. He was only here for a limited period and had a busy schedule but together we started a meeting in the city. He has also helped me with Step One.

I am feeling such gratitude toward my Higher Power, my sponsor and the SA fellowship. This is the joy of recovery. But my sponsor has cautioned me to remain alert and aware all the time, as lust is cunning and powerful.

Today I will end by sharing this little prayer: My Higher Power, I give this day to you. Establish the work of my hands, The steps of my feet, The words of my mouth, The direction of my gaze, The thoughts of my mind, And the attitude of my heart.

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.eu/en/surrender-brings-miracle>

A New Life Vs. Substituting Another Problem

The reason why lust and sexual acting out are so attractive to me is because they are so very powerful at what they do in me. Initially, they were my "solutions" to other problems. Eventually I became addicted to them, and they failed to be solutions and became their own problems. But I

didn't have an alternative "solution" that would not enslave me just as lust and sexual acting out had done.

The reason there is such a variety of 12 Step groups for a variety of addictions is because those "alternate solutions" are also addictive for me. I'm quite sure I would become enslaved very quickly by anything I used to "substitute" for lust and sexual acting out. That of course is my natural tendency, so I had to find a real solution instead of a substitute

MEDITATIONS

Walking The Walk Vs. Talking The Talk

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little (AA 164).

What is worse than an active sex drunk who thinks he knows everything? A dried out sexaholic in the room who thinks he knows everything. A little ways into recovery I made the painful discovery that just because God removed my compulsion to act out did not mean He removed my arrogance. It was easy for me to use the literature to pick apart my fellows. I wore the label of “Big Book Thumper” like a badge. God blessed one of my mentors with patience, but even he had a breaking point. After one of my rants, he cornered me, saying, “When are you going to leave that Big Book at home? Someday you’re going to be the only book someone can read!”

That was my crash course in ego-deflation. What hundreds of pages of literature had failed to accomplish, my sponsor had done in two sentences. I was no authority, and had failed to use the literature as an aid, using it instead as a weapon. Like any other tool in life, I would have to learn how to use it from those who had experience. Without open mindedness and humility, suggestions become little more than curious inconveniences. There are no shortcuts through the Twelve Steps for any of us. I had to collect all the bumps and bruises everyone else did in seeing them through. Instead of being an expert on the Program, I started to work the Program.

Fortunately for me, the founding members of our wonderful Program did not make humility a requirement for membership.

God, thank you for giving me the grace to remain teachable today.

TRC Meditations 106

that would become my next problem.

That real solution is the “spiritual awakening” that Step 12 refers to. It is the right connection with God and others. It is a new way of life. It is living life on life’s terms. It is accepting reality that includes hardship and pain instead of always believing I should have a way of escape into a fantasy world of my own making. And the amazing thing about God is that he is a master that doesn’t enslave me. He only accepts what I willingly give to him. I am free to

take back my will and life at any time that I might foolishly decide to make that insane decision.

That new life is the result of surrendering to God and working the Steps under the direction of a sponsor. The program works when I work it. And I believe it will work for others as well.

[Sexaholics Anonymous, Taichung](#)

Meditations

Taking Action

Program people taught me that right thinking never produced right actions, but if I took the right actions, the right thinking and feelings followed (SA 164).

In my sexual obsession, I believed I could think my way out of the mess I had made of my life. Someday, I thought, I would read the right book, hear the right words, or find the medicine that would provide the magical cure. Illusions!

In SA, I learned right action is possible, regardless of what my thinking may be telling me. I do not have to figure this out; I take the actions I see are working for others who have the same problem. The next right action is usually clear while my thinking is often confused. Calling another member, going to a meeting, getting out of a triggering situation, or performing an action of love are some actions I have learned to take in recovery.

An SA member told me that when the next right action is not clear, she prays to God, works the Steps, or shares with other members until the next right action becomes clear. I now follow her advice and my life in recovery brings me more peace and purpose.

God, help me to know the right thing to do, and grant me the courage to act on it.

TRC Meditations 31

Set Aside Prayer

Dear God,

Please set aside anything I think I know about myself, about my disease, about the Big Book, the 12 Steps, the Program, the Fellowship, the people in the fellowship, and all spiritual terms, especially you God; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Amen

SA STORIES

I'll Stand By The Door Roy K.

Recorded Audio Greeting to the Newark, New Jersey "Chorus of Recovery" 2008 International Convention

My name is Roy and I'm a Sexaholic. I'm standing here in the west LA Saturday night meeting and I'm talking to a large group of sex drunks. This is where the first meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous (I think in the world) took place in this room on January 25, 1981. Through this recording I'll be also talking to the

me a seat. That was the beginning where I found, for the first time in my life, where I knew I belonged, because they were leading with their weakness. Previously I always thought we have to lead our strength.

After a few months of sobriety, I was separated from my wife. I did not know what happened. I met a man named Jim R. Here was somebody in Alcoholics Anonymous who knew what I was and who knew where I came from. He had been a homosexual hustler in the streets of Los Angeles and had lost a family. When I met him at the door he was about four

This is where the first meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous (I think in the world) took place in this room on January 25, 1981.

international convention. I greet you folks and I wish I could be there. I wish Iris could be with me. The Chorus of Recovery theme, that you have, is just a marvelous idea. I understand you have solicited stories about real recovery in SA which has turned into a Chorus of Recovery. That's really good because, as difficult as this is, God can do and is doing for us for we cannot do for ourselves.

Think about the title Chorus of Recovery. Every chorus starts with one note. Then there's another note and another note, sometimes a melody, sometimes a chord. I would like to trace the steps, the doorways of the each voice of the chorus that brought me and the program here.

I go back to April 24, 1974 when I walked into the door of Alcoholics Anonymous for the first time. There was a man at the door. His name was Dick. And he handed me an AA brochure, shook my hand and offered

years sober in AA, clean and sober from drugs and alcohol. He had a new family, two little girls, two beautiful little daughters. Jim R. was my first sponsor.

He's dead. They found him hanging at the off ramp of Temple Street. What happened? He'd 13th stepped a newcomer woman in Alcoholics Anonymous. That took him out of his marriage. It took him back into drugs and everything else. The last time I saw him he told me he was speaking with the devil. However, this man saved my life. I was the only one who spoke at his funeral. I couldn't stop weeping. All the devastation of his life was there in that small little funeral parlor. And, he was there at the door for me. So when we look at a Chorus of Recovery, we find that not all notes keep singing.

Next at the door was Carl J, my sponsor. He died a quiet sober death recently, but, thank God, he's the one

who started me through the Steps. I'd go to his house every week and do it.

The next person at the door was Kevin B. He was bi, a high school dropout, no religious background. I was a college graduate with a religious background. We had nothing in common! Anyhow, he was the one I could pick up the phone and call. He was my life connection in any impossible situation. I will never forget the first time I called him. And I said to him that "she just walked in, a new secretary, micro mini skirt, high heel shoes! She's got it on a platter! And I'm going to pieces inside." On the other end on the phone he says: "yeah, I went by Ralph's supermarket and there on the street" The honesty was what saved us both. We didn't have sponsors. We didn't sponsor each other, but he was there!

There was the first pseudo meeting

He said "don't worry, God is your partner." If it hadn't been for that you and I would not be here today, because I needed that direction.

of SA which happened in James Allan W's office with Frank H, Karl and myself. We had the AA big book. We were the AA sexaholics in that one meeting in Simi Valley who identified. It took us quite a while to get to know each other, but we did. After that first meeting we were so joyous that we recognized and were honest with our sexual stuff. James Allan said we ought to call this Lustaholics Anonymous. Well, of course, later on it got called Sexaholics Anonymous. It was the door to his office that was open, and that was great!

Next standing at the door was Clancy I, the great West Coast AA sponsor. I decided after my slip after a year and a half that I needed tough direction. I never had a father and never had

taken instruction from a man. I needed a sponsor. For a year I'd pick up the phone and after 15 seconds Clancy read the situation intuitively. Then he'd give me an action and hang up without saying goodbye! Although that man was at the door, I couldn't stand him. But, I followed direction and he was at the door.

Next man at the door was Chuck C, his sponsor. The people that I had been dealing with in AA who identified and who wanted to start some kind of fellowship for sexaholics, had gone by the wayside. I was left alone. So I went to Chuck C in Laguna Beach. I said, "here's the deal, I've got to find my people. But I don't have anybody." Chuck C gave me about four hours of his time. I'm just sitting there with my mouth open and he's giving me the best of his advice and wisdom. He said "don't worry, God is your

partner." If it hadn't been for that you and I would not be here today, because I needed that direction. He was at the door of his home. So this brings us to just before SA.

So the history of AA is a marvelous journey. It's a marvelous chorus and we are just a small part of that AA chorus in Sexaholics Anonymous. We are not unique. We are part of this chorus. I wish I would have had the foresight to call AA central office and see how many organizations have got permission to use the steps and the "anonymous" title. Probably 500 at least. There's just an incredible number of fellowships, offshoots from this: good, bad or indifferent, whatever! There's something happening. It's the chorus of recovery! A chorus of recovery with some bad notes and

some stuff in there. But that's the way it goes.

So we are being called to a harmony That is here and is our doing. Now I'd like to read a small piece of a poem that Sam Shoemaker wrote. It's called I Stand at the Door. By the way, during the 1955 Saint Louis convention, 20 years after AA was born, where Bill W turned the organization over to the fellowship, one of the two keynote speakers in that convention was Reverend Sam Shoemaker. I urge all of you to go to the AA book, AA Comes of Age, and read the transcript of Sam Shoemaker's talk to the fellowship. Sam Shoemaker apparently was not an alcoholic, but he sure sounded like one! He was accused by some of the people in Saint Louis of being an alcoholic. And he said that was the greatest compliment he ever had. He was an amazing man. Bill W, in that talk, gives credit to Sam Shoemaker for the principles of the AA program.

Now, "I Stand at the Door," is written by Sam Shoemaker. And, I want to close with this. There will basically be five or six hundred people in New Jersey who are hearing this. What it all boils down to is one person to another, one drunk talking to another. One person standing at that door. And here we are going to hear it from a man whose life and work was so influential in why we are here today.

"I Stand at the Door"

I stand by the door.

I neither go too far in, nor stay too far out.

The door is the most important door in the world -

It is the door through which people walk when they find God.

...The most tremendous thing in the world

Is for people to find that door - the door to God.

The most important thing that any person can do

Is to take hold of one of those blind, groping hands

And put it on the latch - the latch that only clicks

And opens to the person's own touch.

...Nothing else matters compared to helping them find it,

And open it, and walk in, and find Him.

So I stand by the door.

...Somebody must be watching for the frightened

Who seek to sneak out just where they came in,

To tell them how much better it is inside.

...Somebody must watch for those who have entered the door

But would like to run away. So for them too,

I stand by the door.

...Thousands of them. Millions of them.

But - more important for me -

One of them, two of them, ten of them.

Whose hands I am intended to put on the latch.

So I shall stand by the door and wait For those who seek it.

I had rather be a door keeper

So I stand by the door.

Sam Shoemaker (from the Oxford Group)

Thank you and may God bless our fellowship

Roy K. March 1, 1927
-- September 15, 2009

Group Discussion Topics

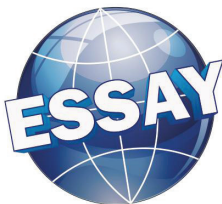
In *I'll Stand By The Door* he talks about the men who “stood at the door” to welcome and guide him into sobriety and recovery and eventually to found Sexaholics Anonymous.

Which persons have been at the door for you when you arrived at SA? What messages from them have stayed with you in sobriety and recovery?

The presence and use of AA was essential. How do you use AA today? What is your part in the Chorus of Recovery that is SA today?

Why I Love Recovery discusses the dual benefits of spiritual recovery and reducing long standing behavior problems.

Have you had such dual benefits? How does SA deepen your connection with G-D and others?



Our Meeting in Print

Why I Love Recovery

A key to sobriety and healing

I love being in a program that cultivates both spirituality and self-development. I crave closeness to G-d and this program has helped me to find a spirituality that really satisfies, in addition to leading me back to the religion of my upbringing. I have found a G-d Who is loving and all-powerful, as described in Alcoholics Anonymous, and Who wants to have a relationship with me. G-d is there for me in every way especially when it comes to keeping me sane and sober, and has diminished substantially the most problematic behaviors that I struggle with. For example, low self-esteem and all its manifestations like codependency, perfectionism, approval seeking, people-pleasing, etc..

I have been codependent all my life. Instead of pursuing my dreams, I tried to be who others wanted me to be, neglecting myself. Now in recovery, I have started learning to be authentic and true to myself. Before recovery

G-d is there for me in every way especially when it comes to keeping me sane and sober,

when I was in the throes of having very poor self-esteem I unknowingly began a very destructive process. In an attempt to become special and feel good about myself I decided that I needed to become perfect, holy and above this world. I stopped pursuing any and all physical pleasures and repressed all my emotions so that I could always do what is right and not be pulled in other directions by impulses and desires. In recovery

when I realized how destructive this way of living was, I had to re-learn all about myself as I allowed myself to experience my physical desires and emotions. It was scary but I was determined and I had G-d by my side helping me along. I have discovered so many aspects of myself such as my values, strengths, weaknesses, and certain talents that I began to cultivate. It's been a marvelous and exhilarating adventure that I am really enjoying.

As I have found a new freedom and am no longer captive to and obsessed with lust, I now have new opportunities to explore life. When I have free time instead of using it to act out, I use it to discover and do things that I enjoy. One of my

When I have free time instead of using it to act out, I use it to discover and do things that I enjoy.

favorites is camping. For me, it is such a wholesome way of relaxing. It fills me up spiritually as I connect with God through nature. I do great physical activities like kayaking and hiking, and emotionally it is such a nice change of scenery and so relaxing and calm out there.

Another beautiful reward of recovery is connection with others. I am discovering how much I appreciate having deep connections and relationships with others. There is so much joy in a true friendship. I have found many friends in this program. We are able to be authentic with each other and we have nothing to hide. In fact, it has made it more difficult for me to develop friends outside of the fellowship because I feel like I can't reveal my whole self for fear of their reaction about my addiction and recovery. I love to have fellows stay at my house. My home is an open one

and I appreciate having company and hosting. But if I hosted a non-addict then I wouldn't have the ability to continue my recovery work at home doing things like being on the phone with members, journaling, meditating, reading our literature, etc. So for now at least I am happy to invite addicts which enhances my recovery as I then get to do some of these same recovery activities with someone else.

I want to end off by saying that having a deep, intimate and loving relationship and connection with G-d is the key to my sobriety and healing. I am so grateful that I have such a beautiful relationship. I cultivate it each day with gratitude towards Him, reliance on Him for all my needs, reaching out and connecting all the time, seeking out His will in each situation, and living a life that is dedicated to carrying out His will for me. I treasure and cherish my closeness with my God, hold on to it tightly and just want it to grow and grow. It is the most important and precious thing in my life.

Meir W., New York, USA



I Got This!

Our survival depends on "we"

How many times have I made that declaration? Hundreds, maybe thousands of times I have said those exact words. Recently I watched a TV survival show where 12 contestants were dumped in the ocean within swimming distance of various islands. They were required to write journals before and during the show. Everyone wrote some form of "I got this" at the beginning. During the course of the show, hunger, loneliness, sickness, or insects began driving them to leave the contest.

Then an interesting shift happened. The remaining castaways started writing in their journals wondering who else was stranded on the islands. Many started searching for other survivors. Castaways would find each other and pair up. Some found others, but still wanted to do it on their own. Those who paired up started writing in their journals "We got this!" After 49 days 5 survivors had all found each other. They combined resources, sharing encouragement, burdens and laughs together. They knew they could do together what none of them could do alone.

I am reminded of the second paragraph of page 17 of the Big Book, "There Is A Solution." "We are average Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented... We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie,

joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table." What an apt description for us Sexaholics!

When Bill wrote the first draft of the Big Book he used "I" statements. What amazing insight to eventually change it from "I" to "We"! I have learned that in this new way of living I can not do this on my own. It is a WE program not a ME program. When I isolate and try to do this on my own I have ALWAYS failed. I need everyone in this program. Old timers and newcomers all have something to

They knew they could do together what none of them could do alone.

teach me. We band together and help each other when we are struggling. We celebrate together when we reach milestones or pull another struggling addict from the relentless, beating waves of our addiction.

The lesson I learned from this TV show was amazingly spiritual. I was reminded I need everyone in my life to help me survive. The five remaining contestants not only survived together, they thrived. At one point they used garbage from the ocean to create a game of skee ball, having fun together. The same thing happens for me at meetings when I share who I really am. We relate, we connect, we share. We all survive and thrive. We even find something to laugh about and we find the real joy in the fellowship. We are rescued!

Preston D, USA

STEPS

Am I Willing To Go To Any Length?

Sobriety is a gracious gift

I found myself fully confronted with this question back when I started working the Steps in earnest with a sponsor. Up until that time, I had been willing to settle for periodic “lengths” of sobriety. Because I’m an addict and quite insane when I’m lusting, I had figured that was good enough. I believed I could fight against lust meaning I stayed in the addiction a lot longer than I would have if I had just admitted from the start that I couldn’t do this.

I failed yet again after a really good stretch of sobriety; I was smacked in the face one more time that I was truly hopeless if left to my own ideas and effort, and I didn’t know what to do about that. Perhaps enough “enlightened self-interest” kicked in that I finally found a sponsor who could tell me what to do. That was the first good choice I made in the process of becoming “willing to go to any length”.

When my sponsor offered to sponsor me, I remember that I prayed to God saying, “I will do whatever he tells me, even if it kills me.” I was pretty sure

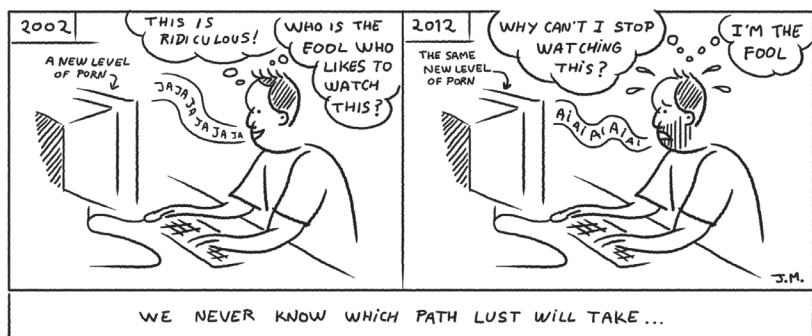
he wouldn’t tell me to do something that actually killed me, but that was the second good choice I made in the process of becoming “willing to go to any length”.

As my sponsor started directing me through working the Steps, he told me that when I was ready, I should write in the front of my AA book the date and the words, “I am willing to go to any length to stay sober.” That was the third good choice I made.

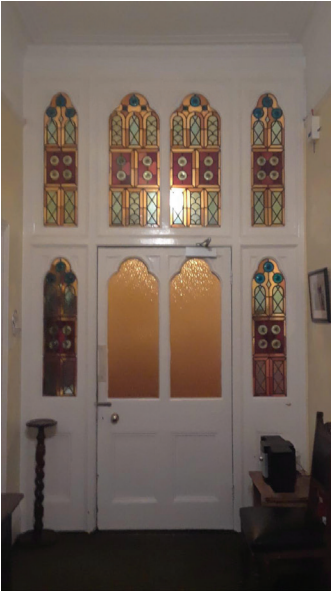
When he led me through Step 3, he told me that Step 3 was a commitment to work the rest of the Steps. That was the fourth good choice I made along the path of being “willing to go to any length” to connect rightly with God and others, and to be given freedom from lust and the obsessions and compulsions.

So for me the SA program has worked by going to any length to work the Steps as a path to connect rightly with God. And I’m very confident at this point that if I stay in that path and continue to grow along spiritual lines through a life that is progressively surrendered to God, I will continue to receive God’s gracious gift of sobriety, recovery and freedom.

Sexaholics Anonymous, Taichung



WORLD WIDE NEWS



Fáilte go hÉirinn
[Welcome to Ireland]
Door to the Meeting Place

Ireland Fellowship News

The Irish Fellowship enjoyed numerous meetings and workshops hosted by long term member Dave T from USA January/February 2019.

Dave arrived in Ireland 23rd January, after attending the SA International Convention in Madrid Jan 2019, staying in Ireland until Thursday 14th February.

In this period of time, Dave managed to visit ALL groups in Ireland, passing on his wisdom, warmth and presence.

All in all, Dave traveled 4,235 km or 2631 miles zig zagging across Ireland by car, bus and train. This is the equivalent of traveling across most of the USA. (Sorry no donkey and cart..... next time!)

The Groups in Ireland visited were Galway, Ennis, Limerick, Cork, Kerry, Dublin, Carlow, Wexford, Belfast,

Charlestown, Cavan and Donegal.

Dave facilitated 4 day workshops, Cavan, Galway, Dublin and Belfast. Some of the other meetings extended their time for Dave to pass on his experience strength and hope, others had regular meetings.

Dave stayed with many members during his time here and we all had a wonderful time, being with Dave and enjoyed the fellowship immensely.

Countless wonderful and beautiful sights and happenings; string figures and connections, houses visited, cups of coffee, roads traveled with scenic countryside and people met along the way.

The Irish Fellowship are warmed by his visit.

Go néirí an bothar leat
[Good luck on your road]

Israel

Our spiritual kindergarten :-)
Bet Shemesh, Israel meeting



World Wide News



SA/S-Anon Queensland Conference September 13-15 2019 “Carrying the Message of Hope”
Alex Park Conference Centre, Alexandra Headlands, QLD Australia
Contact: essay.brisb@gmail.com

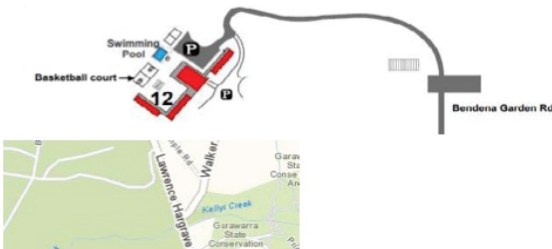
2019 SA/S-Anon Sydney Conference 14th-16th June 2019

Theme: 'Recovery Toolbox'

Venue: 'The Tops Conference Centre', 51 Bundena Gardens, Stanwell
Tops Same onsite location as previous years (Grevillea).

All enquiries about the event to: nswessayintergroup@gmail.com

Register at www.saoz.net/events



**12 shorter meetings
over the weekend
packed full of
insights. Free time
and social
activities included.**

SIM 2019 Scheduled!

**SIM [SA Internet Marathon] Event will take place
21-22 November 2019 from
1200 to 1200 UTC. Theme is “World of SA.”**

**New SA English speaking Discussion Phone Meeting for Bangkok:
Monday 08:30 PM local time UTC +7 Moderator is Beau. Contact
essaybangkok@gmail.com**

Internet: <https://join.skype.com/akX2Thlny>

Asia Pacific Online Unity Event Report

It was a huge success, especially since we organized it in a month's time frame. We had 133 people registering with around 30 people at each of the meetings. We had people from all over the world attend.

We had some issues with South Korean meeting with some of the speakers not available at the last minute. Sometimes the WiFi dropped out in small sections, but someone was able to step in and keep the meeting going. Other than it went rather smoothly.

We have set the date of next years one for 26/4/20 which is a Sunday so everyone can participate. We are hoping eventually the SIM committee will take over the running of the event. Flyer for 2020 is on page E17.

Kind regards Jason C.

**ASIA PACIFIC AREA
SA Online Unity Event
27 April 2019**

Programme (Bangkok Time)

- 11.00am - International Matters**
 - Tom K., Chair, General Delegate Assembly
 - Richard P., Vice-Chair, General Delegate Assembly
 - Farley H., Chair, Regional Alignment Committee
 - Steve S., Chair, International Committee
- 12.00pm - Step One**
 - Kyle (Spokane, WA, USA)
 - India Panel
- 1.00pm - Step Two**
 - Harrison (Portland, OR, USA)
 - South Korean Panel
- 2.00pm - Step Three**
 - Jackie (Netherlands)
 - Singapore Panel
- 3.00pm - Working with Newcomers**
 - Yvonne (Spain)
 - Australia Panel
- 4.00pm - Region Building**
 - Nicholas S. (UK), First Chair of EMER
 - Francis C. (Ireland), First Vice-Chair of EMER
 - Luc D. (Belgium), First Secretary of EMER
- 5.00pm - The Importance of Fellowship**
 - Dian (Netherlands)
 - New Zealand Panel

REGISTER NOW AT: <http://tinyurl.com/SAunity2019>
For more information, email: newcastlesgroup@gmail.com

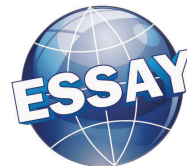
Poster for the 2019 Online Unity Event held in late April this year.

World Wide News

New SA Archives & History Committee

In 2018 the SA Board of Trustees established the SA Archives and History Committee [A&HC] to collect and catalog records of the origin and development of the SA Fellowship. The A&HC mission is: "to preserve the history of SA, to document the memories of our members and make this information accessible to SA members and other researchers [in order] to provide a context for understanding of SA's progression, principles and traditions."

The A&HC currently is making appeals through SA Intergroups for additional stories from early members. The SA Board of Trustee recently approved guidance on the collection of histories, including suggested questions for early members who are willing and qualified to share their personal and group histories. Copies of the questionnaires can also be downloaded from the SA.org website or may be requested from saico@sa.org.



Our Meeting in Print

Literature

Now available from the SAICO Online Store!

Formerly obtained from SA Publications in California. Order here: [SAICO store](#):

Beginnings—Origins and Growth of SA
Discovering the Principles
Does A Male Have To Have Sex?

First Step Inventory
*The SA Brochure—Problem, Solution,
20 Questions*

Why Working The Steps Is Important

a new publication from [SA Store](#)

“I go to meetings...how come I’m not happier?”

Ever feel like this? If we share this thought with sober members, sometimes the response will be, “What Step are you working on?” This can be very frustrating, especially if we’ve worked on some of them.

While working the Steps, we seek to develop and nurture a relationship with the One who has all power (as we understand Him). At first, this relationship may be weak, but with more Step work, it continues to grow and strengthen. When we need His help, God is there for us—anytime, anywhere.



SAPIC

NEW VIDEO FOR WOMEN!

The Public Information Committee's newest video has been released!

This video has been in production for over two years and we're grateful to share it with members and prospective members around the globe.

A HUGE "Thank you!" goes out to the women members around the fellowship who submitted video and audio clips for the project—together, we hope to carry the message of recovery to the sexaholic who still suffers.

To see this, along with our other videos, please visit:

sa.org/sa

Help us spread the word to sexaholics who are still suffering. If you have any suggestions for other videos or other ways to communicate our Solution for recovery, or if you'd like to volunteer to be a member of the Public Information Committee, please contact SAICO to apply.

In this nearly four minute video women actually in Sexaholics Anonymous talk about lust, their inability to stop, and the scary and even awful consequences of their compulsive sexual behaviors. They share the solution which frees them from fear, from lust, and from the humiliations of this disease. Take the time to watch this new outreach effort from SA which is visible [HERE](#).

Second Language Problems

Identifying in a non-native language?

For many sexaholics English is a second language. I am not a language expert. However, I have noticed that issues arise for SAs using English in readings and discussion. A person's mother tongue is their heart and gut language. When talking about childhood issues, family of origin issues, in my opinion, this is the language that needs to be used.

In my travels outside North America for SA I meet people trying to work our program in English. They are working with translations, though often they do not have copies available to all. They may have out of country sponsors because there is not much sobriety locally. The sponsors may be second language English speakers also. Thus, we end up with people trying to explain their gut level problems in their head language and their sponsors trying to explain the heart level solutions in head language.

When I am doing workshops in other countries, I suggest that someone, even though they have a good command of English, explain their problem or question in their mother tongue. I have someone standing there that translates for them. The questioner can correct or say that was not exactly what I was asking and get it corrected. I respond in English and the response is translated to them even though they just heard it and think they know what I just said. It is amazing how much this helps in communication.

How might this play out in the SA recovery program?

First, I think we must give them a way to have a working copy in all their

hands. Something like two columns on a page with one the English version and the other column same content translated into their language. Even Google Translate would be a start. They can then compare the two and get a better look at what it is trying to say. This could also take time after a meeting to suggest changes. Even a bad translation gets them to look at their gut/heart language feelings and ideas. Maybe SA could look at ways to help pay for initial translations. New groups do not have the treasury or often the skills to take on this task.

Second, I believe we should discuss having people at the local level sponsor each other, especially for a newcomer or slipper. Often the newcomer or slipper think that a foreign sponsor will have all the answers. A local person can see their resistance, such as arriving late, and hear their shares. A local person can speak gut to gut, heart to heart. Maybe that sponsorship is better than having someone who has completed all their Steps. I think that remote sponsors are very necessary.* And, it might be best they are reserved for members who have longer term sobriety.

These are just some of my thoughts.

Dave T., Oklahoma USA

*Maybe a word to the English speaking sponsors for whom it is either native or a second language. When accepting sponsorship or working with current sponsees, suggest that you could be a more sober sounding board or or Consultant Sponsor and they could have a stand in local co-sponsor.

If Walls Could Talk



Las Maretas-Arico-Tenerife, Canary Islands-Spain. Every Saturday from 15.00 till 16.30 hours. We welcome SAs from everywhere. Javier



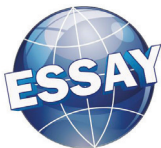
Barcelona, Spain has three evening meetings each week in English and Spanish



Three SA meetings every week in Prescott, Arizona USA. Saturday 7 Am, Monday and Thursday 7 Pm. All the meetings are held in this beautiful little room!



Greensboro, North Carolina USA. meeting space for our 2nd annual "Back to Basics" 12 Steps presentation held after our Saturday morning Rule 62 meeting. Steve E



Our Meeting in Print



Meeting room in Grants Pass Oregon USA. Saturday Night Group since 1988.

EVENTS CALENDAR

International Conventions

July 12 - 14, 2019 Seattle, Washington, USA SA/S-Anon International Convention: Surrender, Serenity, Miracles. Info at www.serenityinSeattle2019.com

November 21 - 22, 2019 SA Internet Marathon Internet (SIM): World of SA.

January 9 - 12, 2020 Nashville, Tennessee, USA SA/S-Anon International Convention: A Design For Living. Info: <https://www.designforliving2020.com/>

Regional and Local Events

May 3 - 5, Covington, Georgia, USA SASERA 2019 Spiritual Retreat: Improving our Conscious Contact. Info: www.sasera.org/spiritual-retreat/

May 6, via Zoom Conference CFC Sponsoring Prisoners Workshop. Email: saico@sa.org

May 11, Exeter, United Kingdom Exeter Recovery Day: The First Three Traditions. Email: recoveringhuman@outlook.com

May 17 - 19, Gdansk, Poland 12 Step Workshop. Email: ninepinesshine@yahoo.com

June 14 - 16, Sydney, Australia SA/S-Anon Sydney Australia Conference: Recovery Toolbox. Email: nswessayintergroup@gmail.com

July 12 - 14, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland Dublin Essay Convention: First Things First. Details to follow.

August 9 - 11, Cuautitlan Izcalli, Mexico Mexican National SA/S-Anon Convention: Buscando la Sobriedad con Alegria. Email: agalseg@hotmail.com

August 9 - 11, Saint Petersburg, Russia SA/S-Anon Russian Speaking Convention: God's Love is Enough for Me. Info: www.2019.sa12.org

Let go and let God!

**Ninth Annual Russian-Speaking
SA/S-Anon Convention**
with Russian and English speakers and translation
"God's Love is Enough for me"

Registration fees:
• 5 euros – until June 1st
• 10 euros – until July 1st
• 15 euros – until August 1st
Registration is open until August 1st

Location:

Russia
Saint Petersburg
August 9-11, 2019

For registration: www.2019.sa12.org
E-mail: spbconvention2019@gmail.com

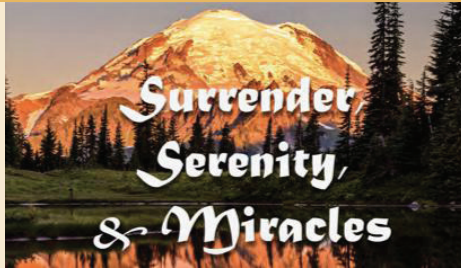
**DONATE
TO SA INTERNATIONAL
USE PAYPAL OR CREDIT
CARD IN 7 CURRENCIES
www.sa.org/donate/**

SA CONVENTIONS

SEATTLE 2019

Surrender, Serenity and Miracles
SA S-Anon S-ateen International Conventions
Seattle, Washington USA July 12-14 2019

Surrender, Serenity and Miracles is an opportunity for SA, S-Anon, and S-Ateen members to celebrate recovery, deepen their connections, and integrate program tools into their lives. Fellowship members will attend from around the world. Register now for three of the brightest days of your life in sunny Seattle and soak up some “vitamins” F and R: Fellowship and Recovery! Register at <http://serenityinseattle2019.com/>



NASHVILLE 2020



A DESIGN FOR LIVING

2020 INTERNATIONAL SA /S-ANON CONFERENCE

January 9-12, 2020 | Nashville, Tennessee Sheraton Music City Hotel

(full website & details coming soon)

<https://www.designforliving2020.com/>

NEW SA GROUPS MAY 2019

Europe, Africa, Asia,
Harare, Zimbabwe
Nottingham, United Kingdom

North, Central, and South America
Antioch, Tennessee, USA

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA (new meeting)

Narrowsburg, New York, USA

West Hartford, Connecticut, USA

New Bern, North Carolina, USA

Provo, Utah, USA (additional meeting)

Santa Rosa, California, USA

Springfield, Ohio, USA

Essay Purpose And Themes

Essay presents the experience, strength, and hope of SA members. *Essay* is aware that every SA member has an individual way of working the program. In submitting articles, please remember SA's sobriety definition is not debated, since it distinguishes SA from other sex addiction fellowships. Opinions expressed in *Essay* are not to be attributed to SA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by SA or by *Essay*.

The theme this issue May, 2019: *Open-mindedness*. August, 2019: *SA at 40 Years!* October 2019: *Freedom Behind Bars*. December 2019: *Miracles in Recovery*. Closing date for articles is approximately four weeks prior to publication dates in February, May, August, October, and December.

Submissions To Essay

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

The *Essay* welcomes meeting room photos, artwork and humor. Graphic art and funny stories enhance each issue. For graphics, 300 dpi is preferred.

We invite articles of different lengths, from 200-400 word anecdotes or memories, to 400-600 word Practical Tools or Meditations, to 1000-1500 word Member stories. We prefer electronically submitted manuscripts sent to Essay@sa.org. Articles may be sent by postal mail to SAICO, PO Box 3565, Brentwood, TN 37024 USA. Handwritten items should be written clearly on only one side of each sheet.

Articles are invited in the original language with an English translation. Whenever possible we use the original language and the translation. Please include an author name, address, telephone number, and/or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential.

Permission to Copy

As of June, 2017 the *Essay* in digital form is available free from the sa.org/essay web site. In order to serve the members of the SA fellowship, a print subscriber or a person using a free download of an *Essay* issue is granted permission to distribute or make ten copies—*print or digital*—of that issue, to be shared with members of SA. Such copies may not be further copied, shared, or altered. In lieu of making copies, refer persons to www.sa.org/essay so they can download a copy for themselves. We encourage all who are capable of subscribing to a print edition to do so. We encourage readers of the digital edition to make a donation to SA, as your financial support is critical to the work of our fellowship in making our Solution known to all who seek freedom from the bondage of lust.

Permission to copy *Essay* articles is only granted to the subscriber or downloaded and only applies to those issues in which permission is specifically granted, and not to *Essay* issues dated prior to March 2015. No issues of, or articles from, *Essay* may be placed on any cloud service (such as Google Drive) or website, other than sa.org.

SA CFC

SA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES COMMITTEE

Prisoners In Need Of Sponsors

The SA Correctional Facilities Committee has seen a dramatic increase in the number of prisoners needing to be sponsored by mail. This is due to SACFC outreach, etc. We currently have a backlog of some 40 sponsees. We have an urgent need for sponsors.

Could you please put out a call to service for readers in the May *Essay* issue?

Please include my email address: [SACFC 1@gmail.com](mailto:SACFC1@gmail.com), and Manse's email: Manse B." [<tpoint1987@gmail.com>](mailto:tpoint1987@gmail.com)

Eric S

Humor For SA

SHAME

WORKING STEPS WITH MY SPONSOR
IN A COFFESHOP, I REALIZED WE
LOWERED OUR VOICES FOR TWO
REASONS ONLY:
WHEN WE WERE TALKING ABOUT LUST...



OR ABOUT GOD

Have a good joke, wry observation, funny SA story?

Send your Humor gifts to essay@sa.org

Our Confusing Program

Sexaholics Anonymous so often is just plain confusing! Here are some challenges we face in SA recovery:

We have to surrender to prevail.

We must give it away if we want to keep it.

Half measures avail us nothing—and we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

They tell us to hang in—and to let go!

We say we are anonymous—and we share our name before we talk.

We do not judge another's sobriety—and we seek to stick with the winners.

If we don't stop lusting we will keep being miserable—and we are told not to have major changes in the first year.

(with thanks to AA!)

The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted that we were powerless over lust—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps and Traditions are adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (“AAWS”). Permission to adapt and reprint the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions does not mean that AAWS has approved the contents of this publication, nor that AAWS agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is connection with programs which are patterned after AA, but which address other problems, or in any other non-AA context, does not imply otherwise.

Sexaholics Anonymous is a recovery program based on the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous and received permission from AA to use its Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in 1979.

The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or Sexaholics Anonymous as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the sexaholic who still suffers.
6. An SA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Sexaholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Sexaholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



GOD

grant me the

SERENITY

to accept the things
I can't change

COURAGE

to change the
things I can and

WISDOM

to know the
difference.