

Following are transcripts of a seminar given by Roy K. at the Klinik in Bad Herrenalb, Germany, on the weekend of October 18 to 20, 1985. Roy copyedited the transcripts and approved them for distribution to members of the fellowship.

STORY ONE

My name is Roy and I'm a recovering sexaholic.

I'm very pleased to be here. The SA groups from the United States and Canada send their greetings and are with us here today. I have mixed feelings, very emotional feelings being here, and the feelings are all good — too good to be true.

I know you're all wondering who I am and what I'm going to say. I am, too. [Laughter] The plan of the seminar is not structured at all, and I want to leave it flexible.

What I say will also be true of others, but I can only speak for myself. Above all, I want our sessions to bring us together, and to see what God has in store for us. I'm here because I want to be better and I want to grow. And I think everyone in this room is here because you want to live and you want life more abundantly.

I want to tell you what I am not. I'm not a psychologist, a sexologist, or a therapist. I'm not an expert on sex addiction. I'm not a spokesman for Sexaholics Anonymous. I'm not a religious person in the sense of being connected to the religious establishment, although I was raised in a German Protestant Church, and I love the German language and the German people, but I'm sorry — forgive me — for not knowing German.

What I am is a recovering sex drunk. I'm going to be talking about myself. You will have different reactions because you have different needs. I cannot meet your needs. I can only bear witness to the truth of my own experience.

It's difficult to start cold. My plan was to go through right now and give you a summary of the 12 Steps. But this is almost meaningless unless you realize the necessity for the 12 Steps. In my opinion, no one is really going to work this 12-Step Program unless they are absolutely powerless over something.

Now the 12 Steps are beautiful — we all recognize that. But they're just on paper. They really mean nothing unless I need what they have to offer. So the question here today is: How can I help you unless you are powerless?

Can you be honest with me today? How many here, regardless of whether you're a sexaholic or not, know in the bottom of your hearts that you are powerless over something?

[One after another, everyone present raises their hand]

I think I have to change my plan. I think I have to start with my story. I have the mind of a sexaholic and an alcoholic. My thinking is: I'll save my story for when the most people are here. [Laughter] The best thing I can tell you is what happened to me.

I was born into a family on my mother's side who were alcoholics and sexaholics. My mother had pre-incestuous feelings for me, I believe. I started masturbating at the age of eight, but I was a thumb sucker from my mother's womb. I think I was an addict waiting to happen. I

had to have something to cope with life. As a child, I could not cope with my emotions, and I couldn't cope with the reality of my surroundings.

One Sunday morning when I was reading the comic strips, and as I saw the beautiful Queen of Magic in Flash Gordon, that's when I was awakened to my sexuality normally as a child. A very beautiful experience. It was a normal, natural awakening. I felt no guilt or shame and I asked my mother what was happening. She found it difficult to talk about it and told me never to do it again. But it was not harsh. Something happened, and I knew that I had to do it.

Now there are two kinds of masturbation. One is what they call the nirvana kind, which is for oblivion, where there is no fantasy or imagery in the mind, and the other is where there's a picture or image of the fantasy partner in the mind. I started with the first kind, and sometime later it went into the second kind.

In the first form, let me describe the experience. The actual sexual climax was nothing; it was the end. It was the actual stimulation that was producing the nirvana effect of the drug. And so I would prolong it for as long as possible, sometimes for hours. When it turned into the picture kind, then I had to usually find a picture, and for the rest of my life, till the age of 47, masturbation became the normal mode of my acting out, regardless of what else was on top of it — girlfriends, marriage, prostitutes, whatever.

I would like to break down the anatomy of what happened inside of me during masturbation. One, the thought pops into my head. I make the decision to masturbate. I find an image. When I was 14 years old, I was working in a market and we would have to wrap the vegetables in newspapers, and that was my great treasure house of pictures. When no one was looking, I would quickly tear out a picture and then go and have sex with myself.

Now it has to be the right picture, and as the decision is made, an excitement, an electricity, comes into me. It's a search, and I begin to close out the world. The obsession begins to shut everything out. Now I hope I don't get too explicit. If I get too explicit, please raise your hand. As I start staring at the picture, it's a fixation. How can I describe this to you? This picture is just dots on a piece of paper, just ink. But when I look at it, it is transformed into something larger than reality, and I begin to take a drink. As I drink, my soul becomes connected with this and somewhere along here the sexual stimulations begins. But notice that the chemistry, the magic, has happened before there was any stimulation of the organ at all.

Let me tell you of an experience that illustrates this. It happened after I was sexually sober a year-and-a-half. I see it so clearly because I had been in recovery.

I was innocently looking through Time magazine. I see a picture of a dancer in a revealing costume. I look at the picture and I close it back because I know I can't look. There are two things: attraction and fear. Great attraction and great fear. I know that I can't look. It's toxic for me because I know it's the first drink that gets me drunk.

I turned the page and looked again. By the third time, I looked and drank deeply, and the picture was transformed into what I must have: my supernatural connection. I had no choice after that point. I knew I had to start masturbating, but then I said, that's useless, I'll go out and find a prostitute.

The point I want to make is intoxication and trance. What this really is for me is the distortion of reality; and the amplification, the intensification of reality. I take what is in the real world and make it something it isn't. I infuse it with a spiritual power. And that spiritual power is created within me to give me the transcendence that I need to cope with my reality. That gives me my god.

So it's a creative act within me. I create my drug in my own mind. Why do I have to create this false reality? It comes from a need within me that is not met. And the need is larger than the reality, so the need is larger than myself. It is super-natural. And I transform this simple experience — dots on paper — into that transcendent experience. And I make my relations with a woman serve that same end.

Now the sex researchers, looking at the outside only, would say, the man is functional, normal, healthy, and his sex instinct is doing its normal function. None of their instruments know what was happening inside my soul. This simple experience of masturbation is infinitely more than animal masturbation because I am more. The greatest flaw, in my opinion, of twentieth century science is its one-sided view of man.

Let us summarize what I just described. The first is the physiological, the visual and the sensory stimulation. Perhaps the doctors here can verify that the visual cortex is the largest part of the brain. Is it not something like one-third of the brain? A very significant portion of the brain, thus it has great effect and power in me. Now at the physical level there is the sexual stimulation of the genitals and, going through the eyes, the physical aspect of masturbation for me becomes a very potent aspect.

But the physical is nothing! The psychological aspect we've just described is fixation, trance, obsession with the penis, and it's a closed loop within the self. What am I doing inside? I'm creating a fantasy image that I'm having sex with. But that fantasy image is me. So when I speak of the closed loop in masturbation — as the one who's using the drug, not the normal person — I'm driving myself farther inside of myself. I'm doing damage to my psyche by splitting myself having sex with myself and I am slowly making it impossible to have a true union with another human being.

We have the physiological and the psychological. Is that all? No. Because for me, masturbation is a spiritual experience. And I use the word spiritual not in the sense of religious, but in the sense of the god-connection. The god-connection and the human connection. In my experience, my masturbation became an act of worship, and woman became the goddess, the idol. I'm thinking now of the mother goddess of pre-history. Here again, the connection I'm going to make is just my opinion; you won't find it in any books.

Beginning with homo sapiens 28,000 years ago, we find man in the caves of Europe and later in Turkey in Anatolia. Man became a hunter in Europe first, and as the glaciers receded, he moved east into Turkey. And we know now that Turkey was the true origin of Western civilization.

Now when we dig the remains of man, from the earliest of homo sapiens in Europe to a few thousand years B.C. in Turkey, among all the other things that we find, we find one thing that is common to all of them: It's the figurine of the naked female figure, usually in stone or ivory, and it has the female sexual features exaggerated, and no face. They're usually fat.

Now the scientists really don't know what they represent, but they call them "the mother goddess" figurines and they feel it may have been connected with fertility rites or some other religious process. That goes back 28,000 years, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, very widespread.

Do you want to know how this sexaholic interprets that? [Laughter] I start with myself and Playboy magazine, and then I go back to the early photographs of the 19th Century, and we go back to Venus and Astarte and the other mother goddesses of ancient history, and I don't know what they represent but I know that these images I use become my goddess. I cannot live

without that spiritual connection with them. My spiritual mis-connection!

Now those of you who are not sexual addicts or masturbation addicts will know nothing of what we are talking about. What was I really looking for in masturbation? First, I was looking for the natural discovery of my sexuality. This was the normal, natural function I was trying to fulfill. I was also looking originally for oblivion, altered consciousness, mood altering experience, transcendence, connection with person. And what else was I looking for? I think I was looking for the Lover of my Soul.

Plato gives a beautiful illustration of the soul. He says the soul is like a charioteer — the one who drives a chariot — and he has two horses. One is a noble steed and the other an ignoble steed. He is driving his chariot to meet his lover. At times the noble steed controls, and at other times the ignoble.

For 39 years, I gave the reins to the ignoble horse, and the good part of me was powerless. I was lost because I knew I was out of control, going in the wrong direction. Nobody told me masturbation was wrong. What my mother said really didn't matter to me. I think my sub-conscious knew there was something self-destructive.

Do you see now what the remedy for me has to be? You see how total it has to be for me? The remedy has to be physical, psychological and spiritual. I've got to stop the acting out, and I've got to change my attitude and my character and find what the charioteer was looking for. I have to find the Lover of my Soul.

We've been speaking of masturbation. Now let's take the anatomy of my affairs and relationships. And by the way, every relationship started with an affair. First there was the look. Across a crowded room. The magic connection. The chemistry, the electricity. And when I feel the chemistry of that look, the distortion of reality has already begun. I'm beginning to change it into what will meet my needs. But it's covered with romance. "Dancing in the Dark" — I was a dancing fool. [Laughter]

But when I see her, I don't want to see the real person. I don't want to see her without high heel shoes, without her makeup. What makes the magic is the low lights and the chemistry. The image.

As my addiction progressed, the unreal quality increased, just like in the pictures with the masturbation. After a while it has to be more intense and more lurid and more attractive. Then comes the moment of truth. The stimulation begins, and what was happening in my fantasy with masturbation is now happening with another body; intoxication, amplification, and distortion. I infuse her the same way I infuse the picture with a fantasy created to serve my sick needs. And I become possessed.

I'm overcome by a super-real or super-natural feeling, and this feeling has transforming power. It changes me. It's a mood-altering experience, and I'm taking this natural, beautiful instinct and forcing it to serve that inner spiritual emptiness. The next step is again, idolatry and worship.

Let me tell you of an experience I had at the age of 17 that's very hard for me to describe. I had never touched a girl, but I had been masturbating for nine years. A girl came into the living-room of my home. She was attracted to me. She was sitting in a chair. As soon as I discovered we were alone, I dropped to my knees and grabbed her legs. Now the legs had been one of my fetish triggers in all the pictures and fantasies. There is no doubt in my mind that this was an act of worship. I was possessing the goddess. That's why the innocent romance of an affair and relationship for me had to happen again and again and again. It never satisfied my real

need. And that's why I could never overcome the inability to have true union with that person.

Now when we compare these two anatomies of my sexual addiction — the masturbation and the affairs and relationships — what do we see? When I give you the first list and the second list, what comes to your mind? What jumps out at you? You're right, they're identical! That which is the most intense experience in my life holds out for me the promise of my salvation.

At the very end of my sex addiction — and I hope it is the end, I have that choice to make it not the end — my addiction had taken me from innocent masturbation, through voyeurism, through affairs and relationships, to prostitutes, massage parlors, the movie houses, and being arrested. Sex on the streets. At the very end, I was in a motel room in Hollywood and I was on a three-month sex binge. I began falling in love with the prostitutes.

Somehow I was trying to force something to happen. I had never done that before. I don't fully understand why I started falling in love with these prostitutes. Did I want them to serve this spiritual need? The last one was the embodiment of all the sexual fantasies I had ever had. And after the act of worship, I made the decision to be her pimp so I could keep having her: to give up my marriage, my career, everything. This was the Magic Piece. This was the Queen of Magic. In my hands and in my soul.

As I was sitting there, after I had made this decision, I had what the alcoholics call a moment of clarity. I saw that within three days ... I would need somebody else. *Some-body-else*. Because the unreal never satisfies the real need. The lifetime of lust had brought me down to the end. The party was over. All my life I had been deceived. There's no way I can describe that desolation and lostness.

The last phase of my addiction was the prostitute addiction. And if we went down the anatomy of that experience, the pattern would be identical with that of the masturbation and relationships.

Now if you have an addiction like I have, you're going to need the most powerful remedy that the world has to offer. I couldn't find it in anything that the world had to offer. Three psychiatrists, two group therapies, church after church, many religious experiences, a new marriage, a new job ... None of these fixed me. Even exorcism failed. I left the house where they performed that rite with deep regret that I had burned all my precious phone numbers.

Now I'd like to talk about my view of the 12 Steps as they have taken me out of this addiction, one day at a time. For the first year-and-a-half, I did not work the Steps. I believed in them, but never connected with them. The first time I had heard them, I said, this is God's gift to the human race. I worked all 12 Steps in less than 12 minutes! [Laughter]

These Steps are hard. Because I have a hard disease. This disease is with me today. I am a lustaholic. Part of me wants the goddess today. Part of me knows that if I don't look and take a drink, I'm going to die. But when I drink, that's when I die. When I connect instead with my Higher Power and say, I'm powerless over my lust, I send this away to You now, then I live. And every temptation thus becomes for me an opportunity for an increment of life. I'm getting the fullness of life, the abundant life, one temptation at a time.

What the 12 Steps mean for me is I have to die, each time. That's the First Step: I have to be willing to die. Because this impulse for life, which is the most powerful impulse I have, has been misdirected and connected to a false reality, to which I must die.

I admit today that I am powerless over lust and my life is unmanageable. My emotional

life, my psychological life, my relational life with people. I'm still a relational cripple, can't you see that? When I walked in, you knew I wasn't perfectly related to people. But I'm better than I've ever been, thank God!

STORY TWO

I think my SA story begins a long time ago. I've never taken it back this far before. It's my story so I can't change it.

My mother comes from the ruling dynasty of 12th Century Armenia. My father's ancestors lived in a cave. So the royalty and the peasants mixed, and today I'm something of both, caught in the middle.

My parents met in the USA and there were three children born. I have an older brother, myself, and a younger sister. My father was a shoemaker and owned a little grocery store, and mother helped him in the store and did all the housework and all the cooking.

We lived in the country in Van Nuys, California, during the Depression. We never went without a meal, but we lived on 20 dollars a month. I remember going after the harvest and gleaning the beans from the field, or the lettuce, from the leftovers. But this was our way of life and we lived it fully. My father died when I was five, and that's what made it difficult.

I remember when the springtime came and the fields were plowed, my brother and I would run in the fresh-turned earth in our bare feet. There were trees and sunlight, but on the inside of my life there was darkness.

I didn't understand the darkness. As a child, the fear closed me off. Our bedtime stories were not Alice in Wonderland. Mother's stories were about being chased by the Turks. And she would play out her recurring nightmares by telling us those stories.

Ours was not the all-American family. Our home was a little Armenia, and yet we lived inside the American culture. It was like an island of home in an alien world. And the external world was unknown and supposed to be hostile. And we had no other Armenian community with which to relate.

I believe that very soon I made my older brother my father's substitute. We were very close but in a rather strange way. He was the industrious one. I was the introvert and the passive one. He would always be doing something, making something, and my whole life consisted of being with him and serving him.

For example, he's building a radio on the table and I'm standing to the side. I'm giving him his tools and his solder as a well-trained robot. I do something wrong and suddenly I get it — wham — on the shoulder. He didn't want to hurt me.

Later on, psychiatrist after psychiatrist and therapist after therapist cited this as the great cause of my mental illness — rejection by my father's substitute. And when I discovered resentment in sobriety, suddenly there was my brother and I was the victim — it was all his fault.

My mother — how can I describe her? She was heavy-set, compulsive, full of anxiety, and could not cope with these three children. I can identify with her because I could not cope with my three children. So when she can't cope she chases us with a mop and when that doesn't work we get locked in the closet. [Laughter]

Now what happened inside of me? As I said earlier, one Sunday morning when I was eight years of age, I'm reading the comic strips, and there's Flash Gordon. This was the comic strip of the future. One Sunday the Queen of Magic has lured him to her cave and she's dressed in high heels and very filmy, futuristic clothes. As Flash has to pass her to get to Dale, his beloved, she comes up to Flash and kisses him. That's when I awoke to my innocent childhood sexuality. I discovered the pleasure and the newness and the innocence of coming into puberty, and that's when masturbation began. In total innocence, but in an unreal world.

At the age of five, I believe, I was still a thumb sucker, and my parents had been trying for years to get me to stop. When everything failed, one day they brought in our neighborhood motorcycle cop, and he's so big, all I can see is his belly. And I remember him saying to me: "If you suck your thumb once more, I'm going to cut off that much, and the next time we'll cut off some more." My mother tells me that that night, I put my thumb to my mouth and immediately pulled it back with a shudder. That was my first drug, I think. I needed something to cope with life. And I believe that's when the resentment started.

When the masturbation started at age eight, it was not connected with any imagery. My mind was in a nirvana state. As masturbation progressed, however, I found that when I used the picture to masturbate to, suddenly the world was different. It created a new experience. Ever since that time, the imagery had to be there, either in fantasy or with actual pictures.

The masturbation progressed, and I had no contact with women or girls at all, and by the age of seventeen, it was up to three times a day. As I look back on it, it was a grey, lonely, bleak existence. I had to look forward to that relief, that escape, every day just to exist. Life was intolerable without my drug. I remember in high school, I had a crush on a girl, and the best I could do was hide behind a pillar and look at her across the campus so that she wouldn't see me.

When I was seventeen, I saw the supplement in the biology text on reproduction. That's when I discovered what sex was. I don't know how anybody can live seventeen years and not know what sex is, but that was me. That was a marvelous awakening to me and it brought forth all kinds of hope. I think that's where I began to reach for a connection in my fantasy with another human being, instead of in this closed circuit inside myself.

I graduated from high school and went right into the Navy at the tail end of World War II, and that's when I started trying to stop masturbation for the first time. I was in electronics training, and for some reason I started Bible study classes in the room where we washed our clothes in bootcamp. At the same time, I started trying to stop masturbating. I think now that for the first time I was trying to save myself. I became a periodic — that is, instead of every day, I would stop and start again. So I stopped and I kept stopping, and this gave me the delusion that I had my addiction under control.

After I got out of the Navy, I went to college. I was going to a church, and the minister learned that I played the violin, and he knew a girl in the congregation that played, and he thought he'd put us together for a duet. What a tragic experience that was. And the duets weren't that good either. [Laughter]

I remember the first time I saw this girl. I judged her — probably from my conditioning from my mother — that since she's not Armenian, she's not a good girl. All American girls are

bad. [Laughter]

We married. [Laughter] I got swept off my feet. You want to hear something funny? This was the first girl I ever dated or touched. For the first time I'm kissing a girl and I can't understand that I can't control my erections. So I went to a doctor and asked him what to do. And he said, buy a jockstrap. I bought one but it didn't work. [Laughter] Strange doctor...

Before we got married, I decided for some reason that I would have to stop masturbating. So I stopped for 30 days and almost had a nervous breakdown. I was going to summer school and the terror of getting married and being in withdrawal from my drug, and white-knuckling it, created the situation where I'd study for five minutes and my hands would be shaking. I was trying to find excuses to start masturbating again.

I was trying to find a way out, but even then I knew that marriage wouldn't fix it. So I was very relieved when another doctor asked me — I had had mumps in the Navy — for a specimen so he could do a sperm count. After a weak protest, I started masturbating again, and of course the first drink got me drunk.

We got married, and on our honeymoon we had a misunderstanding about not having children — I thought we had to have no sex. I found myself in one small room with one bed, and no sex. The first time I'm with a woman, and I'm going crazy. I actually started beating my head against the wall.

Once we did start having sex, I had this marvelous experience. This beautiful newness of having sex with a woman, and it was one of the most marvelous freedoms and experiences of my life, except that a few short weeks later, I found myself inexplicably masturbating again. I would go to any length to get a picture.

I was going to Bible school in St. Paul, Minnesota, and I discovered that if you go through the garbage in the attic, you find there are other sex addicts in Bible school. Then the conflicts started again, because suddenly I realized I had this pure good wholesome thing — marriage — and I'm back in the darkness. The conflict began.

So what did I do? I went to another doctor. Only this man was by an alleyway, upstairs in the darkness and I think he had an abortion clinic. I went to the wrong doctor. All I remember is that when I told him my problem, he said nothing. He just shook his head and pointed to the door.

Next I went to a minister and decided I had to talk to him about my habit. We had a very nice talk, but I didn't talk about my habit. I did one very interesting thing instead. When I was leaving, and having mentioned nothing about my problem, I said: "Do you know so-and-so in school — that student — I think he masturbates, and isn't that terrible?" The poor man just shook his head. He didn't know what to do either. I guess I haven't had much luck with the professionals.

Three children later. [Laughter] I woke up and was wondering what hit me. I was in seminary. I was assistant pastor in a church. I was studying for the ministry. I had just had my first prostitute. I was preaching against worldly passion from the pulpit, and one day it was all too much for me. I bolted from the ministry and I bolted from the marriage. We had already been through a few separations, so it was no surprise.

Many factors contributed to this. One of them was I wanted to be free to proceed with my addiction, I couldn't cope with a family or intimacy. Another was I couldn't stand living the lie anymore. Another was great disillusionment and great disenchantment with the Church. I felt

like the greatest misfit I have ever been in my entire life. That's when my affair and relationship addiction began. They are the stories familiar to all of you.

I learned how to dance. I had been the manager of a dance studio, and I just loved to dance. This was where the romance began — afternoon dancing, evening dancing. [Laughter] Stealing away from work and dancing in the dark. Strangely enough, sometimes the compulsion was relieved just through the dancing. You see, I think my addiction has nothing to do with sex at all. My whole life there has been this desperate need inside that had to be fulfilled with Person. And often, just the joy of dancing with a person would still the compulsion. But a short time later it would come again and I would have to act out.

When the prostitute addiction took over, my life quickly went downhill. But what comes to mind now is a story I've never told in public. I'm really telling this story for myself, and I want to thank you for letting me tell my story.

It was a 45-minute bus ride from UCLA to where I lived. This one day on the bus I'm sitting next to a lady when at the next stop a woman dressed in a green knit suit and gloves walks in the front door. She sat in the seat in front of me. For 45 minutes, this lady tried to pick me up. I think she's one of us. The subtle language of the tossed head, and the eyes — you know the story ...

Now this can be a normal beautiful experience between two human beings, and we see it in the movies all the time. This is the stuff romance and love are made of. Let me try to tell you what was going on inside of me. You know what a volcano is? The molten lava first starts to boil and comes up higher and higher and higher. For the first time in my life, I was seeing in the flesh what the picture-fantasy since the age of eight had been programming and conditioning me for. Here was the Queen of Magic for the first time in the flesh, and she wanted me.

The inner conflict was so intense it was like a contained explosion. The volcano exploded, but it exploded inside. At the moment when she was going to get off, she gave me the signal. She went to the front of the bus and pressed the cord, looked back at me for the last time, and every cell in my being was screaming to go out the back door.

Why didn't I go out the back door? The older lady next to me — what would she think? [Laughter] I did not get off the bus. But at the next stop, I got off and ran back as fast as I could! [Laughter]

Nice adolescent story, right? But look what it did for me. That was the starting point of my pursuit on the streets. The next thing I know I have nine dollars grocery money. I tell my wife, who has the first little baby, I'm going to the library, and I take a 45-minute bus ride, hoping to find the green knit suit, and I wind up spending the nine dollars in a bar on main street trying to pick up a B-girl. I would walk the streets, looking desperately for a connection, sometimes just to talk with a woman, sometimes to try to pick up a woman.

One incident from my relationship addiction: the girl who had acres of land and a house on a hill. This was my first relationship. But when it was over, it was never over. It was just another bottle I had put in the cupboard of my heart. And in hard times when nothing else was available, I would pick up the phone and call her or go and see her.

That was what it used to be like. My addiction had taken me from the simple, innocent masturbation, through marriage, through affairs and prostitutes. I'll never forget the first time I was arrested in public: hands up on the wall, searched, swear to God, "Thank you, this is the last time!" And of course as soon as I'm released, I'm back looking for the same woman. At the end, sometimes I would be impotent even in sex with new prostitutes. I had to recreate the distorted

reality of lust in my mind even to have sex. I had reached the point where increasing doses of the drug had brought diminishing results, and lust and sex were no longer working.

I had heard through a prostitute about AA and I sensed when she read the 12 Steps to me that this was the synthesis of everything I had been looking for. Sometime later I was coming home from work and I saw an article in Time magazine on the New Alcoholism. I called Alcoholics Anonymous and went to my first meeting.

I went to my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting in a suit and tie and they thought the courts had sent me. [Laughter] After the meeting I was beaming, beaming with joy. I told them I was an alcoholic personality. I got some ugly stares as a result of that, but I had found my people and I knew I was finally in the right place.

What happened was this: I went to that meeting, and my life simply turned and started going in a new direction. I made no commitment or decision to throw away the literature or the phone numbers or anything. It was a great freedom. Since I was separated from my second wife at this time, it was total abstinence — no sex with myself or anybody else, and no pornography. Those first 30 days of withdrawal were very difficult. I was very shaky. The only words I knew of the Program were: “I’m powerless, please help me.” But that was enough, and it kept me sober one moment at a time.

I’ll never forget the first call I made. One-thirty in the morning I called a friend in Alcoholics Anonymous and I said, “I’m sorry, but I have to go back out there.” And he said, “Go ahead.” Before that phone call, I knew the compulsion was just as strong as in the bus with the lady in the green knit suit. Before the phone call, there was no choice. After the phone call, I was absolutely free and slept like a baby.

That was the first time I felt the miracle. In AA, they call it the small miracle. For me, there’s no bigger miracle in the universe. It’s the difference between life and death, light and darkness, conflict and peace, evil and good, uncleanness and cleanness. Victory over lust. One temptation at a time. And it gets better. But with lots of pain.

After I got together with my wife and we started having sex again, I made an amends to her. I shouldn’t have told her. I had no one else to talk to, so I told her why I was on the AA Program, that I was a sex addict. Her response was accepting, and I was overwhelmed. The next time we had sex, I had sex for the first time with a clean mind. No images.

Now from the age of eight, during hundreds of thousands of times of sex, whether I’m masturbating or with a prostitute or a girlfriend, I always had an image in my mind. This time I discovered sex without images or fantasy for the first time. There’s no way I can describe this new experience to you. It was a spiritual act that merely used the physical responses; an act of true bonding and love. It was simple and right and good. No distortion, no intensification, no alienation. No being driven farther into the self or away from the person. I recommend it highly.

But for the sexaholic, there’s a price to pay, and it’s the greatest price in the world. The price is death of ego, what Bill W. of AA called deflation at depth. This is what working the 12 Steps does for me.

STEPS

Good morning. Good to see you. I'm getting to know you better. I decided that the next time I travel, I'm going to spend at least a week getting a feel for the people and the culture first, instead of coming from somewhere out of the blue. Do I seem to be coming out of the blue? [Laughter]

It may seem strange to you that we haven't gone into the Steps yet, but what I've been trying to do is communicate the desire to work the Steps. Let me say at this point that these Steps are not for everybody in this room. They're not for everyone that needs them, they're for those who want them. And for those who are willing to pay the price. So in any group like this, there are people who are not willing to pay the price. We just accept that. All of my remarks this weekend are directed at those who I hope want and are willing to pay the price for the great treasure that these Steps promise. Join with me in the Serenity Prayer as we ask God now to make these Steps real for us.

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

What I want to do is read the Steps slowly and try to give you my feeling on the essence of each Step from where I am today.

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.

What is the essence of this Step? It is "I can't do it. I can't do it." But there has to be something I can't do. This Step is meaningless unless there is something I can't do. Do you have something today that you are absolutely powerless over? I want us to close our eyes for just a moment and I want you to see in your heart and say in your mind what you are powerless over right now.

"I can't do it" is the essence of Step One. "I give up." You say you are powerless over something, but have you given up? Have you given up today? That is the only question there is in the Twelve Step Program. If you haven't given up, forget the rest of it. The rest is going to be an academic exercise.

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. When I came into AA, that power for me was the group. I saw that the group — the people in the group — were staying sober. Somehow a power larger than myself was making it happen. And this was the beginning of that inner voice of mine that said, "I now belong." So let me ask you the question: Have you become part of a fellowship? Not just going to meetings. Have you come to believe that there is a Power working in this fellowship that is making happen what could not happen in Step One? Is that happening for you?

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. In the First Step, I said: "I can't do it. I give up." But that's not enough. The completion of the surrender which is Steps One, Two and Three is "I give *me* up."

I used to capitulate to my self-wants or to the woman. I have to be willing to give me up to the Higher Power. The Man of Galilee said that no man can serve two masters. He will either hate the one and love the other or hold to the one and despise the other. Giving myself to God is different to giving myself to a lover or even to my wife.

Today the question in your heart has to be: Do you want something from this weekend? Do you want something from this clinic? Do you want something from your group? Your group can't give it to you. I can't give it to you. This clinic can't give it to you. Have you surrendered your will and your life to God?

Let's take advantage of this time together and try something. There's going to be one point in each of our hearts today that I call "the sticking point." That will be the only thing in our consciousness that we have to surrender at this moment. There will be other things; but it's one thing at a time.

So what I'd like to have us do is to hold hands in a circle, sitting, and do the surrender of Steps One, Two and Three. [A pause as everyone joins hands] We're going to keep it simple and focus on the one thing that's the worst, the most impossible in your life right now. Whatever it is, you don't have to tell the person next to you. It's your secret. You can't do it. God can do it. I give myself up now and cast myself onto Him. Don't worry about the consequences. In your heart you know what you have to give up.

As you come to Step Three in your heart now, you can say something like: My God, You know that I don't want to give this up. Help me to be willing to be willing. I want to say, Thy will, not mine be done. I want to give my will and my life to You.

The taking of the Twelve Steps is a very private work.

Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. What does this tell me? It tells me that I will now start looking at the truth about myself. The question is not so much who I am, but what I am. And also, what have I done?

There's a new scientific journal that deals with death and dying. And one topic this journal deals with is what's called "panoramic memory." There are stories in the journal by people that have experienced this. For example, a man is climbing in the Alps and falls from a great height, and knows he's going to die. You know how we know that it's finished? But he survives. When he came to, this man wrote down what happened inside him on the way down. He had all of his life actually pass before him.

There seem to be many scientifically documented experiences like this. This fact seems to be in the subconscious of the human race. I know that I have within me everything I have ever done. Judgment is within me right now. Step Four means I want to start looking at the truth about myself today — what I am and what I have done. I want to do it now because I put it off with my drugs for so many years, I almost didn't make it. I don't want to be surprised. And you know what you give me? In our meetings, week after week, you let me bring my final judgment ahead of time. You let me see it, face it.

So, what are you facing today? Are you able to really look at yourself today? In our SA book we have the parable of the man being chased by the wild elephant. To escape, he takes refuge in a well. Are you willing to face your wild elephant today? Are you willing to turn around and look at him? That's the terror we've been running from and drugging ourselves from. It's that part of ourselves we're not willing to see. Step Four — have you written it out?

Step Five: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature

of our — what! Who put that word “wrongs” in there? I thought this was a self-help Program? [Laughter] But there it is — the exact nature of my wrongs.

The Twelve Step Program is not for everybody. I’m as sick as my secrets, as we say in AA. But I can only do Steps Four and Five if I have done Steps One, Two and Three. I really can’t cheat. I’m blind until I do Steps One, Two and Three. Bill W. of AA calls it “the deflation of the ego.” When Step Three was written originally, the words “on our knees” were added.

Step Six: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. Step Seven: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. These Steps really are one. The shortcomings and defects are all tied in together. This is where I send it away to God. The question today is: Am I willing to send away this sticking point, this one thing, to God?

Step Eight: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all. Step Nine: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. In Steps Eight and Nine, we make right me wrongs that had to do with other people. In Steps Four, Five, Six and Seven, we are willing and we send away our wrongs, but in Eight and Nine, it’s very specific.

Why do I have to right the wrongs that I’ve done to other people? They’ve probably forgotten all about it.

Let me tell you of an SA member in the very first year of SA. This man started his Fourth Step on resentments. It’s the most unusual case I’ve ever heard. It was a Fourth Step only on resentment, and he had to stop writing it. He stopped writing at number 450. He had perfect recall on every person he was currently resenting in his heart. I’ve never seen the man, but we talked on the telephone. He said, “These things in my mind are a cancer that I’ve been holding all my life. I have to make the wrongs right because there’s no other way I can erase them inside of me.”

In my limited experience, I have yet to meet anyone that has found any other way of totally erasing the effects of the past without doing this. Have you? Has anyone here discovered a way of doing that? When you come off your last drug, this inner damage will float to the surface. I urge you to come off the last drug — all of them — so the sickness will come up now and not stay inside and be that cancer.

Do you know how impossible this is? I know how impossible it is. I’m absolutely powerless. I can’t do it. But I do it. Part of me knows it has to die in order to do it, and that’s how I come to life.

In our sexaholism, we are apparently seeing something else influencing Steps Eight and Nine. That’s why we put in Step Eight and a Half: Surrendering our resentments, we asked for willingness to forgive all persons guilty of real or imagined wrongs against us and forgave each one.

This is what we discover: When we think about making the wrong right with another person, we really can’t do it unless we’ve forgiven them first. If you’re like me, you’ll find it impossible to forgive. But I forgive. Not because I want to, because I don’t want to I have to do it. As soon as I take the action, I receive the grace to forgive.

This forgiveness is part of Steps Eight and Nine. This is the toughest medicine the human race has to swallow. The best medicine. Now, where are you in this Step? Are you forgiving that person you can never forgive? This is how we discover God.

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were — what!

All in unison: Wrong [Laughter]

Wrong. ... promptly admitted it. I was wrong [Laughter] Impossible. I can't do it. Not only do I not feel like it, I've never done it in my life. God, I just can't. But I do it. Because I have to. There's no choice. Otherwise, I stay in my death.

Walther was telling me the story of Lazarus rising from the dead. I know how it feels to be dead in the tomb, wrapped and stinking. You come to the clinic that way, don't you? And with some of us they can't roll the stone away [Laughter]. When they start unwrapping us, we say, "No, no, let me be." [Laughter] "I like the stink."

"I was wrong." The most beautiful words between two human beings that can ever be spoken. Try it and see.

Step Eleven: 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. In my opinion, Steps Eleven and Twelve happen if we have worked Steps One through Ten and continue to work them. If I'm working One through Ten, Eleven and Twelve are going to happen in my life. All I'm doing in Step Eleven is what comes naturally when I get the junk out of the way and just say, "Come in, Lord." I don't even have to say that. He's already there.

The question for us here this morning is: Are you letting Him in, or are you letting your wrongs shut Him out? That's Step Eleven.

Step Twelve: 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. This is the one Step that's not in the imperative. This is the Lazarus experience, the awakening. Always in my life I used to look for the magic, the technique, the person that would give me life. You know — the laying on of hands [laughter]. The ecstatic religious experience. Studying theology, philosophy. Looking for the awakening in that magic encounter with another person in order to come to life. It never happened.

It never happened because it's an 'inside job' and only these first Eleven Steps can do it. The question for us today is: What life are you living in? Are you living in the life in which you have always lived, or are you in the new life? Only you can make the choice. God gives us the choice. We can stay in the tomb, or come out.

SWITCHING ADDICTIONS—RESENTMENT

The best thing I can do for you, in my opinion, is to try to communicate the necessity of seeing the defective self, acknowledging it, owning it, seeing the powerlessness over it, and getting victory over it through the principles of this Program. The only way I can do that is to tell you what happens in my life.

As I got sexually sober, the first thing that happened was I switched addictions. I switched to resentment. I had always been resentful apparently, but my drug had covered it. When I withdrew from the drug, resentment exploded like a volcano. I remember telling my sponsor all of these bad things about other people, and around the third session, he stopped me. “Wait a minute,” he said, “I don’t want to hear about them anymore, I want to hear about you.”

It was as though somebody had struck me. I came to. And for the first time, I began to look at myself. Something else happened in AA. The man who welcomed me into AA turned out to be the one who tried to get me kicked out of AA. He didn’t want AA polluted by anybody except pure alcoholics. And for two or three years, he kept up a campaign of hostility against me.

Now being a victim of this man was more clear-cut than being a victim of my brother. Everyone knew this AA man was wrong. But what happened inside of me? I would leave each meeting seething with resentment, repaying what this man had done in the meeting against me. It was my new addiction. And it was terrifying. It possessed me, yet I was functioning on the outside as a normal person.

Let’s look at the wife. Hmmm... She left two hairs in the sink. [Laughter] She put the car gear in park before setting the parking break. Where’s the fork? The knife is here — there’s no fork. Always something wrong with somebody else.

I had pain because of other people. Why did they keep hurting me? If only they’d treat me right, I’d feel good. In the Program, I began to see the pain that this was causing me. I don’t know when I started, but I thank God I started it. Nothing helped to cool down the boiling cauldron of this new addiction until I said those magic three words—

All in unison: “I was wrong.” [Laughter and applause]

Those are still the most difficult words for me to say. But as soon as I began to say them when I was wrong, the reality of the other person began to change. It was a marvelous adventure for me to say that I was wrong. I felt like hell before I said it, but as soon as I could say it, I felt good. Then gradually I could see my relation to my brother like this: What sort of a person was I that made him react like that to me? He was manfully doing the best he could to cope with a very sick person.

My need for another person to fill my need distorted the reality of that person. Only when I looked at myself and my own wrongs, and made amends for that, only then could the reality change. I can’t know God or other people until I look at myself and use those three words. What I used to see as hostility on my brother’s part, I now see as kindness and restraint.

The AA man, however, is a different story. I never wronged that man, except in my mind. I imagined getting into fights with him. I found that the memory of his wrong was still

playing in my mind until about two years ago. I had done all the Steps on it. I admitted that I was powerless over him. I prayed for him. But with this one person, that wasn't enough. Finally, I was reading Bill W. of AA — I believe it was the Big Book — and although he doesn't say so explicitly, he implies that there may be cases where we have to make an amends to the person we resent.

Well, there were two people in my life that I swore I would never make an amends to, because I didn't have to. One was this man in AA, and the other was a former boss of mine. Even though I prayed for them and forgave them, the tapes still played back, and it began to dawn on me that something was wrong. I still gave them power over me. So I went to each of them in turn and said that I was wrong in resenting them. I want you to believe me when I say that since the instant I did that, I have been absolutely free of the tyranny of any such memories of either of these two people in my mind.

The most beautiful gift I have, the most beautiful “attitude-into-action” of my soul today, is taking the action of forgiving somebody. The secret of this was the relation with my wife. I don't think I could have recovered from resentment without having worked through it with the one closest to me. And it would be impossible to work on it with people and not have it affect the core of my life.

FEAR INVENTORY

A few weeks ago I went through a series of medical exams. I first felt fear by looking at symptoms in myself and seeing that something was wrong. One of the tests was for hypoglycemia. During this test, they take a blood sample every hour. A nurse took the first sample and after an hour she took the second sample. Then I said, “The doctor said it’s stress burnout.” She said, “Well, could be.” As she was finishing, she said, “You’re aware, of course, that fear can do tremendous things to the human body.”

I didn’t know why she said that, but during the next hour, somehow the light went on. When I came back, I said, “Did you sense any fear in me?” She said, “Yes, I saw it the moment you walked in.” My condition had nothing to do with the blood — I’ve had hundreds of blood tests.

After I left, I had another hour to myself, so I left the clinic and walked up the driveway. There’s an elderly, well-dressed gentleman walking toward me, and as I look at him I find that I avert my gaze and look down. Suddenly it occurred to me why I did that. Fear. I’ve always done that. That’s probably my habit. I saw it for the first time.

After a few more steps, I see my car parked in the hot sun and I notice an empty space in the shade. I start hurrying so that I get there before somebody else gets the parking spot. Self-centered fear.

I park my car in the shade and go back to the clinic. I sit down and put my elbows on the arm rests. My elbows are bare, and as I cover my sleeve, the nurse says, “What’s wrong?” I say, “I’m afraid I’m going to catch something in my elbows from the chair.” [Laughter]

The incidents happened within minutes. I started writing out my fear inventory. After an hour, I had written so much I stopped writing. My life is driven by fear.

Now the psychiatrists and the doctors can probably tell me the origin of those fears: During birth they had to pull me out of the womb with the forceps. I saw my father in the coffin when I was five. On and on and on. But it doesn’t matter, because I can be free of my fear today. One fear at a time, and never in advance. The same way I can be free of lust and acting out sexually, one temptation at a time. The same way I can be free of my resentment — one memory, one incident, one person at a time. I’m not cured of anything. I have a daily reprieve based on the maintenance of my spiritual attitude.

When I woke up this morning, I said, as I say every morning and evening: “Lord, I am powerless over my lust, my resentment, and my fears. Please keep me sober today, because I cannot. I take Your Presence to shield me from my lust, from my resentment, and my fear.”

How can I tell you that the essence of being human is to see, acknowledge, surrender, and get victory over the defective self — the wrongs? God is not something I find by searching, as I tried to do all my life. Invariably, my conscious search for God is a mis-connection. When I get the wrongs out of the way, He’s already there. And that’s the glory of the life of a recovering sex drunk.

Q & A

[Question]: What's the difference between the questions 'Who Am I?' and 'What Am I?'

Roy: When I was in psychiatry for treatment, it seemed to me that the emphasis was on trying to discover who I was. I was the child of immigrant parents. We were poor, and they didn't speak English well. And my mother was from this and my father was from that. Und und und. [Laughter]

This was very interesting, but it didn't seem to help me. In the Program and in the Steps, I'm discovering not *who* I am, but *what* I am. In Step One, I discover I'm a sexaholic; I'm an alcoholic. In Step Two, I discover I'm in rebellion against God. In Step Four, I discover what my attitudes are that are wrong and how I have wronged others. Thus, by distinguishing between who I am and what I am, I was trying to force us into the Program way of thinking — keeping it very simple.

[Question]: Can you elaborate on the paradox "I can't do it, but I do it?"

Roy: This question has troubled philosophers since the beginning of time. You and I cannot get an answer that will satisfy anybody. All I can tell you is what we discover in these meetings. When I came in, I was absolutely powerless. I could not stop lusting or sexing. But one day I crossed the line and was able not to do it. Today I say I am powerless over lust. Why do I say I am powerless over lust today? I've been sexually sober for nine-and-a-half years. Let me try to tell you why, but it's difficult to explain.

When I am tempted by a certain image — and by that I mean an image that is my special trigger — that's when I know today I'm powerless over lust. When and if I pretend I can resist it, it has never worked for me. I was white-knuckling it for a year-and-a-half. Last night, when I was tempted and I wanted to take a drink, I white-knuckled it. And I had to keep white-knuckling it. It stayed there. When I said, "Lord, I'm powerless, I send it away," I was absolutely free, with no desire for a drink after that point.

In the past 11 years that I have been working on sexual sobriety for myself, my experience has forced me to see that today I am a lustaholic. Part of me wants to lust today. The more I have worked in the Steps, and the better person I become, the more I see that within me are all the seeds of my wrongs. And this is the great glory of my life today. That within this human being — who has the seeds of lust, resentment, fear, self-glorification, self-pity, self-obsession — there's total victory over these whenever I send them away to God.

So who gets the glory in my life today? I know the One who has to get the glory in my life. I have no power in myself "to be free of my sins. It's that simple. I know the world doesn't understand this, and perhaps many of you won't understand it. It seems to be the most difficult thing to understand for people in the Program. And I'm talking now to the sexaholics.

The most typical self-delusion of the newcomer in SA seems to be that somehow he should be able to stop lusting. "I'm coming to the Program now; I'm working the Steps now;

I'm going to meetings now. Why did I take that look? Why did I take that drink?" This is what drives more people back out there than anything I know. They cannot make the transition from doing it themselves to letting God do it.

I think we're very lucky in SA. We either discover the loving God who loves us because of our sins, or we still try to do it with our own strength and fail. And I think the evolving history of SA in the lives of you people right here will answer this question more fully in the years to come. We're so lucky — we won't stop with "putting the plug in the jug." If you want to stay sober, nobody will have to tell you what these Steps are about. You're automatically going to have to learn and do these principles.

I'm glad this question was asked because perhaps it's the most misunderstood thing in our Program. And the greatest adventure in your life awaits you when you discover for yourself the difference between these two modes of acting. It's the paradox in our book that says, "Without God, I can't. Without me, God won't." The same question you asked: "I can't, but I do." This is the AA Program. Attitudes in Action. It's a Program of action; we do. If it kills us, we do it. And we find it doesn't kill us. We live.

[Question]: Why do you say that for sexaholics, sexual relations are only possible in marriage? And what about homosexual relationships?

Roy: The answer to both of these questions doesn't come from me. It is coming and will come from recovering sexaholics.

For my part, I have lived in the world of affairs and relationships. The relationships were of all types: live-in or live apart, occasional or periodic, very innocent and nice, or bad. Many of them were good; they were uplifting, I needed them. I felt good about "that woman." No one in that world could have told me I was doing anything wrong to myself in that relationship. That was the only reality — the only world — that I knew. In recovery, in sobriety, I have entered a new world. The old world was two-dimensional, the new world is three-dimensional. It's the difference between a flat picture and three-dimensional reality. When I write an inventory of these relationships, I ask myself: Why was I still masturbating? Still seeing prostitutes? What was I really doing? Every relationship of mine began with an affair of lust, because I was a lustaholic.

When I got back with my wife after I got sober, I began a journey that's impossible to describe. "Falling in love" has nothing to do with love — for me, the sexaholic. For me, falling in love prevents love. Falling in love is a closure of the mind that shuts reason out and capitulates to the emotions. I don't want to "fall" anymore. Now I grow in love, and I don't know it's love when it's happening, because it's pain, and sometimes it's hell. And I'm learning how to give without any idea of getting something back.

Three-dimensional reality was impossible for me until I came to total surrender in my marriage — that there was to be no one else, ever. The marriage contract had meant nothing to me. The oath of marriage had meant nothing to me. But when I worked the principles of the Program with this one woman, the best in me knew that there was nothing for me until I committed myself to this one person and took all of the "bottles" out of the closet.

When people come to me for advice, I tell them that the answer you want today, you cannot have today. If you just want to stop the sex on the streets and have a homosexual lover, or if you want to stop the masturbation and just have your man — if you are a sexaholic, I suggest you take sex out of the equation totally, get sexually sober, get victory over lust, and see what happens to you.

That's what's happening in SA today, and some marvelous things are happening. You see, you're asking the question in a dimension that is irrelevant. Three months into sobriety and you'll be asking that question from a different perspective. Later in sobriety, you'll find you won't even have to ask that question.

[Question]: Is marriage a decision of the will? Does it really matter who the partner is? How do I know if I have the right partner?

Roy: Ask 'Dear Abby.' [Laughter]

My answer is, Work the Program on that. You know what my prayer was, year after year in my marriage, after I got back with her? "I'm willing to have this woman, I'm willing not to have her; Thy will be done."

In AA in the States, they have a rule of thumb: No emotional involvements for at least a year of sobriety. I even heard of an AA sponsor who tells newcomers not to have sex for a year. How can it be any different for sexaholics? If anything, it should take longer for us to come to our senses.

But there are no rules in this game of life. There are no rules in SA. Maybe you should be married tonight. Maybe you should never get married. The priority today is, did you take the First Step today?

On the other hand, I see many couples in relationships in SA hanging onto each other so closely — closer than man and wife, even though they're not having sex — as though they're afraid that if they let go of the other person, they themselves will vanish. They'll be destroyed! In my personal opinion, I feel that if there is something this intense, it may be another form of the drug. And what might be in order is a physical separation as well as a sexual separation. The priority always must be progressive victory over lust.

[Question]: I got confused when you talked about 'soul-surgery.' Does this mean therefore, that closeness and bonding are not part of the Program?

Roy: Life is infinitely deep. Let's not sell ourselves short with one level of experience. Sometimes the good can be the enemy of the best. It depends on where I am. Let me tell you about an experience I had this weekend.

I was sharing very closely and intimately with a person after a meeting. The person was saying that he had been lusting during the meeting, and we talked together very intimately. We even prayed together. We talked about the paradox between our doing it and God doing it, and we both seemed to sense that underneath all this was a loving God who loved us because of our lust.

After this person opened his soul in total honesty, I found myself drawn to that soul, to that person. In total acceptance. Because of his weakness. Because of his powerlessness. Because of his wanting to be good and finding it impossible.

After this moment together I felt I had to do what people in the clinic do, and that is embrace him. And since this person has been to the clinic, I felt he was going to expect that. But he hesitated, and I knew what that hesitation meant. We had already had the deepest embrace possible for any human beings. The physical embrace would have been out of order.

Be careful that the good does not become the enemy of the best for you, because when you leave, you may find that the band-aid that felt so good will come off and still leave the sore.

[Question]: I'm an S-Anon member and I feel a conflict. I don't lust after the body of

someone, but I do want to lust after the soul of a person. And I notice I'm powerless. Where others can quit this kind of thinking, I can't. Where do I belong? SA or S-Anon?

Roy: We don't know the future relation between SA and S-Anon. Maybe there is only one Program. But what you're describing is the addiction.

You see, I'm not only addicted to active lust, like the man on the street, but to passive lust. Passive lust has to do with filling the spiritual void by having the other person addicted to me. It's another example of a natural instinct gone astray. The natural instinct is for me to want to be attractive to the opposite sex. But my attitudes, choices and addictions have made it so that I have to have them lust after me and fill that need.

Let me tell you a story of an SA member. I know him intimately well (Smile). He was three years sexually sober. One day he met a friend he hadn't seen for a long time and the friend said, "Hello, I see you're wearing those pants still." Now what were those pants? Stretch pants — tight in the crotch. The friend knew they were toxic for the sexaholic. The sexaholic confessed that suddenly he knew what he had been doing for three years. Those were his "go-to-meeting" pants, and he wanted and needed the women to look at his body. Passive lust. Maybe one or two women in the world have this too, I don't know. [Laughter]

We're finding out that the range of sex addiction is very broad. I'm thinking now about a member I know in California who had all the commonly accepted forms of sex addiction — visiting prostitutes, masturbation, pornography ... He came into SA, got sexually sober, became sexually abstinent, and that was relatively easy for him. But since then, he has discovered the real addiction. For him, the real addiction is he has to have contact with a woman. He has to have the phone number, he has to see, has to touch a woman. His addiction has nothing to do with sex. It used sex.

Many women in SA come to the same conclusion. It's not easy to see this aspect of sex addiction or to describe it. But in meetings with these members, week after week and month after month, we are seeing that the power in this spiritual aspect of the addiction is just as strong as the power in the physical addiction.

The man I just told you about is finding that the dependency on Woman is the real basis of his addiction. And in my opinion, that's what the recovering sexaholic has to deal with. The spiritual area. That's why our addiction strikes at the very heart of the human being. Not only at the interface of the person with himself, or the interface between man and woman, or man and man, but also the interface between man and the Source of his life.

I believe we should close this session now. This is a very precious time together. In our illness, we touch the deepest core of the human spirit. Because of this, we have within our reach that closest touch with the heavenly Father. I'm very grateful that I am a defective human being, because within my defective human nature, I have had revealed the glory of God. Because of my defective nature I have been able to feel the embrace of the love of God Himself. And I feel the greatest glory awaits us in SA as we find this true bonding in our fellowship together. I think we are the lucky ones. "He came not to call the righteous . . ."

I'm so glad always to be with my people. It's the greatest joy of my life.

I would like to close the seminar by reading "A Vision for You."

"We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answer will come if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot

transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

“Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. 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.

“May God bless you and keep you — until then.”

Let's stand and say the Lord's Prayer together. Let's embrace. [All stand] Let's look at each other again.

Roy leads, and the seminar ends with the Our Father.