

ES SAY

February 2020

A periodic publication of
Sexaholics Anonymous featuring:

Practical Tools

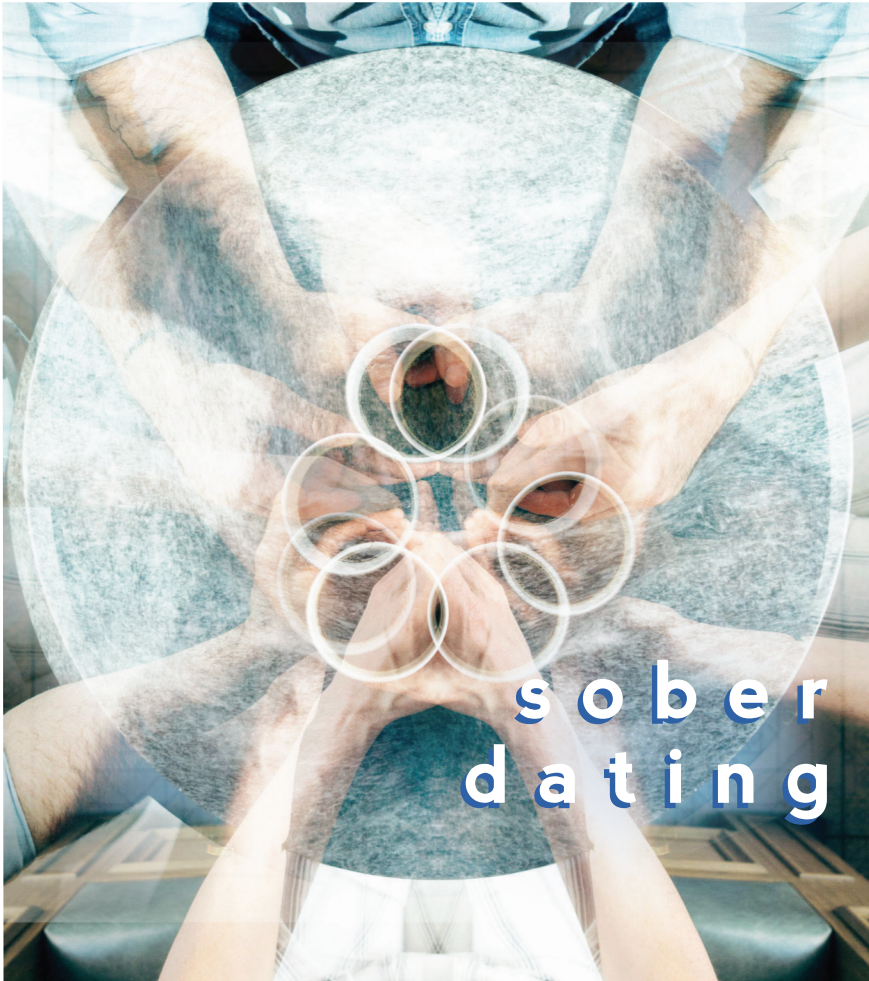
Check List Sobriety
Being "Triggered"
"Bad News" in SA
Obsession Song

Steps/ Traditions

On Being Willing
"Figure It Out"
Promote SA & Tradition 11

Sober Dating

Dating - A Spiritual Experience
Respecting Women in Recovery
The More, The Healthier
My Experience with Sober Dating



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 on 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 Delegate Assembly in May, 2016



EDITORS' CORNER

February, 2020

Dear *Essay* readers:

This issue of *Essay* includes many stories on “*Sober Dating*.” Our next issue in May, 2020 will focus on “*Travel and SA Recovery*.” Please send in any stories or short articles on your experience with traveling experiences in Sexaholics Anonymous. Future topics include: *Lost in Translations* in August, 2020. Let us hear from you at essay@sa.org. Be sure to see the Editor box on page 7.

Our desire to be a global Meeting in Print continues. The free download of each issue in both English and Spanish reaches sexaholics around the world. As other translations are made available, we put them on our website. Posts on our web site make access to meaningful articles simple. All of these are at sa.org/essay

Mailed print subscriptions are wonderful for those who want for the *Essay* to be easy to hand to newcomers and to use for meeting discussions. Usually 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 M., Kent A., Daniel T., Will W.)
 Artists: (Christian M., Jimmy M., Luc D.)

Subscribe to *Essay*!

The electronic worldwide *Essay* (pdf file) is now free. Download your current or back copy from www.sa.org/essay Mailed individual five issue print subscriptions are \$20 USD/year to addresses in the United States and to Canada and outside North America are \$26 USD/year. Group rate (10+ copies sent to one address) for mailed copies is \$17.50 USD/year to USA addresses. Multiple year subscriptions are welcome. Visit www.sa.org to subscribe or for information.

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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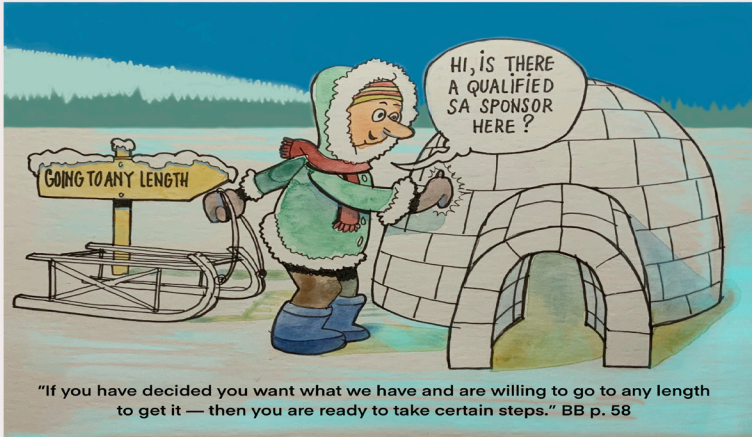
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If you have a wonderful idea for a recovery cartoon, and lack the ability to draw it out, please send it to me and I will do my best to make it into a visual cartoon.
 Contact Luc D: luc4essay@gmail.com

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Dear *Essay*

Dear *Essay*,

A short letter from a maternity ward, just shared with my SA fellowship:

Good morning holy dear brothers!

My name is Zusha and I am a Sexaholic. I am powerless over lust and would do anything to destroy my life today, unless I have a miracle from God. Grateful to be in the time of miracles!

I am now in the hospital with my wife, who they have to induce into labor, because of some signs of potential risks, God forbid. My addict is fully here with me, aware of my fears, and offering lust, magazines, lustful videos on YouTube, fantasy, objectifying people and more.

God is behind it! Calling to me, "I know my child, you cannot do this on your own. You need spiritual help. I hope you'll remember all spirituality, all help, is from me. Please turn straight to me!"

Oh Lord, please help me cling to

you with all the strength You've given me. Help me relax, take it easy and with gratitude, be humbly of service. Thy will, not mine be done.

With lots of love. G.R.S.

Dear *Essay*,

I'm pleased to inform you that me and 2 other ex-pat men are now having regular SA meetings in Sarajevo, Bosnia at 1:00PM on Thursdays. Laurens with EMER suggested I reach out to you to update you on the meetings. What's the best way to communicate these meetings to a broader audience?

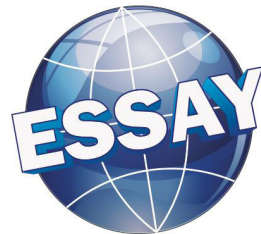
I'm also interested in starting an English speaking PHONE meeting for folks in Central Europe. How do I go about getting that on the Virtual Intergroup info? I've reached out to them but haven't gotten any feedback or additional information.

Grace and Peace, Jimmy R.,
recovering sexaholic in Sarajevo

Dear *Essay*,

We just had our 2019 annual fall marathon in USA Capital Area (District of Columbia, Virginia, Maryland). It was awesome. Rich P. from Atlanta was our keynote speaker. I have attached a write up, which I'm hoping to have printed in the *Essay*. It's been a miraculous year for me!

In Gratitude and Service, Hosea C.



Our Meeting in Print

Available from the 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

Editor for Essay Needed

Five years of editing comes to an end

After the May issue of *Essay* David M. will be retiring as Editor of the *Essay* due to health concerns. The Board of Trustees will be accepting expressions of interest from sober sexaholics interested in this service position. Contact Trustee Eric H. at saico@sa.org for more information. The basic job description is contained in the SA Service Manual. Contact David at essay@sa.org to learn more about the position.

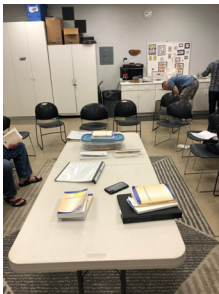


World Wide Walls of SA



**Above: Exeter, England
UK 7:30 Monday night**

**Below: Los Angeles, California
USA 6:15 am meeting room**



**Above: Thousand Oaks,
California USA Thursday night**



Literature

Welcoming Newcomer Women

From the Trustees

Sexaholics Anonymous reaffirms itself as a fellowship of men and women in an [SA Meeting Participation Statement](#) that emphasizes that a "...spirit of inclusivity is fundamental to the identity of an SA group." For valid reasons, women are a minority in SA meetings. Many meetings have no women at all. This makes it very difficult for a female newcomer to feel welcome in SA, even though she needs the SA program every bit as much as her male counterpart.

A first meeting can be such a key moment of willingness and admission of powerlessness. For those of us who are women, we often feel very, very alone during that moment as we look out over a sea of male faces and wonder how here we're going to get well?

Some of the best experience of women newcomers is in the sample flyer shown below. Please feel free to make copies of it, revise it for your local area, or use however you need. Take what you like and leave the rest.

Welcome Women! We're Glad You're Here!

Women newcomers who think they might have a problem with lust are welcome to Sexaholics Anonymous. In addition to coming back to this meeting, you will probably also want to find a way to connect with other women in SA recovery. Women in SA make phone calls to each other for support outside of meetings, ask other women to be their sponsors, and make plans to attend meetings together. Because there are more men in SA recovery than women, we know it can be a challenge to reach out if there aren't any other women at your first meeting. Please know that there are sober women in SA. Following are a few tips for making a connection with them.

Attend SA Phone Meetings. These daily calls occur throughout the day and are often attended by SA members from all over the world. A few women are usually present in addition to men. Check www.sa.org/meeting_phone/ to find the up-to-date phone number, meeting times, and meeting descriptions.

Contact SAICO. The SA International Central Office has a list of SA women to take calls from women newcomers and who may have resources for sponsors. Contact SAICO at saico@sa.org or +1 866-424-8777 and ask for the phone list.

Attend the SA International Conventions. These are held in January and July. Conventions are announced at www.sa.org and are attended by women SA members from around the world. At these conventions, many women find sponsors, meet other women in recovery, and share stories and phone numbers with other women.

Buy SA literature. Literature is available at face to face meetings or at www.sa.org. Literature that specifically contains stories from women includes Member Stories, the *Step Into Action* book, and the five times per year publication *Essay*. The fellowship also has a brochure *SA Is For Women*. Get it at www.sa.org/store.

Keep Coming Back to This Meeting. Even though you may be the only woman at this meeting, you are not the only woman with the disease of sexaholism. Women and men alike have found recovery in SA. Many members have been helped by the suggestion to try six SA meetings before deciding whether the program is right for you. Keep coming back! SA works if you work it, and you are welcome here.

ensayo en español

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

Practical Tools

Check List Sobriety

Using the daily tools works!

I had a sponsee who would call me every day with a check in. I laid out a daily program of action like the one that was given to me. Every few days he would call to report he had lost his sobriety. I would say the same thing every time. Did you slide out of bed to your knees for morning prayers? Did you do your daily readings? Did you call 2 other SA members? And so forth. His answers were always the same, a half-measures “no” on most of the suggestions.

One day he raged at me and said, in the middle of my questions, “You ask me the same f’ing questions every day, can’t we just have a normal conversation?” After a pause I continued: Did you call two people in the program? He interrupted and said “f’ this” and hung up. Then about 30 minutes later he called back and let me know he made a chart with every stupid question on it. He said every day he is going to do everything on the f’ing list. At the bottom he has a check box that says “sober.” He raged and said, “If I check every f’ing thing on this list and I am not sober” ...long pause, translation... “I am going to come over there and kill you!”

Thirty days later, still sober, he was absolutely amazed. And, we could actually have conversations that didn’t surround the daily checklist.

Here is a basic starter check list kit for newcomers. These are only suggestions (just like I suggest that you do not step off the roof of a 46 floor building)

First thing every morning before you get up to use the restroom slide out of bed to your knees and pray the following:

God thank you for letting me wake up sober. God I am powerless over my ____, I surrender my ____ to you. (start with Lust). God I desperately need your power, please lend me your power just for today. “So Thy Will Be Done!” Then pray the Third Step Prayer (memorized)

Preferably as you start your day read the following:

Alcoholics Anonymous 30-31 (Most of – ad infinitum). Alcoholics Anonymous 86-88 (On awakening – to Step Twelve). Alcoholics Anonymous 417-420 (And acceptance – Thank God for A.A.). 2 pages Alcoholics Anonymous (with a Dictionary) xi – 181. Highlight all prayers, 2 pages White Book, 2 pages of other Spiritual Literature

Call two members and your sponsor every day. Get more phone numbers.

Before going to bed at night, kneel at bedside and pray the following...

God thank you for keeping me sober today. God I am powerless over my ____, I surrender my ____ to you. God I desperately need your power, please lend me your power just for tonight. So Thy Will Be Done! Then pray the Third Step Prayer.

When you detect a temptation, “DO NOT” attempt to fight it. Instead go to

[Check List Sobriety continued]

God, admit powerlessness, surrender and ask God for His power. Then call another member in the fellowship.

Read White Book pages 157- 168 “Overcoming Lust & Temptation” Highlight all the prayers in the section and write them on a 3x5 card. Carry it with you. When tempted, recite some of the prayers until the temptation passes.

Go to 90 meetings in 90 days! SA local meetings plus SA phone in meetings.

Find a place to volunteer once a week.

Dennis T, Alaska USA

Being “Triggered”

An invitation to grow up

A member wrote about how he is triggered so often by other people. When we discussed what he really meant by the word triggered, he answered, “I was attacked by lust.” He’s suffering and feeling that our program is not working for him.

In reality, there is no such thing as being ‘attacked by’ lust. Lust is desire - nothing has desire but ourselves; nothing is desire but what’s in our own hearts. Even our own eyes don’t have desire! They just see. It’s our will, our priorities that guide our eyes and necks. We want to see more of what we desire. When you see something attractive, you’re blaming your desire on that thing—something outside yourself—as though it makes you desire it.

I’m a sexaholic and understand full well that we are easily reminded of our desires by opportunities that come up and things that we see! My sponsor helped me admit, for the sake of my own sobriety, that if there’s lusting, it’s

mine and mine alone. Lusting isn’t the same as seeing something, and seeing something isn’t the same as lusting for it.

The I-was-triggered crowd are people who equate seeing attractive people with being physically jumped on. But that’s just blaming. That doesn’t make it a true reality. Nor does it make it part of this Program just because some sexaholics may say it a lot. And it has nothing to do with the powerlessness I read about and see in sober members.

If there’s lusting, it’s mine and mine alone. Lusting isn’t the same as seeing something, and seeing something isn’t the same as lusting for it.

Please consider this short example: In discussing the 4th Step, Bill W. tries to explain that when we find people, circumstances, or life unbearable, our problem is not in them, nor in life. The problem is in ourselves! It’s always our own character defects that are our problem, not the behavior of others, nor our circumstances in life. Taking Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7 help our success in life in that our blaming finally ends.

But then why is it that when it comes to lust, so many of us point a finger at attractions and call them ‘triggers’, and

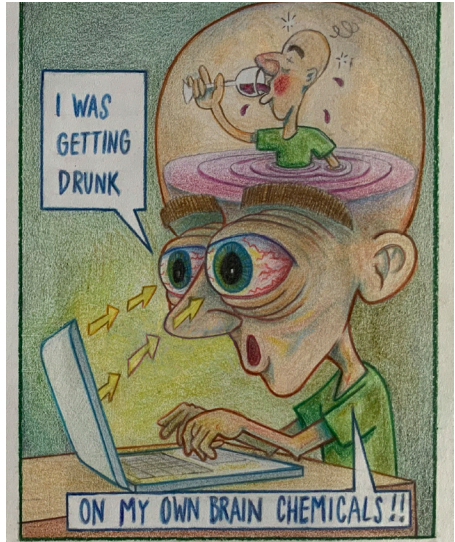
Practical Tools

we get away with believing that we are 'attacked by lust', etc? I believe this is due to the word, 'Powerlessness.' In truth we aren't always ready to be sober; lust is sweet, and surrendering it is often very scary and very painful for us. Powerless, gets twisted to mean "powerless to resist any temptation," instead of meaning, "unable to drink like a (normal) gentleman." That is an entirely different perspective. Our program becomes an excuse instead of an invitation to regaining our power of choice and enjoying the freedom that G-d offers us when we give up the right to our lust drug.

Recovery is certainly not for the faint-of-heart and not for those who are ready to blame. To me, it's the opposite of victim hood. It is an invitation for us to start and continue growing up. My sponsor tolerated me for 15 years to help me learn this. I certainly cannot speak for the

Program. But this is the only way I know that works for me.

Dov G, Baltimore USA



“Bad News” In Sexaholics Anonymous

(In serial form, #4)

Over three sober decades in SA there have been quite a few pieces of “bad news” for us sexaholics. They all arise, like our entire program, from our experience, strength and hope. Each issue of *Essay* under Practical Tools we’ll share some pieces of “bad news”:

- Acceptance is the answer to all my problems today. There is no wiggle room in this statement.
- In Steps 9 and 10 we make amends for ourselves so we don’t have to lust again. An amends is humiliating. We must actually change our behavior – that’s what “amend” means.
- Ego deflation in depth is the norm, not the exception, in our recovery. Almost none of us like ego deflation. However, it is essential for sobriety and recovery.
- A faced fear vanishes. There may still be a problem or embarrassment or challenge – just no fear.
- “If you spot it, you got it.” When something is said about another person (by them or to them), it may or may not be true about them. It is ALWAYS true about the person saying it.

Meditations

The Blame Game

The Steps restore his balance

The key is looking at our own defects and wrongs, especially in our relations with others (SA 109).

When I worked Step Four in SA, I saw that self-centeredness was the basis for my character defects. I hung on to negative feelings, such as anger, resentment, self-pity, and fear. I sulked in long silences when my pride was injured. Attempting to medicate these pains, I propelled myself into addictive binges. As I listed my defects, I realized how they had damaged my relationships with others. In my inflated self-image, I blamed others for my problems. How insane is that?

Sharing the nature of my wrongs in Step Five convinced me of my inability to restore balance in these relationships on my unaided strength alone. I needed my Higher Power to remove those liabilities from me. The opportunity came as I worked Steps Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine. In that process, God took my readiness to surrender the defects and began to remove them. Through working the Steps, I discover I am happier and more realistic when I accept responsibility for my actions. As God has forgiven me, I have learned to forgive others—and myself. Through surrender and self-appraisal, I find honesty and humility. One day at a time, I now move forward along the path of recovery.

May I make an honest and balanced account of my life.

The Real Connection 23

Land Of Milk And Honey

Gratitude for everything

Trial, tribulation, and pain are the soil in which the Steps can germinate, take root, and find fruition in our lives (SA 74).

The first time I read the 9th Step promises in the AA Big Book, I envisioned a land of milk and honey.

If I got to that part of the Program, I thought,

all my problems would be over. I would no longer struggle with relationships, or temptation to lust or financial worry if I just maintained sobriety.

By the grace of God and the help of my fellow SAs, I did reach that part of the Program through working the Steps. But I also learned that life in recovery is not always smooth—I have rough times and good times. Besides milk and honey, I was also given cows and beehives. The

blessings are there, but I need to do the work to keep them, regardless of life's circumstances. One day at a time I do my readings, make my calls, go to my meetings, serve others, and work the Steps—that is what works.

God, please continue to bless me with a spirit of gratitude for what I have been given, and direct my attention to those who need help.

The Real Connection 289

Making The Connection

Finding an unexpected family in SA

We were making the real Connection. We were home (SA 205).

I could not understand the wonder of the “Real Connection” until I first realized how disconnected I had been for much of my life. In hindsight, I see that my relationships were superficial, convenient, or practical. My values shifted and changed with the popular notions of the day. I was caught in a world of relative meaning: Who am I? Where do I fit in? Do I have any worth or purpose?

Acting out sexually seemed to be a way to connect with others and myself, but this was the big lie. Isolating myself in lust, whether alone or not, proved only to misconnect me from others. It just felt wrong. I did not like the secretive encounters and I did not like myself. I used a cloak of bravado and hyperactivity to keep anyone from seeing my pain and disintegration.

Then my Higher Power sent someone into my life who told me his story of sexual addiction and then listened to mine. He led me to SA.

The anxiety I felt at my first meeting gave way to joy and gratitude as I connected with the members who welcomed me, shared their stories of recovery, and helped me start on the path of sobriety. I got a sponsor, surrendered my will to my Higher Power, and began to work the Steps. I then recognized I had found my new family and my real home.

With my Higher Power to guide me today, I will stay in the real Connection.

The Real Connection 246

A Prayer/Rap To My Higher Power (HP)

Secret-self mired, hiding required
Living that way made me sick. And tired.

Resentments, desires. Love's funeral pyre
I learned from a Sage at a tender age, my little brain mis-fired.

“It's not my fault!” an Elder said to me
But it's my problem, and my responsibility.
Yes, it's my problem and my responsibility.

Secret-self mired, hiding required
Then I turned the key and found HP and now I am inspired

Now it's about You, and not about me
It's time to interrupt this family legacy

Ego, you're fired! And HP you're hired
Together, we're gonna get my brain re-wired

-Jim S.

Sober Dating

Dating- A Spiritual Experience

Spiritual principles while dating

Hi, my name is Yitzy and I'm a sexaholic. My sobriety date is October 30th 2018. My home group is ESH of Brooklyn, NY. I have a sponsor and I have taken all 12 Steps and I sponsor others. I would like to thank my Higher Power, who I choose to call God for allowing someone like me to have this amazing experience with dating in recovery and to be able to share it with others.

Part of my story is that I couldn't get sober until I had emotional sobriety. I was sober from the beginning until 14 months later when I had my last relapse. I was not in fit spiritual condition.

At some point, a close program friend suggested that I was emotionally mature enough to start dating. I spoke to my therapist and he agreed. When I came back to him a few weeks later I realized that I was ready because at the time nothing was really happening and that was okay.

At that point I had already been through the 12 Steps and was actively trying to practice the 36 spiritual principles of the Steps, Traditions and Concepts in my daily life. I was attending meetings, practicing prayer and meditation as a daily discipline and actively sponsoring as many people as I could. My work and school life were going well and I was financially stable. My life was clearly being managed by my Higher Power.

Then I met a girl and things got serious pretty quickly. As we got to know each other I subtly hinted to her that there were important things about my personal life that I wanted to share with her at a later point in time. This process included a lot of prayer, meditation and guidance from others in the fellowship about their own personal experiences until I eventually I felt guided enough on how to move forward with this.

A long term sober friend gave me two very helpful suggestions. First, he said, don't call it an addiction, call it a problem or a struggle. People tend to get scared when they hear the word addiction.

And secondly, it's not a disclosure. A disclosure is when you betray a spouse's trust. Instead, you are sharing a meaningful and important part of your life with her.

We went out to a hotel bar which was the perfect environment for sharing. My Higher Power made sure of that! I began to share with her how lust and pornography etc. has been my coping mechanism for many years. I had no shame sharing this with her and I was completely centered in God. Also, I have made it a practice to pray and meditate in silence for about ten minutes in before going on a date, especially before this one.

After I shared all this with her she thanked me for my honesty and vulnerability. She then asked me a few questions which I answered honestly. I told her that I didn't mind, as long as she was okay with hearing the

There are no guarantees that I will stay sober. But if I continue to live the way I do now and grow spiritually, there is a good chance that I'll stay sober for good.

Sober Dating

truth. One of her last questions was, "So this support group you go to for help, is it something like Sexaholics Anonymous?" I kind of freaked out and laughed at the same time. God has a great sense of humor.

Several weeks later, she came back to me with two more questions. If I relapse, what will happen? And, if I spend so much time helping others with the Steps (she knew my recovery schedule) how will I have time for her?

To her first question, I simply said the truth. There are no guarantees that I will stay sober. If I continue to live the way I do now and grow spiritually, there is a good chance that I'll stay sober for good. To her second question, I assured her that I will make her a priority in my life.

The Big Book promises in the Tenth Step (pages 84-85) that if I keep in fit spiritual condition, my obsession with lust will be removed. I will be placed by my Higher Power in a position of neutrality, safe and protected from lust. This girl I was dating was very pretty and I did not lust after her even once, even when we were hugging or kissing. I was completely connected and in the present moment. Sometimes it was so intense that I felt I would need to act out. But as I was in fit spiritual condition, by God's grace, it did not happen.

She was impressed by how I really stuck to the spiritual principles of the program while dating her. My feeling is that only after I've been taken to that position of neutrality was I able to start dating. I had to use the tenth step quite often while dating because apparently girls have emotions that they share with you when you're in a romantic relationship. And if I wasn't spiritually fit I probably would have

fallen apart emotionally.

After five months of dating we were about to get engaged. She broke up with me. She had trauma that didn't allow her to commit to taking our relationship to the next level. It has been about a month or so since this happened. It still hurts at times, like tonight, as I'm sitting here on my bed as I'm writing this.

I've come to realize that my main growth over this past month has been through working the program, being honest about my feelings, sitting with my feelings and not trying to escape them.

I feel that I have grown in my recovery over this past month more than any other month because going through this experience took my recovery to the next level. Life wasn't going the way I wanted and I still worked the program and it worked for me.

Yitzy R. Brooklyn, USA

Mistery
Covery

She made me feel this way...



Respecting Women In Lust Addiction Recovery

Learning to be appropriate

One way that I find myself still engaging in lust is to say something - anything - that might be flattering to a woman. I might say something about a woman's hair, or her earrings, or clothing, or perfume. Other times I will compliment what a woman has done well, when my motives are unclear.

Today, because of Sexaholics Anonymous, I'm better than I used to be, but not as good as I'm gonna get, God willing.

Before SA I would do this flattering behavior every day, with almost any woman I could. I was selling beds and mattresses in a store, and I would make insincere and lust-driven compliments to a colleague, and would try to seduce students half my age. I am ashamed now when I think of how disgusted and threatened they might have felt by my comments. Slowly, I have moved away from this behavior. Instead of

doing this every day, I have gone two or three weeks before I forget and say something inappropriate to a woman.

The last time I did this was a week ago at the end of a very intensive teacher training. Ten of us co-trainees went to a bar (non-alcoholic in my case). At a certain moment, I made a compliment to one young colleague. She is probably about 23, whilst I am 48. She responded by saying before the whole group "If you were 60 years younger that compliment might have been appropriate, but it feels off now." Now that was a blow to my ego! But it was a blow that helped me see clearly how inappropriate, unchaste, and unfaithful my behavior has been. That is why I have made the effort to write it out here. And so I bring it to the light.

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.eu/learning-respect-women-lust-addiction-recovery>

Significant Relationships in Sex and Lust Addiction Recovery

Learning about intimacy

My experience in Sexaholics Anonymous is that for most of us, significant relationships are part of our recovery. I never tell my single SA sponsees not to date because they are

going to date anyway, and I don't want them thinking they have to lie to me. SA is not a program of celibacy for all—thank God.

I remember sitting in my counselor's office when he told me, "Brad we are going to have nonsexual intimacy right here in this office." I remember thinking, "Geez, I'd rather have sex." That's how much I was afraid of real intimacy. I had no idea how it was done. Over time I have begun to learn more about relationships.

It doesn't surprise me that a psychiatrist would recommend someone have a relationship, but as a sexaholic I listen to the wisdom and experience of my fellowship. I choose the SA lifestyle even though many people outside our fellowship don't believe it's even possible, much less a healthy alternative. What I've found is that the SA guidelines are possible, and they are the healthiest alternative for my extreme case. Each of us has to

The More The Merrier Healthier

The fellowship gave us monitoring and support to keep us from being overwhelmed, a safe haven where we could finally face ourselves. (SA 204)

I am very fortunate that I was blessed to find sobriety in SA before getting married. I am also thankful that my sponsor required that I had stable sobriety before giving me permission to date. During the dating period, in addition to my meetings and step work, I checked in with him multiple times during the week, especially checking in after spending time with the young woman I was dating. Lust, just like the bogey man, is even scarier late at night. My safeguards were prayer, check-in calls, journaling, recovery reading, and a curfew. These safeguards helped to reduce lust and helped me address my codependency and love addiction.

In all of my previous relationships, before SA recovery, if there was any chemistry, *the connection that had the magic* (SA 203), I would immediately

try to move the relationship from friendship to sex partner. I didn't realize it at that time, but I was being overwhelmed by my lust. By working the SA program of recovery, the fellowship gave me monitoring and support to keep me from being overwhelmed, and I found *a safe haven where I could finally face myself.* (SA 204)

Thanks to my God and the SA program of recovery that he has given me, I was able to experience sober dating and maintain my sobriety during dating, during the engagement, and during our 15+ years of marriage. I can truly say that my wife is my best friend. Being married to her is even more glorious that I could have imagined.. Thanks to God and his wonderful program of recovery, the fellowship has given me monitoring and support to keep me from being overwhelmed. I've found my safe haven. It's good to be home. Recovery is a great place to be!

Simon W., North Carolina USA

make that decision for ourselves.

I don't masturbate. I go for extended periods of abstinence with my spouse in order to recover from lust. I don't watch shows or engage in many activities that my culture allows. My choices may not be "normal" behaviors in my culture, but for me they are necessary. In fact they are the door to freedom.

It is my responsibility to inform my health care providers of my addictions.

My doctor is fully aware of my chemical dependency and my sexual addiction. He treats me based on that information. My counselor is fully aware of my commitment to the SA way of life. I selected him for that reason.

I once saw a movie in which an addict asked a counselor about "relationships." The counselor said, "First get a plant then after one year get a pet. If after two years the plant and the pet are

still alive then you can have a relationship." That may be extreme advice but it does make a point. As a sexaholic, when it comes to relationships I follow this advice from the AA Big Book: First Things First, Live and Let Live, Easy Does It.

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.org/significant-relationships-sex-and-lust-addiction-recovery>

Sober Dating

It is not for everyone

For years I thought I took sober dating very seriously. My partner and I had been sexual together in 1991 and all hell broke loose. I prevented her contacting me ever again, and fled back to the UK. Then, five years later I reasoned things were different. She and I reconnected at an SA international conference. "This must be God's will" I reasoned. My sponsor wasn't so sure. "Make sure you are never alone together" he said. So we demurely held hands in public at the conference. By the end of the conference I had forgotten our turbulent history of five years earlier and had gone so far as to propose marriage! By that stage my sponsor wasn't even in the picture.

We entered a year or so of "sober transatlantic dating." Then, with great pomp and ceremony, surrounded by both our families we got married. On our wedding night I was still sober. We honeymooned on the Mediterranean. Sex was amazing. Then one day, walking on the beach together, I realized, out of the blue, that I was desperately depressed again. How come? Again I reasoned, "I am with the woman of my dreams enjoying the life of my dreams. What has gone wrong?"

The answer of course was EGO, "Edging God Out" and addiction to lust—cunning, baffling, and powerful. By this time we had known each other for seven years, five of them either physically separated or "technically sober." My weird interpretation of the SA sobriety meant that while separated we could engage in telephone sex together. Then, after two years of marriage, she left. I was devastated. I returned to my sponsor Jess L

I attended meetings almost daily,

whining in self-pity. In spite of extraordinary support by my sponsor, I made a suicide attempt which left me paralyzed down one side. Physical recovery was slow. Emotionally and spiritually it was even slower. After barely 6 months apart I was back with her in bed again. "Why not?" I reasoned "Aren't we husband and wife after all?"

We lasted barely another two years. "Sober dating" got the better of us. Unsober marriage finished us off. Lust in and out of marriage, whether sober by the SA definition or not, had served to mask my deepest fears and the depths of my sex and codependency addictions. I can see now that without first treating those, our marriage really did not stand a chance, whether sober or not.

These days, as I prepare at long last to make my Step 9 amends to her, I can see that my defects were running the show. Even though I had been also blessed with many years of sobriety in other programs.

Today, my capacity to delude myself around my SA sobriety definition appalls me. I still considered myself an honest, honorable man, blaming her for the breakdown of our marriage. I had to own my part in it.

Sober Dating? For all you would-be sober daters out there my conclusion will appear pretty bleak. There are sober SA's who have engaged in sober dating. I know a few of them. For those who, like me, find that it is not for them, God has a much greater gift in store: progressive victory over lust and not some kind of add-on!

I learned to stick as close as possible to my sponsor, live in Step 3 and realize that SA conventions are part of everyday life. They offer no guarantee of sobriety. God does - when I let Him!

Indrei, Romania

My Experience With Sober Dating

Ten years of patience pays off

Recently married for the fourth time, the marriage already unstable due to my disease, I arrived at SA in early 2002. I've been sober since July 18, 2008. However, sober isn't well, and my anger persisted. Finally my wife left me in 2013. At that time, I was a GDA delegate and attending International Conventions. I had an unmarried sponsee who needed dating guidance. What did I know about sober dating? Nothing. I had never done it in my life. So I started attending sober dating meetings at International Conventions. Here are a few highlights of what I have learned:

First, we get sober, "including not getting into relationships" (SA 204). Jess L, on a speaker tape, stated that in his opinion it takes ten years for a sexaholic to get married. My unmarried sponsee was young, and eager to date and marry. How could I tell him this? So, I told him he could start dating when he had one year of sobriety.

The second memorable piece of advice I received was about relationship stages. First, people are acquaintances. During this stage they interact with each other, getting to know one another. They invite each other to events that they enjoy. During this stage, touching is not part of the relationship. What a concept! I usually had sex with new relationships before I even knew their last name. I told my sponsee that while dating there was to be no hand holding or kissing. I also suggested that he should date 20 different people. After his third date

with an individual, he could inform her of his SA membership.

After acquaintance, comes friendship. Friends plan things together that they know from the previous stage that they both enjoy. Friends also hug and hold hands. Friends do not kiss. Kissing is for the third stage of a relationship, which is love. I told my sponsee that he wasn't supposed to kiss somebody unless he could honestly say "I love you." Again, what a concept for me who always started relationships with sex, then tried to figure out if I liked her or not. Finally, comes the final stage of a relationship which is commitment/marriage.

Now, we have been dating for over a year and our relationship has moved into the "Love" stage.

I am happy to report that this sponsee met a woman in January, 2018, after having dated a number of women. There's nothing magic about dating 20, but we need to learn how to get over the obsession of "Is this the one?" Only when we have this skill can we successfully move on to more intimate levels of relationship. This sponsee married in the spring of 2019 and will soon be celebrating his one year anniversary.

And what about me? My sponsor encouraged me to start dating around 2017. I tried it and I couldn't do it without lust. I would go on a date, and I would then have sexual dreams. So I'd wait a while and try it again. Same result. Finally, in 2018, at Jess L's magic ten years, I found that I could attend my folk dancing events

Sober Dating

without lust, as long as there was a lot of prayer included. I went with the group after dancing to a pub to get to know other members. I consider this my dating period, since I only dated four other women prior to this.

A little over a year ago, a newcomer arrived. I danced with her a couple of times. She continued to come and we found ourselves talking during the breaks. After about three months of seeing each other at dances several times a month, we agreed to take a dance class together. Now, we have been dating for over a year and our relationship has moved into the "Love" stage. We tell each other "I love you" and we kiss. She knows about SA and has recently started attending S-Anon.

In conclusion, my sponsee and I have successful personal experience with sober dating. I am still sober and my sponsee got married without losing his sobriety date. Sober dating is possible, as impossible as it seems. Try it! You just might like it.

Brian W., Oregon USA



The AA Experience From 12x12

A.A. has many single alcoholics who wish to marry and are in a position to do so. Some marry fellow A.A.'s. How do they come out? On the whole these marriages are very good ones. Their common suffering as drinkers, their common interest in A.A. and spiritual things, often enhance such unions. It is only where "boy meets girl on A.A. campus," and love follows at first sight, that difficulties may develop. The prospective partners need to be solid A.A.'s and long enough acquainted to know that their compatibility at spiritual, mental, and emotional levels is a fact and not wishful thinking. They need to be as sure as possible that no deep lying emotional handicap in either will be likely to rise up under later pressures to cripple them. The considerations are equally true and important for the A.A.'s who marry "outside" A.A. With clear understanding and right, grown-up attitudes, very happy results do follow.

12x12 119

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A Legacy of Recovery

From fantasy to marriage

My first recollections of my addiction are from the summer my family moved to a new subdivision. I would turn nine in August. The only other boy in the neighborhood was four years older, and he was lonely, since his parents both worked. It was in the privacy of his house one day that he introduced me to pornography. My heart raced and I tingled with excitement. When he suggested that we remove our clothes and smoke cigarettes, the pictures took on a whole new dimension. I was hooked from the first viewing and craved opportunities to get lost in this exciting new experience.

Over the years I required ever more explicit pornography to maintain or increase the level of excitement. I connected with friends who had porno stashes of their own. We would go to R- and X-rated movies that offered the next plateau of excitement. The pent-up demand for physical contact with a woman was almost overwhelming. My first objective upon entering a relationship was to progress physically as quickly as possible. When I began having intercourse at age twenty-one, masturbation was still my constant companion. I used it as a panacea, a medicine to cure all my ills - when I was restless and wanted to sleep, when I was tired and wanted energy, when I was happy and deserved a treat when I was sad and needed a lift.

As I got older, I decided that what I wanted in a relationship was the

ultimate private stash. She had to have the right type of body and enjoy sex as much as I did. I married her when I was twenty-seven years old. At first I masturbated only when she was having her period - because I needed the release, I told myself. As the frequency of sex in our marriage decreased, I began to fill in the dry periods with masturbation.

My behavior started to change two years into our marriage, when I began my search for God. I became aware of how much time I was wasting with my sexual behavior. I tried to change: I had cable removed, I started to go to church again, and I tried to cut back on the masturbation, which I still kept secret from my wife. I had limited success. I could go dry for periods of time, but I would always fall back on my old behavior and feel completely defeated by it.

Four years into my marriage the pieces began to fall into place when by accident I turned on a TV talk show. I realize now that this coincidence was one of the many miracles that my God has worked in my life. The program dealt with sex addiction and featured a man sitting behind a screen describing his addictive behavior. He was telling my story! I felt sick; my worst fears were confirmed. I really was a low-life. I stopped masturbating immediately. What I didn't know was that I could not quit on my own, without support. The next year was a blur that culminated in separation from my wife and near loss of my job. During the stress of these events, I had returned to my drug.

What I didn't know was that I could not quit on my own, without support. The next year was a blur that culminated in separation from my wife and near loss of my job.

Sober Dating

Through another miracle of God, I learned about SA the following year, when I was thirty-two years old. That was 1985. I stopped masturbating, one day at a time, a week before my first meeting. I came to the meeting scared, alone, and embarrassed. I knew what it was that I needed and wanted to stop doing. I was completely in the dark about how to go about it. I shared my story and heard others share theirs. The relief was indescribable. But the temptation to masturbate did not disappear. I needed to work the Steps, to pray, and to use the telephone when the urge overcame me. As I withdrew from my addictive behaviors, I learned that every aspect of my life was influenced by my addiction.

After four and a half years of sobriety,

Our marriage has been unbelievably blessed by God. I was being given a chance by God to pass on a new legacy of sobriety and recovery to my son, one that he could pass on to his children.

I took the next step in my relationship recovery by asking a woman out on a date for dinner. During that first evening, as my mind contemplated spending a lifetime with this person, I could hear my sponsor's voice, also in my head, reminding me that this was about dinner! A lifetime relationship is built on the solid foundation of emotional intimacy, and that takes a lot of time and patience.

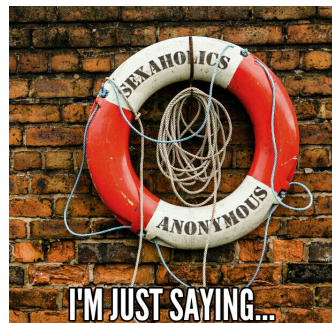
My dating experience ebbed and flowed over the next six years. Only after I had come to peace with living life as a single man, and with the idea of living the remainder of my life that way, did I meet the woman who was to become my wife. My newfound serenity gave me the freedom to risk

letting her know who I really am. I shared what I think and what I feel. My honesty was like a clear shining light to her.

While my desire to refrain from any physical contact confused her at first, she felt encouraged enough to continue dating me. Once she learned about my recovery, many of her questions were answered. New ones replaced them, such as discussing the appropriate amount of physical contact for an engaged couple. With the support of my sponsor and others in the program who had preceded me in dating and marriage in sobriety, our courtship and engagement were a wonderful time of preparation for, and anticipation of, our new life together. As my wife, she continues to support my recovery. Words cannot express the joy that she has brought into my life.

Our marriage has been unbelievably blessed by God. When I shared the good news of our pregnancy with my sister, and the discovery that we were going to have a son, her response was that the cycle was coming full circle. I was being given a chance by God to pass on a new legacy of sobriety and recovery to my son, one that he could pass on to his children.

Member Stories 2007 21



SA Stories

Isolation In Subtle Forms

Discovering his wise elder

Isolation has always been a danger for me as a sexaholic. Before coming to SA, I lived my life in a bubble, withdrawn from others, cut off from any type of Higher Power, out of touch with reality, lost in my world of illusions. I was uncomfortable dealing with reality, and preferred the comfort of isolation, in which I could bask in lust and let my ego reign in all its glory.

SA and the beginning of recovery allowed me to emerge from chronic isolation and establish true relationships with others and to enter into an intimate relationship with my Higher Power

Living my life one day at a time in the SA way, I seek genuine contact with others, nurture an intimate relationship with my Higher Power, and learn anew to live in reality

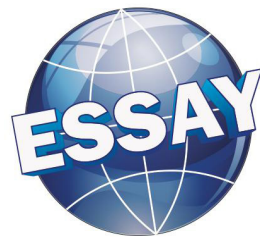
and myself. Re-connecting with reality was essential to my recovery. However, my longing to pull away never really left me, and I am sometimes tempted by more subtle forms of isolation. Just as I must learn to live permanently with my condition as a sexaholic, I must deal with a sort of instinctual temptation to slip into isolation. Sometimes, the temptations to isolation are disguised; sometimes they are as insidious as the lust temptations.

The temptation may be to physical isolation, wanting to pull away from those who surround me. But, I can also withdraw in much more subtle ways. I may, for example, simply turn inwards even while I am in a group

or a conversation. I can be mentally or emotionally absent while others are speaking, all the while mulling over how I will respond. I can isolate myself in my marriage by not sharing with my wife my emotions or what is truly happening in my life. I can isolate myself from my SA group by not revealing everything and keeping things to myself. I may isolate myself in my certitudes and close myself from others' opinions. My ego's power leads me into isolation because my ego is at its most forceful when I am alone and lost in the eddies of my mind. When I am truly listening to or in deep contact with another, my ego must back off. It's my ego which brings me to escape mentally into something which is not necessarily lust, yet brings me the pseudo-comfort of isolation.

Living my life one day at a time in the SA way, I seek genuine contact with others, nurture an intimate relationship with my Higher Power, and learn anew to live in reality and appreciate it, just as it is in my own life. I don't know if I'll ever be delivered from the lure of isolation. I do know that by living the SA way of life one day at a time in the best way I can, my life will be much richer and more meaningful to others.

Louis S., Quebec, Canada



Our Meeting in Print

No Mistakes

Hope arrives on time

Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake (AA 417).

I am reminded of this again today. I don't go to church. I avoid religious people and situations like the plague. I believe in a Higher Power and I am still learning who He is. However, I still really struggle with my old concepts and beliefs.

My company is making some big changes. They let my sales rep go Tuesday. He was told they are dissolving my territory. So this morning I was in fear, doubt, and uncertainty. I went to get my wife some gas.

While I was standing at the pump thinking and worrying a little old lady walks up. She looked at me in a kind and gentle manner and said "Life can be uncertain and sometimes feel hopeless. I wanted to give you some hope. Inside this pamphlet are some verses that can give you hope." Then she shuffled away got in her van with her husband and drove off.

I felt peace almost instantly. I noticed of the 10 people milling around getting gas I was the only person she talked to or gave the pamphlet too. Normally I would be pissed. What do I look like? Do I look like I need your religion?

Instead this morning I am glad she reminded me of the fact that God is everything or he is nothing. Nothing happens in His world by mistake. It was no mistake this lady picked me out to hand me a pamphlet filled with hope.

Preston D, Tennessee USA

Obsession Song

For the sexaholic there is nothing good about obsession. One way to surrender obsessing is singing the Obsession Song. The lyrics are below and the tune is Frère Jacques. Click on the Desire Chip to listen.

I'm obsessing, I'm obsessing
 Yes, I am. Yes, I am.
 Take away the garbage,
 take away the garbage
 Please God, Please God

David M.



Whew, I Made It!

God is with me always

This is my second trip to an out-of-town city for a two day work trip. The first trip I met with the new group I am working with. We spent two long days in tough preparation for our business that concludes today. There was a lot of hard work, and laughing, and getting to know each other.

Yesterday I brought morning snacks (fruit, yogurt, etc) and Almond biscotti. The week before I brought lemon biscotti. We had talked the previous week about how I like to make lemon biscotti at home. After tasting the almond biscotti, I made the comment that I do not care for the almond and will get lemon next time.

[continued from page 22]

One of the women in the group is an attractive divorcee near my age. She made the comment, "You will just have to go to your hotel room and make some."

Part of my job in negotiations is assessing comments made and the intent. I smiled and let it go. Then the guy in the group asked, do you have a kitchenette in your hotel room? I said no. She then said "well you can come over to my place later and make it there." Again I smiled with no comment and we went on with our business.

I thank God for the protection at that moment. While I felt the draw, I did not run that scenario or take that

God is with me always and when I am walking blindly I am always one prayer away from Him

drink. Before recovery, it has and would have been much different.

Later that evening I checked into my hotel room, an SA woman who was severely suffering called for ESH who has called in the past. Just being in a hotel room alone can be a temptation, but God's Power was full strength. I felt no lust whatsoever. I just talked with my sister in the program, shared, and then I prayed with her.

All this to say, I want to share ESH that I have learned in the past with these scenarios.

When God shows up mightily in these situations, I have learned a very valuable lesson and that is, to not

say and think when I get back home, "whew I made it."

The last time that happened and I thought "whew I made it," I went back out, as I walked into a local coffee shop. It was a close call, very close.

So when I travel back home today I realize that, when I touch down, I will still need God at that moment, if not more. I know God is with me always and when I am walking blindly I am always one prayer away from Him. So today I thank God for the intuition to stay close to Him, especially in areas where I may let my guard down.

Dennis T, Alaska

Group Discussion Topics

Would you be willing to try singing the Obsession Song as a tool to surrender the right to obsess?

What tools work to help you end obsessing about the past or future?

In the Isolation story the writer seeks genuine connections. Have you found those in SA?

The author of "My Experience With Sober Dating" describes success of a slower process to begin dating. Have you seen this work in SA?

In the same story, have you experienced "acquaintance, friendship, and love" as stages in a marriage or other relationship?

"Figure It Out" is not one of our slogans. What's your experience with trying to understand sexaholism?

Retirement Plan

God is with me always

A couple of months ago, I retired. Finally I came down to the last couple of days and it was time to say goodbyes, which would include some affectionate goodbyes. That was good and bad, because $\frac{3}{4}$ of my co-workers were women. I was looking forward to some hugs and not entirely in a healthy way.

I am a sexaholic. Part of my disease is that I become a predator. I can creep into the life of a needy woman and “help.” I want her to trust me, to appreciate me, to want me. It looks like I’m being there for her, but it’s all about

God had been working miracles for years, and I hadn’t known about it until the day I retired.

me. It seemed that every day I would be grooming or wanting to groom some woman or at least wanting to groom somebody. Yet they trusted me. Silently I said, “You fools! How can you not see through my act! My heart is craving you, lusting after you, and you seriously don’t even know?”

During the last couple of days, the hugs began. Then, unexpectedly, it seemed that God spoke to my heart – a spiritual experience.

God said something like: “you have this low opinion of yourself, and a few dozen people seem to have a high opinion of you. All these people aren’t dummies – they have intuitions, they are probably pretty good at spotting a con. Instead of believing that you are fooling every single one of them, can you possibly believe that they are accurately seeing goodness and trustworthiness in you?”

I have a friend and former sponsor who believes in “the rule of 180⁰.” This rule says that the truth is the opposite of whatever he is thinking. Remembering the rule of 180⁰, and recognizing God’s voice, I was suddenly able to trust these other people.

How could this be given my cravings and manipulations? God gave me the answer to that one also. God was doing for me what I could not do for myself. Not only that, God had been doing so for a number of years, and I had not even realized it.

I knew my own predator’s heart; but perhaps there was a huge secret that I had been missing. Miraculously, it seemed that God was greater than my heart. Me, a trustworthy man? An honorable man? I had trouble believing it—and the evidence is that my co-workers believed it!

My heart melted. “God, you are great. God, I truly never expected this. And God, I can believe what I’m hearing, that I’ve been being honorable – entirely by your surprising grace because I know where all my instincts were heading.”

At the end of the day, I gathered my last box of belongings, went out the door, and pushed the elevator button. A young woman, who had in truth been a target at times, came bursting out of the office door, running to catch me and to hug me goodbye. I chose to believe the story that she was telling, that all of them had been telling: they trusted me and they liked me. God had been working miracles for years, and I hadn’t known about it until the day I retired.

Anonymous, Oregon, USA

How Sexaholics Anonymous Helped Me To ‘Remarry’ My Wife

Learning to value her

One gift of SA has been the recovery in my marriage. I have no right to a happy and fulfilling marriage. I am certainly not worthy of this, but I have an amazing Higher Power who loves me no matter what—and for some reason, He seems to get a kick out of loving me through others, including my wife. Imagine that!

We are married for over 21 years. My stuff hit the fan 12 years ago. I have been clean and sober since January 2014, so you can see it hasn't been a perfect recovery. However, SA has changed our marriage in many ways:

I have worked the Twelve Steps of SA and I've had great sponsors who worked my tail off. I pray a lot. If I put my Higher Power first, everything else works out better.

The Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book,” encourages us to seek support from others. My wife and I have seen multiple marriage therapists. Preparing for my disclosure, in the spirit of Step Nine, was terrifying. I was afraid to share specifics of my harms to my wife. My Higher Power said to me, “Do not do this as Step One, but as a Step Nine.” I did not vomit the problem all over my wife. Instead I gave a candid description of the problem as well as a solution. Once I described the “low points” in enough detail not to whitewash, I answered any and every question she asked. If she wants to know a detail, I tell her the truth. I let her be the judge of what she is willing to hear.

Here are a few things I do:

- I explicitly pursue my wife. She had mounds of evidence that I did not value her or find her attractive. My living amends is to show her that I love her, value her, and want her. I never really knew what she longed for, and it has been my loss.
- I buy her flowers two to four times per month
- I ask her for what I want. One of my biggest surprises was the pain she felt at not knowing what she could do to please me. How painful to learn that hiding myself from her didn't only isolate me, it also hurt her!
- I pause to think about her during the day. It's not natural for me as an addict to remember others during the day, so I have to practice this.
- I write a letter or a card to her about once a month.
- I meditate so that when I am listening to a gripe about myself, I can be compassionate by maintaining a bit of a loving distance.
- I date her. I ask her out. I make plans and take time for intimacy, and I ask her for it, but graciously accept if she doesn't want that now.

I'm sure there's more. Today, I really love my wife and I want to be married to her. If the marriage fails, I know that God will love me anyway and He will show me joy in other ways. I'm grateful for the program of Sexaholics Anonymous for showing me how to remarry my wife.

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.eu/how-sexaholics-anonymous-helped-me-re-marry-my-wife>

Steps & Traditions

On Being Willing

Making amends has long-term results

My Step Eight amends list had one individual who was going to be challenging. I was hesitant because I feared a confrontation. I knew that I was wrong and I would have to admit it to him. This had been a burden on my soul and there was no moving forward into the grace of my Higher Power's forgiveness if I held grudges toward others. My sponsor reminded me that the things that we want to do the least are sometimes the things which we need to do the most.

I put my amends in an email and sent it. He responded almost immediately and said to forget what had occurred. He was happy that we could be reunited. As it turned out, we really weren't that mad at each other. We rejoiced in what we had meant to each other, despite our confrontation, and were each grateful for the other's friendship and renewed trust. Not much more beyond that was said and we went back to our separate lives.

Before long, I encountered another individual that had known us both. This person tried to engage me in a conversation that was belittling of the character of my friend. The things he was describing were factual. However, I refused to join in and speak ill of the person I had forgiven. I was not going to undermine, by my actions, the words I had spoken with my heart in my amends letter.

I read once that our concept of forgiveness is one single act of acknowledgment. However, forgiveness begins with our words but then must be followed by our actions. One example was that we can't "tell the tale." This means that if I claim to have forgiven someone I do not later recount the wrongs done to me by that person. I remembered this as I heard the other speak

of the transgressions of my friend.

In more recent days a situation came up in which I needed help with something particular. This wasn't a need for which I could call just anyone. It was something specific, urgent and of a nature wherein my friend was the only one who could help. I wasn't sure if he still held a grudge. I wasn't sure if this would be seen as awkward or inappropriate. I made the call anyway. I was desperate. My friend immediately dropped what he was doing and came directly to my side and, together, we tackled the problem. No questions were asked. He was more than glad to help. This was true selfless friendship. I felt the joy of a relationship restored with a friend I had written off as lost. Had I continued to speak to others with words of accusation and deceit, I would never have experienced how powerful total forgiveness really can be.

I am grateful to my sponsor, my SA fellowship and my Higher Power for the wisdom and structure to lead me to healing and restoration which I would never regain by my own efforts.

Hal C., Georgia USA



Steps & Traditions

“Figure It Out”

Not one of our slogans!

I don't know if my experience is like anyone else's or not. But not only did I never “figure it out,” trying to figure it out became a roadblock to surrendering (give up, let go, and let God). This kept me from having the necessary change in attitude and taking the action Steps necessary to connect rightly with God and find sobriety and freedom from lust.

For me, “figuring it out” was my attempt to gain control over lust, over myself, and over the world around me. But I couldn't control any of those things; I was powerless. I needed power I didn't have. It had to come from somewhere else, from Someone else.

Trying to figure it out kept me distracted and kept me living deep in my illusions and delusions, instead of

having to face the simple truth that I was thoroughly defeated. Trying to figure it out kept me from abandoning myself to God's grace and power. It kept me from surrendering to God and working the Steps as my sponsors suggested I work them. It kept me wrapped up trying to do things my way. Doing things my way never gained me freedom.

Trying to figure it out kept me distracted and kept me living deep in my illusions and delusions

Today I have sobriety, recovery, healing and freedom. I didn't need to “figure it out” to get here. But I did have to lose the fight, surrender to God, and work the Steps under someone else's direction in order to connect with the Power that would free me.

Posted by Sexaholics
Anonymous, Taichung

Laughter and Sunlight

Surrender is always available

One Sunday morning driving along a beautiful lake I recognized that I was feeling serenity and gratitude. That is a renewed experience for me.

Then, out of the corner of my eye, an object of my idolatry appeared. In surrender, I looked up at the beautiful green tree leaves, thanking God that I

don't lust after trees.

Just then, from the other corner of my vision, hopped a black bird across the street. A bouncing crow was God's way out of temptation.

I giggled, then laughed, and the sunlight shined in. I am grateful that I don't lust after light, trees, or birds and God provides a way out for me as I surrender.

Chris B, Washington, USA

World Wide News

SA London Recovery Day

The Recovery Day took place on the 4th of February in the regular meeting location of the Tottenham, London group. 23 fellows attended the day representing 9 groups, from London, Leeds, Bournemouth, and one fellow from the United States. The theme of the day was Step One. Raymond H from Leeds gave a live talk followed by a Q & A session. This was followed by an SA meeting in a regular format. Following a lunch break and fellowship, Mike F joined us over Skype from Rochester, New York and gave a talk followed by Q & A. Finally there was a panel of three fellows and everyone was able to ask them whatever they liked regarding the program of SA. It was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

In Fellowship, Zalmi S



Asia Unity Conference

Starts 9:30 India time April 26, 2020. Looking for people to help with:

Promotions and Speaker organizer

Contact: newcastlesagroup@gmail.com

THE SA & S-ANON ISRAEL REGION PRESENT

2020 WINTER CONFERENCE

Connecting to Life

S-ANON KEYNOTE SPEAKER **SA KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Cécile FROM THE NETHERLANDS **LA** SOBER 19 YEARS

Join us for a packed day full of talks, panels and much more on:

Tuesday, March 24th, 2020

Crown Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

3 WAYS TO SIGN UP! **09:00 - 22:00**

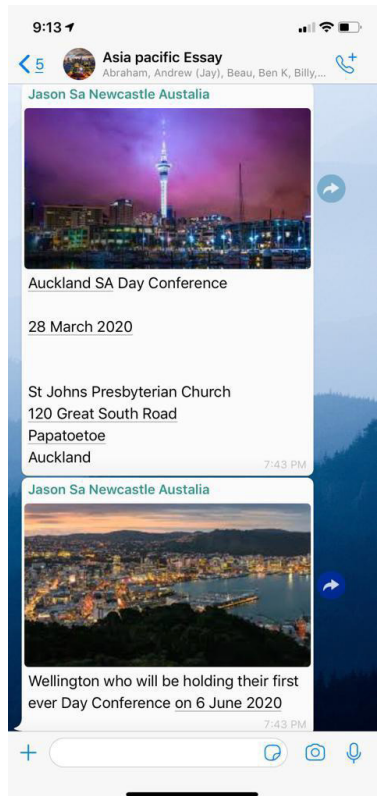
VISIT THE SITE: bit.ly/sawinterconf

CALL THE SA HOTLINE: 077-450-0242

BY MAR. 12 BY MAR. 24

| | | |
|-----------|-----|-----|
| WITH FOOD | 330 | 430 |
| WITHOUT | 260 | 360 |

IN PERSON: Talk to a representative at your meeting



Promote SA & Tradition 11

Letting people know that we're here!

Consistent with Tradition 11, AA receives promotion and referrals from medical professionals, therapists and psychologists, clergy, corporations, and the media. Thus members need not break their anonymity to promote AA. I believe that we in SA need to be seen. Otherwise, we let professionals, clergy, and other S programs treat most of those seeking help. We will also leave many more facing the spiritual death described in the Spiritual Nature of Addiction section in our White Book. This attitude is against Tradition 5 to carry our message to sexaholics.

SA receives scant promotion and referrals. This is partially because outsiders don't believe we can help lust/sex addicts "as others seldom can." SA receives scant promotion from clergy, too, who often see sexual temptation as "every man's battle" to be dealt with in-house. And what support is there for bi-polar women who may maniacally pursue sex? Sex offenders released from prison are often court ordered to see sex therapists who typically counsel regular masturbation to "good" porn. Sex addicts caught harassing others or watching porn at work usually are simply fired instead of being sent to treatment and a 12-Step program like an alcoholic would be.

SA is a tough sell and tough road which yields tepid growth. What prompted me to write this article was a failed Twelfth Step, which resulted in the newcomer starting a meeting at his church instead of joining SA. From my experience, I believe that he and his church buddies will attempt to control and enjoy their lust, believing the Lord

loves them. Gays, lesbians, and cross dressers, etc. who used to join SA now find support in the LBGT community and society at large, although many are addicts with unmanageable lives. For the few who do investigate SA, we can't apply the hard nosed AA Doctor's Opinion "that the alcoholic is doomed," because sex addicts rarely die. We can't simply tell them they'll spiritually die. Even overeaters face a heart attack or stroke and gamblers plunge into ruinous debt.

SA has existed for about 40 plus

SA is a tough sell and tough road which yields tepid growth.

years and currently has around 15,000 members. Compare this to the number of sex addicts. Many men and women view porn regularly. And porn is just one element of sex addiction that can include affairs, prostitution, lifestyle acting-out, etc.

I think our society is in denial about the size and ravages of sex addiction. SA is in denial that outsiders dismiss us, and therefore we must announce our presence.

Some possible ideas to enhance attraction include reformatting international and local websites to increase the number of hits; place high quality content on SA websites, and encourage members to access the pieces regularly -- in order to increase SA search ranking; and mail and email professionals and clergy. Probably half of SA intergroups have done mailings or email pushes locally.

Eagle Wash, USA

Skype Meetings

There are currently 10 weekly English-language SA Skype meetings. You can join them using the following links - even if you just want to see what time they take place (meeting times - and even days - vary based on time zones). Moderators' accounts are provided for larger groups, as they sometimes remove less active group members to avoid difficulties with making calls:

Mondays: Bangkok <https://join.skype.com/KhkakX2Thfny>
and <https://join.skype.com/wfWLQ4KDorQ9>

Tuesdays - men only: Contact me at Skype: ShlomoChaimZ in New York City

Wednesdays: <https://join.skype.com/fnZvG5iiS9pf>

Wednesdays (Thursdays): <https://join.skype.com/tpbl8tFJdRcT>

Thursdays (Fridays): Essay NSW <https://join.skype.com/Acbm3HWWgFRx>

Friday and Sunday: Essay NSW <https://join.skype.com/OQSJpNFelk0x>

Saturdays: Essay India 12 <https://join.skype.com/nRampP7BpOaS>
and <https://join.skype.com/x6M38WgZ4tGj>

Sundays: <https://join.skype.com/IULldw5u7qBF>

There is also a Zoom meeting on Wednesdays at 12:00 Noon GMT. To join, use this link at that time: <https://zoom.us/j/4281678327>

Phone/VoIP Meetings

SA phone meetings and voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) meetings are held daily throughout the day and night. Download the official flyer for information on times and how to connect. Here is the link: https://www.sa.org/meetings_phone/

SA-NET

SA-NET is a closed email meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous. All members are screened prior to being given access. It is not intended as a replacement for face-to-face meetings, but can be a good daily support. To join, send an email to sanetjoin@gmail.com. Provide your first name, last initial and email address. State whether you are a member of SA and that you wish to join SA-NET. The group secretary will follow up on your request.

Traveling to Asia?

Call out to any SA visitors to Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Are you willing to run workshops or lead shares at local meetings?


Please contact Jason at newcastlesagroup@gmail.com

SCOTTISH CONVENTION 2020

"Taking the actions of love"

KINNOULL 27 - 29 March 2020

SA Convention with S-ANON participation
Cathal (sober since January 1997) is leading an SA workshop



Join us for a weekend of fellowship and sharing at the beautiful Kinnoull retreat in Perth, Scotland.

36 residential places, mostly in en suite single rooms. Comfortable meeting rooms. Lovely gardens and near-by walks. Weekend full board £160, limited availability of twins and non en suite rooms at £150.

Total of fifty delegates can attend and these can be catered for too if desired: with full meal package on site £80; non-residential without meals £30 for the weekend, £20 a day.

Local accommodation available for couples and other non-residents.

Register contact:
ANDREW +44 7857132052
scottishsaconvention@gmail.com
Check out website:
www.kinnoullretreat.co.uk

World Wide News

Nashville 2020 Conference

Trustees met earlier in the week. They received committee reports, discussed the success of the November SA Internet Marathon (SIM) and how to distribute the SIM recordings, and considered the new California law change regarding private information.

Some of the many Conference topics included A Design for Living, Meditation and Prayer, Living in the Now, For The Spouse, Rituals, Sex, Changed Relationships, Abstinence, and on Sunday an Old Timers Panel.

The photos to the left show SAICO banners, part of the SAICO staff including retiring Administrator Kay on the right and new Administrator Laura to her left. The last photo is the ever ready streaming staff with microphone and computers.



**Save the Date
Sydney SA conference
19-21 June, 2020
Last year was amazing
So save the Date!**

Events Calendar

International Conventions

July 24 - 26, 2020 Toronto, Ontario, Canada SA/S-Anon International Convention: True North 2020 - Happy, Joyous & Free.

Info: <https://www.truenorth2020.ca/registration>

November 19 - 21, 2020, Online SA Internet 24 hour Marathon, Registration information will be available in the spring.

January 22 - 24, 2021 Atlanta, Georgia, USA SA/S-Anon/S-ATeen International Convention: Keys to Freedom. Info: <https://keystofreedom.org>

Regional and Local Events

March 7, 2020 Norcross, Georgia, USA SA/S-Anon Atlanta area Marathon: The Journey Continues. Info: <http://www.atlantathejourneycontinues.org/>

March 20 - 22, 2020, Galway, Ireland SA Irish Convention: A Program of Action. Info: robessay@gmail.com

March 24, 2020, Jerusalem, Israel SA/S-Anon Winter Conference: Connecting to Life. bit.ly/sawinterconf

March 27 - 29, 2020, Perth, Scotland, United Kingdom SA with S-Anon participation Scottish Convention: Taking the Actions of Love. Info: www.sauk.org/activities/events/

March 27 - 29, 2020, Sumas, Washington, USA SA/S-Anon Northwest Regional Retreat: Joy of Living. Info: www.sa.org/store - Northwest Regional Retreat

April 17 - 19, 2020, Gdańsk, Poland SA Europe and Middle East Region & European S-Anon Convention: Action and the Joy of Living. Info: emer2020poland@gmail.com

April 26, 2020, Online Asia Pacific Area Online Unity Event. Info: newcastlesagroup@gmail.com

May 1 - 3, 2020, Covington, Georgia, USA SASERA Spiritual Intensive (Retreat): Improving our Conscious Contact. Info: www.cedarspringscrg.org

May 1 - 3, 2020, Hamburg, Germany SA Steps-Workshop. Info: Bernd: +49 1704 490 537 or Iain: +49 176 4342 8646 through WhatsApp or Johannes: +49 1757 249 440

May 2, 2020, Rochester, New York, USA SA Rochester Marathon. Info: ozzmann@frontiernet.net

May 15 - 17, 2020, Big Bear, CA, USA Men's Retreat for SA Men: Changing the Core. Info: <https://www.sabayarea.org/event/find-god-xxvi-mens-retreat-for-sa-men/>

SA Conventions



It is our hope that the dozens of speakers and breakout meetings will be a source of strength and recovery for all the members of SA, S-Anon and and S-Ateen who choose to attend.

Connect with the fellowship and find your True North by joining us for the 2020 SA & S-ANON International Conventions in Toronto, Canada.

Starting Friday evening on July 24, 2020, and continuing until Sunday afternoon on July 26, 2020. Held at the Delta by Marriott Toronto Airport.

Please Register Now at www.TrueNorth2020.ca

(If you do plan on coming, please register as soon as possible because this will help us to plan effectively for the numbers of people attending.)

True North 2020: Happy, Joyous and Free, is an inspirational recovery event presented by the SA Ontario Intergroup and the S-Anon Ontario Central Intergroup. We are pleased to be able to host the joint 2020 summer conventions in Canada and to welcome you to Toronto.

TRAVELING TO CANADA: American Citizens traveling to Canada are required to present valid and secure identification documents when entering Canada and upon returning to the U.S. For land or sea entry, this can be a U.S. Passport, Passport Card, Enhanced Driver's License or a Trusted Traveler Program card (NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST). Traveling by air requires a U.S. Passport, or Trusted Traveler Program card (NEXUS, SENTRI, FAST).

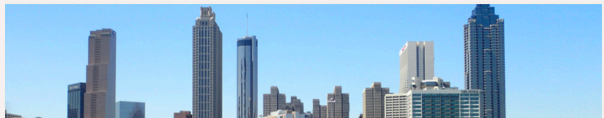
More information go to: <https://www.dhs.gov/western-hemisphere-travel-initiative>

Atlanta January 2021 Convention

<https://keystofreedom.org/>



SA & S-Anon 2021
International Convention



Keys to Freedom: SA & S-Anon 2021 International Convention is an inspirational recovery event presented by the SA Atlanta Intergroup and the S-Anon Atlanta Central Intergroup. We are pleased to be able to host the joint 2021 winter convention in the United States and to welcome you to Georgia. It is our hope that the speakers, the breakout meetings and the fellowship time will be a source of strength and recovery for all

DONATE
To SA international
Use Paypal or credit card in 7
currencies
www.sa.org/donate/

New SA Groups February 2020

Europe and Asia

Göteborg, Sweden

Iași, Romania

Warsaw Poland (English speaking)

Sarajevo, Bosnia

North, Central, and South America

Ames, Iowa, USA

Kerrville, Texas, USA

2019 Fourth Quarter SAICO Budget Results

4th quarter 2019

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Revenues | \$85,087.00 |
| Expenses | \$97,824.00 |
| Rev – Exp | (\$12,737.00) |
| Prudent reserve | \$131,930.00 |

2019

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Revenues | \$324,436 |
| Expenses | \$342,721 |
| Rev – Exp | (\$18,285) |
| Prudent Reserve | \$131,930 |

The Finance Committee invites the SA Fellowship's Service Committees to participate building the 2021 SAICO budget. Information provided by your committees constructs the budget foundation reflecting the Fellowship's service needs. It supports the Fellowship's on-going services to carry its Sobriety message to those still suffering. This Service Committee budget call begins the 2021 SAICO budget preparation process. Our goal is to have the budget ready for the GDA's approval at their July 2020 face-to-face meeting at the Toronto Canada convention.

Submissions To Essay

Your writings and art are invited, although no payment can be made. All articles, art, 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* especially 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, sobriety date, address, telephone number, and/or e-mail address so that authenticity can be verified. This information will remain confidential.

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SA CFC

SA Correctional Facilities Committee



Prisoner 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 150 sponsees. We have an urgent need for sponsors.

Our email address:
SACFC1@gmail.com

Humor For SA

Divorce Outbreak

I got married twice before finding my way into Sexaholics Anonymous. I thought those marriages would save me but my best thinking got me divorced.

You see, I have an allergy to lust: I break out in divorces.

The Steps and Car Trouble

I finally have a full Twelve—I compare the Steps to car trouble

Step 1: I destroyed the car

Step 2: there's a Mechanic out there who can fix it

Step 3: I'm gonna let Him do it

Step 4: let's see what's broken

Step 5: let's discuss it with the Mechanic and his apprentice

Step 6: I'm willing to get rid of all the bad parts

Step 7: with humility I'm gonna ask the Mechanic to fix it all

Step 8: listed all the other cars I bumped and scraped as I slowly killed my car

Step 9: went to them and asked forgiveness for the damage I did to their cars

Step 10: I got the car on the road and kept a safe distance between me and all other cars on the road. If I got into any scrapes I immediately fixed them and apologized.

Step 11: I got out of the driving seat and let the Mechanic drive!

Step 12: I went out to the scrap heaps and showed other people their cars could become roadworthy again!

Daniel T.

Have a good joke, wry observation, funny SA story? Send your Humor gifts to essay@sa.org

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.