

# the Journal

November-December 2008

## Honesty



Single Issue \$3

# Make an International Difference

All you need to write for the Journal is experience with addiction and S.L.A.A. recovery. Any member of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, new or seasoned, may submit a piece for consideration. Through the Journal, members of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous serve together to carry the solution for sex and love addiction worldwide.

Submitting an article is easy. You can email your submission to the Journal using the email address below. You can upload it through theSLAAJournal.org. We accept all common file types. If you do not have Internet access, you can send a CD (compact disk) to Fellowship-Wide Services at the below address. If you cannot type or do not have access to a computer, perhaps someone who does can take dictation for you. We will also accept manually typed or legibly hand-written submissions through the Fellowship-Wide Services address below.

Please read the writing and submission guidelines just inside the back cover before you begin writing.

We ask that you include your phone number so we can reach you to resolve any ambiguity in meaning and your general location or postal code so we can balance the submissions geographically. Please also include your name as the author. You may use a pseudonym or pen name.

You can, if you wish, include your last name with your submission, but if your piece is published, we will replace it with your last initial for purpose of anonymity at the press level. It is the policy of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous to maintain both anonymity and confidentiality regarding the storage and usage of contact information; It is against our policy to sell it or give it out.

Through the act of submitting a piece, writers waive their rights to compensation in association with the submission and grant all rights associated with the submitted piece to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Inc. to edit, quote, print, publish, and distribute the submission in the Journal or publication of collected works. All published submissions are protected under the copyright of the entire issue in which they have been published.

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The Conference Journal Committee, a service body within Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, publishes *the Journal* for the good of the international S.L.A.A. membership. Oversight and policy is provided in accordance with the Ninth Tradition.

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## **First Things First**

### **Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Preamble**

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition-oriented fellowship based on the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous.

The only qualification for S.L.A.A. membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. S.L.A.A. is supported entirely through contributions of its membership, and is free to all who need it.

To counter the destructive consequences of sex and love addiction we draw on five major resources:

- 1 Sobriety. Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom-line addictive behavior on a daily basis.
- 2 Sponsorship/Meetings. Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within S.L.A.A.
- 3 Steps. Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sexual and emotional sobriety
- 4 Service. Our giving back to the S.L.A.A. community what we continue to freely receive.
- 5 Spirituality. Our developing a relationship with a Power greater than ourselves, which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

As a fellowship S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements, or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns that renders any personal differences of sexual or gender orientation irrelevant.

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## **The Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.**

- 1 We admitted we were powerless over sex and love addiction - 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 God.
- 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 God 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 a Power greater than ourselves, praying only for knowledge of God's 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 sex and love addicts, and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives.

The above version of the Twelve Steps was adapted from the Twelve Steps first published by Works Publishing Company in 1939. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York, granted permission to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous to reprint the above version in 1986. The forward of Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, 1952) states, "... the Twelve Steps can mean more than sobriety for problem drinkers." The fellowship of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous is grateful for the early contributions to recovery made by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous through the gift of these twelve principles to the public in 1938.

## **Ninth Step Promise**

Now we were truly feeling some sense of deep release from the past! We were free of much guilt for our misdeeds, from the shame of having fallen short of our inner values. In many instances the values we had thought were ours had turned out to be someone else's, and we had shed or changed these to allow the seeds of our own personal wholeness to take root and grow.

Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, 1986 *The Augustine Fellowship*, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Norwood, Massachusetts, pg. 95

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## **From The Editor**

Dear Reader,

Please excuse the delay in the November-December 2008 issue of *the Journal*. The previous three issues were produced in a timely manner, but this issue is late, and I have no meaningful excuse to offer. In compensation, you may find this issue's quality higher than normal, we hope remarkably so. Our goal for 2009 is to maintain this high level of quality while returning to prompt delivery.

Happy Holidays,

Douglas D. Managing Editor, *the Journal*

## **Open Service Positions with *the Journal***

We currently have three important service opportunities opened within *the Journal's* service structure.

### **Editorial Assistant**

The Editorial Assistant assists the Managing Editor with the editorial process for each of the six annual issues of *the Journal*, which includes the content, form, and aesthetic presentation. There can be more than one Editorial Assistant. Each must have at least one year of continuous bottom line abstinence.

## Marketing Director

The Marketing Director oversees the existing network of Journal Representatives and cooperates with several other S.L.A.A. service bodies to reach out to sex and love addicts throughout the world by building subscriptions to *the Journal*. She or he is required to join the Conference Journal Committee and must have at least six months of continuous bottom line abstinence. The Marketing Director holds a key public information role within the fellowship, since *the Journal* is a prime vehicle for reaching towns, cities, health care facilities, and countries that do not yet know S.L.A.A.'s message of the hope. She or he will oversee the health of the network of Journal Representatives, building it up to increase *the Journal's* reach and effectiveness. The Marketing Director will use her or his wide network to assist the Managing Editor in finding great stories for future issues of *the Journal*. The Marketing Director may also make improvements to the Journal's subscriber renewal program, which the Fulfillments Manager would then implement. In summation, the Marketing Director's fundamental delegated responsibility and authority is to build *the Journal's* goodwill worldwide, thus boosting both subscriptions and writing submissions and strengthening Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous in the spirit of Traditions Five and Nine. If you dream big, this position is for you.

## Fulfillments Manager

The Fulfillments Manager oversees the subscription list and the printing and mailing of each of the six annual issues of the Journal. She or he is required to join the Conference Journal Committee and must have at least six months of continuous bottom line abstinence. The Fulfillments Manager ensures the legibility, aesthetic quality, and durability of the finished copies of *the Journal*. The Fulfillments Manager will evaluate print vendors and manage jobs sent to them. She or he will work with the Executive Director and *the Journal's* Accountant to reduce production costs in the spirit of Tradition Seven.

## Interested?

If interested in one of the above positions, email [Correspondence@theSLAAJournal.org](mailto:Correspondence@theSLAAJournal.org). If you have a story for *the Journal*, read the inside cover for more information.



## **Announcements**

### **Reaching Future Members**

Here is your opportunity to share with sex and love addicts not yet in recovery your experience, strength, and hope. The Conference Public Information Committee is involved in exciting outreach opportunities. You can be a part of a new chapter in the growth of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous.

We are assembling teams interested in working with the staff of health care facilities (such as treatment centers) to reach the many sex and love addicts who pour through daily. The goal will be to start meetings inside the facility or provide referral information so that patients can find meetings when they are discharged. You can assist the fellowship as whole by teaming up with like-minded people who wish to carry our message of hope.

We are not alone. Let's reach out together to those who are.

For a deeper recovery experience, email us at [willingness@MySLAA.org](mailto:willingness@MySLAA.org) or call our Fellowship Wide Services Office during the hours of 9 AM to 5 PM central time Monday through Friday at +1 210-828-7900 and give back what you freely have received.

### **An Invitation For You**

Enlarge your recovery by allowing others to get the same benefit that you do from reading *the Journal*. It is a great way to carry S.L.A.A.'s message of hope and practice the Twelfth Step. The fellowship needs willing volunteers of all skills and levels of willingness and availability.

Some sex and love addicts have no meeting in their area or the meetings in their area have become stale and repetitive. Through the variety available in *the Journal*, you can breathe new life into the recovery of groups and individuals who need refreshment. *The Journal* also fosters international unity, the core of our First Tradition. Here's what we can do together.

We can formally or informally become the Journal Representative for our intergroup or home group, encouraging the use of *the Journal* as a source of topics, letting people know that there are Journals for sale, and ensuring that plenty of Journal subscription cards are always on the literature table.

We can visit a local organization that deals with sex and love addicts in our area, bringing copies of *the Journal* along with a few pamphlets. The institution may be a treatment facility, a judicial entity, a large recovery club that welcomes varied literature, or a hospital.

We can work with others to design and oversee outreach projects.

We can help make phone calls to encourage Journal Reps and intergroups.

We can design or print bulletins or posters that raise awareness.

If you think that it is time in your recovery to grow to another level, email us at [willingness@theSLAAJournal.org](mailto:willingness@theSLAAJournal.org) or call our Fellowship Wide Services Office during the hours of 9 AM to 5 PM central time Monday through Friday at +1 210-828-7900 and inquire about becoming a Journal Representative for your home group or intergroup.

## **Santa Cruz Twelve Step Intensive Retreat**

The Santa Cruz Intergroup, in conjunction with the S.F.I. and the Monday Men's Freedom Group, is holding an Intensive Step Retreat in Santa Cruz, California, leveraging the Third Edition of the Sex and Love Step Recovery Booklet developed by and for S.L.A.A. members, which is now passing through the Conference-approval process.

The event will be held from Friday, February 20th through Sunday, February 22nd, 2009 and is only \$199 per person, including fun, food, lodging, and your own personal copy of the step booklet to bring home with you. If you live in Santa Cruz and wish to get the package without lodging, a reduced price will be available. Email us at [santaCruz@MySLAA.org](mailto:santaCruz@MySLAA.org) or inquire through the Contact-Us page of [MySLAA.org](http://MySLAA.org). The pricing and dates are subject to change.

## **Other Events**

Colorado Service Group is hosting an S-Group Conference, Saturday, November 8, 2008, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM at St. Joseph Episcopal Church, Lakewood, Colorado, Saturday, November 8th, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. See [www.coloradoservicegroup.org](http://www.coloradoservicegroup.org) for more details.

Los Angeles Intergroup is holding a New Year's Retreat, December 28 through January 1, 2009. Come for Fun, Fellowship and Recovery in the Santa Cruz mountains amid towering coastal redwoods. Visit <http://www.slaalosangeles.org/index.htm> for more details.

New England Intergroup has a Vermont Twelve-Step Weekend Retreat on December 19 through December 21, 2009. Come work the Twelve Steps in a supportive environment at a Vermont farm house. There is ample opportunity for down time if your schedule is overwhelming you. Our Annual Yankee Swap will also be happening at the event. For more information, visit [slaanei.org](http://slaanei.org).

The Seattle Intergroup is holding their Men's Retreat in Indianola, Washington from January 30 through February 2, 2009. Visit the Seattle Intergroup website at <http://www.slaa-seattle.org/pages/events.html>.

## Theme

### Fantasy Confessions

One might say an expert is anyone who has devoted seven-thousand hours to a thing, even if that thing is the cosmic souring of space and time for the possibility of romance. From late infancy, when I first discovered the new world, to the moment I truly committed to abstinence from fantasy, forty years had passed. With three-hundred-and-sixty-five days in a year and at least five hours a day squandered on imagining things that would never happen, the numbers multiply out to a number that qualifies me as a fantasy expert. Thankfully, compulsive fantasy has been removed, and with newborn clarity, for the first time I confess the uncensored truth to you. (Don't worry, I don't get graphic.)

I was only three when I first imagined scenarios with Lori. Skinny, light haired, only-child, two years older than me, and living next door on a street with no one my age, she was my social world.

On that powerful day when she invited me to play doctor, I'm sure that I had to ask her how it was done. She walked me through it.

Of course she expected me to show her my private parts first. When it came to her turn, I was betrayed. That became a model for many events that followed.

The unfairness of a carrot dangled and then denied me justified all sorts of behaviors. I spied on girls and manipulated situations, but it was always easiest for me to use my imagination to create scenes of my own. In my mind, I would single-handedly save the most desirable girl in my grade-school class from certain harm or embarrassment. Perhaps I would beat up the bully that taunted her in front of the class.

Imaging scenarios that began with her throwing up or wetting her pants was my favorite. I would be the one available to help her clean up before our classmates found out. Then I would be her most intimate friend, guarding her secret with my life. She would forever be my grateful admirer, affirming me when no one else would. Back in real life, no one else was affirming me, not with any consistency, except perhaps my mother.

School was a very dangerous place. Around every corner, a mocking crowd or a shameful snub laid in

wait. By seventh grade, school had become physically dangerous. About half the class was punched, tripped, or threatened on a daily basis, although it always felt like it was just me.

I had many escapes. Among them were reading novels or the encyclopedia, mathematics, some science or art project, isolating in the woods along the bike paths we had forged, and, of course, fantasy. Sometimes all these were combined, and I would plot to control the world.

I imagined flying needles, robots under my control, that moved so fast that others could not see them. They would tranquilize some boy that was in my way or some girl I wanted to possess. I could imagine a scenario where she would awake in a place where it would seem to her that we had both been abducted by the same anonymous villain. She would turn to me for protection as the only human contact available. I would be her first lover and her only friend.

Stolen pornography, voyeurism, and masturbation were great escapes too, but not as powerful as the built-in ability to create the world as I wanted the world to be.

It was like the Train Man program in *The Matrix* or the universal remote control in *Click*. In the world of the creative, I was God; I made the rules.

As high school approached, the necessity of safety drove me to learn popularity. I worked out, learned how to dress and style my hair for maximum positive effect, learned how to appear like I didn't give a [expletive], learned how to talk in groups, and learned how to snub the right people at just the right time. By sophomore year, I was very popular.

But it was already too late. I was already deathly afraid of intimacy with girls, and I was unable to converse with any real authenticity. The more attracted I was, the more out of reach they seemed. I achieved safety, but not real social liberty. The only girlfriends I had were imaginary. Sometimes I told my friends about these imaginary girls in a way that sounded almost believable.

By the end of high school, I found that among the partying crowd, social liberty was a free gift - well, almost free. All I needed to sacrifice was eleven years of financial, emotional, and educational progress; I couldn't

study and smoke pot at the same time.

After high school and a failed attempt at higher education, I looked up Lori. I had not seen her since grade school. She came out to dinner with me, but when we sat together afterward in the love seat in my living room, I wasn't able to kiss her, even though it was pretty clear that the moment was right.

I was paralyzed by the possibility of rejection. It did not matter that she would probably kiss back. Rejection and betrayal were inevitable, whether then or at some later time. That had become a core belief before high school.

During the party years, I had multiple problems with the law and a few confusing relationships, one that ended with painful conflict and enormous regret. With reality getting worse and worse, fantasy reached an extreme in compensation. My imagination was called upon to become more refined and powerful to provide an effective escape. There were scenarios ranging from harems to revised versions of reality, branching off from past real-life experiences with new outcomes that matched my wishes, both sexually and emotionally.

Masturbation accompanied many of the fantasies, but my imaginary world transcended the erotic. Everything was up for grabs, from imaginary educational and career paths to imaginary friendships. My grasp on the real had long since slipped away.

Through a mysterious sequence of events, sobriety from drugs and alcohol was thrust upon me in my mid-twenties. I was repeatedly encouraged to attend men's intensive twelve-step retreats held in Vermont twice a year, so I did. That was when the recovery process was cemented into my brain. The true nature of powerlessness and the need for a real spiritual awakening was spoon fed to me over the next few years. The awakening came, and so did an authentic relationship with God and some degree of mental health.

After two years, a woman in recovery who had been an object of my fantasy made herself available to be my girlfriend. (Later, I found out that she was a relapsed former member of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. It was her description of S.L.A.A. that eventually led to my looking for a local meeting.)

I had very quickly become popular in the recovery community, and my popularity opened the door to getting her. That is the way I thought of it then.

Dating all the most attractive women was my vain attempt to realize ancient fantasies, which was the primary reason I entered relationships during that period. Each woman risked loving and sleeping with a man that loved them back only as a vehicle for the temporarily realization of some past vision. The result was that the entire string of girlfriends later became a list of people to whom I owed amends. In hindsight, there were signs that some of them had the same kind of motivation.

After a dozen years of recovery in Sex and Love Addicts anonymous and various battles with denial, I came to understand the relationship between fantasy and codependency. I eventually recognized the need to start sharing my recurring fantasies at meetings, skipping the details that might trigger others, but capturing the essence of my self-administered ruse. As I did, the thought of staying in fantasy became absurd, and I finally surrendered it.

I have heard said, "I can only change my behavior; I can't control my thoughts." I once felt that way, but have since discovered that I am equally powerless over my thought and my behavior. I have also heard that I can only change myself, not anyone else. The truth is that I've found it much easier to motivate new behavior in others (sponsees or students, for instance) than it has been to find the motivation to change myself.

Only God has been able to permanently affect the desires of my soul.

If God is willing to remove my addictive behaviors, why not my addictive thoughts as well? Does it make sense to think that God can relieve one form of addiction and not another? What characteristic of fantasy addiction would put it out of the reach of God's power? Either God can or God can't. My experience is that God can.

As I continued to understand more deeply the scope of my fantasy, my level of surrender increased. With the greater surrender came the greater miracle. It was a matter of spiritual maturity.







When asking for the right things, expecting God's love, change came. God is the agent of change. My job is to become the willing recipient. I learned this from Steps Six and Seven.

Because I am opened to being changed by God, God has redirected the creativity that I was given. It no longer serves sex and love addiction. It is now used in the areas of writing, public speaking, music, and media production to address the spiritual needs that I have been called to serve. And I don't leverage my position to get women, nor do I want to. That's a miracle.

A year ago I could not have conveyed this story with clarity. Clarity is the byproduct of getting honest with myself. Even more important than clarity is the gift of satisfaction with reality. There is nothing to escape from except the pointlessness of playing God in my own mind.

I've come to recognize how brilliant God is in presiding over my creative abilities. Even when I am directing creative work, I ask God to direct me.

by Kaleb C., South Florida

## Amazing Truth

Twenty-one years ago, at the age of eighteen, I was in an abusive relationship that made me analyze where was I going and why. I knew back then that I did not want to be a battered woman and that there was something very wrong.

I was blessed with the guidance and compassion of an angel named Tom. He helped me see the cycle of abuse, what it was capable of, and how to interfere with its trajectory. He suggested that I go to meetings.

I walked into the rooms broken, not knowing who I was or what my likes or dislikes were. All I knew was that I loved someone very sick who had tried to kill me twice. Back then, I could not have guessed that having a sick crack addict in my life would later become a blessing. Indirectly, I have gained much from this abusive relationship.

I got into Tae Kwon Do. Even though my abuser went to prison, I wasn't sure if I would someday have to defend myself against him. I wanted to be prepared for when he got out.

In recovery, I learned to find my voice, my passion, my opinion, my rights, and my aspirations, things I didn't think belonged to me. I had had to oppress them when in the company of my family or my ex-boyfriend.

Through therapy with my angel and through recovery meetings, I gained self-respect, self-care, self-esteem, insight, joy, peace, optimism, friendship, and bonds of friendship that are stronger than my family ties. The most significant gain, I would say, is the Siddha Yoga path, which allowed me to reconnect with God, having been raised Catholic and Santeria, a religion that, for me, involved fear and oppression.

I am now living my dreams, sixteen classes from graduation and ready to begin a career I believe will bring me joy and satisfaction, and I owe it all to a sick man who inadvertently started me on a new path. My whole life has been one giant ripple effect from his life colliding into mine. I thank God I'm still alive to tell about it.

I recently contacted him via Facebook after being inspired by a healing movie. He was all too

happy to hear from me and said he had been looking for me for a while. At first, all my emotions came back flooding me with fear, anticipation, curiosity, and, most of all, gratitude. We agreed to speak on the phone and even though he had already apologized via e-mail; it was much more powerful over the phone.

My first question to him was, "Do you know why you are apologizing?" He responded, "For my bad behavior." I retorted, "Do you know what your behavior was towards me?" He had no recollection, so I explained to him that he tried to kill me with a gun at my community college after our break-up.

I told him that he had told the Dean's secretary that he was my boyfriend's best friend that that he was there to inform me of my boyfriend's suicide the night before. A note had gone out to my Algebra class that autumn day, and I remember walking down to the Dean's office puzzled as to why I was being summoned. I wondered, "Did my Pell grant fall through? Did I have some overdue bill?" No explanation came to mind.

I entered the Dean's office, and there was Steve sitting in the waiting area. I addressed the secretary. "Why is he here?" She didn't respond. Instead, she was offering him use of the Dean's office, since he was not in that day. Steve declined the offer, saying, "It's ok, I'll tell her outside."

I clamored, "Tell what? Why are you here?" The secretary wouldn't make eye contact with me, and Steve quickly grabbed me by my neck in a lock that may have appeared to the secretary as an embrace, but he was choking me while jabbing a gun into my ribs. I recall that horrific day all too well.

I remember him in my ear whispering, "I'm going to take you to the parking lot and shove this gun up your ... and blow you to pieces, and then I'm going to kill myself." I remember thinking, "This is really going to happen like he says if I get to that parking lot," so I faked a sprained ankle (which wasn't uncommon for me back then) and slowed us down to the portable offices on the fringes of the lot. I tried to reason with him; I begged him for my life. I pleaded, "If you love me, you won't do this. We could get help together, but if you kill me and yourself, it's all over."

While in the midst of this transaction, I thought, "God, if you exist, now is a good time to show it." While I was leaning back against a window, behind my back I started making symbols with my hands. I don't know sign language, but it appeared unusual enough for a professor to come out and inquire, "Can I help you?" "Can you help me?," I thought, "Yeah, you can get this psycho off my back."

My audible response was as calm as I could muster: "Yes, I'm looking for professor so and so." I made up a name, and the professor said, "I'm not familiar with that professor. What department is he in?" I quickly thought of a hint. "Sociology," I replied as if to say, "This guy is a sociopath."

The professor said, "Come with me. We'll look him up in the directory." God had intervened. Steve ran away, and I proceeded to sob at the professor's feet. I explained to him what had happened, that my books were still in the classroom, and that I was afraid to go to my car.

That was the first time he tried to kill me. The second was while I was in a nightclub. He removed all the lug nuts from my wheels.

Luckily, my friends noticed one of the lug nuts Steve had left on the hood of my car, and I got some replacements to put on. Thank God for automotively inclined friends.

I did not have him arrested after either experience because I loved him. That's what I thought of love back then. Today it holds a very different meaning. I expect a much higher caliber of love.

Once I reminded him of these things, Steve was mortified and embarrassed by his own behavior and apologized profusely. He had no conception of what he had put me through, probably because of his drug and alcohol abuse during the time he did these things. Ironically, I had the distinguished opportunity to thank him for sending me on the right path.

I feel freer than I have ever felt, like I can accomplish anything. My gratitude overflows, and my belief that prayers are heard is stronger than ever. For the prior twenty-one years, I'd been praying for him whenever I was reminded of him or how I got to where I did. I wished him peace, love, and health, all of which seem to have come true for him.

My heart is full of a different love toward him, of a kind I've never felt before. A soul mate love, only accomplished by recognizing that he and I have fulfilled our mutual purpose in this lifetime.

May you feel with me this moment of gratitude, love, and bliss. Aloha.

by Nirlepa, Hawaii, USA

## **Gradual Maturity with the Twelfth Step**

### **First of Two Letters - 2005**

Hello,

My name is Brian and I'm a sex and love addict. I live in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. I am Secretary for the Saturday 5.00 PM St.Kilda Meeting.

We have just recently, once again, established a regular monthly intergroup meeting. There are only five groups in Melbourne. They have an extremely fluctuating membership with maybe five to ten reliable attendees.

The Intergroup is viewed as necessary by possibly five members. We have a phone line with a recorded message, and this line is never checked for messages.

We are also trying to establish a national website. No twelfth-step work occurs outside meetings, and sponsorship is thin.

Also enclosed is my request for literature, but I would appreciate it if this letter could be forwarded to other intergroups for support and suggestions.

Thank you.

## **Second of Two Letters - 2008**

Hello,

My name is Brian and I'm a sex and love addict. I live in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. This letter is a copy of letter sent to you in 2005, which I've edited to reflect our current situation.

I am not an animal; I am a human being. I act out my thoughts and frustrations to avoid myself as if I had a better plan than God's.

We have a regular monthly intergroup meeting. There are only five groups in Melbourne with an extremely fluctuating membership and maybe five to ten reliable attendees. Only ten members view the intergroup as necessary.

We have a phone line with a recorded message and this line is checked for messages. Efforts are made to do twelfth-step work, with non-anonymous messages left, followed by direct contact. We also have a National Website, established in Sydney.

Sponsorship and twelfth-step work outside the meetings are scarce. I think our longest sober members, Carsten & Brian (a different Brian than me), have been attending meetings and working the Twelve Steps for two years. Closest to that is less than a month. While Sean hasn't done the Steps, he has over four years.

There is much mentioned at our twelve-step meetings about the HOW Programme, and gradually this confusing double messaging is decreasing. HOW is for use as a private sponsorship tool. HOW alongside a twelve-step program gives two messages.

Also enclosed is my request for literature, but I would appreciate it if this letter could be forwarded to other intergroups for support and suggestions.

Thank you.

by Brian, Victoria, Australia

## **Honesty: The Core of Recovery**

One time at an S.L.A.A. meeting, an experienced member said, "Dishonesty lies at the center of every addiction." The converse is also true; honesty forms the very core of recovery. Without it, no recovery is possible. I have experienced this principle in my own plunge into sexual addiction and my slow upward crawl out of its depths.

The Fourth and Fifth Steps show us the necessity of being honest with ourselves and with at least one other human being, while the Tenth Step tells us that we need to continually be honest with ourselves and promptly admit when we are wrong.

As addicts, we try to hide the truth from our spouses, friends, and coworkers. My addiction, starting with raiding my father's secret pornography stash, later took the form of visits to prostitutes and strip bars. I always used to say, "I'm going to a party, and I'm the only one invited." Yet many of those dancers who always went by their stage names, were more honest with me than I was with them. One of them told me one time, "You

belong home." Another said, "Why would you want to come here when you have everything you could want at home?" Why indeed? That is the paradox of our obsession with lust and dishonesty.

After a devastating year in 2004, during which I concealed acting out from my fellow S.L.A.A. members, I finally got honest and began almost four years of abstinence from my bottom line. I thought I was cured, but I was not being completely honest with myself. Two years later, what I thought to be an innocent emotional affair with a customer resulted in my second wife's attempted suicide, a terrible event that sobered me up for awhile.

Then, after a trip to Las Vegas for a trade show at which I became overwhelmed with erotic images, and after a subsequent visit from my youngest son that dredged up memories of guilt and abandonment, I found myself once again at the door of a local strip club to medicate my emotional pain. My Higher Power gave me message after message in various forms. One man told me how lucky I was to be married to a wonderful woman. A dream of a man frozen in a block of ice made me realize

how trapped I had been. An unplanned visit by a former S.L.A.A. member, who wanted to come back to the group with her equally sex addicted husband, made me realize I needed to get honest or perish. I chose to get honest with a fellow member who had been in the group almost as long as I had.

A film about a man whose one dishonest act negatively affected thousands of people emphasized the truth that there are no innocent lies. Finally, a coworker, who became uncomfortable with a customer's unwanted advances, said to me, "Infidelity has caused so much pain to my life and the life of others. I don't want any part of it anymore."

I now know that I can only stay in recovery as long as I am honest with myself, my Higher Power, and others. It is painful, but it is necessary to face the truth of who I am and what I have done. There is no other way.

by JF, Missouri, USA

## Special Section on Outreach

### Truth in Fiction

As a Pastor, a former owner of a women's shelter, and a former primary counselor in a major treatment center, I have come to see the reality of untreated sex and love addiction. It would be unethical for me to share patient, tenant, or member information with you, but I can still share with you a truthful story. The story invented below is a fictional synthesis of a thousand real stories, realistic in every respect. Situations and personalities have been combined in a way that no single real-life person is even remotely represented.

Beth is a cocaine addict. She entered treatment because her live-in boyfriend got into recovery and threatened to send her packing if she didn't get clean.

Beth arrived angry, at him, at the treatment intake people, and at the world. She was quickly diagnosed with substance dependence, acute anxiety, and borderline traits. Her history of sexual promiscuity went unnoticed because she



deliberately made a big deal about how faithful she had been to her current man.

During the course of her treatment, she would frequently disappear into the bathroom for twenty minutes during trauma group. The staff discussed it and decided that she was resisting treatment. The fact that she was visiting the ladies room to quietly masturbate went undetected as did her past promiscuity, so instead of treating sex and love addiction, the staff prohibited her from visiting the ladies room during group.

Beth abruptly entered withdrawal, which had not been her plan, so she responded by running away. She first found some cocaine and then held up in a hotel room with another relapsing addict. He introduced her to shooting cocaine during sex. No one could find her for a month.

When she emerged all mangled, she was not able to return to treatment because the insurance company was denying coverage. Her boyfriend had lost interest in flying her home. Where she ended up after the emergency room, only God knows.

Lynn, the trauma specialist on staff had had a vague sense that the

Beth's acute anxiety had something to do with early abuse. She had quietly wondered what Beth had been doing in the bathroom. It never occurred to anyone on staff that Beth ran because of sexual withdrawal, not cocaine withdrawal. Beth's borderline diagnosis explained the chaos and dependency in her personal relationships and her impulsive behavior, so love addiction (which insurance companies don't recognize as an addiction) was overlooked.

Consequently Beth disappeared, like thousands of others, into a world of darkness. If there was someone there, someone who had taken the time to start an S.L.A.A. meeting in the facility, if someone dropped by the treatment center to invite the staff to take the patients out to a nearby S.L.A.A. meeting, Beth might have found the help she needed.

Who is responsible for this travesty? I am.

anonymous

## Meeting the Demand

Where did I go when life was at life's end? The answer that came

to me then was the same answer that hundreds of thousands of people come to every year: We go for treatment.

Is Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous there when we arrive?  
Not usually. Not yet.

At the onset of the 2008 A.B.M., the Conference Public Information Committee was memberless. The good news is that the group is alive and well today. In the announcements section of this issue, you can find the notice provided to *the Journal* by the C.P.I.C. Chairperson. My hope is that you will read it along with the call for Journal Representatives. These are two public outreach opportunities that can bring depth and joy into the experience of recovery.

Try it. I have, and it has been a great and noble adventure.

by Douglas D. Managing Editor,  
*the Journal*

## I am a Pen Pal

Step Twelve is, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to Sex and Love Addicts

and to practice these principles in all areas of our lives."

In the spirit of Tradition Five, "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the Sex and Love addict who still suffers." As a grateful recovering Sex and Love Addict, I continue to look for the opportunities to carry the message to those who are still sick and suffering. One of the ways I have discovered this is through being a pen pal to those who are incarcerated for having committed sexual offenses.

As one who spent time behind the razor wire, I know firsthand the importance of having communication with the outside world. I carried on extensive correspondence with family members and friends, which was a great blessing to me. It gave me the outside connection that I could not have had otherwise.

My first experience as a pen pal came about six years ago. When I came into the program, one of the first people I became acquainted with was awaiting his trial and sentencing for inappropriate sexual behavior. This member became my first sponsee.

I was able to prepare him somewhat for the prison experience, and I knew that someone would have to step up and be a link to the outside world for him. During the following two years, I wrote to him several times telling him about what was happening in my life and also to keep him up to date on what was happening in the meetings he had regularly attended. I found it rewarding to help to lift him up during his loneliness and let him know that there were still people who cared about him.

This same experience was to be repeated in my recovery three more times. Of those three, one has been released and the other two are serving extended sentences. It has been a way to give back a little bit of what I have received in my personal recovery.

I feel blessed to have experienced being a pen pal. It has strengthened me, and since there are no S.L.A.A. meetings available in either my state's prison system or the federal system, this has been a way for the member who is incarcerated to get current with someone in the program and to share in the lessons which they have learned in prison.

I have had one bad experience with being a pen pal. I received a referral from a friend who is in another program telling me that he had a contact that he did not know how to help achieve sobriety. I accepted the challenge and began some correspondence. Much to my chagrin, this person had no remorse for his actions or understanding of his fault; the system was to blame. He was deep in denial.

Since his offense was toward children, I still hoped that I might be of some help. When I asked him whether he was sexually attracted to children, he responded by saying that his attraction was toward older men. This frightened me because I am a senior citizen. I felt that it would be dangerous to continue this correspondence and referred him back to the one who referred him to me in hope that he might find someone who is younger to help him.

My best experience as a pen pal came nearly a year ago, when a man who was about to be released from prison wrote to our intergroup seeking information. The request was passed along to me. He was being released to a halfway house and wanted

someone to work with him as he worked on the addictive behaviors that landed him seven years of prison time.

I made sure that he had a copy of S.L.A.A.'s basic text and began having him work the Twelve Steps. We had to do this by mail. This isn't the usual way I take a man through the Steps, but under the circumstances it was the only way.

He progressed through the first two steps rather quickly but then stalled on the Third Step. During that time he wrote only sporadically, revealing that he had recently been acting out. He was resisting the surrender of Step Three.

Fortunately, his counselor had some other recovery books and encouraged him to read what was said about Step Three in them. With a couple more letters, he was finally able to surrender. He asked me if I might be able to visit him at the halfway house. I was apprehensive and would not recommend this to everyone, but I agreed to be added to the list of people that he would like to have in to visit him.

I knew that there would be obstacles to overcome, including being approved by a parole officer. After some phone calls to his counselor, the parole officer, and a caseworker, I received news that I had been approved. The parole officer still had to sign off on me, but under the new rules that had come into effect, the caseworker could sign off along with the counselor and his immediate supervisor, supplanting the need for the parole officer's approval.

This is the best part and occurred only yesterday. I made the short trip to the halfway house and met with him in person for the first time. It was rewarding to see this man's totally genuine desire for recovery and the better life it brings, just as it had seemed in his letters.

Here was someone who has been very honest in his communication with me regarding his past and present activities. But there was a sense of remorse that was obvious in his communication. How, you might ask, do I know that he was sincere and not just acting? It is because we could sit there and he would look me in the eye as he spoke about his actions. The stories were consistent between

the letters and the in-person meeting.

I finally remembered to ask him how he learned about Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. I was surprised to learn that nearly eight years ago there were S.L.A.A. meetings in prison. He had attended regularly and had begun to learn just enough that he knew that he had to reconnect with the program and begin working the steps in earnest.

After the meetings had been discontinued, he kept asking why the meetings had ceased. No one would give him an answer.

I have been able to find out that this state does not recognize inappropriate sexual activities as an addiction. They are following the guidelines set down by some national psychological association. Sadly, here is just one person who was unable to get the help that he needed from the program until he could finally convince someone to get an address for him.

This experience has been life changing for me because it is the first time that I have been able to begin to work through the Twelve Steps by mail. Helping someone

face-to-face is one thing, but by letter is more of a challenge due to the delay between letters.

I feel so passionate about prison outreach that I have now become a member of the Conference Prison Outreach Committee. This will give me an opportunity to help more people and to assist others as they begin to reach out to those who are incarcerated. Doing it on my own has been rewarding but challenging. I haven't had access to the kind of resources that would make it easier. With the kind of information that we are now able to gather, it will be much easier for all of us to reach out to incarcerated sex and love addicts.

If you are interested in being a pen pal please contact the Conference Prison Outreach Committee (C.P.O.C.) through [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org), our Fellowship Wide Services website. There should be names of men and women who have reached out to us seeking a pen pal. You will thank your Higher Power for leading you to reach out and you will receive much strength from your efforts.

by Garry K., Medina, Ohio, USA

## Share Space

### Snow Dogs

Here come the holidays! The majority of my mental space is filled with concerns about unsent greetings, unwrapped gifts, worries about how much money I've spent, regret and guilt about not being able to spend more on others, aching joints and muscles from shoveling snow, and questions about how to get everything on my to-do list completed.

Then I'm reminded what the holidays are about by watching a bunch of silly dogs frolicking in the snowdrifts this morning. As I watch the diving, leaping, snorting, barking canines of all sizes, shapes, and colors chasing each other through the powder, I'm overcome with laughter, joy, complete abandon, and a love that cannot be defeated by anything on Earth. Are there any more important priorities in my life? Are there better reasons to be here now?

engineered by a Power that has infinitely higher goals in mind than the chatter in mine. Beyond its astronomical details, Solstice reminds me that no matter how dark things seem, Light is always there, the sun (Son) always rises, and Spring with its flowers, birds, and warmth is on the way.

As I say "oh yes!" in recognition, all the obsessions that seemed so important a moment ago recede into the nothingness from whence they came, as shadows flee from Light. If everything is in perfect order, as it is in the world of our animal friends, what is there to keep me from bringing joy, love, peace, and the certainty that all is well into every day? What would keep me from sharing those gifts with everyone I meet?

by Bruce B., December 2007

As I watch the sun sink tonight, I remember that it is nearly the moment of Solstice, a miraculous event that happens twice a year,

# Write for the Journal

Please refer to just inside the front cover for writer qualifications, copyright information, and information on submitting a piece. Priority may be given to submissions related to one of these tentative upcoming themes.

January-February 2009, tentative: Acting Out is Anorexic

March-April 2009, tentative: Spiritual Awakening

May-June 2009, tentative: Varieties of Experience

Submissions may be edited for readability and appropriateness prior to publication. Professional writers often rewrite their pieces several times before submission to avoid placing the burden of correcting spelling and grammar on the editorial staff. Amateur writers would do well to read what they have written and rewrite it until their ideas are expressed clearly, as would their professional counterparts.

Thrift is important; don't say in many words what could be said in a few.

All submissions must include citations for any references or inclusions that require attribution by law.

Writers are asked to avoid commenting on issues unrelated to recovery from sex and love addiction and to maintain their focus on their personal experience. In pursuit of this focus, writers can use the first person singular pronoun, I, and avoid references to specific people and locations.

Pieces with an appropriate tone for publication in the Journal will proclaim what is good and useful rather than what is wrong or improper. This tone will assist the readership in the development of a positive outlook toward growth and personal recovery.

We ask that writers do not use the Journal by name as a professional reference or as a writer's credential. Public disclosure of membership in S.L.A.A. is expressly discouraged.

The 1989, 1990, and 1991 General Service Conferences of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous adopted motions that established the Journal. These charter statements indicate the purpose of the Journal to be the growth of the S.L.A.A. fellowship and its individual members. Because traditionally our common welfare comes first, assignees or volunteers of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Inc. select material is based on their understanding of the application of this purpose at the time of selection. No guarantees of publication are expressed or implied.

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