

Journal

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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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The source for references to the Twelve Traditions throughout this publication is *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, pp. 122, 123, Copyright © 1986 The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., San Antonio, Texas, U.S.A., and said Twelve Traditions were derived from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, pp. 9-13, Copyright © 1981 Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., New York, New York, U.S.A.

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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,

Sometimes it only takes one piece to sway the topic of an entire issue of *the Journal*, just as a single sentence spoken into the right moment can sway an entire life. That is the case with this issue. There is little more I can add. As you read on, you will likely see what I mean.

Sincerely,
Douglas D.
Managing Editor, *the Journal*

Events and Service Opportunities

Miami Step Retreat '09

Looking for a deeper, more satisfying recovery experience? Come to the Miami Step Retreat '09, held from June 5th through 7th, 2009. 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 \$229 per person.

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

S.L.A.A. is Growing

The Journal is a basic recovery tool for S.L.A.A. groups and individual members, and it is a key outreach tool into areas that do not yet have an S.L.A.A. presence. Tradition Nine states that each S.L.A.A. service entity is directly responsible to those they serve. In the spirit of Tradition Nine, *the Journal* recognizes its responsibility to both its current readers and potential future S.L.A.A. members seeking recovery.

To reach more sex and love addicts that do not yet know of recovery, we're stretching further than ever before. We're looking for people with writing, drawing, editing, layout, outreach, web design, production, and printing skills to assist in the creation of the new, deeper, more refreshing publication. Please assist us in creatively carrying the message of recovery.

Executive Director

The Executive Director of *the Journal* provides a leadership example and oversight of publication functions, overseeing editorial work, outreach, artistic direction, and subscription services. The Executive Director reports the status and health of *the Journal* to the C.J.C. each month and monitors and promotes the self-sufficiency of *the Journal* in keeping with Traditions Seven and Nine. Candidates must have at least one year of continuous bottom line sobriety.

Editorial Assistant

Each Editorial Assistant assists the Managing Editor with the editorial process for each of the six annual issues of *the Journal*, including form, content, and aesthetic presentation. Candidates must have at least one year of continuous bottom line abstinence.

Marketing Director

The Marketing Director (also called the Outreach Coordinator) oversees the network of Journal Representatives in the interest of building *the Journal's* reputation worldwide, building subscription volume, and encouraging creative contributions of 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.

Fulfillments Manager

The Fulfillments Manager oversees the printing and mailing of each of the six annual issues of *the Journal*. The Fulfillments Manager also ensures the legibility, aesthetic quality, and durability of the finished copies of *the Journal*. The Fulfillments Manager will evaluate the handling of subscriptions and help execute subscriber retention policy. Candidates must have at least six months of continuous bottom line sobriety.

Interested?

If interested in one or more of the above positions, visit www.theSLAAJournal.org, select Contact *the Journal*, and send your contact information to us using the web form. We will treat your information confidentially in accordance with *the Journal's* Privacy Policy. If you do not have web access, you can call the F.W.S. Office at 210-828-7900.

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.

Daily Prayer and Meditation

The Spiritual Program

This is a spiritual program. How often have I heard this statement in meetings? But have I truly considered what a spiritual program is?

A dictionary definition of a program is, "a plan or procedure for dealing with some matter."

In this case, the matter is my spiritual life. The word 'spiritual' has several interesting shades of meaning.

1. of the spirit or the soul as distinguished from the body or material matters
2. of, from, or concerned with the intellect; intellectual
4. characterized by the ascendancy of the spirit; showing much refinement of thought and feeling

{both definitions from Webster's New World College Dictionary © 2005 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.}

The program of S.L.A.A. is a plan - a procedure - for dealing with the life of my soul and intellect through refinement of thought and feeling that will be marked by

ascendancy of the spirit. Ah. That's a pretty lofty goal for someone who showed up here just wanting to learn how to stop myself from destroying my life through my compulsive need to have sex in bookstores, public restrooms, and parks, and who fell in love with the first person who would deign to give the time of day.

At the time, I would have been angered if someone would have suggested it, but in retrospect my spirit and intellect really did need refining.

Today I enjoy a serene and meaningful life. It is incredibly rich in many ways, including spiritually. How did I get here? By following the program as set forth in our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts, Twelve Promises, and slogans - in short, by studying and using the five major resources listed in the S.L.A.A. Preamble.

But guess what? It didn't happen overnight. It required daily work and thought in order to achieve this ascendancy of the spirit and refinement of thought and feeling. I guess I figured out that no one was going to save me but me. Sex and love addiction certainly wasn't doing it. You showed me the

answer. You said I had to work S.L.A.A.'s spiritual program.

I enjoy working, so that's not a big problem for me. In fact, over the course of the fourteen years of my sobriety, I have also pursued spiritual and intellectual refinement through various other channels: therapy; working a program of creative recovery; seeking, studying, and practicing religion; and exploring the realms of great art, poetry, music, and literature. At the core of all of this adjunctive exploration stands the S.L.A.A. program. Through it I have worked with my sponsors and with my Higher Power to refine my character so that I might, "solve from within the problems of [my real life]: Insecurity, loneliness, and lack of any abiding sense of personal worth and dignity." *{Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, p. 74}* What a miracle that you have offered this to me!

When I first started to come around S.L.A.A., I figured the program had more to do with Judeo-Christian religion than I might be able to tolerate. Let's say I was skeptical as to whether the spiritual stuff would work for me. I just wanted to know the practical ways to stop the acting out.

What I've learned over the years is that the Twelve Steps provide me an anchor or foundation regardless of my specific beliefs. The foundation is a faith that works. My theological beliefs have changed and matured over the course of my sobriety but the twelve-step foundation has allowed me to explore, question, reject, embrace, and luxuriate in various understandings of Higher Power without ever having to question my place in the order of life. The humility you taught me keeps me sober today.

As I see it, humility is the kernel of truth - the virtue - that powers the Twelve Steps. I try to make it the core of my personal spirituality. I developed humility through working the program of S.L.A.A., but first I had to learn what it meant.

You taught me that humility means being right-sized - what humility is: "a desire to seek and do God's will." *{Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 72}*, and that, as they say, humility is not thinking less of myself; but rather thinking of myself less. [Humility is a] healer of pain. *{Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 75}*

Indeed, I have come to believe that humility ensures that I can be in a

pain-free, healthy, and proper relationship with myself, others, and the God of my understanding. Whenever I am in pain, spiritually, emotionally or physically, I have learned to look for the ways in which I have not been right-sized or have not sought to know and do God's will or have been selfish. Then I address the problem right away using the Twelve Steps. I soon get to be free of pain again. If that's not a pretty cool use of spirituality, I don't know what is. For me, it sure beats Valium.

I'm tempted to try to single out one of the Twelve Step that epitomizes spirituality. The obvious choice would be Step Eleven. Step Seven is another strong candidate. But as I consider each of the Steps, I'm flooded with memories of the lessons and gifts I've received from working it.

I have found joy, peace, love, serenity, healing, and yes, a sane and fulfilling sex and love life through working the Steps and the rest of the S.L.A.A. program. My spirit and intellect has indeed been refined.

Ours is a spiritual program that is the solution - the spiritual release - from a very real physical, mental, and spiritual disease. I hope that

you too will find this release for yourself. If I can do it, so can you!

- by Stephen S, Pittsburgh, PA

{Editor's Note: S.L.A.A. neither endorses any particular step material outside S.L.A.A. Conference-approved literature nor endorses the use of any particular dictionary of the English language. Also, the adapted version of the Twelve Concepts for S.L.A.A. have not yet been presented to and adopted by the Conference, but some expect adoption to come soon. Lastly, you can find the S.L.A.A. Preamble referenced here on page three.}

Medicate or Meditate

If I continue medicating sorrow with the company of women, malaise may wormly burrow and suture deeply through heartwood's skin of future's thin to build a forever home, property rights and true needs notwithstanding any point of view.

Then how shall Buddhahood shine its warming yellow light down onto my pink and open face, where eyes await a clear or better vision?

Swallowing capsules
of self-love,
smooth and soothing,
freely given
by either attentive hand,
is a first and basic step
towards smiling
often, easy,
and again.

Yes, a crew cut stocky boy
grins big and pleasing,
needs nothing
but to linger
at the breakfast table
tucked like gold
in the kitchen's nook.

He knows in his
firm baseball body
the day awaits
his bristled brush of hair
and bucktoothed lights,
for play and mischief
are two of love's
dearest happy friends.

So, let us go and note
life's bold embrace,
while laughter's jaunty walk,
breath's gentle flow,
sparkle seeds
of happiness
sporting through
and through
the completion
of our one,

and truest,
face.

- by Peter L., California

The Quality of a Day

Had I not seen an example, I never would have tried myself. After all, I was taught as you may have been taught, to ask God in the morning for my sobriety and thank God again at night, but through a friend I met a man who flipped it around. Nku, who walks with a serenity that jumps right out at you, told me that his prayer life was his sole explanation. "Each morning," he said, "I try to get one thing done. In the evening, I try one more time. The rest of the day is God's time."

I would come by at eleven in the morning to pick up my friend for lunch, and he'd be on his knees, mumbling out loud to God. My friend and I would take a long time to catch up on each other's life, and when I returned to dropped my friend back off, this man would still be there. By this time, he'd be on his face, literally crying for the emotional healing of someone else's marriage, or he'd be begging that some one he just met on the street yesterday would find the needed strength to overcome some difficulty.

Three hours he'd have been there, pounding on the dirt and bonding with the Power we call higher. For Nku, his God was the Highest Power. "How can time be better spent than with the Creator of all," he once shared with me.

With this example given, I built my new concept of Step Eleven. Ever since, my sobriety has been soaring far above what I once thought was sobriety: Mere abstinence from my bottom lines. That is not to say I don't have any problems, because yesterday, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. My response, after a several hours of prayer and meditation, is to write this letter to tell you how great God is.

That is what spirituality is to me. There is no thing I can do, say, or think that affects the quality of my day more than the prayers I prayed yesterday and this morning.

How did I wake up this morning? Did I ask my Highest Power to guide me? Did I meditate on goodness and beauty? Did I remember that there is little that I can accomplish with the right motives without God's daily understanding?

Although the things I do and say at least partially define my character, there is little character

I have to take into my day without God's daily interference. God interfered with my addictions, and I have many. God interfered with my character defects, and I have many more of those. Yet God will let everything spin off into chaos if that is what I choose, and I made that choice for years. Today I choose differently.

God's interference, more than anything else, is why I am sober today. And I am thankful with all my heart and mind.

Now that my cancer is in mighty hands, and the letter he wanted me to write is in yours, I have more praying to do, so if you'll excuse me, there are many sick and unhappy people in my village this month. Like Nku, I pray that God lavish them with all the peace and good fortune that is possible.

To you too, I pray that God gives you the eye of heavenly understanding and the best of what sobriety has to offer.

- Kefilwe K., South Africa

Perspectives

The Bottom Line

Hi, I'm Frank, and I'm a sex and love addict. I am very grateful to be here in this room, and to be in recovery because of you.

We're all here in this room for one simple reason: Whatever it was that we did, at some point, it seemed like a good idea at the time. The behaviors that sent us into a pattern of compulsion did not seem to started out as an addictive pattern. If I would have recognized my compulsive patterns of sexual addiction (not just old-habits or mischief) was going to get me arrested and exiled from my home, I'm sure I would have taken more aggressive steps to deal with it back then. I might have shown up at S.L.A.A. allot sooner.

That little voice that urged me on to do things that were wrong, selfish, out of integrity with my higher self - that told me it was a great idea to get high, go to clubs, look at porn, or whatever - was not my highest self. It was a deep addiction. Now, looking back on my patterns of self-indulgence and self-destruction, I see the things that got me into trouble in the first place.

You know what the big cosmic joke is? "Experience is the thing you get right ... after you need it."

Through the grace of God we have found our way into Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. Coming here may have been the first step, or it may have been one of a series of first steps that each of us took to try to come to grips with what it was that was torturing us, making us miserable, and possibly ruining our marriages and our relationships with our kids - ruining our lives.

As Tradition Three states, "The only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is the desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction." It doesn't even say we need to stop. We only need to have the desire to stop. It is from there that recovery can begin.

If we are to be successful in our recovery, to achieve true sobriety every day, we need to know how to stay out of trouble. We need to set boundaries for ourselves that will keep us from acting out in those behavior patterns we have come to recognize as part of our addiction. If we are to maintain our sobriety, we need a line that we will not cross.

There's a reason why there's an arm at most railroad crossings: If

we're so oblivious as to ignore all the other warnings - road signs, horns, and flashing lights - there's got to be something firm to stop us, something stronger than a suggestion. The railroad people really don't want us to get hit by a train. It makes a real mess that's a pain to clean up. And most of us would rather not get hit.

Like the railroad, we need to make ourselves a barrier, a series of warning signs, horns, flashing lights, and an arm that comes down to keep us on the safe side of things while the train passes. This barrier is what we call our Bottom Line. It's a line we draw for ourselves to keep our bottoms out of trouble - out of getting hit by the train wreck of active addiction.

The places where we didn't have a line, a barrier, a boundary in our lives and we got into trouble is the exact place where we need to set one if we are to be successful in our recovery. We need to set limits around where we channel our passion, our desire, our creativity - all characteristics we might have used to feed our addictions. We need to take control of our own boundaries to avoid getting into the train wreck of addiction again.

Now, just to stretch the metaphor a bit more: Trains, like passion,

desire, and creativity, are good things. A lot of people are served well by public transportation and mass freight transit. Trains fulfill a great need in society. They are part of a vast, organized system run by people who know what they're doing.

If you happen to mess with this system without enough experience or self-control, you can find yourself on the wrong end of a battle against a very powerful force, and you will be unable to avoid disaster. On the other hand, there are times and ways when it is safe for us to cross the tracks.

For example, for those of us who are married, seeking true loving intimacy with our spouses is very different from seeking intimacy outside our marriage. The former is life-affirming; it can be a beautiful, spiritual act of unconditional giving. We build families with our partners and grow together.

On the other hand, that same act with someone that is not our spouse might result in the same physical response, but it can be spiritually toxic. Such an experience may be about taking rather than giving. It can be another step toward descent.

{Editor's Note: Although various versions of the following story appear in copyrighted material, it is effectively public domain as its origins seem to be Asian folklore. It is likely that this tale was originally about suffering and enlightenment or another Eastern duality rather than heaven and hell and was later adapted to Christo-Judaic cultural.}

You may have heard the story of a man who, in the midst of an existential dilemma, a spiritual crisis, cried out to know the difference between heaven and hell. He was immediately taken up by an angel to be shown the difference.

Hell was the first destination. There was a long, sumptuous banquet table laid out, as far as the eye could see, and every seat at the table was filled. There were all kinds of delicious food at every place setting, but people weren't eating. He looked closer and saw that everyone had forks and spoons instead of hands, but no elbows. So while they could pick the food up, they couldn't get it into their mouths. They were eternally starving to death in this hell, because they couldn't figure out how to feed themselves. "This is hell," the angel explained.

Next, this man, shook up from this image of incredible bounty and yet denial, was taken by the angel to heaven. There, he saw a table very similar - no - identical to the one he saw in hell. When he looked closely at all the people, he saw that they too had utensils for hands! But here everyone was eating, and laughing, and having a great time. Everyone was feeding each other.

This story describes the difference between heaven and hell as the difference between a state of perpetual self-serving, where we never get what we truly need, and a life of service, where we truly live fully. Understanding service starts with those closest to us, and expands outward, in ever widening circles. We are truly nourished, filled up, healed, by the ways in which we serve others.

The way for us to get out of the hell of our self-serving, but ultimately self-starving addiction is to stop the active addictive behavior and raise ourselves up to our highest selves. And if we want to stay on this higher plane of living, we need to know where to put up these barriers.

We need to know ourselves well enough to recognize which things we did, places we went, and

thoughts we had that always led us into trouble. Then we need to make a contract with ourselves and someone with whom we hold ourselves accountable to steer free of these activities, places, and thoughts so that we don't get hit by our train of addiction.

There is one catch to this: When we set bottom lines for ourselves, we may or may not accurately assess where our boundaries should be. One thing is certain, though: We are here because we know we have a problem. We can consider ourselves like a person at that table in hell, unable to feed ourselves.

How do get ourselves out of this purgatory? We can reach out to someone else at the same table and find a sponsor to get some help thinking about our bottom line how to go about our recovery. Remember back when it seemed like a good idea at the time? We might have been the only one thinking that.

A bottom line we create with the help of a sponsor will separate for us the things that might seem like a good idea but aren't from the things that really are gifts from God for our recovery. And sponsors need us as much as we need sponsors, so that their recovery is blessed with the element of giving.

That is how we feed each other. This is what we did to be lifted out of hell, out of the train wreck of our addictions, into the light and grace of sobriety.

- by Frank S., Newton, Massachusetts

Set Free

Hi friends,

By sharing my concerns about excessive and frantic masturbation openly, I have come to see how I was doing this to deal with anxiety, fear, and anger. Sharing before a mixed male and female group seemed to help too. I felt comforted that I could tell ladies about this urge to frequently engage in uncontrolled masturbation. Instead of being judged, I received a sympathetic ear from both women and men, gay and straight. With this support, I've been able to reach my goal of only healthy masturbation.

- by Arthur S., Washington, D.C.

A Metaphor for my Addiction Recovery

I was diagnosed with insulin-dependent diabetes, type one, at age eleven. During my recovery, over the past year and a half, I have come to recognize the importance

that my medical condition has played in my attitudes toward my body and my health and consequently toward my addiction to Internet pornography, fantasy, and compulsive masturbation.

Briefly, the connection is this. For my whole life, I have been encouraged by doctors and nurses to keep my diabetes under good control. Good control means eating healthily, exercising regularly, and monitoring my blood glucose frequently, as well as getting regular laboratory tests and medical check-ups.

However, no matter what level of control we diabetics maintain, we come to realize that there are many things we cannot control. For instance, at the age of twenty-nine, I nearly went blind from complications arising from my diabetes; my vision was saved only by months of laser surgery and the expertise of many dedicated doctors.

A more common event is that sometimes, for no discernible reason, I will experience hypoglycemia (episodes when my blood sugar drops low enough that I get sweaty, dizzy, nauseous, and confused) or hyperglycemia (periods of high blood sugar that result in excessive thirst, fatigue,

and nausea). Hypoglycemia must be treated immediately; if the blood sugar level drops too low, a diabetic runs the risk of coma and death. These types of episodes I can try to avoid and anticipate, but I cannot completely control their occurrence.

Indulging my addiction became a primary form of escape - one of the ways I sought to blunt the fear and anger associated with feeling as though my health was out of my control. I thought pornography and masturbation were things I could control absolutely. I believed I could control what I viewed and for how long. But most importantly, I could count on the result of feeling good physically. It seemed a perfect antidote for not being able to control my health situation.

Control, of course, is one of the things that we sex and love addicts come to realize we absolutely do not have, over our disease and over many other things in our lives. Nothing made that clearer to me than the fact that, as my addiction took my control, my diabetes also spiraled further and further out of control - so much so that, in the six years preceding the start of my recovery in S.L.A.A., I had approximately six hypoglycemic

emergencies that required medical intervention.

It's been about a year and a half since my first SLAA meeting and about two and a half years since I went on an insulin pump. The pump has helped me greatly in managing (not controlling) my diabetes. I had not had an emergency hypoglycemic episode requiring medical attention since, until this past weekend.

I was at a large family gathering on the Oregon coast to celebrate my upcoming fiftieth birthday. At four-thirty in the morning, I stumbled downstairs of our rental house in a hypoglycemic fog and headed for the kitchen, knowing somewhere in my brain that I needed to get something to eat. I was so confused and disoriented, however, that I went from counter to counter and cupboard-to-cupboard, trying to decide what to eat, and I couldn't find a glass for some milk. I didn't know where I was.

Eventually, I found a package of cookies, reached into the fridge, and started chugging from a gallon of milk. I felt as though I was in some place and didn't know whether or how I'd ever make it back to a world that I recognized. I was absolutely terrified and utterly helpless, and I soon felt I had to sit

down because I didn't know what to do or where to go.

My wife has always had a sixth sense when it comes to me having hypoglycemic reactions, and sure enough, she came down the stairs during this event, found me slumped against the refrigerator door, and began pouring a dextrose solution down my throat while her sister dialed 9-1-1. The paramedics arrived, and slowly, very slowly it seemed, I recovered my senses as my blood glucose returned to a normal level.

In the past, my reaction to such events has fueled my addiction. It was as if, after one of these episodes, I was saying, I'll show my body who's in control, and I'd go off in the ensuing days on an orgy of internet porn, masturbation, and fantasy. All the while, of course, I was distancing myself from my wife and two sons who love me.

After this recent episode, however, when I got up the next morning, I meditated, something I've been doing regularly as part of my program. Within five minutes of sitting down and paying attention to what I was feeling, I broke out crying. I realized how terrified I was and had been, especially in that period when I felt like I was

looking at the world through a thick glass pane separating me from everything familiar, unsure I'd return.

The next feeling that hit me during my meditation was how utterly grateful I was for my wife, my sister-in-law and her husband, and my older son, all of whom were there with me during the experience. I felt my heart open and had an outpouring of gratitude that I'd never experienced before, at least not in reaction to my diabetes. I went inside after meditating and gave each of them a big hug and told them how grateful I was for their help and support during the episode of the previous night.

When I'd had such episodes in the past, I had always felt afterwards that my body was damaged, that it had somehow let me down. And I had felt my aloneness; I felt that no one could possibly know what I went through unless they'd been through it themselves.

This time, however, in acknowledging and accepting that I had been terrified, I accepted my own lack of control and helplessness in that moment. Yet despite that helplessness, I realized somehow that I had made it downstairs and had, perhaps instinctually, began to eat. I also felt

for the first time the love and support that was all around me that would get me through those times when I could not take care of myself. I no longer felt alone in my struggle with my diabetes.

I realized last night, as I shared this episode with my S.L.A.A. home group, that the episode was a metaphor for addiction and recovery. I can focus on what's wrong with me, on my illness, and I can focus on how alone I am in all this, that my friends and family cannot possibly understand what I'm going through, or I can focus on what's right with me; I am in recovery. After all, even though I've had many relapses, I am working toward better health and toward managing my disease rather than controlling it.

I can more wisely focus on the support that I have, realizing that there are others who do know what I'm going through (all of you out there as well as the members of my home group), and that even those who don't know exactly what it's like (my wife and family, for instance) still love and support me and would do whatever they can to help me to live properly through my disease. And I can be extremely and humbly grateful for that love

and support and willingly reach for it and accept it.

Each day, I intend to consciously bring to my awareness that I am not alone when facing my disease and in walking along the path of recovery.

- by Mark H.

Self-image

My name is Eric EE and I am a sex and love addict. My sobriety date by the grace of God is May 4th, 1992. My bottom line is no sex outside of a committed relationship, and yes, I am in one. She has passed on to her reward, but she was my wife, and I can only handle one at a time. My top lines are to leave this world a slightly better place than the way I found it and to do two good deeds everyday, one deed of which cannot be known by anyone but myself and Higher Power. Take what you want, need, or can use, and feel free to leave, ignore, or erase the rest.

Whenever I do something new that I haven't done before I have to deal with fear and must make my choice about how do deal with it.

FEAR is False Evidence Appearing Real,

FEAR is Fornicate Everything And Run,

FEAR is Forget Everything And Relapse, or

FEAR is Face Everything And Recover.

The greatest fear is fear of the unknown, something new, even if it is for our own good. I am reflecting now how often I have in my life chosen a really bad, depressing, and downright awful situation that was comfortably familiar rather than trying something a little different and risk the unknown, even if it was only an itty bitty little tiny bit unknown. I have found that I can embrace my inner child (in my own case a little juvenile delinquent addict) and tell myself, "It's okay. You are not alone. You are a sober adult. God will be with you. We can do this together. It gets easier."

It gets even easier if I remember to ask Higher Power to come along and hold my other hand. I've learned not to, under any circumstances, let the intoxicated acting out addict hold the little inner child's hand. We've had entirely too much of that kind of live already, thank you very much.

One way to speed up recovery is to start rebuilding our self-esteem. There are two definitions for the word PRIDE in the dictionary, one

of which we need desperately, the other of which we don't need at all. The type of pride we need is the acknowledgement of ourselves and those around us when something is done well.

Especially if it's the first time we did something well, we can reach over and put right hand A on left shoulder B (or other way around if you happen to be a left-handed), pat three times, and say, "that-a-boy," or, "that-a-girl," out loud. This may sound silly but if you wait for someone else to do it for you it may never get done, and we need positive affirmation and support when we do healthy, sober, self-fulfilling and self-enriching things.

Which would you rather do? Look silly or miss the opportunity to contribute another straw to your own personal happiness? People who already know about our acting out may consider us outrageous anyway, so why not risk looking silly.

Perhaps we can use more habits like this one in our lives. People are habitual creatures. In recovery we get a chance to choose what habits we are going to practice. Maybe we can choose habits that benefit us or build us up as opposed to the slow forms of suicide we may have been practicing.

We can also take every opportunity to sincerely congratulate someone else on a job well. The sincerity part is important here. This practice has the added benefit of tending to attract people with good recovery as friends. It is always nice to have a bunch of cheerleaders on your side in the game of life.

Most of us already experienced socializing in a group of negative people. We need to replace that group with something healthier. After all, fifty that-a-boys equalizes only one whoops, and one hundred that-a-boys equalizes only one awe-shucks. We need to make a point of gathering all the that-a-boys we can get.

Eventually we get to a point where one that-a-boy is equalize simply by thinking, "That didn't work out quite as well as I planned." When we get there, we have rebuilt our self-esteem. Usually when we get there we have a pretty good credit balance of that-a-boys too. This is some tricky stuff for some of us.

Consider how I had once dealt with work. If I received criticism once at work, I could take that home with me, drag it through the mud, and beat myself up with it for an entire holiday weekend easily. If I received a compliment, it

tended to go in one ear and right out the other. I needed to change big time.

Nowadays, if I receive criticism, I need to examine it, and if the shoe fits I need to get some new shoes, cause these here are less attractive on me than what I want. If I manage to receive a compliment today, I need to look at that too. If I deserve it (as I sometimes actually do), I need to polish that puppy up bright and shiny and mount it prominently on my I-love-me wall. I remember to make time to look at that wall fondly at least once a week.

It gets even easier as I trust my Higher Power more and more and turn this day over to Higher Power. Some of the old sayings of organized religion start making more and more sense. The battle belongs to God. If God is with me who can stand against me?

My Higher Power don't got no step children or adopted children. We are all His children, and He loves us all equally. He loves us so much, in fact, that we could think we were His only child. That's the way He treats each and every one of us - sort of a neat trick. Maybe that's why He is Higher Power and I'm not.

Any new S.L.A.A. members who think they may have stumbled into a religious cult, please know this is just a program of spiritual action. You only have to know two things about Higher Power in order to work this program successfully: There is one, and you ain't it. I do however invite each and every one of you to try and learn more. You may find the study not only very interesting but also tremendously rewarding.

One major challenge I had (and still do) is the lack of self-esteem and self-worth and low self-image. Deep in the core of my addictive mind is an idea that I am not worth good care, or anything good for that matter. So I have difficulty accepting the good things in my life that come my way as I work my program and get better. I tend to discount and dismiss and devalue the good stuff that comes my way, which is a really nasty habit in my opinion. This too is part of the struggle with my disease.

If I find it difficult to accept the good stuff in life, I am diseased am I not? I don't know if I will ever be totally comfortable receiving all the good things in life. I am getting more accepting of them happening. I am also learned to appreciate them and be very grateful for them no matter how

large or small they may be. They all count and are all valuable.

Oh one other little thing - I suspect it is a spiritual law of some kind - They attract more good things to come and join them and they tend to congregate where they are appreciated. Just thought I would mention that. Do with it what you will.

One of my greatest FEARs (and this really is False Evidence Appearing Real) is that I won't do something perfectly. How many times have I ever done something new for the very first time and done it perfectly? Can we say exactly never? This fear of not being perfect has prevented me from doing all sorts of things.

I will never know how much different my life might be if I had just done it instead of cognitively copulating it and decided I wouldn't do it at all because I probably couldn't do it perfectly. This simple thought has defeated me more times than I care to remember. Weather I tell myself I can do something or tell myself I can't, either way, I am right.

I'm pretty sure sky diving without a parachute may be something I can't do without further exploration. However, if I have never tried something others have

been able to do in their lives, I can't know if I can do it or not until I give it a go. When I give it a go I will learn something. I will grow. I will expand my horizons. I will enlarge my own comfort zone. Even if I fail to do what I set out to do, I have much to gain just by showing up, suiting up and stepping up.

I took some knowledge from the basic texts of several religions. In the first chapter of one of these books there is a description of Higher Power doing a small chore. He created the heaven and earth and all things therein, and I noticed that whenever God finished something, He checked it out. Perhaps this was some sort of quality control measure. Anyway, He saw that what He had done was good.

Now I think this is important because I have read several different translations of this story. They all say, "good," several times. At one point they say either, "very good" or, "extremely good," depending on the translation. I have yet to find any translation that says, "perfect."

This leads me to an assumption and conclusion. It appears to me that God's standard of craftsmanship that He sets for

Himself is good, just good. So doing something well is good enough for God. This information might be useful to the perfectionist type addicts amongst us.

Personally I have reached another conclusion. Nothing changes until something changes. Anything worth doing is worth doing merely well, not perfect. I am not God.

I will do the best I can, and occasionally, I will fail. When I fail, I will have learned something too. I will have learned at least one way that does not work to get the particular task done, so I will know better than to try to do it that way in the future. If I learn something, haven't I succeeded?

I can't lose by taking action. No matter what, I can attempt to do something. Whatever else may happen, things will change, however minutely, as a result of my actually doing. If I don't make any effort, if I choose not to act because I can't do it perfectly, nothing will change, and the laws of entropy will kick in.

One of the things Thomas Edison is famous for was that he said that he learned nine hundred and ninety nine ways not to make a light bulb before he found one that worked. That experience helped him create

a number of other new things over time, many of which he patented.

I always thought Edison was a great example of when life hands you lemons, make lemonade, set up a stand, learn the powers of advertising, franchise, invest in lemon farms, produce trucking, learn labor relationship skills, and research ways to grow more and better lemons. Don't just chuck the peels away either. Sell them to your local bartender and convince the general population that lemon oil is a really great cleanser and better yet it smells good. Money may grow on lemon trees if we have enough trees and we care for them and show some savvy in the harvesting and marketing of them.

"Impossible is a unit of measurement denoting the degree of difficulty. Whatever is possible is done. That which is impossible is that which remains to be done."

- Roman General Scipio Africanus

This is the guy who beat Hannibal (the real one, not the one in the recent series of movies), raised and sacked Carthage, and then salted the earth. Some two thousand years later it's still salted. Old Scipio didn't fool around.

Stay sober just for today.

- by Eric EE

Share Space

Entry into Life

Hi,

My name is Kristin, and I am a sex and love addict. I found out about S.L.A.A. a few years ago through my friend who had attended.

One part of me is a sex and love addict, and it feels to be that part of me that exhibits a state of hyper-vigilance at all times when I have a new love interest. You see, my only love interest was my father. The interest that I had in my father was that of getting his love, gaining his love and ultimately keeping his love. But my father was incapable of loving.

But I have never been loved in the way that I wanted to be, so I have had to be open to loving myself rather than waiting on someone to love me first. I spent my entire life trying to get someone to love me. Father Charles, my spiritual guru from India, thinks that I am normal.

This past August of 2008 my oldest child moved out, in a sense - left for college in New York City. That day,

into the evening, I experienced a very strong turning point in my life. On the eve of that very night, I went into a state of withdrawal and have been there ever since. This is a very key and important time in my life. I'm growing up sexually and spiritually, and I'm learning how to remain still and very true to my self.

Who am I? I have this really nice way about me; I am very kind. I am a forty-three-year-old single mother of two beautiful and wonderful children. I raised my children alone for ten years as of this very month, from December 1998 to December 2008.

- by Kristin, New Jersey

A Lovely Way To Live

I am so glad to be in this program, and always glad to be in a meeting where I can feel the calm and soothing presence of my Loving Power. It always brings me closer to the best part of myself. Those are things I like.

I am grateful to be sexually sober today. To me, that means I have a choice about intimate relationships, have options. Instead of fighting off all the compulsive junk in my mind and

heart, like I used to do all the time, I find enjoyment and fun in learning about real love that lasts and what my part is in it.

Learning to love for real is difficult, yet so much easier than that other thing I used to do. It's so good for me to remember that, one day at a time.

I'm so grateful for the increased connection to my Loving Power that comes through living recovery. New doors have opened for me here, new doors to better feelings, and then better and better life opportunities as time goes by.

I am relating right now to steps one, two, and three. Even after years of Loving Power's help and love, I still go through times of forgetting that my Higher Power is on my side. I might begin to think that life is out to get me. I forget to trust!

Throughout the nine years I've been in program, I cannot remember a single time when I surrendered in step one, said yes in step two, and then turned it over in step three, that it has not turned out well - not one single time. My recovery has not been perfect or according to my expectations, but the great thing is that I can surrender again and make a new choice.

Making different choices as my life evolves is another great gift of the program. Being willing to love myself, love life, and love others is a new skill. I don't always know how, and I don't have to. I'm glad I'm willing and able to learn. This is a lovely way to live.

- by Nancy M., Warwick, NY

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.

July-August 2009, Amends Stories

September-October 2009, Healthy Sexuality

November-December 2009, Spiritual Experiences

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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