

theJournal

January-February 2009

ANOREXIA IS ACTING OUT



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.

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Fellowship-Wide Services
1550 NE Loop 410, Ste 118
San Antonio, TX 78209

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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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Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous

Fellowship Wide Services

1550 NE Loop 410, Suite 118

San Antonio, TX 78209

+1 210-828-7900 Monday through Friday 9 am to 5 pm CST

Executive Director Kim B.

Managing Editor Douglas D.

Art Director Irv B.

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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.

From The Editor

Dear Reader,

When social, sexual, and emotional anorexia was under discussion at the 2008 Annual Business Meeting of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, I noticed the slight air of segregation between addicts and anorexics crop up within some of the comments that were being made from the Conference floor. It is an easy assumption to fall into that sex and love addiction is the symmetric opposite of sexual, social, and emotional anorexia.

To gently present the alternative view, I interjected, "I've come to realize that anorexia and addiction are not two extremes we toggle between, but that they usually they operate simultaneously. They aren't opposites at all."

One of the members of the Conference Anorexia Committee, smiled and came back with, "I'm glad you've discovered that. We on the C.A.C. have known that anorexia was behind our addiction for some time."

I grinned quietly, because I had also known it for years. The notion that anorexia operates behind our addiction is presented in our Conference approved literature on the subject. Many of us have read it and pondered its implications for our own recovery many times.

This integrated view of anorexia and addiction is presented in this issue from many vantage points. The comic in the center of this issue depicts the opposing view for contrast. I hope you enjoy the read.

Douglas D.
Managing Editor, *the Journal*

Events and Service Opportunities

Central California Step Retreat '09

Looking for a deeper, more satisfying recovery experience? Come to the Central California Step Retreat '09, held from March 6th through 8th, 2009. Set among the natural beauty of the Sequoia Retreat Center you'll get the peace and serenity you've been needing. Sequoia is a beautiful, clean, and comfortable facility, nestled in the wooded mountains of central California, fifteen miles north of Santa Cruz.

The program is twelve-step oriented, so attendees are invited to engage in actual step activity. There is also time for fellowship, recreation, rest, and getting current. You will get a copy of the Sex and Love Step Recovery Booklet, a straightforward, back-to-basics guide to sexual and romantic recovery created by and for recovering sex and love addicts, to take home with you. The Conference Literature Committee is currently processing the booklet in preparation for Conference approval.

Registration includes meals for all three days, two nights of lodging, top-notch facilitation, your personal copy of the step booklet, and great fellowship. The cost is \$279 per person. Registrations must be postmarked by February 28th, 2009, or \$20 additional fee will be required.

Registration flyers and more information can be found at www.SouthFloridaSLAA.org or <http://www.slaa-san-diego.org/meetings.htm>. You can also email us at santacruz@arts-show.net or inquire through the [SouthFloridaSLAA.org](http://www.SouthFloridaSLAA.org) Contact-Us page.

Houston Women's Beach Retreat '09

Come to a retreat for women in beautiful, peaceful, safe surroundings on May 1 through 3, 2009 in Surfside, Playa Del Oro, 2402 Bluewater Highway. Any woman who thinks she might have a problem with sex and love addiction may attend. This retreat has been held in Surfside (60 miles south of Houston, Texas) since 1997. Many women have attended yearly to recommit to their long term sobriety and help other

women get the recovery they have enjoyed. Others attend frequently to deepen their understanding of the Twelve Steps. There are women attending with anywhere between one day and eighteen years of sobriety. Visit SLAAFWS.org for more information 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.

S.L.A.A. is Growing

To reach more sex and love addicts that do not yet know of recovery, *the Journal* is reaching further than ever before. *The Journal* is a key outreach tool into areas that do not yet have an S.L.A.A. presence. We are looking for willing volunteers to assist in the making of the new, deeper, more refreshing recovery periodical.

Executive Director

The Executive Director of *the Journal* provides leadership between Conference Journal Committee (CJC) meetings, notes performance on behalf of the CJC, and monitors and promotes self-sufficiency for *the Journal*. Part of the Executive Director's leadership role is to coordinate marketing, production, art, and subscription fulfillment. Candidates must have at least one year of continuous bottom line sobriety.

Marketing Director

The Marketing Director oversees the existing network of Journal Representatives in the interest of building *the Journal's* reputation worldwide and boosting subscription volume and the volume of contributed writing and visual art. The Marketing Director also cooperates with other S.L.A.A. service bodies to reach out to sex and love addicts throughout the world. Candidates must have at least six months of continuous bottom line sobriety. Interested?

If you are interested in one of the above service positions, email correspondence@theSLAAJournal.org with your phone number or use the contact page on www.theSLAAJournal.org. If you are interested in making a creative contribution to *the Journal*, read the front and back inside cover of this issue.

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 pass 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@arts-show.net 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 have freely received.

An Invitation For You

Enlarge your recovery by allowing others to get the same benefit that you get 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 groups and individuals that need refreshment. *The Journal* also fosters international unity, the core principle of our First Tradition. Here's what we can do together.

- We can formally or informally become a 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 Representatives 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 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.

Publish Your Event

Let us know about your group or intergroup sponsored events. We will help you get the word out to our readership. You can email editor@theSLAAJournal.org or submit a press release just as you would a story through www.theSLAAJournal.org, preferably several months in advance so participants have time to plan to attend. Event notices must be received at least one month prior to the issue date. The event notice deadline is December 1st for the January-February issue, February 1st for the March-April issue, April 1st for the May-June issue, June 1st for the July-August issue, August 1st for the September-October issue, and October 1st for the November-December issue.

Acting Out is Anorexia

What is Anorexia?

S.L.A.A's brown anorexia pamphlet defines anorexia as follows. (Excerpted from *Anorexia: Sexual, Social, Emotional*, 1992 S.L.A.A.)

"In Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, we suffer from addiction to sex, love, relationship, fantasy, romance, and codependency. However, there is still another addiction some of us suffer from: anorexia. As an eating disorder, anorexia is defined as the compulsive avoidance of food. In the area of sex and love, anorexia has a similar definition: Anorexia is the compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving social, sexual, or emotional nourishment."

Back a few years ago, some of us anorexic S.L.A.A. members researched the word anorexia. Here's what we found.

The word anorexia is a noun. In the sixteenth century, it was derived from this Greek word, roughly pronounced *orego*.

ορεγω

It literally means the inability to reach out or stretch oneself toward something. It figurative means the inability to aspire to higher things. The adjective forms of the word, anorexic and anorectic, came into use in the late nineteenth century.

Interestingly, the word anorexia is also tied into the word *regere*, meaning to keep straight, guide, or rule in Latin. Through this Latin connection, the word anorexia means the inability to control.

We've spent hours talking about this among the recovering anorexics in my home anorexia groups over the years. The rest of this article is what I've come to believe as a result.

The anorexic person is always trying to control without consciously being aware of it. People with the eating disorder *Anorexia Nervosa* try to control their food intake. The typical psychological explanation for this behavior is that the anorexic wants to exercise control in the area of eating to battle the world of uncertainty.

In the context of S.L.A.A., the avoidance of love is often an attempt to control current feelings

and future sensations. The behavior is typically based on the belief that intimacy leads to pain. But to love, it seems, some control must be relinquished.

That scares the addict who is, for the first time perhaps, feeling like their sexual and romantic behavior is under control. Of course, letting go of control is the central theme of Step Three. I placed control over my life with a Power greater than myself.

Recovery from anorexia involves a specific kind of risk taking. In Step Three, I can, as a recovering anorexic, leaving my emotional, social, and sexual life with God. My experience tells me that this type of risk is good and does not pose any risk to my recovery.

I've never come across a way to develop intimacy in friendships or relationships without risking betrayal, abandonment, and rejection. Some people say, "No pain, no gain." I'm not sure that pain is always necessary for personal growth, but I will say that something similar seems to be universally true. No risk, no reward. I've found this to be true in art, writing, and business. As a recovering anorexic, I've

discovered that God wants me to take risks.

Thinking of the word study, I need to reach out and aspire to higher things. Having done this for over a decade, I have experienced the reward of authentic love, close friendship, and a sane and enjoyable family life.

by Douglas D., Managing Editor

Acting Out is Anorexia

I had done this before, and I was not happy. The vice of sex with another nameless acquaintance clamped down on my weary skull. If it weren't for vanity, I'd have blown it free.

It wasn't need that took me out each Friday night. I had been frequenting Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous meetings long enough to know that. The all-too-familiar signature of addiction was once again found scribbled in guilt-colored ink just beneath my consciousness.

I was eventually blown free, but by something of a larger caliber than a bullet. It was the Twelve Steps by which freedom finally came. The Steps found me wading in the

vomit of my own behavior. Though solid spiritual food was a challenge, those twelve bite-sized nibbles were small enough to keep down. Thank God for the nourishment of recovery.

After a few years of abstinence from anonymous sex, I began to attend a social, sexual, and emotional anorexia meeting that had sprouted nearby. They taught me that anorexia, in the context of sex and love addiction, is the compulsive avoidance of exchanging authentic love. I identified well enough with the pattern to begin introducing myself before sharing with, "My name is Daniella, and I'm an anorexic sex and love addict."

After attending this new group for a few months and reading more on anorexia, I started verbalizing commitments designed to strengthen my connection with healthy friends and family. The group called these professions top line commitments. We celebrated our personal social and emotional achievements together each week, awarding little wooden tokens to those who had followed through. It was written into the meeting format that way. I liked it.

My improved relationship with my siblings and parents was a credit to the group. Through the group, God had opened the door to a few important and lasting friendships outside of the recovery community. One of those is a platonic friendship with a man. I had never experienced that before.

Over time, I realized that I had been socially anorexic at parties, emotionally anorexic while playing dramatic roles on stage, and sexually anorexic at the peak of intercourse. Until I had begun to build authentic relationships because of those precious top line commitments, I didn't know how to socialize, emote, or remain present during a climax.

When I moved to Paris, France, it was leaving our close-knit anorexia group behind that gave me the greatest feeling of loss. Thankfully, the Internet, which used to be a place of danger for me, became a tool of recovery, and I kept contact with members of my anorexia group. I also maintained the close friendships that emerged because of my recovery progress.

In Paris, new friendships began to form. When I returned to the states, I made sure to include the day that the anorexia group meets

in my itinerary. I visited my family and good friends outside the fellowship too. There is great importance in staying in practice. Having to re-learn lessons is wasteful.

I attend lots of S.L.A.A. meetings when I'm back in the states. Phone meetings are fine, but face-to-face meetings create a deeper bond, especially when we meet socially after the meeting or throughout the week. I want as much of real community as I can reasonably get.

It was in Paris that I saw an ad for a physical rehab clinic, upon which were the words, "La récupération vit." Recovery is living. I remembered what I had learned while attending the anorexia group. The antidote for love addiction is not abstinence from love; it is authentic love. The antidote for anonymous sex was intentional, pre-discussed, connected sexuality.

Recovery is achieved by living, not by abstinence, although abstinence had to occur first to open the space for the good life to fit. Inauthentic things must be replaced with the authentic, otherwise I am left with nothing,

and that's not recovery. I had learned that.

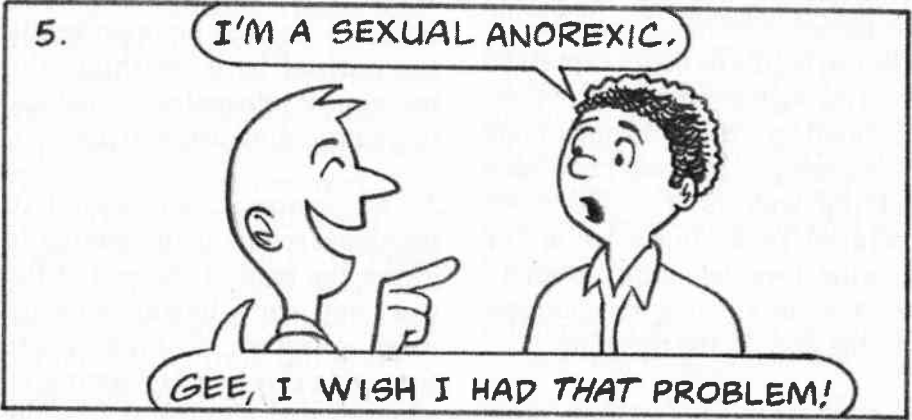
Recovery is living. When I saw the words in French, they shifted my thinking for just a moment so I could see something new. The sequence of horrid experiences with anonymous sex shot before me like a near death experience, and I spoke the words out loud. "Acting out is anorexic."

There at the Parisian café, I connected the two symmetric ideas for the first time. I vaguely remembered a phone meeting where someone had said it. "Acting out is anorexic." If someone had coughed, it would have escaped my notice.

I remember thinking that it didn't sound right. I had always thought acting out and anorexia to be opposites. There on the streets of the city traveled by many great philosophers, the truth of it rose from the pavement like the ghosts of the philosophers themselves. They aren't opposites at all.

Anorexia had been the essence of my addictive behavior and thought. Wasn't it reality I was escaping from? How is compulsive escaping not the same thing as





compulsive avoidance of giving or receiving love?

Then I thought of my sexual escapades. I remembered how little I could remember. I knew more from the grocery store lines about people I had seen only through the lens of a camera and film than I knew about men who had entered me in imitation passion.

Anorexia, the compulsive avoidance of exchanging authentic love can hardly be better expressed than through a counterfeit of love. Trapped in artificial, poisonous relationships, the result I had been getting was as if I had been isolated in a single room for months. I was left empty, even if I was the one shoeing my conquest out the door in the morning.

I hear lots of women now admitting to addictive pornography and Internet sex. As I identify with them, I now think, "I remember that kind of anorexic experience." What can be more anorexic than avoiding all risk by limiting interaction to an image or strings of text?

Nude models can't see back. They can neither reject nor betray. A chat room session can be closed at

a click of a mouse. The person behind an avatar can exit and come back as another person behind a different avatar. Chat rooms can give the illusion of safe sex, but for an anorexic like me, it is as emotionally and spiritually dangerous as sex with strangers.

Without risking abandonment, there is no intimacy. Without risking judgment, there is no possibility for encouragement and support. Without risking rejection, there is no opportunity for mutual love. Without the investment into real relationships, there is no dimension to life.

As an anorexic, I engaged in fractional relationships similar to giving the man at the end of the exit ramp who is looking for work a few quarters. Glimpsing life through a tiny hole is voyeuristic, whether that glimpse is into the men's dressing room or into the experience of sharing a home. My partial relationships were fear-driven.

In embracing complete human relationships, I might get hurt. In seeking commitment and reciprocal love, I might suffer loss. I'll take that deal. The alternative is soullessness.

I cherish my time spent with those with whom I have developed seasoned friendships. God is among those friendships, and the most important of them. The Twelve Steps taught me that.

When at work or out for fun, although I consider my safety, I engage fully with those I meet for the first time. I understand the importance of safety and practice setting boundaries, but when seeking the authentic I might have to risk encountering a forgery. God keeps me safe. I no longer wake up to the shock of having slept next to someone unknown. The vice has been removed. The pressure is off my skill, and the bruises have healed, all through such a simple one-day-at-a-time remedy. I continue to practice the principles behind the Twelve Steps and boldly love and accept love in return, and God takes care of the rest.

In one breath I can now say, "Acting out is anorexic, but recovery is life," and know that the two pieces fit into the same puzzle, once solved becomes a stepping-stone to enchanted living.

By Daniella P., Paris, France

Anorexia Recovery Questions

After a few months, the Wethersfield Anorexia Group got tired of rereading the questions in the brown Conference-approved anorexia pamphlet, so they began a new list with thirty more anorexia questions, not for self-diagnosis, but to provoke recovery from anorexia. The Bal Harbor Anorexics by the Sea Group improved and enlarged it. With a few minor edits, my home group, an anorexia group of S.L.A.A., adopted it and made a few minor edits. The final forty-four questions that can be used as a recovery from anorexia tool are listed here.

Although this anorexia questions list may not be approved S.L.A.A. literature, each group is autonomous per Tradition Four, so each group can vote to use or discard whatever they wish as long as it does not affect S.L.A.A. as a whole. My home group decided to read one question at a time out loud and allow each person, going in a clockwise direction, to answer the question or pass. Once everyone has had an opportunity to share on a question, we read the next question. We rotate between

the brown anorexia pamphlet and these questions. It works nicely.

1. In what ways have your family and peers influenced your anorexia?
2. How have failed relationships within your original family contributed to your anorexia?
3. What anorexic behaviors do you have that you've been unwilling or unable to change so far?
4. How has your need to rely on someone else's weakness or strength been mistaken for real intimacy?
5. Do you have trouble making or keeping commitments to yourself or others?
6. What might you be doing to scare away potentially healthy friendships and intimate relationships?
7. Have you ever recoiled from physical intimacy for no apparent reason, and, if so, why?
8. Do your princes or princesses turn into frogs after you have kissed them, and, if so, why?
9. Is intimacy always a short-lived thing in your life's history?
10. Have you used sexuality to gain a false sense of intimacy or protection?
11. Are you attracted to people who are ultimately undesirable partners?
12. What things have you either lost or never had as a result of your anorexia?
13. Do you often find yourself weighing the pros and cons of pursuing or continuing a relationship?
14. How have your experiences with commitment affected your trust in others?
15. Have you recently had uncontrollable physical manifestations of anorexia in a relationship?
16. How often do you interact socially without any agenda other than to have fun?
17. Do you have difficulty in separating sex and love, and if so, how can they be integrated?

18. What are some specific actions, tools, or guidelines you use to address your anorexia?
19. What does the word intimacy mean?
20. How has the relationship between your parents affected your anorexia?
21. In what specific ways has sex and love addiction masked your anorexia?
22. What are the symptoms of your anorexia?
23. What do you do or say that traditionally scares off potentially healthy relationships?
24. Are you generally attracted to people who have little interest in you but are repulsed by people who are attentive?
25. Is it harder for you to make commitments to yourself or to others?
26. Is it harder for you to keep commitments to yourself or to others?
27. How have your experiences with commitment affected your trust in others?
28. Is it possible to be sexually anorexic without being emotionally anorexic?
29. Is it possible to be emotionally anorexic without being sexually anorexic?
30. What does withdrawal from anorexia mean?
31. How would you be if you were not anorexic?
32. How can one escape from trying to control sexual misbehavior by becoming sexually anorexic?
33. Do you or have you ever tried breaking free from sexual anorexia using sexual excitement or dangerous sexuality?
34. In what ways have you tried to make others understand you and submit to your expectations?
35. Have you expected others to understand you without sharing any of your

background with them to allow them to know you?

the basis of them, and if not, why not?

36. Have you ever been socially paralyzed because you put others on a pedestal?

37. Do you have difficulty forming new friendships or relationships?

38. What were you afraid of?

39. What opportunities have you lost as a result of your inability to be yourself around others?

40. How have you limited the variety of people in your life because of assumptions about how they would perceive you?

41. How have your language patterns, expressions, clothing, personal hygiene, or physical fitness pushed others away?

42. What part of your personality have you constructed or permitted to continue to keep others at bay?

43. What areas of your life are definitely not anorexic?

44. If you have any long-term friends or relationships, what is

By Kaleb C.

An Anorexia Meeting Format

This is the Sample Road Anorexia Group's format. Maybe someone wants to start a meeting like ours.

[The Conference Anorexia Committee and the Conference Diversity Committee can provide other choices, and can be contacted through the S.L.A.A.'s Fellowship-Wide Services Office.]

To the Chairperson: Before the meeting, find copies of the S.L.A.A. Preamble, the Twelve Steps, and the Promises and select a reading from S.L.A.A. literature, such as: A section of the brown S.L.A.A. Anorexia pamphlet or an anorexia article from *the Journal*.

Start the Meeting. This is a regular anorexia meeting of the _____ Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous Group. We welcome anyone new to S.L.A.A. or to this meeting. To those new to S.L.A.A. we suggest you attend five meetings before deciding if the program is for you.

Please join us in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things that I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

My name is _____, and I'm an anorectic sex and love addict. We need a volunteer to read the S.L.A.A. Preamble. We need a volunteer to read the S.L.A.A.'s Twelve Steps.

To allow people to safely share what is necessary, we refrain throughout the meeting from all forms of cross talk, including commenting on what people have said and telling people what to do. Group conscience has decided that we will allow three minutes per share and take turns in a clockwise direction.

Start the reading, encouraging attendees to read a few paragraphs each. When the reading is over, start the discussion, and then open the topic to the floor until the MIDPOINT OF THE MEETING.

The topic section of our meeting is over. It is time to celebrate with those who have committed to top line behavior at previous meetings and have fulfilled those

commitments. These goals were chosen to bring us into deeper relationship and commitment with family, friends, or partners. It is the tradition of this group to give symbolic rewards to those celebrants. Is there anyone celebrating today? Applaud those who are celebrating top line success and give them a symbolic reward.

We now have an opportunity to commit to top line goals. These goals can be chosen to bring us into deeper relationship and commitment with family, friends, or partners. Please keep your explanations short. You are responsible to remember your own commitment, as the group does not record them. Is there anyone making a commitment today? Applaud those who are committing to top line activities, and repeat a single sentence summarizing the commitment back to the person who made it.

The topic section of our meeting is over. Our Seventh Tradition states that we have no dues or fees, but we are self-supporting through our own contributions. Our expenses at this location are \$____ per meeting, so we ask that you contribute if you can, but there is

no requirement to contribute anything. Pass the envelope for contributions.

This is the section of the meeting for getting current. We get current by sharing our recent sexual and emotional situations and thoughts that pose a current threat to our S.L.A.A. sobriety. Again, we allow up to three minutes per share and take turns in a clockwise direction. Permit sharing until 5 minutes before the end of the meeting.

Our time for getting current is over. If you have not had a chance to share, talk with someone after the meeting. Our business meetings are held after our regular meetings on the ____ week of each month. Let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but rather understanding, friendship, and authentic love. It is of paramount importance to keep the identities of those present and personal information that was shared confidential. Please join us in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. Handholding is optional during our closing.

Anonymous Contributor

Anorexia and Top Line Behavior

Our anorexia group has grown recently. One sign of growth is that we go out together after the weekly meeting, and we call each other during the week. Our members are finding deeper friendships and closer connections with their parents, siblings, and spouses. It is good to see. I need the strong recovery.

I've personally started three S.L.A.A. anorexia meetings. And I've read quite a bit about anorexia. Recently, there has been talk of writing a Top Lines pamphlet for S.L.A.A. and getting it Conference-approved.

We already have a Bottom Lines pamphlet. For those who have not read it, a person's bottom lines are the types of activities and thought patterns that cause a loss of control. They are activities that, once engaged in, lead to a loss of control over rate, frequency, or duration. Bottom lines are specific to each sex and love addict.

These activities are often actions that we repeatedly performed even when they violated our principles or cause pain or severe

consequences. Bottom lines can be mental obsessions, without any associated actions at all, as for a fantasy addict or someone who pines addictively over a desired lover to whom she or he has never spoken.

I've heard much over the years about anorexia bottom lines, but in practice, they don't work for me. We addicts have difficulty enough recognizing when we cross our addictive bottom lines when the bottom lines are physical actions. Are we supposed to immediately realize that we didn't do something we could have? Does that mean we have relapsed and need to move our sobriety date?

That kind of thinking would just cause me to relapse. My twisted addict mind would say, "Oops, I could have just asked my girlfriend out to a movie tonight, but my anorexia had me stay late at work. Since I've crossed my anorexia bottom line, I might as well secretly go visit the girl who slipped me her address the other day." I need to keep my bottom line a simple and accurate representation of addictive behavior that leads to relapse.

There is a place for anorexia in some of my top lines though. I have

two kinds of top lines, and I think that if there is a pamphlet written for top lines, it should outline the distinction. The first kind of top line is meant to lead me out of anorexia. The second kind of top line is meant to lead me away from addictive action.

An example of the first kind of top line is to meet with a person I have dated tonight for a movie and consider the possibility of kissing her. She has been my friend for years and we have gone on many dates, but I haven't been comfortable with going further. It would be wise to remain opened to the possibility, since she is healthy, intelligent, and well balanced. Over a period of years, we have demonstrated friendship together that is free of addictive patterns.

Realistically, that does not mean I must to go further. A relationship may not be what I really want, but I need to not exclude the possibility of trying a kiss. She and I have discussed great commitment, but conversation about intimacy is not the same as intimacy.

Sometimes, discussion is a bit sterile and what is sometimes

needed is a risk. My anorexia wants to shut me off to options. My top line is to be open to options. The present day application is to meet with her, keep an open mind, and be willing to try new things.

Here are some examples of the second kind of top line. They are opposites of addictive patterns. Instead of hunting for someone insecure enough to do what I want them to do, I look for strong people to befriend and with whom I can safely practice intimacy. My interactions with those who are insecure are limited to well-defined roles that are healthy and properly bounded. I now listen to what people have to say, take interest in their interests, and notice their expressions instead of undress them in my mind and fantasize about having sex with them in public places.

One way to look at my recovery is that I now practice safety around my bottom lines and take risks to reach my top lines. This is a big shift from emotional paralysis, social propaganda, dangerous sexuality, and psychopathic fantasies.

Top line behavior and thought nicely occupies the time I had once spent in bottom line addictive

behavior and obsessive thought. Top line living also builds purpose, which is a great motivation to stay in recovery and not return to active addiction and anorexic seclusion. The strengthened relationships become reasons not to act out or withdraw inward, and the people I have allowed into my recovery life have become natural accountability partners. It's a great journey.

By Marcel P., Ontario

Anorexic Pornographic

I am told that all my bottom line behaviors are also anorexic. Those in S.L.A.A. with some experience have been telling me that for six years, ever since I set my bottom line as one-night stands, pornography, and sex or intrigue with married women.

At first, I did not know what they meant. It makes sense to me now.

What I liked about one-night stands was their brevity. I always said, "Good night," after sex. One night, one of my trophy girls passed out drunk in my bed after we finished our sexual frenzy. I stayed up reading almost until sunrise so that she would sleep it off enough so I could wake her and

send her home, all to avoid sleeping next to her. It's not that she was unattractive. It's just that I'm an anorexic sex and love addict.

Pornography was the most anorexic. I don't even know the real names of any of the actresses in the films, if you can call them that. The only thing on the celluloid was disconnected sex. There were no stories and no signs of growth or change in any of the characters. Such things in pornography are just a distraction. While the addictive part of me used to key in on the undistracted mechanics of sex, the anorexic part of me was comfortable with the horrible acting. I did not want to know the characters. The best part was that neither the filmmakers nor the cast ever had to see me physically or emotionally naked. I could get my addictive hit without ever being known. Zero intimacy. If that is not anorexic, then I don't know what is.

Married women were safe because I could cut it off at any time by declaring that adultery is wrong. Of course I had no such morality when I lured them in. Once I became bored, I always pretended that they somehow manipulated me into their web of marital

dishonesty, but my boredom was just a front for my emotional anorexia. It was the lie I told myself. The newly discovered morality was a front for my anorexia too; I just wanted the woman to go away, far away. After my compassionless moral judgment, they weren't likely to call again.

I was very destructive and cruel. Obviously, my Steps Four through Nine were rough, but they were worth the effort.

All this acting out was an avoidance of giving and receiving love. The old-timers in my home group were right. All my bottom line behaviors are also anorexic.

It's now possible for me to experience love. It started with my sponsor. Then I was able to love my family, with real emotion, and they could feel the difference. I used to just fake it. I love now in ways I didn't know were possible, and none of the people I love are one-night stands, porn stars, or the wives of others. I can even cuddle with my girlfriend without feeling like I need to wiggle free after a few minutes.

Thank God I'm free of the craziness. They tell me that one day at a time I can live life without falling into bottom line behaviors, provided I maintain my spiritual condition. I just keep coming back to S.L.A.A. and follow the few simple suggestions that always work when we truly follow them.

By Vladimir D., Russia

My Prostitution

I just dumped another nice guy. That's what I do. Since I got clean and sober from drugs and alcohol, I don't prostitute myself anymore, but I do dump nice guys, and I'm not sure I can stop. I used to dump them for crazy guys that liked to party. I'd have sex with the new guy for two weeks straight, relapsing with crack or alcohol somewhere along the way.

God led me to Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, which is a whole other story. After getting and using some women's phone numbers, I stopped hooking up with guys who were getting high. I stayed out of relationships for a year, which is what I needed to do to get anywhere. When I went through the Steps, the desire to

have sex or go back to the street left me, thank God.

Eventually, I was ready to try a few dates. Guys have never been hard to find for me. I was born with features that most guys like, so I don't have to try. During active sex addiction, that became a problem.

All through grade school and early teens, I was always obsessing over some guy. Although I could get whoever I wanted, I would always run away and then obsess about the person I had left. I was, more or less, always in pain, so love scares me.

When I got older, I learned to shut off the love part and just party and have fun. Emotionally shutting off was my protection. My drinking got bad in my twenties and I eventually stumbled into doing crack. That's when prostitution started to look good. I'd get drunk and want to get high, and there was always some guy who would pull over and make an offer. Where I ended up wasn't what I wanted.

I'm so grateful for my first two sponsors. I wouldn't have made it off the streets and through the Twelve Steps without those women. I'm also grateful for my

male friends who keep eye contact and have good boundaries. They taught me what it's like to be appreciated and loved by a man without sex or intrigue.

My main problem now is that I still run away from good things. If a guy treats me well on a date, if he's interesting and responsible, I lose interest. I'm told it's old tapes. I think that's true. My thoughts just go down their own path, as if they weren't mine.

There are a few people in S.L.A.A. who keep sharing about how their thought life has become sober. Those people used to annoy me, basically because I wanted what they had, but I didn't feel worthy of getting it. When I finally came clean about it, they said that they weren't worthy either, but that the grace of God doesn't need us to be.

I keep praying, begging for a new mind. I heard a preacher talking about a new mind once. That's what I want. I pray every day.

When I told my very spiritual friend that I dumped another nice guy after three dates, and said that the prayer isn't working, she told me to be patient and wait on God. I told her that I've been waiting a while. She said wait more. I asked

her how long it took for her. She said, "It depends on what I'm asking for - sometimes right away, sometimes next year, sometimes never."

The turn-it-over steps are hard for me. Step Three, Step Seven, and Step Eleven involve too much waiting for this impatient addict. I had a tough time with them, but I didn't give up. Eventually, I got through, but I feel like I still have to go back to them every once and a while to keep them fresh.

If you remember, I said that when I was a kid, I became afraid of my love addiction, although I didn't understand that back then that it was addiction. I buried my emotions. The anorexia meetings help. At those, I learn that my acting out has always been part of my anorexia.

I've been expecting negative results and running from feeling for so long, it is hard for me to accept anything God wants to give me. I need help. At the anorexia meetings, there are sex and love addicts who know how I feel. They tell me to keep coming. I listen to what they share and begin to realize that I used to check out when sex started, not just with [prostitution] customers, but way

before that period, back in my early teens. I drank and screwed.

I used to flirt with a guy to avoid real conversation. It was such a habit that it was actually painful when I started communicating, like a reverse withdrawal. My anorexia came from my fear of the pain of obsessing over another boy. It made me cold and isolated. The only way to punch a hole through my protection was with something intense.

The intensity of my addiction was the only thing that made me feel alive, so my acting out was powered by my anorexia. And the ways I acted out were anorexic too. I didn't connect with these guys, not in the middle of sex and not when we were just talking. I was too busy manipulating.

With time, I might even stick with a nice guy. My friends have hope for me, and I'm beginning to too. I just need to keep growing and praying for God's will, not mine.

By Jessica L.

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.

March-April 2009: General Stories

May-June 2009, Daily Prayer and Meditation

July-August 2009: Amends Stories

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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