

ESSAY

May 2020

A periodic publication of
Sexaholics Anonymous featuring:

Travel & SA Recovery

My Drumsticks

Traveling in Recovery

Viajando en Recuperación

Pure Coincidence?

Searching of the Spirit (Roy K.)

Practical Tools

Resign from the Debating Society

Restored to Sanity

One, Two, Three Waltz

Stories & Steps

First Light

About Temptations

Self Reliance Failed Me

What's the Point of Sobriety?



SA Purpose

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

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Responsibility Declaration

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

Sexaholics Anonymous Statement Of Principle

We have a solution. We don't claim it's for everybody, but for us, it works. If you identify with us and think you may share our problem, we'd like to share our solution with you (*Sexaholics Anonymous 2*). In defining sobriety, we do not speak for those outside Sexaholics Anonymous. We can only speak for ourselves. Thus, for the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other

than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust (*Sexaholics Anonymous 191-192*). (*Adopted 2010 by the General Delegate Assembly*)

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

Any two or more sexaholics gathered together for SA sobriety according to the SA sobriety definition may call themselves an SA group.

Meetings that do not adhere to and follow Sexaholics Anonymous' sobriety statement as set forth in the foregoing Statement of Principle adopted by the General Delegate Assembly in 2010 are not SA meetings and shall not call themselves SA meetings. (*Addendum to the Statement of Principle passed by the General Delegate Assembly 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

May, 2020

Dear *Essay* readers:

This issue of *Essay* includes many stories on "Travel & SA Recovery." Our next issue will focus on "Lost in Translations" (experiencing SA in other languages and cultures) in August, 2020. Please send in any stories or short articles on your experience with language changes in Sexaholics Anonymous. Future topics may include: *Personal Prejudice and SA* and *Happy and Joyous Freedom*. Let us hear from you at essay@sa.org. 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

Want to have a copy of *Essay* to hand to a newcomer or interested therapist? Mailed print subscriptions are the way to do that. 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.)

P.S. Be sure to see the "Editor Needed" box on page 7.

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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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"The joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word." 12&12 p. 106



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

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Dear *Essay*

To the *Essay*:

After six years of continuous struggle in Sexaholics Anonymous, my Higher Power granted me the gift of sobriety. My sobriety date is the 5 September 1993.

In retrospect, there were three concepts, obstacles that were beyond my resources, but not beyond my Higher Power's Grace:

- 1: How to sit with pain.
- 2: To understand that recovery is a marathon, not a sprint.
- 3: I could not "think" my way into solving the answers to sobriety. This is a dis-ease of the emotions, not the intellect.

To reach the point of surrender that was needed, I truly believed I would never achieve sobriety. With great sorrow, I embraced defeat. Roy K. wrote "I simply knew I had to stop, no matter what the cost." The night before the gift of sobriety, AA co-founder Bill W. cried out "In agony of spirit, in helplessness and desperation, I'll do anything at all."

I knew I would never be sober. But, if I could have tomorrow a Higher Power-centered day and be of some small service to another suffering sexaholic, even if I acted out the following day, I would humbly offer that one day to my Higher Power.

I did not share during a meeting for six months. I listened with an intensity that was God given. During

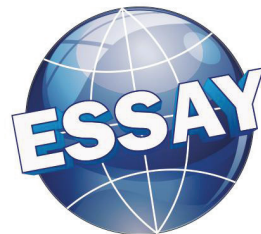
that sixth month I realized I was given the gift of sobriety. I am a sexaholic. I was a sociopath – a very low bottom street sex drunk. I have known jail (multiple petty larcenies), psych-hospitals, and a previous lifetime of failures. But I now know "amazing Grace, that has saved a wretch like me."

Bob H., Virginia USA

From the *Essay* cover artist:

For this cover, as an avid traveler and SA meeting maker, I loved the theme *SA and Travel*. For the cover, I gathered SA reading material with a vintage map as the backdrop and a vintage suitcase I've used to travel with to embellish *Traveling & SA Recovery*. The back cover continues this old travelers map theme as a backdrop to our precious serenity prayer. Within the steps and traditions, a photograph of a road trip is displayed, the intent was to show what might be the safest form of traveling at the moment.

Christian M.



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 this 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.

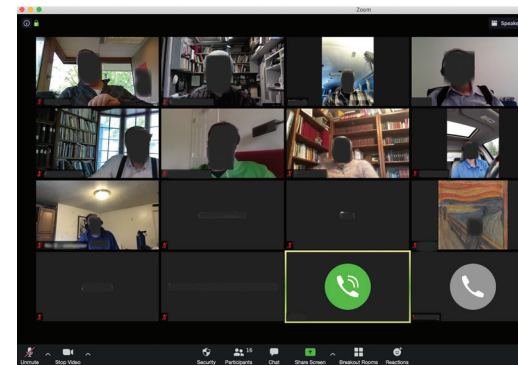


World Wide Walls of SA

Send your meeting place photos (minus identifiable people) to Essay@sa.org



Taipei meeting with social distance



Zoom "gallery view" sample from an SA USA meeting

Literature

COMING in JUNE, 2020...

THE E-WHITE BOOK!

The SA "White Book" Sexaholics Anonymous e-version will be ready to purchase & download via Amazon Kindle.

Have the Fellowship-approved version on your device as an ever available tool for recovery.

<https://www.amazon.com/Kindle-eBooks>
keyword: SA White Book Kindle

ALSO IN JUNE:
THE "WHITE BOOK" Sexaholics Anonymous
PRINTED ON DEMAND!

FOR SMALL ORDERS WITH DESTINATIONS OUTSIDE THE UNITED STATES FOR A REASONABLE PRICE.

<https://www.sa.org/store/>

From the Trustees Support for Women Committees

An ad hoc committee on "How SA Supports Women" studied the global issues related to welcoming women newcomers. They presented to the General Delegate Assembly several recommendations, among which were:

1. Developing a new brochure on how better to support women and men in local groups. This brochure is currently in the works and may be available in 2020.
2. Encouraging co-educational committees on "Support for Women."

Several areas/regions already have co-ed "Support for Women" committees. There are many issues that can only be addressed regionally or locally and not on a global level. It is important that Regions and Intergroups step up to see how best their area can better serve women and men by having a committee making this a continuing topic and not one that is simply

looked at and put aside. It is important that each committee is co-ed because it is about the fellowship serving women in SA, not women in SA serving women in SA. Below is some example information from the European and Middle Eastern Region (EMER) about their Support For Women Committee (SFWC)?

"SFWC is an EMER committee whose purpose is to foster the growth of the sober female membership in Europe and the Middle East. We are doing it by:

- Maintaining contact with female members throughout the EMER Region and seeking to understand their concerns.
- Creating resources for members to give new female members in their groups.
- Connecting individual female members with each other.
- Providing materials, sponsors and support for sole women in mixed meetings.
- Setting up "Women Around The World" What's App group and "Women-only Skype Meeting" to facilitate connection.
- Providing female keynote speakers for future Regional and International conventions.

For those interested in the SFWC, contact:
support4sawomen@gmail.com

Practical Tools

Resign From The Debating Society

Seeking emotional sobriety

There's an addiction that the news media has supported for years. The media is the supplier. We, the masses, are the consumers. The drug is adrenaline. The fight or flight response is measurable. You don't need a sanitized laboratory to test the physical reactions you exhibit in response to hearing and seeing real life tragedy on television. You can feel it.

Now I can't tell you how these emotions affect most people. But I'm a Sexaholic, Alcoholic! So it matters to me. The 12&12 (page 88) indicates that the acid test for sobriety includes emotional balance. The Big Book indicates that one's disposition prior to a slip is being "restless, irritable and discontent."

Nothing will make me restless, irritable, and discontented faster than furious ego-driven arguments. Whether on the television, the radio, at work, in my home, or in my very own head. I'm a real sexaholic, and if I want to obtain long-term sobriety I must eliminate that language and those arguments from my life. I must do as the 12&12 suggests on page 26, and resign from the debating society.

Here's what I did to resign. I walked away from live media (TV, radio, internet news) cold turkey, for a few weeks.

- I could feel how my body reacted.

- I knew that I was passing through the well-known stages of withdrawal.

- After a couple weeks I would go back for a hit every now and then.

This went on for at least 2 years. I would have a couple weeks of solid abstinence and then go back to the news for a half an hour. That day I would call my sponsor and explain to him how going back affected me.

I didn't really know how serious a problem this was for me until this period of abstinence from the news media and arguments in general. When I saw what it did to me physically, I knew what I had to do. I went away and I haven't gone back. It's been about 2 years since I have gone out of my way to visit TV, radio, or internet news. I just don't do it.

By avoiding the media and arguments in general, I've been able to have a lot more peace in my day-to-day life. I've also found a lot more tolerance for others. I've found some of my views on political and social issues relaxing. That's probably one of the nicest side effects: I've become more tolerant of others.

Resigning from the debating society has been one of the most important aspects of my emotional sobriety. Regarding news and politics, I've decided to observe the 10th tradition and refrain from having an opinion. I can't tell you how much of my life I've wasted having an opinion on something I can't do anything about.

And I wouldn't have any sobriety if it weren't for AA and SA, so thank you very much!

Jesse, Alabama USA

Restored to Sanity

Faith and Reason both matter

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous is quite clear that our own thinking cannot solve our addiction problem. I have learned this time and time again. My own thinking never produced the power I needed to recover from sexaholism. Often, it compounded the problem. When I stopped arguing and surrendered to the program and followed the directions outlined by my sponsor and our literature, I began recovering.

Part of recovery is this very restoration to sanity where God helps me grow in prudence

Recovery entails growing into “true manhood and womanhood” (SA, p.149). Recovery is meant to take me from emotional infancy and lead me into spiritual adulthood. This cannot be accomplished by faith in self, but rather by faith in God and by the power of the program.

One of the fruits of recovery is the “restoration to sanity” where I can once again come to trust my thinking. While I once doubted my own thinking, today I have a healthy skepticism. I believe sometimes I have taken self-skepticism to a point that neither our literature nor my higher power would have me do.

The Big Book says, “Logic is great stuff. We liked it. We still like it. It is not by chance we were given the power to reason, to examine the evidence of our senses, and to draw conclusions. That is one of man’s magnificent attributes” (AA,p.53). In fact, the Big Book uses the entire chapter “We Agnostics” to demonstrate the reasonability of faith in the “God idea”.

In my recovery experience, God has

not asked me to throw reason and prudence out the door. In fact, recovery suggests that I ask God to “direct my thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.” (AA, p.86). When this is done, I can “employ my mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use.” (AA, p.86) Part of recovery is this very restoration to sanity where God helps me grow in prudence – the ability to make good, reasoned judgments. I believe that in recovery, I can come to make prudent decisions.

I believe I was never meant to

divorce faith from reason. Both can operate together harmoniously, for by God’s power I can be transformed by Him renewing my mind so I may be able to discern what is good and pleasing to him.

Zak B, Ottawa, Canada



The One, Two, Three Waltz

A formula for resentment

In the Alcoholics Anonymous story Freedom From Bondage on page 552 the woman describes her desperate need to be free of resentment. Her very specific formula of praying for the person or thing she resents really works! This led me to develop the One, Two, Three Waltz. For those unfamiliar with social dancing, a waltz is three steps repeated over and over.

The first step of the waltz is “God, I surrender my right to resent (or be judgmental or be angry or to reject person or thing.” The second step is: “I pray that person or thing gets whatever she/he/it needs to be healthy and whole

today. I pray that person or thing gets today whatever I would want for myself.” The third waltz step is: “God, may I find in You whatever I thought I would find in resenting (or judging or being angry or pushing away) person or thing. May Thy will be done.”

Two cautions: The prayer in the second step may need to be repeated until it feels genuine. This can take extra effort! And, like a waltz, all three steps will need to be repeated over and over. Being willing to do the waltz for two weeks is essential.

Try the One, Two, Three Waltz. You’ll find, as I have often, that it works!

David M., Oregon USA

“Bad News” In Sexaholics Anonymous

(In serial form, #5)

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:

- Worrying about the rest of my life is none of my business -- if I am working Step 3.
- The Rule of 180°: I figure out exactly how I want to react or what I want to say. Then I do the opposite, which turns out to be the best choice. The Rule of 180° saves a lot of trouble!
- When I don’t want to go to a meeting or make a phone call is exactly when I most need to do it.
- If we want clear water, don’t stir the bottom of the pond. Dredging up the past clouds our vision.
- Telling the truth is a great fall-back position.
- Two “automatic” contributions to a resentment / obsession are: 1) holding on to the resentment for a long time and 2) expecting another person to be different than the way they actually are.
- Having opinions, about anything at all, is always optional. Most relationship problems are caused by opinions.
- Expectations are pre-meditated resentments.

Meditations

Life-Changing Program

For the wise have always known that no one can make much of his life until self-searching becomes a regular habit, until he is able to admit and accept what he finds, and until he patiently and persistently tries to correct what is wrong (12 & 12 88).

I spent my early years in SA working a non-acting out program. I attended meetings, went out for fellowship afterwards, turned over and released lust hits, and attended conventions and marathons. But there was little improvement in my life. The fellowship alone, while an important part of the program, supported but did not change me.

Once I started working a life-changing Program—by including working the Steps with a sponsor—I saw improvement in my life. The Program says I need a “personality change sufficient to bring about recovery” (AA 567). This started to manifest itself as I practiced writing daily Step Ten inventories to identify defects in my personality and, with my Higher Power’s help, started correcting them.

For me, correcting means, if the inventory shows me acting selfishly—lust is almost always selfish—I write a list of specific unselfish actions I can take (being kind to other drivers on my commute, holding the door for someone, or picking up trash) and then take those actions. If I have unrealistic expectations of someone, such as expecting them always to be kind and thoughtful, then I must pray for them and show them the kindness I hope others will give me when I am hurtful and thoughtless. If I am fearful (Wasn’t it because self-reliance failed us? AA 68), then I pray for willingness to trust in, rely on, and play the role assigned to me by my Higher Power. I believe my Higher Power will help me “match calamity with serenity” (AA 68). Sharing my inventory with another program member (hopefully, my sponsor) makes me accountable and allows an outside opinion on my thoughts. As an addict, my thinking is always suspect.

I worked long and hard over many years to become an addict. I can now put the same effort and time into becoming a more whole and healthy person.

Higher Power, thank you for this life-changing program. Please give me the strength to continue making progress.

The Real Connection 371

Love in the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

A favorite author of mine (not in a 12-step program) says that love is “a flow of energy willingly allowed and exchanged, without requiring payment in return.” The 12-step recovery process has been an integral part of my experience with this flow of love. As I walk the road of restoration, the channels are open for me to receive

the love that my higher power has for me.

But: the story needs to continue. The invitation and the goal is that I would redirect that love to others. The twelfth step states, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics and practice these principles in all our affairs.” I think it’s fair to interpret this step as an act of love.

I will only speak for myself; but now that I’ve

been on this journey, I can be less of a taker and finally be the sort of giver I’d always hoped to be in my life. This reality is not through my own sufficiency. Quite the contrary. I need my comrades in my weekly group. I need the phone calls. I need my sponsors’ wisdom and friendship. I need my higher power. And not just because all these things are helpful and good for sobriety, but precisely because they are the channels that allow

(continued p 13)

Meditations

An Amazing Journey

We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny (SA 210).

I read about a man who made an amazing journey following a civil war. He was on a mission that required him to walk through the defeated part of the country. On his journey, he carried the flag of the winning side. The man depended solely on the residents to feed, house, and protect him. He finished his mission without a problem. In fact, he was treated royally everywhere. It is a story of acceptance, unity, and love from his fellow citizens.

Several years ago I walked through the door of my first SA meeting as I embarked on my own amazing journey. Unsure of how I would be received, I timidly took a seat near the door. My demeanor shouted a silent “Help me!” To my relief, surprise, and joy, I was welcomed as if I was a special guest. I was given the gifts of acceptance, understanding, and hope—including a White Book to guide my steps.

My journey to health and recovery continues. The road has been rough at times, full of potholes and unexpected detours. But it is on this road that I have found people who support me. My fellowship of SAs identify with my disease, but more importantly with our common solution. They offer encouragement in my recovery, and join with me in carrying this message of hope to other suffering sexaholics. My destiny now is far brighter and happier than it has ever been.

Thank you, God, for companions who know me, accept me, and walk with me on this amazing journey of recovery.

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for the flow of love. And, miraculously, I too am a channel for others now.

As I meditate on this reality and the current COVID-19 pandemic all around us (or whatever challenge we are facing), I’m convinced that we who have been on this journey are equipped with tools for the struggle. SA members are the exact sort of people who are capable of channeling love in this COVID-19 time.

We know that all of our addictions are really just about connection. So in a time of distance, we continue our meetings virtually. In the time of loneliness, we reach out to others. In a time of confusion and fear, we remember the serenity prayer. In a time when days feel like they may blend together into one long confusing season,

we remember, “one day at a time.”

Believe me: I too am facing challenges everyday. But I’m being invited to look beyond myself towards others. May I be sober not just for sobriety’s sake, but so I can be capable of giving love today. May I stick to my spiritual routines not for myself but to be the sort of channel that my higher power uses to bless others today. May I keep connection with my brothers in the program so that I can be strong for my connections to others today. For today is all I have. I am capable of being a channel of love. And so are you.

Robert E, Georgia USA

My Drumsticks

Finding passion better than lust

Several years ago I was going to an SA Convention. I got a window seat, because I don't want anybody to ask me where I am going. I don't want to lie, and I don't want to tell the truth. I want to look out the window and be left alone.

The flight made three unsuccessful attempts to take off, twice for mechanical reasons and a third time because five passengers wanted to get off the plane. I said to myself, "Do they know something I don't know?" I could just see the morning paper reporting the crash, and these people talking about how God told them to get off the plane. I think to myself, "Get Off This Plane Now!!!" I said the Serenity Prayer, which brought some sanity. I settled down. We taxied for the fourth time. This time we were off!

I was talking, engaged with the people sitting near me. Sitting next to me was a woman named Carol. The thing that I had been dreading most happened! Carol asked, "So Glenn, where are you going?" I responded fearfully, "To a convention." She said, "That sounds exciting. What type of convention?" Reluctantly, I answered "A Twelve-Step convention." "Oh," Carol responded, "I am familiar with the Twelve Steps." She went on to recite Step Twelve. I was so taken aback that I joined her.

Then she said, "I am a Life-Coach in my spare time. My niece was addicted to meth, and in five years she was off meth, and married, and had her

masters." I said, "You know your stuff!" She went on. "A good friend of mine was going to be inducted into the Rock-n-Roll Hall of Fame. After the band retired, he started drinking heavily. He was the drummer and was supposed to play with the band at the awards. He couldn't do it because of alcohol. I told him to carry a set of drumsticks in each hand everywhere he went. Those drumsticks were a symbol of his passion." I realized if he had the drumsticks in each hand he couldn't have a glass or a bottle in his hands.

She told me, "Wherever he went he had those drumsticks. To the supermarket, laundromat, getting a haircut, he had those drumsticks in his hands, and it worked! His passion to play the drums, perform, and get that award, along with those drumsticks constantly in his hands, conspired to get him that award!" Then she got in my face and said, "Glenn, I don't think you know what your drumsticks are." I had never been confronted like that before. I wanted to argue, but in truth I admitted, "You are right, I don't know what my drumsticks are. Sober is not well."

When I reached my destination I had to make a mad dash off the plane for my next flight. Since that time on that plane, I have searched my soul. I am still trying to understand what went on in that conversation. I have asked God *as I understand Him* for help. This is what I have come up with: Passion—Spirituality and Alcohol—Sexual Lust. Drumsticks—Rolling up pages of my spiritual literature, putting them in

My Drumsticks connect me to my Passion, and they deter me from reaching for sexual lust

each hand. My Drumsticks connect me to my Passion, and they deter me from reaching for sexual lust.

I still don't have it all together. I am teachable, open to feedback. It is very hard to understand this. I still may not have it. I do know that God will move heaven and earth to show me His will and give me the power and wisdom to carry it out.

Anonymous, USA

Surrendering to Reality

Letting go of escaping to fantasy

On page 81 of the Sexaholics Anonymous book is a paragraph which just happens to be my favorite quote from the book.

In summary, for us surrender is the change in attitude of the inner person that makes life possible. It is the great beginning, the insignia and watchword of our program. And no amount of knowledge about surrender can make it a fact until we simply give up, let go, and let God. When we surrender our "freedom," we become truly free.

"Surrender" can be defined very well by those phrases, "give up, let go, and let God".

We were studying Step 3 in group the other night, and the idea of turning away from lust and turning toward God really fit well for me. There has been plenty of turning in my experience of recovery. But because the deepest core of my addiction is not my outward behaviors, but is my inner attitudes and character and beliefs, the crucial turning, the necessary attitude change of unconditional surrender, had to

take place for lasting sobriety to take root in my life. Everything else I had done for decades before to try to gain freedom on my own was doomed to failure because I had never surrendered to God as a core change of attitude. Step 3 had never truly happened because I still thought I had some power over lust. And if I didn't have to surrender to God, why would I? (I am not a saint.)

I had to surrender my fantasy world that I had counted on to immediately give me everything I wanted with no negative consequences. That world

I "came to believe" in a Reality at the core of all that is real.

was not reality. That is not how the real world works. Escaping from reality into my fantasy world was my drug to deal with everything that I found unpleasant in the real world. And I needed something other than just another drug to replace my fantasy as the "solution" to all my problems. The real world was not going to change; I had to change!

I "came to believe" in a Reality at the core of all that is real. I came to believe that Reality not only has the power to free me from my bondage to lust, but to free me from the bondage of myself, my selfishness and self-seeking, and a myriad of other character defects as well. And all I had to do was to surrender to that Reality. The reality is that I am not god. But the reality also is that a loving God is real and desires to free me from the bondage of self that I may better do his will.

Sexaholics Anonymous, Taichung

Traveling in Recovery

Sobriety offers a new way to travel

The only annual novelty that happened in my family, apart from my birthday, was the arrival of the holidays. We used to go to the beach every year and the freedom the sea and the waves produced in me softened the anguish of having “special parents”, who did not love each other and who might even divorce.

With my adolescence and after the abuse, I lived in a public transport. A stranger began to touch me until he put his hand in my pants and got my first ejaculation. I discovered that the beach had many incentives apart from the waves: Remote paths where other men went in search of instant sex, tight and insinuating swimsuits to highlight the best of me, my sex.

Every trip I prepared with the family, either my parents or later, my wife and children always had the ingredient of morbidity, intrigue, flirting with lust. How many times I have refused to go to certain places simply because they lacked cruising areas or were too isolated from cities where I could act out.

In Recovery, the first noticeable difference to my family was that I improvised the daily route as well as the places to stop to eat, to rest, the attractions that were in the area. Before, it was a duty to anticipate what I would find in the places to visit. However, I lived them in my mind, not in my heart.

My children knew that they could not waste time playing or sneaking in the villages we visited. There was a strict schedule to fulfill, in order to complete the huge list of visits to places, restaurants, castles, beaches. It was a frenzy.

Now my wife says that the best is yet to come. In each trip we make, there are precious details that we didn't see before. Surely, we stop visiting many charming monuments and places, but the magic of discovering with our feet the wonders of cities is worth it.

We will always have the opportunity to revisit what we have left to see. But it will be another day.

JC, Spanish intergroup

Pure coincidence?

Meetings and gratitude

Eight years ago, I decided to take a month's leave of absence from work to travel to Florida and enjoy the beautiful March weather of the sunshine state, as well as to practice

my favorite sport: golf. One important concern I had when I made that decision: how would I be able to maintain my SA routine that has enabled me to keep progressing in my recovery, which includes attending, on a regular basis, SA meetings?

I consulted the list of new meetings worldwide

published in each Essay. Well, through the pages of the Winter issue of Essay of that year, I experienced what I called a “little miracle”. That list happened to include a new meeting precisely in the little town where I had rented an apartment!

(continued p 17)

www.sa.org/Essay

Viajando en Recuperación

La sobriedad ofrece una nueva forma de viajar

La única novedad anual que sucedió en mi familia, aparte de mi cumpleaños, fue la llegada de las vacaciones. Solíamos ir a la playa todos los años y la libertad que el mar y las olas producían en mí, suavizaba la angustia de tener “padres especiales”, que no se amaban y que incluso podían divorciarse.

En mi adolescencia y después del abuso, que viví en un transporte público. Un extraño comenzó a tocarme, hasta que metió la mano en mis pantalones y conocí mi primer orgasmo. Descubrí que la playa tenía muchos incentivos aparte de las olas: caminos remotos donde otros hombres iban en busca de sexo instantáneo, trajes de baño ajustados e insinuantes para resaltar lo mejor de mí, mi sexo.

Cada viaje que preparaba con la familia, ya sea con mis padres o más tarde mi esposa y mis hijos, siempre tenía el ingrediente del morbo la intriga y el coqueteo de la lujuria. Cuántas veces me he negado a ir a ciertos lugares simplemente porque carecían de

áreas de cruising o estaban demasiado aislados de las ciudades donde podía consumir.

En Recuperación, la primera diferencia notable en mi familia fue que improvisé la ruta diaria, así como los lugares donde parar para comer, descansar y las atracciones que había en el área. Antes, era un deber anticipar lo que encontraría en los lugares para visitar. Sin embargo, los vivía en mi mente, no en mi corazón.

Mis hijos sabían que no podían perder el tiempo jugando o escabulléndose en las aldeas que visitamos. Había un horario estricto que cumplir, para completar la enorme lista de visitas a lugares, restaurantes, castillos, playas. Era un frenesí.

Ahora mi esposa dice que lo mejor está por venir. En cada viaje que hacemos, hay detalles preciosos que no vimos antes. Seguramente, dejamos de visitar muchos monumentos y lugares encantadores, pero la magia de descubrir con nuestros pies las maravillas de las ciudades merece la pena.

Siempre tendremos la oportunidad de volver a visitar lo que nos queda por ver. Pero será otro día.

JC, intergrupo español

As soon as I arrived in that town, I learned that the meeting was only a five minutes drive from my apartment. Pure coincidence? I do not believe so. My Higher Power was taking care of me!

Every year since, I rent the same apartment in March and I attend that same meeting.

With time, I developed relationships with SA members of that area. They informed me of the existence of another meeting in a town nearby not more than 15 minutes drive from where I am located.

I am thankful to God, SA and the members who decided to form a group in that town. I

am sure that when they made that decision, they had no idea that it would allow me to continue to attend meetings while being away from home.

And I realized that lust and SA have no geographical boundaries.

Jean C., Quebec, Canada

THIS TOO SHALL PASS



The Searchlight of the Spirit

A letter from Roy K to the General Delegate Assembly in July, 2009
(from Essay, September 2009)

When I was asked if I wanted to share anything with the GDA, I thought about it and welcomed the opportunity. First,

I love this very special fellowship of the Spirit, which on the personal relationship level can go deep as we “bear one another’s burdens” and so fulfill the law of love. Thank you!

As far as my health is concerned, I am still being treated for a very aggressive cancer. We don’t know the outcome. The results are in God’s hands. Never has “One day at a time” meant so much. The joyous victory in

this trial is that the One who broke through to me in lust recovery years ago keeps me sober one fear and uncertainty at a time. It’s a whole new program, and I’m asking that I not miss the blessing that’s on the other side of this.

This personal trial for me is not unlike many we have encountered in the history of SA itself and will doubtless continue to encounter. The unique need and promise of our recovery—deliverance from the power of lust in all its forms—makes our “impossible” principles a tempting target for compromise or questioning, especially from within SA itself. Long before cancer actually appears, the body’s cells can start going haywire if our immune system has been degraded. The immune system for Sexaholics Anonymous is our Twelve Traditions. Though they were discovered in the crucible of AA’s experience, we find that we are continually tempted to disregard some early warning immune degradation indicators. Traditions One, Three, and Twelve knock us in the head periodically to try to get our attention. That’s how we’re learning their truth for ourselves! The hard way. So I challenge you to continue discovering together the deep import and relevance of SA Traditions.

What constitutes SA unity, and why does personal recovery depend upon it? What are the implications of our requirement for membership—“the desire to stop lusting and become sexually sober”? What constitutes sexual sobriety, and what constitutes lust recovery? And how may we unwittingly be putting personalities before principle? How does all this tie in together? Yes, we’re being tested here in all three. Let us examine

ourselves honestly and often in the searchlight of the spirit of these time-tested realities.

Therefore stand on principle. Stay true to our historic and unique calling. Yes, it is unique. And don’t be afraid of voices that would try to make this an “easier” program. I love this fellowship—with the whole history of its problems and adversity. God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Above all, let us be ready to offer, through our own personal lust recovery testimonies, what increasing thousands will need and seek. And above all, let us love one another in the truth.

I believe a new beginning awaits

God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

us as we discover the impossible reality of lust recovery under God and humble ourselves before Him so he can pour out his blessing on those who suffer. I thank you for your lives and service. May God bless you all.
—Roy K. 1917-2009

Awake
Awake now
This day
This moment

Awake to the power
Greater than yourself

God is
and God has been
and God will be with you

Listen, and awake
Listen, and awake
Now

A New Life

The SA Program of Recovery is a New Way of Life

I recently returned home from two months of traveling and living my life in another country. One of the hardest parts of those two months of travel was the disruption to my “standard practice” of my Sexaholics Anonymous program of recovery. I know that disruptions will happen. That’s life. Sometimes life gets interrupted, even sometimes for a very good reason. But, I do find that the habitual practices that I have learned through working the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous have quite a positive result in my life. I can really feel the void whenever I experience an ongoing disruption to my regular practices—particularly in the area of my conscious connection with God.

Another area of growth that I have been working on lately is resentment. One of my SA friends and I have been discussing being “unoffendable.” This is definitely an area of weakness for both of us. I confronted my resentfulness when I first worked the Twelve Steps with my sponsor. I had not been able to see this before SA, because I could not admit this defect while I was still acting out with my drug of lust. In order to “practice these principles in all my affairs,” I regularly admit my resentfulness and surrender it to God. As with lust, resentment only gives way to the practice of surrender.

Our program of recovery is really a new way of life for me. Practicing the program—one day at a time—helps keep it new!

<https://sexaholicsanonymous.eu/new-life>

Step 2 - The Strength of Allah

Allah will help if I submit and am honest

I was born in a religious family who always believed in Allah and his power. Actually I was believing that he can do anything except this one thing, so I had problems. I couldn’t pray and ask him about this addiction. I was so resentful how my life was totally destroyed. I can’t describe the remorse and self-pity I felt every time I relapsed. I was an underpaid barista with no friends, no girlfriend, no memories but melancholy which disturbed and ruined my life always because I couldn’t find a way to stop.

After I came to SA the solution was there but the shame and hatred and fury never ended. I swear that I did all of the things they told me but I was relapsing again and again. I kept madly watching porn with no joy just to fill my inner empty soul, until....

One day I was totally depressed so I asked Allah to please help me because I cannot make it. I told Him that I was in pain and was paralyzed. The words themselves were hard for me to say because I just couldn’t believe in His power; but I was truly honest in my words. One day all of the walls were destroyed and I became sober for 2 weeks - I couldn’t make it that long for 7 and half years. I couldn’t believe that I was sober for that long. Now I believe that Allah will help me when I come to him but I should be honest with him. That’s all, stay sober for today.

Awab - Egypt

www.sa.org/Essay

SA Stories

Self-Reliance Failed Me

No effective mental defense

Recently I faced the most severe challenge I’ve had in 18 months of sobriety. An explicit image and message appeared on my phone out of the blue one day when I was in a meeting at work. Like a deer in headlights, I was struggling to know what to do next. I thought it might be someone I had acted out with in the past. I could see enough of the picture and message to realize it was someone looking to act out.

The meeting went on for 30 more minutes. My mind began to race as I started to wonder who it was. I thought I should look at the full size image to see if I could figure out who it was, but how could I view it without being triggered? How did they find me? Which person from the past would look for me? Should I try to act out with this person? How could I get away with it if I did? Should I just delete it or block them? If I do that will I regret it and unblock them later? Lust had me in a weak position, but at least part of me could see I was powerless and the situation was unmanageable. I knew I would need a power greater than myself to restore me to sanity and I would have to surrender if I was going to stay sober.

Thankfully I decided to do the next right thing. I deleted the app completely from my phone before I had a chance to decide what to do with the explicit message. God did for me what I could not do for myself. I am allergic to lust and am not qualified to handle it or make the right decision on my own.

Deleting it brought relief, but I was shell-shocked by the whole ordeal.

May 2020

It made me feel sick to my stomach that I considered actually going back out there. Part of me believed 18 months of sobriety somehow bought me protection from the compulsion. Thankfully I had already planned to go to an SA meeting that night and was getting together with some guys for dinner and fellowship beforehand. This gave me a built in opportunity to check in and share what happened.

By the next day I was feeling back to myself. A trusted SA friend helped me safely retrieve and block the number for good. I had not resorted to my drug. Later that evening I went with my family to see my son in a performance and was filled with joy. The next day, which was Valentine’s Day, I took my wife out for dinner and it was a very pleasant evening.

I was very grateful to be sober for these family experiences! Suppose I had given into lust even a little. Even if technically sober, I would not have been present with my family. I would have been feeling sadness, guilt, regret, shame, and lust. I would have been locked in the prison house of myself.

Self-reliance had failed me. I believe God allowed this to reveal that I was still depending on myself to stay sober, rather than Him. In that moment of temptation, relying on myself, I struggled to find a solution. But through surrender, I recognized I was forgetting Steps 1, 2, and 3. I made a decision to turn it over to Him instead of “self-willing” my way through it.

I learned that when I surrender, God handles any problem.

Robinson N, Atlanta, USA

First Light

The moment we knew the jig was up

[Edited for length. Read the complete version posted at sa.org]

Whenever I get into negative or obsessive thinking, I try to remember the great promise of recovery from sex and lust addiction as I first experienced it. We all remember where we were and what we were doing when first we learned of something that would forever change our lives, especially something that promised us freedom from a hopeless state of mind and body. With this thought in mind, recently I picked up SA Member Stories 2007 (MS) and I looked for the part in each story where the author, now sober, came to a turning point and acted on that realization:

"I'm a sexaholic." I can still remember the first time I said that at an SA meeting." (MS 1)

"[My wife] told me to get into SA or get out. I called the number she gave me. The man said, 'It's lust, it's what's in your head that is killing you.'" (MS 19-20)

"It was on that day, after leaving the porno shop in utter hopelessness, that I met the person who had previously informed me about SA. He invited me to my first SA meeting. I was ready. It was just the two of us at that first meeting." (MS 32).

"After I had served nine years in prison, I was lucky enough to get help starting the first SA group in any state prison system." (MS 54)

"I went to a city where I knew there were Twelve-Step groups and other resources for sexual recovery. Someone told me there was a fellow trying to

start an SA group. I called the number given me." (MS 63).

"The first person to tell me this problem might be an addiction was the woman who is today my wife. I told her about my experiences, and she said it reminded her of my drinking." (MS 77)

"I am a woman who was Twelfth-Stepped by a 'Dear Abby' column about sex addiction. When I read the word 'sexaholic,' I knew it described me." (MS 80)

".. I was suicidal. During this same week, information on sex addiction was presented both on television and in the newspaper. I immediately sent for more information and read it. They were talking about me!" (MS 115)

"With [a counselor's] help, I found a Friday night open meeting of Sexaholics Anonymous. I had to act out before I went to the meeting. The next meeting was Saturday morning, 115 miles away, but I went – and was sober." (MS 126)

"It was self-preservation that finally brought me to SA. I was forty-four. I went to an SA information meeting. I was the only woman there, yet as the men told their stories, I could identify with them." (MS 162)

Sexaholics around the world are having similar experiences daily. The Responsibility Statement—When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of SA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible—thus becomes a Promise. What a gift!

Anonymous. Virginia USA

A Voicemail from Heaven

A gift from a sponsor's direction

For years I had not set up a voicemail on my phone. It just did not seem worth the time or energy. Out of a sense of ignorance, I was not thinking of anyone else's convenience. I suppose I figured I wasn't worth leaving a voicemail for anyway. However, at the urging of my sponsor I went ahead and activated my voicemail. He explained that other fellows may wish to reach out to me when they are facing difficulties with lust, or simply to connect. When it was stated in terms of helping fellow SA members, I didn't hesitate to follow through.

When going through the motions

The true blessing was hearing my Grandmother's voice one last time!

of setting up my voicemail one day in late September 2019, I discovered that it was already set up by default and that my voicemail inbox had actually been full for 4 years. I simply never knew how to access or delete the messages. Out of curiosity, I listened closely to each message. The first was a customer service representative telling me a package was ready for pick-up. The second was a reminder to renew my apartment insurance. The third message, sent on September 24, 2015 (my 25th birthday), was a gift from God. A familiar, kind and loving voice I had come to miss filled the speaker of my phone. It was my Grandma (now deceased) wishing me a happy birthday. While it was a lovely message to receive, the true blessing was hearing my Grandmother's voice one last time!

As tears filled my eyes, I reminisced about her life and the joyful memories I had with her. The irony of me hearing this voicemail approximately one week before my 29th birthday was not lost on me. I also refuse to believe that this moment was mere coincidence. Rather, I believe that I was meant to hear this message only after I entered recovery. If it weren't for my sponsor and me taking the right actions, I never would have been rewarded with this gift from God.

JB, Manitoba Canada

Group Discussion Topics

In *First Light* an old-timer went through *Member Stories* and copied the part that was the turning point for that sexaholic.

What was your turning point or the time you knew the jig was up?

Do you still talk about that moment with newcomers and in meetings?

How has your experience of God or Higher Power worked through that turning point?

In *A Voicemail From Heaven* the writer followed his sponsor's direction and discovered a surprise blessing.

Have you had unexpected blessings in your SA time?

What happened to open you up to that blessing?

How do you feel when you share it with others?

A Sexaholic Fell into a Pit

"Each step felt it would be off the edge"

One day a sexaholic out walking alone fell into a pit. The pit was deep. As much as he tried, the sexaholic couldn't get out. He tried to jump up and to climb up, but this proved useless. He was stuck in the pit with no apparent way out.

The sexaholic cried out from the pit for help. A doctor was walking by and hearing the cries for help approached the edge. "I've fallen into this pit and can't get out," the sexaholic said. "Please help me get out!" "Well, I am a doctor," the doctor told him. "Let me help you." The doctor reached into his jacket for a container of painkillers. Tossing it into the pit he called out, "Take these. They will help you deal with the pain you're experiencing." The sexaholic thanked the doctor as he left. The pills helped numb the pain of being in the pit, but after some time the pills wore off and the sexaholic was still in the pit.

Again he cried out: "Please help me! I'm stuck in this pit!" A psychologist happened by and went over to see what all the ruckus was about. He asked the sexaholic careingly: "How did you get into that pit!? Did someone put you in there? Maybe your parents put you there? Was it your elementary school teacher? Were you born there? Let's talk about it." They spoke about it for a while. After almost an hour the psychologist looked at his watch and said "I'm sorry, but our time is up and I really need to be leaving. Maybe we can speak more about it next week." The sexaholic thanked him for his time. He really had felt better while they were talking. The sexaholic was still stuck in the pit.

Next a spiritual mentor chanced upon the sexaholic crying for help. The sexaholic explained that he was stuck in the pit and couldn't get out. "Here, take this!" the spiritual mentor said, tossing a leather bound book into the pit. "Read that, it contains spiritual truths that can be helpful to you." The sexaholic read the book and it really did contain many interesting and thought-provoking spiritual teachings, but he was still pit-bound. "Now let's pray together," said the mentor. Together they prayed, the spiritual mentor up above the pit and the sexaholic below. After praying the mentor said, "I must be going now but I promise I will continue to pray for you." The sexaholic appreciated the mentor's help but and was still imprisoned in the pit.

The sexaholic's spouse had been out looking for him. She had his children with her. They walked up to the edge of the pit looking down at the sexaholic who was pleading for help at the top of his lungs. "Listen to me!" she cried out. That got his attention and he quieted. "Don't you love me?!" she pleaded. "Don't you love your children! Can't you see how much pain you're causing your family! If you love us, if you ever loved us, get out of that pit!" The sexaholic desperately tried to climb out of the pit, for he truly loved his family. His fingers became dirty and bloodied and the knees of his pants were torn through, but as hard as he tried on his own power, he simply couldn't get out of the pit. After a heartbreaking scene, his family too left, despondent. He cried bitter tears but it was no use.

Finally, a sexaholic in recovery passed by and heard him. "Please, I'm stuck in this pit! Please help me get out of here!" When the sexaholic in

recovery saw the situation, he walked right up to the edge and jumped in with him.

The trapped sexaholic shouted at him: "You idiot! What have you done?! Now we're both in the pit, how does that help anything?!"

Calmly the sexaholic in recovery placed his hand on his fellow's arm and lovingly told him: "I'm a sexaholic like you. I've been in this pit before, and I know the way out." Eventually, together hand in hand, they walked out of the pit to freedom.

Retold by Daniel K, Israel

SA/S-ANON
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"You hit bottom when you stop digging." BB p. 325



Steps & Traditions

About Temptations

An Email sent to a Newcomer

When you asked me about how to respond to temptations, I thought I could share a few suggestions and insights with you.

SA helps me respond to temptations and it is my Higher Power that is the Source. I surrender myself to my Higher Power and admit that I am powerless. If you believe that your Higher Power loves you and hears your prayers, then you will receive help.

Repeat the prayers until the temptation goes away, and remove yourself from the trigger too. We do our part. It is best to remove yourself immediately. Pray immediately and if you find yourself staring at a person lustfully or watching pornography, stop looking immediately. Once we get the hormones working in our body, it is always more difficult to stop. I know because I have been in that situation. When I watched porn for 30 minutes, then started to pray because I felt guilty, it was almost impossible to stop. Now, when I first feel the temptation to indulge lust, I pray right away.

There are other things I can do as well. Avoid the place or the person. If the pornography is on your phone, put a filter on it or somehow block the opportunity. Why tempt yourself?

We have a saying in SA, "I am more susceptible to lust when I am Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired." We call it "H.A.L.T." If I am hungry, I eat something; angry or resentful, I try to surrender that anger or resentment to my Higher Power; lonely, I call a friend; tired, I take a nap or try to get a better night's sleep.

Another help with temptation is to call a friend in Sexaholics Anonymous

or another friend that you trust. Bringing dark thoughts or temptations to the light with another person helps to take away their power. If you find that you are still troubled with a temptation after you pray for a few minutes, don't hesitate to call again. Even just texting can help.

It is also helpful to have an interesting hobby. Positive emotions are very helpful in rejecting attractions that hurt you. I believe lust hurts me. It is a kind of idolatry. Lust is saying to your Higher Power, "I really want this now. It is more important than anything else in the world right now. Even though I know You, my Higher Power, don't want me to indulge this lust, I still want to do it." Isn't that idolatry?

So having outside interests is good; talking to trusted friends is good; taking care of myself (HALT) is good; avoiding tempting places and habits is good; PRAYING TO H.P. IS ALWAYS GOOD AND IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY.

Your friend in the program, K.



Steps & Traditions

What's The Point Of Sobriety?

The gift of life is our reward

When we come to SA the most important question we can ask ourselves is "What is the point of sobriety?" Maybe we want to strive to "get something back" or to "get something" in the first place - a husband, a wife, a job. Maybe we work to be just "good enough", mostly sober. Or maybe we just keep coming back to get support for our illness like Roy talks about in Recovery Continues (p67).

The Big Book states "We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you. You may be aiding in his destruction rather than his recovery ... To spend too much time on any one person is to deny some other sexaholic the opportunity to live and be happy" (p96). This is why my sponsor let go of me, because I did not work the program for almost 6 years. Today I have over 13 years of sobriety.

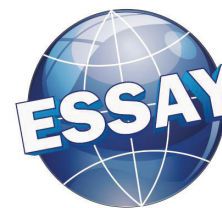
But, some people come to SA completely broken and are willing to go to any lengths to stay sober regardless of anyone or anything. And they stay, and they obtain long-term sobriety.

In the Dec 1999 issue of the Essay Magazine, Roy K clarifies what progressive victory over lust means. As we get sober, we begin to discover new forms of lust, different from our primary form of acting out. Once we discover these other forms of lust progressively, then we come to an

even deeper surrender. Roy says: "This legitimate use of the word 'progressive' is the very process of discovery.... The misuse of our expression 'progressive victory over lust' is when we confuse it with our encounter in the moment of temptation, seeing the image in the corner of our eye, for example. In that instant, there is no such thing as progressive victory. We either drink or we don't drink. Think about it. Man, can we ever let our own 'progressive victory' wording cover a multitude of sins."

I have come to the conclusion that sobriety for a sexaholic is an end in itself. It has nothing to do with fringe benefits. What is the point of sobriety? The point of sobriety is life. It is as simple and fundamental and encompassing as that. And there will come a time when life seems to have taken everything and at that time sobriety has to be enough. Yet the great paradox of the program is that it promises more than sobriety, it promises that we can find a power greater than ourselves and that we can become happy, joyous, and free. That is why we take the steps: to build a true mansion of recovery on top of our foundation called sobriety.

Steve C., San Diego, USA



Our Meeting in Print

Steps & Traditions

Focused on the Solution AND the Problem?

We benefit from both

Can I focus on what I will do to deal with my problems without first admitting I have problems? What does "rigorous honesty" mean, if not to open up to others about my defects? How did I first identify with others in SA and feel that I belonged, other than to hear about the mess others had put themselves through? Why do we read in meetings first about "The Problem" before sharing "The Solution?"

Before I walked into the meeting rooms, I knew I was alone in the world. But in that first meeting, those notions of isolation dissipated as others shared about their issues -- my issues. These people understood my struggle. I'd finally found a place where I belonged. It was a common bond built on common experience with problems, not solutions. The solution part would come (had to come) after.

One of the most beautiful things in SA is the giving of a "first step" by a relative newcomer. In that first step, the member removes the mask. They expose their "ugliness" to the group. They open themselves up to the criticism and ridicule they've always expected if the truth about them were known. What they receive instead is understanding at depth; plus, hope that the problems that have been the bane of their existence could actually be the bedrock upon which a purposeful life can be built.

My particular effectiveness in talking with another SA member is not based on how complete I was when I drafted my 4th step; how much time I spent in prayer and meditation; nor even how many sponsees I've taken through the Steps. What makes me uniquely qualified to help another SA is my history of problems, my first-hand

knowledge of the absolute depths to which this addiction can drive a person.

Focus on the solution? Sure, but not to the exclusion of the problems. To get another addict to follow my lead in working the steps, I must first show them that those steps have been the solution to my problems. I share freely of my problems, both past and present. I never was and I am not now a perfect person. What I am is a person just like any other with defects and problems; some of my own making, some not. If you identify with those problems and are seeking a solution, I am happy to

**In that first meeting,
those notions of isolation
dissipated as others shared
about their issues --
my issues.**

share my "secret" to a better life. The 12 Steps are the solution which I use to deal with my problems: problems I share with rigorous honesty so that you may know I am a brother living IN this world, with you, dealing with worldly issues.

No matter how long I work the Steps, I will never be someone to whom the rules of life do not apply. May I never seem as such to those who seek my help. For if I do, I will have lost my effectiveness as an advocate for the 12-Step solution. My 12-Step program includes both problems and a solution. I will not work the latter without admitting the former. And so both are my focus.

Note: I guess this is why I cringe when I hear experienced members say that meeting shares and phone call check-ins should be focused on the solution, that any discussion of problems is just dumping on the group.

Brent S., Virginia USA

www.sa.org/Essay

World Wide News

**New! Click this link for
Recordings from the Virtual
SA Scottish Convention,
March 27-29,**

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

To The Essay:

The March 2020 Asia Pacific Online Unity event was a huge success.

We had 420 registrations and around 15 volunteers on the planning committee.

Last year we had 123 registrations and 3 volunteers.

119 of registrations were from the Asia Pacific area.

We had a members speak in Bahasa Malaysia, South Korea and Japan.

We finished the event by singing the serenity prayer together.

We can't wait to see what happens next year.

Kind regards Jason

SAVE THE DATE

**ASIA PACIFIC AREA
ONLINE UNITY
EVENT 2021**

25 APRIL 2021

**WE HAVE ENTERED THE WORLD
OF SPIRITS OUR NEXT FUNCTION
IS TO GROW IN UNDERSTANDING
AND EFFECTIVENESS. Pg 84 BB**

Once we can travel again!?

Are you interested in travel to the Asia Pacific area such as Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand? Would you be willing to run a workshop or lead shares at local meetings?

Please contact Jason at newcastlesagroup@gmail.com



52 Weeks To Enhance Your Sobriety

A year of goals

I have attached my goals for the next year in SA. These are to enhance my sobriety. I am going to do a goal every week and write about it in a journal.

Week 1: Make a list of all those I blame (or have blamed) for my problems and pray for them.

Week 2: This week I will focus on accepting the differences in others and learn to love them as they are.

Week 3: I will list 5 things I like about myself

Week 4: What is the next right thing in my life today? Have I tried to follow this way of living?

Week 5: What does recovery look like for me? Journal this.

Week 6: I will list 10 things about my spouse that are good qualities and share them with her or him. For those who aren't married do this with a good friend instead.

Week 7: Read a paragraph from the White Book and spend 10 minutes in meditation on it.

Week 8: This week I will attempt to practice patience and delayed gratification

Week 9: What pleasures can I find in life this week outside of lust? Journal this.

Week 10: "The courage to change the things I can." What things can I change this week? Am I willing to ask God for the courage to do so?

Week 11: I will learn to practice humility this week. What are the ways I can be more humble? How has pride harmed me? Journal this.

Week 12: I will read a selection from "Member Stories", reflect on it and write about it.

Week 13: How much value do I place on taking life 1 day at a time? Do I take my sobriety for granted?

Week 14: How much of myself do I see in "A Vision for You"?

Week 15: Step 4 tells us to take a fearless inventory. What do I fear today? Am I willing to surrender this?

Week 16: How willing am I to do whatever it takes to stay sober? Am I working the program currently?

Week 17: Celebrate Sponsor Appreciation Week and let them know how much you appreciate them. If you don't have a sponsor, make it a point this week to get one.

Week 18: Hungry. I will focus on the role food plays in my life and avoid getting too hungry.

Week 19: Step 1 says I should admit I am powerless over lust. What else am I powerless over today?

Week 20: How many of the "promises" have come true for me? Why or why not?

Week 21: I will let go of 1 event from the wreckage of my past that I cling to.

Week 22: Step 7 says I should humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings. What does "humbly asking" look like to me? Do I normally speak to God humbly?

Week 23: I will ask God this week to know the difference between what I

can and cannot change.

Week 24: Have I actively sought God's will this week? Do I even want to do His will?

Week 25: Am I making progressive victory over lust or am I back into old habits? What can I do to continue to progress to a better sobriety?

Week 26: Step 12 speaks of a spiritual awakening. What does my spiritual awakening look like?

[the remaining 26 weeks goals are included in the online post at www.sa.org]

Michael B St. Louis, MO

The Numbers & The Virus

A Report From April 2020

First quarter results were promising. Fellowship contributions were back to budget levels. Literature sales were returning to normal. We were finding the way. We were on the right track. Then the Corona Virus struck in mid-March. There was no warning; there was no ramp up; there is no play book. Our meeting room lights were shut



off, not dimmed, but just dark. The Fellowship found the way. We turned to our phones and computers and we were joined together in our virtual meetings. The SAICO office found the way to extend their work space to work at home, despite three members needing to self-isolate. The office is open, the mail, phone calls, emails are

being answered, literature orders, and contributions are being posted, service committee are functioning and all are safe, they found the way.

Literature orders and contributions had dried up. How bad would it get; how long will it last?

The situation was dire. You could hear it at the virtual meetings, "It's now time for our 7th Tradition, we have no dues or fees, we are self-supporting through our own contributions." But how do we contribute over the phone or on ZOOM? The Toronto convention and other events were canceled. Would the Atlanta convention need to be canceled? It appeared we were burning through \$4,000 per week keeping the office running. At that rate, we could survive 27 weeks on the prudent reserve from April 1 on.

SAICO would qualify for the Federal PPP loan program to cover three months of salaries. But our Traditions advise us differently. Things were bleak. As one Delegate shouted at the end of GDA meeting without having had time to give the financial report, "I want to hear the financial report - How bad is it?"

Then SAICO ran the Profit/Loss statement for April - REVENUE - \$35.7K, EXPENSE 19.6K, NET INCOME \$16.1K. Most of the revenue arrived the last 10 days of April. Since, Nashville reports their convention finances were better than expected and their check is on the way and the SW region is also sending a nice contribution, the Fellowship has found a way. We are so very grateful. After all, our lives depend on recovery.

Carleton B., SAICO Finance Chair
May 7, 2020



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.

Skype Meetings

There are currently 10 weekly SA Skype meetings conducted in English.

Use the links below to find out what times they take place (times vary based on time zones) and to join.

Moderators' accounts are provided to larger groups for the purpose of removing less active members in an effort to reduce difficulties with call connections.

Mondays Bangkok
<https://join.skype.com/KhkakX2ThIny> and
<https://join.skype.com/wfWLO4KDorO9>

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/OQSlpNFeIk0x>

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

Sundays:
<https://join.skype.com/IUL1wdSu7qBF>

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>

Guidelines for Zoom Meetings

From: <https://aasfmarin.org>

For Meeting Hosts: Protecting Anonymity & Default Settings in Zoom

For Zoom users: With the rush to shift to online meetings, many of us did not take time to investigate what this meant to the spiritual foundation of our recovery – namely, anonymity. Now that online meetings are nearly universally accessible, we want to pass on best practices for protecting anonymity. These have been curated from the membership and online resources.

The default Zoom settings run counter to AA's spiritual foundation of anonymity. The meetings are publicly accessible and full names and faces are often displayed. Additionally, by default all Zoom meetings are recorded to the cloud. Turning that feature off is simple, fortunately.

Suggested Meeting Setting Changes to Preserve Anonymity

Here are some suggested settings for your meeting to use. Please note that most, if not all, of the settings below are not the Zoom default:

1. Login to Zoom.us
2. Click on Settings.
3. Click on the Meeting sub tab.

In your Personal Zoom Settings section, under the Meeting sub tab, scroll through the options in In Meeting (Basic) and In Meeting (Advanced) and change the following settings:

- Require Encryption for Third Party Endpoints
- Disable Auto saving chats
- Disable File transfer
- Disable Feedback to Zoom
- Disable end-of-meeting feedback survey
- Disable Screen sharing
- Disable desktop/screen share for users
- Disable Remote control
- Disable Allow Removed Participants to rejoin
- Disable Virtual background (While fun, some trolls have been showing up to online meeting with violent and pornographic images as their background.)

In the Zoom Settings section, under the Recording sub tab:

- Disable Local recording
- Disable Cloud recording
- Disable Automatic recording

In the Zoom Settings section, under the Telephone sub tab:

- Enable Mask phone number in the participant list

We will update this page with additional information as we learn it and encourage you to share tips and tricks with us that we can include.

Events Calendar

PLEASE NOTE - These events are subject to cancellation or change due to the then-current Coronavirus conditions in their local areas. Please check with the hosting group for specifics.

International Conventions

November 19 - 21, 2020, Online SA Internet 24 hour Marathon, November 19 -20, 2020. Registration information available soon.

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

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

June 19 - 21, 2020, Sydney, Australia SA Conference: Vision 20/20 - Seeing The 12 Steps clearly. Virtual event via Zoom Information: contact <https://saoz.net>

July 31 - August 2, 2020 Golden, CO USA Colorado SA/S-Anon Retreat Information: contact info@coloradosa.org

August 28 - 29, 2020 Mahoney State Park, NE, USA 2020 Nebraska Retreat Information: contact <https://sanebraska.org/contact>

September 13, 2020 Huntington, NY, USA SA/S-Anon Long Island Conference Details & flyer will be available by July 2020

October 2-4, 2020 Ontario, CA, USA SA/S-Anon Regional Unity Conference Living in Gratitude. <http://www.sasocal.org/info-meeting/>

October 9 - 11, 2020 Canby, OR, USA SA/S-Anon weekend retreat: Came to Believe Information: www.saportlandmetro.org or info@saportlandmetro.org

November 6 - 8, 2020 Oakhurst, CA, USA SA Unity Men's Retreat Information: contact sabayarea@gmail.com or www.sabayarea.org

November 07, 2020 Montgomery County, MD, USA Gratitude Day Register and more information: <https://casaig.wixsite.com/home/event-info/gratitude-day>

Send in your event to be listed in Essay and on this web page. Please submit the following information: dates, theme, location, and contact(s). An event flyer is very helpful. Send event information to saico@sa.org.

SA Conventions

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

Próximo Evento

CONVENCIÓN NACIONAL SA / S-Anon / S-Ateen 2020 en VALLADOLID

Del 27 al 29 de noviembre de 2020

MÁS INFORMACIÓN PRÓXIMAMENTE



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

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

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

New Groups May 2020

Europe and Asia

Nice, France
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
Taipei, Taiwan

North, Central, and South America

High Point, North Carolina, USA
Houston, Texas, USA (new mtg.)
Phoenix, Arizona, USA (Español)
Envigada, Colombia

2020 First Quarter SAICO Budget Results

1st quarter 2020

Revenue	\$75,602
Expenses	\$88,101
Revenues -Expenses	< \$12,476 >
Prudent Reserve	\$123,890

SAICO and 7th Traditions

The Corona Virus has disrupted the Fellowship contribution supply line. Most 7th tradition collections begin at our local face-to-face meetings. But we are not allowed

to meet at our regular meeting locations. We have taken to phone and Zoom meetings to carry our message of recovery. But how do we make of 7th Tradition collections? Some are setting aside envelopes next to our phones or computers. Other meetings establish donate buttons on their local meeting, intergroup or regional web sites. We should make an effort to establish donate buttons throughout all the Fellowship's websites. As a reminder the SAICO web site takes PayPal donations in seven different currencies. Please spread the word.

Carlton B., Finance Chair

[see Numbers update on page 27E in *Essay* online]

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

Dear SACFC and friends,

We know your life, and the lives of your loved ones, depend on your recovery and recovery depends, much of the time, on service. During this time it is easy to forget about those incarcerated, even as we take care of ourselves. Our primary purpose of carrying the message has not changed, due to the virus, not one bit.

We want to share our appreciation for all who go out of their way to put others first, and to be 'the hand that reaches out to the SA,' in prison and jails. We are still at work, taking care to match first responders and sponsors with those who continue to ask for help. In some ways, the virus has offered an opportunity as facilities change their approach to physical contact. We have always valued immediate and direct means in working with these men and women, and ask you to pray for them during this pandemic.

We depend more than ever on Zoom, email and WhatsApp. If ever there was a time to acquaint ourselves with meeting technology in recovery, this is it. This has allowed us to continue to communicate with trusted servants on several continents, across cultures and time zones. If you have been using, or have yet to use these tools, we hope you will take advantage of this time try them out.

We are in contact with a number of prison administrators, requesting rare online access to those who are part of SA, now that prisons are placing an extreme limit on contact with the free community. We hope to adapt and learn to be supportive of these 'front line' professionals who are helping us to carry the message of recovery found in SA.

We could use your financial help in the absence of the 7th tradition support normally acquired at the national, international and regional conventions and conferences. This practice allows us to maintain our supply of White Books, Step Into Action and tool kit literature, in addition to the process of administering prisoner requests, contacting sponsors and responders. Pam in the SA International Central Office now reports receiving about twenty new sponsee and prisoner letters a week. The virus may not respect our health, but no virus can stop recovery.

As we work closely with local meetings, it is essential that we have financial support. Because you care about SACFC and its mission, please give, via sa.org/donate.

In service, Eric S. SACFC Chair

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 diligent CFC outreach. Currently we have a backlog of some 150 sponsees. We have an urgent need for sponsors.

Our email address: SACFC1@gmail.com

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 in 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.