

A photograph of a rusty, heavy-duty metal chain lying on a beach covered in small, smooth pebbles. The chain is the central focus, extending from the top left towards the bottom right. The background is a dense field of light-colored, rounded stones of various sizes. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

theJournal

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Freedom
From
Fantasy

Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

1. Having few healthy boundaries, we become sexually involved with and/or emotionally attached to people without knowing them.
2. Fearing abandonment and loneliness, we stay in and return to painful, destructive relationships, concealing our dependency needs from ourselves and others, growing more isolated and alienated from friends and loved ones, ourselves, and God.
3. Fearing emotional and/or sexual deprivation, we compulsively pursue and involve ourselves in one relationship after another, sometimes having more than one sexual or emotional liaison at a time.
4. We confuse love with neediness, physical and sexual attraction, pity and/or the need to rescue or be rescued.
5. We feel empty and incomplete when we are alone. Even though we fear intimacy and commitment, we continually search for relationships and sexual contacts.
6. We sexualize stress, guilt, loneliness, anger, shame, fear and envy. We use sex or emotional dependence as substitutes for nurturing care, and support.
7. We use sex and emotional involvement to manipulate and control others.
8. We become immobilized or seriously distracted by romantic or sexual obsessions or fantasies.
9. We avoid responsibility for ourselves by attaching ourselves to people who are emotionally unavailable.
10. We stay enslaved to emotional dependency, romantic intrigue, or compulsive sexual activities.
11. To avoid feeling vulnerable, we may retreat from all intimate involvement, mistaking sexual and emotional anorexia for recovery.
12. We assign magical qualities to others. We idealize and pursue them, then blame them for not fulfilling our fantasies and expectations.

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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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. Motions adopted at the 1989, 1990, and 1991 General Service Conferences chartered *the Journal*, but it is impractical for all of the content of a periodical such as *the Journal* to be conference-approved. Each recovery group can determine its own position on the use of content from *the Journal* at its meetings.

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader:

Fantasy is a large part of the disease of sex and love addiction for me. As a child, I read a lot of books. I would daydream of far away lands and new and interesting creatures and situations. Anything to take me out of my unhappy and sometimes scary life. Even as an adult, if any situation didn't go the way I wanted it to go I could pretend that I was in a movie in my mind and make it turn out the way I wanted it. There's no room for working on character defects or living in reality there. I wasn't living in the moment when I was lost in fantasy.

Working the steps has made me more aware and able to live in the present. I don't numb out in my addiction anymore. Actually being in my body and listening at meetings instead of off in fantasyland helps me stay grounded. I'm much more centered now that I won't allow my addict to run off to distant lands. I forced her to stop checking out and to grow up and take responsibility for her actions and to look at the reality of the situation. The healthy person takes over and tells the addict she's not allowed to check out.

I have a tenth step format that helps with this. It forces me to write down my actions for the day. It breaks it down by fears, resentments, mistakes, things I did right, secrets, motives, amends, and character defects. If there were fears or resentments I write out a spot-check inventory. Doing this makes me look at my day realistically. It can be painful sometimes, but pain is the touchstone of spiritual growth. And like our literature says: "These minutes and sometimes hours spent in self-examination are bound to make all the other hours of our day better and happier." I used to think of fantasy as my own personal happy pill but it only took me out of my life and made it more difficult to actually accomplish anything useful. I am much more productive and happy now that I live in reality and say no to the fantasy when it starts.

Lisa C.

Managing Editor, *the Journal*

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. 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 which renders any personal differences of sexual or gender orientation irrelevant.

We need protect with special care the anonymity of every S.L.A.A. member. Additionally we try to avoid drawing undue attention to S.L.A.A. as a whole from the public media.

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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.

Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, "What's your personal experience and recovery around fantasy?" Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment.

They are not presented in any particular order.

WHAT'S YOUR PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND RECOVERY AROUND FANTASY?

Many of my fantasies revolve around the old tapes stored in my mind from personal sexual experiences as well as the images from my viewing of pornography. My recovery has come from admitting my powerlessness over fantasy and obsession and my willingness to turn this over to my Higher Power every day.

— ANONYMOUS

Lately I am discovering that my tendency to slip into fantasy is a part of my checking out of reality and isolating.

This leads to my identifying myself as an Anorexic. And in order to recover from these issues, I find that I have to remain present in the now and connect with people around me or make phone calls to program people to keep me connected.

Also working the steps actively helps me keep in the present.

— STEPHEN E., CONNECTICUT

I have often used fantasy to validate my job, relationship and self worth by fantasizing how wonderful I am doing in the eyes of others and myself.

This separates me from my feelings and the moment. I have also used fantasy to improve my view of past relationships!

My recovery today involves saying what I don't want to say; this honesty brings me back to reality.

— ROB P., SAN FRANCISCO CA

One of the aspects of fantasy for me is in regards to who my partner is. My fantasy is that he will always be there for me. He will show up when I need him. He will rescue me and protect me. But my partner is human. In recovery I realized I often didn't ask my partner for what I needed because if he couldn't do it, it would destroy my fantasy. My sponsor reminds me to speak up, gather information and recognize my partner for who he really is, not who I fantasize he is.

— KIM B., BOSTON, MA

As a sex and love addict, I am no stranger to fantasy — whether sexual, romantic, or simply imagining awful outcomes to scenarios that may never occur.

The way that I have dealt with fantasy is by working the steps. In particular, Step Four helped me to deal with fear-based fantasies I had practiced over a lifetime; Step Ten helps me to deal with them as they come up. I have also used Step Ten for shame surrounding obsession involving a “love” object.

When I'm going through a sexual or romantic fantasy, I accept, first and foremost, that I am a sex and love addict and these things will happen to me, but they do pass — especially when I share them with friends (like other sex and love addicts) who understand. I can also ask for hugs from safe friends since my need for love is real.

— OWEN, NEW YORK, NY

My experience with fantasy is that I've used it since I was a child to escape from the pain of my life. Unfortunately after doing that for 35-40 years, I have dreamt my life away. My outer life is empty and my inner life more important than friendship, family, anything. Recovery from fantasy means NOT engaging and when I re-engage, finding something recovery-oriented to focus my thoughts away from escape. I can now use a version of my skills (Imagining.) I can imagine the steps I'll take to get through a situation and what tools I'll use to deal with it.

— RICK B., TAMPA, FL

I first realized how much time I spent fantasizing, realizing it was a safe haven from reality of relationships.

Now I practice 4-2-3, let go of fantasy and I practice reality with baby steps.

— CHRISTINE L.,
MONTREAL

My acting out was primarily extreme sexual fantasies with dangerous characters, made more intense through use of internet images. One of my strongest fantasies involved a particular fantasy character. I even named him. In recovery, I let go of these fantasies. First, I learned to laugh at my craziness, making up a long abbreviation for the dangerous fantasy character “C.T.P.R.C.D.O.M.D.” Later, while at a retreat I realized this character had stayed the same in my mind although, over 5 years, I had changed in my recovery. I then visualized this “bad” character as a recovering addict. Finally, I understood my fantasies as a means of comforting myself (when I didn’t know better ways) and I named a Jack Russell terrier after the fantasy character. Irony and surprise are important elements of my recovery.

— MARC S., PITTSBURGH, PA

Before this addiction running rampant and my eyes would roam – objectifying women and fantasizing scenarios. Now I look at women and men in a spiritual sense as human beings.

— KURT M., CONNECTICUT

I can label it, for one thing, and identify it. I now realize how I check out when I fantasize, and it’s really fear of intimacy because true intimacy involves having differences and dealing with it.

— JK, LOS ANGELES

I had to “pour lava” onto the image of the young man about whom I fantasized romance in order to avoid my addictive patterns. I had to destroy what had caused so much destruction in my life so that I could go on in recovery.

— JOANNE, HOLLYWOOD, CA

I have always been an artist, and fantasy has been my stock in trade. When I came into the program, I obsessed constantly about romantic fantasy – today, I rarely obsess, but my imagination is intact and no longer disturbed by constant distraction.

— KAREN W., DELRAY BEACH, FL

My real life is often too filled with recovery activities, and activities that sobriety has given me, to have time to fantasize. Sometimes when I have expectations, I am able to remind myself they are “in my fantasy” and finish with what I think should happen and how I think it should turn out. This allows me to be able to “let go and let God.”

— TERRI B., OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

I used to lay in bed at night as I fell asleep thinking and dreaming of how I was going to “get” or seduce someone. Four hours later, I was still awake repeating over and over variations of the same theme. When I awoke the next morning I was exhausted. Today I know this is the “hangover” of a fantasy addict.

— ANONYMOUS

I find that the more I focus on self-care activities, the less I indulge in fantasy. I check in with myself often to make sure I don't get too hungry, angry, lonely or tired. I also keep close watch on what triggers me to go into the fantasy mode, and I make an effort to avoid and reduce these triggers.

— LYNNA L., LOS ANGELES

Fantasy was the foundation and core of my addiction. I created a fantasy world to alleviate boredom, and I found it so seductive that I began escaping into it, more and more, and in turn I had to make my fantasy world bigger every day.

My fantasy world soon began to encompass my real, physical world until there was no room for both worlds in my life.

One day, the fantasy world burst and imploded on itself, nearly crushing me to death. That's when I found recovery.

In recovery, I have dealt with my fantasy addiction by working on living in the real moment of every moment.

When I feel my connection with reality getting shaky, my step work has taught me to recognize that and I pull back, check in with my Higher Power, and ask for its help to keep me strong and in the present, and then I look at what's going on in my life that is prompting me to escape.

I look at ways to feel better about the present, and think of things I can do to change it. A lot of the time, it involves looking outside myself to others and things I might do to be of service.

— NATALIE K., CHICAGO

I Am All For Romance

“If you see someone across a crowded room and your eyes lock and your knees tremble... run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.” John Bradshaw, maven of the codependency movement, said that to me back in 1988. I thought he was an idiot. What else is worth living for than that exquisite flutter, that intoxicating rush of erotic anticipation?

Well, I’ve been wrung out and spin-dried a few times since then, and I begin to see what Bradshaw was talking about. The problem isn’t the fluttery feeling. The problem is the intoxicating part. Anything that gets you high holds within it a promise that at some point you will crash.

The question is, where’s your pain threshold? For some people, the party is worth the price of the hangover. For others, the price is too high. I can do a night staring at a phone that doesn’t ring. We’ve all been there and survived. I can block out an hour or two for wallowing. But when it devolves into weeks of nausea and sleeplessness and breaking out in public tears... up with that I will not put. (Grammar joke. Sorry.)



When what it’s doing FOR me is overpowered by what it’s doing TO me... that’s when I stop and reconnoiter.

Bradshaw’s theory was that when you see a person and feel an instant connection, it’s not because you are karmic soul pairs. It’s because that person hooks into some childhood trauma that we don’t recognize or remember.

He drops his left shoulder like Daddy does. Her hair catches the light just like Mom’s. I lean more toward a biochemical theory: A fellow love addict is broadcasting on the same pheromone wavelength as you are.

We love junkies find one another... in the dark and in another language, if need be.

That doesn’t mean it’s not hot. It’s waaay hot. But it blows holes in our culturally endorsed

notions of love at first sight.

Think back to your first soul-mate, your first true love. Remember that delicious feeling?

Okay, think about that person today. No delicious feeling, right? Next, think about your latest soul mate. Same delicious feeling.

Now think of three or four more true loves – come on, we all have a few rattling around – and remember that delicious feeling. Picture them standing in a row, and picture that feeling as a radiant glow that attaches itself to one, then another, then another.

Different faces, same feeling.

What's special and wonderful and intoxicating isn't Him or Her at all. It's the glow.

We associate the glow with the person, and so pine for the person, long for the person, kill for the person and die for the person...

But it was really the glow itself that captivated us –like some Star Trek alien sprite that inhabits human bodies and makes them irresistible. It's not for nothing Cupid is portrayed as an imp with a lethal weapon.

I'm all for romance. I just don't want to bleed to death.

—ETHLIE V

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. Here's what we can do:

- We can 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.

Contact info: <http://www.slaafws.org/contact/jeditor>

Why Not Have Fun While Waiting For The One?

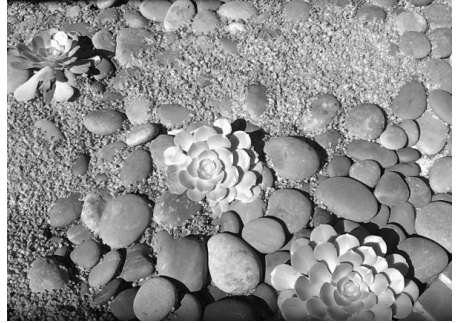
Editor's note: This story contains some triggering language.

That was my motto: Why not have fun while waiting for The One! For over twenty years, I was extremely promiscuous and at the same time utterly emotionally stunted by unrealistic romantic fantasies.

Here's the biggest fantasy of all: this idea of "The One" – a dream partner that completes us, makes us whole. Another common fantasy is that we "have fun" whenever we act out.

I was shocked to learn in S.L.A.A. that anyone would want recovery from fantasy, that this was even possible. B.S. (Before S.L.A.A.,) I'd say fantasy was a main hobby of mine. It was like reading a good book. I'd devote time to fantasy every day, mostly dreams of falling in love. Growing up, every teacher said I was a daydreamer. I took this as a compliment. There were all those feelings, which were difficult for me to process in normal situations. During my fantasy sessions it seemed like something was being set into motion.

My mom actually taught me how to fantasize. Like my dad, she grew up in a broken home. Her successful father had left to build another family. Her



mother became depressed and, except for meals, would lock the children outside until it was time to go to bed. My mother always said even though this was tough and sometimes scary, there was no better scenario to learn how to fantasize. I would have to agree. When my grandmother babysat me, she'd lock me outside too. The only safe place to play at her apartment building was under an old wooden staircase. My sister and I got really good at creating our own fantasies to get through the day.

The therapist who first told me about S.L.A.A. suggested that any kind of acting out was actually a primitive attempt at making pain manageable.

Emotional pain is abstract. Unlike physical pain, there's no localized area that might be treated with medicine or surgery.

Half the time we're not even aware that the pain from old traumas is still there, affecting our actions and interpretations.

Acting out through any compulsion is a way of managing that abstract pain, giving it a face and a name, making it real in the real world where we can try and control it.

Sadly without learning new, healthy tools this results in "repeatedly making the same choices and expecting a different result" – a 12-step definition of insanity.

When I first heard this idea, that my constant quest for sex and love was a way of managing pain – it struck a nerve. Immediately, I realized that so much of my time spent searching out fun times was... anything but fun.

Hours of insecurity, rejection, outrage and utter disconnection were always the trade-off for fleeting moments of sexual and emotional relief. The proportion of pain for pleasure grew much worse as sex and love addiction consumed my life.

By the age of sixteen, I'd established a pattern of cruising for gay sex that lasted until my forties. Back then, I was in the closet. Newly licensed to drive, I'd finish every night out with friends or girlfriends by driving

alone into town and cruising the gay neighborhood of Seattle.

My dad left his glasses, hat and overcoat in the car and I'd wear these to walk the main street until someone – anyone – started a conversation, which ended with being invited to their home or to the local park for some quick action.

Throughout all this cruising, which typically took one hour or more, there would be knots in the pit of my stomach. I can't say it was a friendly, happy, uplifting type of activity. The inner feelings were always gruesome, and my demeanor felt similarly contorted.

However like most people I was not in touch with my true inner feelings and if you'd ask me at the time, my younger self would probably have insisted that I was just out "having fun."

After fooling around sexually, I would quickly reach climax and at that moment suddenly I would feel my feet on the ground and want to die. I wanted to disappear. Instantly I would pull away and shut down emotionally. I was a kid, after all, with psychological problems from which I was secretly seeking relief.

The men would usually try to make me feel better with words of encouragement; they'd press

their phone numbers into my hand. I'd slip away, rip their numbers into pieces, get back into my car and break down in muffled sobs, filled with self-loathing and suicidal longing.

The very first time this ever happened, I caught a glimpse of myself in the rear view mirror while driving home, and gasped. I thought someone else was in the car. It shocked me — the beauty that was shining in my eyes. Even though I felt ugly and demoralized to the core, there was this beauty radiating from my face where a stranger had found it, kissed it, desired it. My tears flowed, halted by moments of awe.

One day, my sexual activity was found out. After getting stoned at a high school keg party before graduation, some friends started making fun of the gays in that neighborhood where I cruised. They joked how they liked to hang out at the bus stop and watch the “little f*gs get picked up by 40-year-olds.” They described a scenario that had happened to me the previous night.

Paranoid and disabled by the pot, I freaked out and instinctively bolted for the booze. I drank and drank to drown myself. An entire bottle of Bacardi 151. When that was gone, 50 plastic cups of beer followed.

With every single sip I wanted to die; I was trying to blot out the painful reality of being alive. I went into convulsions. I puked my guts out before we reached the hospital. My petrified friends drove me home, and never mentioned anything about gays again.

We laughed about what a wild party it was without talking about what happened. “Wow! So wild! So fun!”

From then on, every time I drank or took drugs there would always be this element of trying to blot out the painful reality of being alive at the moment of intake. “Party on, dude!” Together with my sex and love addiction, this fueled a toxic way of life that was doomed to failure. “Hey stud, come over here and let's have fun!” I was living out a fantasy of seeming fabulous.

My first art class in college, a beautiful gay man appeared. At that moment, it felt like he walked right out of my dreams. I was intoxicated from the get go. Slowly I manipulated circumstances so we became close friends. He was the first person I confided the dark secret that I was gay, solidifying our bond. I felt we were destined for each other.

Unfortunately, I couldn't express any of this because I was terrified of breaking the spell, of

losing him. So for two years I sat in silent love. I felt for sure he knew my feelings. Whenever anyone would try and pick up on me, he'd intervene and get rid of them. In my fantasy, I was his, and his alone. It was crazy, and painful. I would make subtle attempts to consummate my love for him with caresses and kisses, but he evaded me at every turn.

I tried to break off my obsession. At the worst moment, I prayed that he would be run over by a car so I would be set free. I was high out of mind on pills at the time. It's likely others heard me, because he returned home from a walk with a fantastical story of a car without a driver trying to run him over. The next night, he reunited with his ex-lover.

I responded by attempting suicide.

The school therapist told my parents I was having sexual identity issues. I lied to everyone about my true emotional state, and rather than being institutionalized they assigned me to an off-campus supervised living facility where I easily broke curfew on a regular basis.

The object of my obsession and I went on a hike up a mountain during this time. At the apex, I remember realizing that for all of my overpowering feelings of love — I was not really

feeling very much love. Rather I was feeling a lot of unfulfilled longing, despair, ambition, envy, hate and vengeance. This was similar to my compulsive pursuit of fun without really having fun.

I pulled a geographic and transferred to Hong Kong for a semester abroad to get away from everyone, especially myself. Guess what? I followed myself to Hong Kong; my compulsions came along. Because I was in the habit of blaming everyone else, I didn't see it that way.

Within a few days, I'd discovered all the underground gay nightclubs in Hong Kong and started casually dating a guy my age named Gucci who later turned out to be a prostitute. I was popping pills and drinking until I passed out almost every night.

Gucci started bringing me along on his jobs. We'd have sex while the johns watched, and then after I passed out... I don't know what happened. One night I woke up with complete strangers having their way with me. As I passed out again, I remember angrily thinking "I can't believe they'd have sex with me when I'm unconscious!" (I would write in my diary: "Wild times! What fun!")

I woke up the next day in a park, no idea how I got there.

For the next 10 years, I

worked in many different night-clubs, mainly as a club kid / gogo dancer. As a performance artist, all my work revolved around explicit themes of sex and love. As it says in S.L.A.A. literature, I made a career out of my addiction.

Compared to my performance artist friends, I was the vanilla one. Now not only were my thoughts and feelings distorted, everything was distorted. I surrounded myself with an environment that reflected a distortion of reality. I didn't know it was sex and love addiction; we referred to it as a fabulous debauchery. It was a lifestyle choice, or at least I thought I had a choice in this.

Flash-forward from this scene to the last year of my active addiction, well after I'd stopped performing. I was spending time with strangers over friends, and most of these strangers I would never choose as friends. I would sleep with at least ten different sex partners a week, sometimes ten a day. This adds up to more than three thousand sex partners throughout my life. I was getting treated for STDs on a yearly basis.

While I was proud of the fact that I could do any drug without getting hooked, this was no longer true. I became addicted to crystal meth. Strangers had

started offering me a hit of meth during sex, and then someone gave me their paraphernalia. I started smoking meth daily.

I became a regular at a nearby bathhouse, usually three nights a week. I was on the invite list for exclusive sex parties thrown by gay millionaires, usually senior citizens in leather slings surrounded by rent boys. A low point involved non-consensual water sports, my horrified gags of disgust ruined an entire orgy where men whom I considered rejects and lowlifes made fun of me.

My life was a freaking mess! This was me having fun?

The worst was that I was becoming more aware how little I connected with or cared about anyone, and vice versa. A typical hookup involved a stranger in a state of sexual tension more tense than sexy. There'd be porn, we'd smoke meth, we'd fool around, then we'd watch porn, and repeat. Sometimes the porn was so freaky I'd want to gouge out my eyes. The sex was a sad imitation. It made little difference whether or not I was taking part. Often I left the bedroom to cruise online for someone else.

Sex with everyone started to seem a lot more like mutual masturbation. We were just using each other for a few fleeting seconds of pleasure surrounded

by a clumsy, mismatched, unsatisfying wrestling match. It didn't seem to matter to any of my sex partners whether or not I was there.

Clearly, I'd abdicated being there long ago.

This is where my last qualifier appeared, a fellow meth and sex addict. He came from the British upper class, whispered sweet nothings signifying nothing, and in return I made him my Higher Power. There's no new twist. Same delusional fantasy and magical thinking as all the other pre-destined true loves I've had.

He was supposed to quit meth for an impressive new job in another country. If I were to join him abroad, unasked, I would need to quit meth too. So I quit meth. It took me several attempts. I put time together like candy beads on a hungry kid's necklace.

I finally realized the only way I would quit smoking meth, was if I quit having sex with strangers. There was no other way for me. In February 2007, I quit both for good.

If I was tempted to use or cruise, I would stay in bed. I stayed in bed for two months. I couldn't deal with rehab, and there was no way you would ever find me at a "lame" 12-step meeting. "No way."

Well, the qualifier didn't want

to be with me, despite my inappropriate attempts to woo him through wholly obsessed love letters. I deleted all of them from my computer, but I keep them on a flash drive to remind myself how crazy I've been and could be still if I ever slip.

While I knew I didn't want to kill myself, I kept absent-mindedly dividing my possessions into pre-sorted piles for relatives and friends in case I suddenly gave in to suicide one night.

I called around several free clinics for free therapy programs. And that's how I met the therapist at a gay center who brought me the message about S.L.A.A. When our sobering sessions came to the end of that program, I finally attended my first S.L.A.A. meeting as an affordable alternative to therapy.

The recovery here blew me away. I felt like I'd come home. The principles of this program were waiting for me my whole life.

How do I find freedom from a lifetime of living in fantasy? I show up for S.L.A.A. meetings. Sometimes I share for my allotted three minutes, the rest of the time I listen. This is new for me. I get a lot of reality checks in the rooms.

I practice the 3-second rule when I start to fantasize, intrigue

or obsess – meaning I have three seconds to think of something else. I avoid situations that may trigger me, or I remind myself beforehand that I am a sex and love addict and this is a lifelong disease. For example, I can't just watch a movie or a play or an opera, I have to remind myself throughout that it's not real life and the characters do not represent my qualifier and me, or the guy in the next row and me.

I run important issues by my sponsor before anyone else because I cannot rely on my thinking, my feeling or my interpretations. I now have four sponsors in three programs, including a S.L.A.A. service sponsor who I turn to for guidance in my service work. S.L.A.A. is my home program.

When I first started 12-steps, the drug and alcohol programs were too triggering for my mind state at that time. The rubber necking of other members during meetings was painful to observe. There seemed to be a lot of untreated sex and love addiction there. Now whenever I go anywhere, I bring my S.L.A.A. program with me. I'm grateful for the earlier fellowships, and I ap-

preciate the recovery of the many inspiring old-timers.

I am committed to service at the worldwide level in S.L.A.A. There has been nothing more sobering for me than the privilege of serving with people I appreciate whose recovery I admire. My spirit is awakening here, especially through service by the many glimpses into how our Higher Power works through the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions of S.L.A.A. to reach the addict who still suffers.

There are so many in this world who still suffer, including institutions and media. I wish all others would realize what's commonly considered as having fun via casual hook ups or fantasizing true love to be scant more than psychological compulsivity. Maybe it works out okay that way for others who are not sex and love addicts, although privately – I doubt it.

But as they say here, "If someone's not ready for recovery from addiction, there's nothing you can say to help them. And when they are ready, there's nothing you can say that won't help them."

– Tom B., Los Angeles

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My Recovery From Fantasy

One lunch break. Two hours. A hundred and twenty minutes. A slice of pizza. And a walk to the beach in Santa Monica. Jury duty wasn't half bad.

I mean how can you go wrong with a slice of pizza and the beach? Last time I got thrown in a courthouse in Van Nuys and though I got out of work for the day and managed to escape service for another year to a year and a half without getting called on a case, it wasn't any picnic.

Mainly because I'm an addict, you see. Any addict knows that any time away from the norm, any time we find ourselves with time on our hands, is a recipe for trouble with a capital "T." And that's precisely what I expected this jury duty to be.

Being the addict that I am and the sunny day that it was, I almost wished mine appeared on the list of names of jurors being summoned into the courtroom. Jones. Langford. Miller. Ramirez. They skipped right over the "O"s and the "P"s. Surely that was no coincidence. No "O"s AND no "P"s? That was too odd.



Maybe I should ask. Maybe they needed a "P." Maybe I should be the "P." My addict's voice was louder than all the chatter in my head. I caught one glimpse of the blue sky through the window and headed straight for the elevator, bolting out of there like a criminal set free after doing her time. Not that I'd know what it feels like to do time mind you, but being an addict, it's hard to stay in one place for any period of time, long or short. I'm sure you can relate.

The day was breezy for January and I felt so grateful to live on the West coast. A New Yorker through and through, gratitude is something I got from program, but my taste for pizza is something I brought from home. I let the breeze carry me to the first NY pizza place I could find and got myself a slice and a Coke. I made a few calls on the patio. I had been cooped up long

enough. Not the kind of calls I made in the days of my addiction, mind you. Those would have been calls to qualifiers. Desperate attempts to hook up in the small window of time I had been given for my respite. These were productive calls. Calls to my agent. Calls to work. I even called my Mom.

You know, all the things we didn't have time for or make time for in our acting out days. I got a couple of voicemails so I had to leave messages and started beating up on myself.

"You were only semi-productive." The addict is always doing those push-ups you know. And then my mind started wandering.

What if I called him? Or him? He would be happy to hear from me. He might even leave work to come meet me. I wonder where he was working today. It didn't really matter. He'd be so happy to hear from me he'd surely drop everything. Stop. I caught myself. I had to get out of there. I tossed the remains of my pizza and headed for the ocean. The ocean always grounded me.

If only I could make it there I knew I would be okay. I started running to the ocean now. I knew it was the only thing that would save me.

I turned the corner and got as

close to the ocean as I was going to get. I couldn't believe the spot that I had landed in was the same spot I'd been to so many times before, only not as the same person. If you are an addict too you know what I mean. You know that it's possible to be a different person without changing your identity.

To be transformed. And here I was today in the same spot I came time and again with my very first qualifier when I was in the thick of my addiction only now, years later, having had no contact with that qualifier nor the desire to have any.

Interesting too because this qualifier was a different "him" than the "him" and the "him" in the thoughts I was running to get away from. What better antidote than to be reminded of my very first "him"? Like I said, no coincidences.

I stayed at this spot near the ocean which happened to be a gazebo and basked in my gratitude and the sunshine, which by that time of day felt almost as good as my gratitude. I thought about how lucky I was to have been given this reprieve from my obsession, a recovery from my fantasy you might say. It felt good.

— ANONYMOUS

Addicted At Work

I'm going to share my story of addiction and recovery. I come from a long line of addicts – not that I knew that before I entered the program. I am a sex and love addict with the focus on fantasy and codependence. When I say fantasy it means that I can have a relationship in my head while not pursuing a relationship, and have my emotional needs met without having the person next to me.

My addiction really spun out of control when I was at work. I held a job with a company for a year prior to when the 'qualifier' appeared. I was highly recommended for the position, and I was very eager to start. I was very eager to work my tail off. I was very excited about the position because it had a lot of mobility. I could definitely move up in the company.

My addiction started very "innocently" from having a little crush and not knowing I was completely obsessed and compulsive towards this other person. I didn't even have to speak to this person to get a high or a hit. I just had to hear her name, see her name on an email, hear her voice in another room, see



the back of her head and I would be momentarily incapacitated.

I was not in S.L.A.A. at the time. I was in another program and my sponsor in that program really encouraged me to join S.L.A.A. And I did. I got some very strict boundaries after I was really losing my mind for about three months.

Within one week of starting the program and being vulnerable with myself and being honest with myself, I had been called into my boss's office every day because I was not paying attention at work and it was starting to affect my performance.

I was making mistakes that made my company look bad, and it started to make me and my boss look bad.

I was really out of control in my head. And so my bottom lines got stricter and stricter as I continued my employment. They started with simply not saying

“Hi” to the qualifier. She had to say “Hi” to me first.

Although I was the receptionist, I was not answering her phone calls anymore. I would respond to her by email, “Sorry I missed your call, what can I help you with?” Not speaking directly to her unless she spoke to me, but also having a two minute conversation max and then I’d have to walk away.

While these seemed nearly impossible, I was able to do it for about four months. And then one day, I accidentally said “Hi” first, and just that one action led me on a slippery slope, which ended with my boss saying I was not a fit for the company, for the position.

And that led into severe amounts of pain and more incapacitation, my performance continued to dwindle. I was later fired because I could not control my obsessive/compulsive behavior.

So at this point I’ve been seeking employment, but during my interviews or after my interviews or while I was online looking, I would be triggered wondering if I would be addicted to another person at work. How would I handle that? I was afraid. My triggers came back. So I’ve been working diligently with

my Higher Power and with my sponsor about what appropriate boundaries to have, what intrigued me about this person in the first place. I asked myself “what type of person am I addicted to?” And a lot of it had to do with status. She was a director and I was an administrative assistant. So I had to develop a higher self-esteem and empower myself.

And then I saw other patterns. I dated a doctor, so I enjoyed her status. And it was never about the money, it was about the status that it would bring me if I was linked to this person because I didn’t have self-esteem around my status in society.

During my time off from work I have gone back to school, I’m getting my second bachelor’s in business now. I have a business idea and I am actively pursuing that. I feel like had I not been fired, had I been allowed to continue to work poorly, I would have really been miserable. You know, I couldn’t quit the job because I needed the money.

This is a very bad economy right now. I couldn’t quit. I was grateful to be fired because then I could get unemployment and health insurance. I didn’t buck at all with the firing. I was grateful,

pained, but grateful because now I have my own life back. I'm able to grow and empower myself to be the person God meant me to be.

I just completed Step Nine, and that has really released me from so many of my addictive relationships and the pattern that I saw that kept me in a lower status in relationships.

I saw in my Step Seven that not being equal to others — that's what I was addicted to, that I didn't want to be equal to others. I was either bigger or smaller than someone. It was really hard for me to develop relationships with women in an intimate friendship and be honest with myself. And I worked on that.

I made excuses for other people. I allowed my boundaries to be crossed for whatever reason they had that I validated. I couldn't make decisions for myself. I let others make decisions for me. All those things really related back to the fact that all the people I was pursuing had social status and I felt I didn't.

With all of my recovery I've empowered myself. I've grown my relationship with my Higher Power to be able to tell him, "I don't know if I'm ready to go back to work. I'm afraid." And to

be honest about that with myself was very hard, because I've had to negotiate with my landlord about rent. I've had to decrease some activities. I don't go shopping for myself anymore. I have to be very careful and take care of myself. And I'm doing it successfully. I'm very proud of myself for that.

About two weeks ago, I was praying. "God, I need a job now. Now I'm ready, I need a job now." And I got a call. It was sales. It wasn't something I was completely in to. I gave it a chance.

After they'd offered me the position, I had to sit there and say, "Is this what I want for my life?" And I was able to make that decision for myself. I could also walk away and say, "No, thank you."

I made the decision that my Higher Power and I are in business together. I get to make decisions what I do because it's sales. I decide with my Higher Power how much money I'm going to make. I follow the direction from someone, but I'm going to have a trainer and mentors versus a boss, versus an evaluation, versus clock in/clock out. I'm given a lot of flexibility and I'm able to empower myself by doing that.

I didn't realize that everything

that I'd prayed for about a job situation is now in this job. And that is just so comforting that my Higher Power heard me, acknowledged what I wanted, and really helped me develop what is appropriate for me to want. And then by giving it to me I feel like He said, "Yea, you know what? That is good for you."

And I felt so validated that I

was able to ask for something that is good for me, and that I'm taking care of myself by asking for the right things. I'm committed to my recovery.

I'm very grateful for having the addiction expressed the way it was, so then I can learn how to live the life my Higher Power has meant for me to live.

— ELIZABETH C., LOS ANGELES

Take Higher Power Everywhere



Share space

Work The Steps Or Die

I got into recovery because my behavior had clearly become addictive and was creating negative consequences for myself and others. A sense of self had evaporated and I was enslaved to a way of life that blinded me from really living.

I started out very young with pornography and masturbation; add to this a lonely and isolated childhood, I had a fantasy and anorexic habit in place. In my late 20's, this escalated into visiting strip bars with increasing frequency and amount of money spent. My virginity was lost to a call girl at age 28; at my bottom, I was addictively spending huge sums on call girls for sex and attempts at feeling like I was in control of my world.

I was shocked when I realized exactly how far down the scale I had slid. I came to the program. I tried to "do recovery" on my own strength, even when I was



working with a sponsor, but my pain, denial, and lack of effort left me floundering. I was not finished yet. I left recovery to continue with the insanity that I mistook for really living.

It took a final crushing emotional breakdown to wake me up from the insanity I was practicing. I came back to SLAA. I got a sponsor. I worked the steps. I knew I had to if I were to remain sober. I desperately wanted sobriety because it became clear that it was either that or a return to the grips of addiction. I had known about the steps for a long time, but I never really lived or practiced them. Working the steps and following my sponsor's directions to the best of my ability has kept me sober since Octo-

ber of 2009. I still have desires to go back to addictive behavior — my addict wants to come out. For this reason I take steps to aid in my recovery. In times of temptation, I made up a “powerlessness prayer.”

“God, I am powerless over this, I can’t do anything, I need you to take this from me...” I would pray this continually, with an emphasis on powerlessness and dependency. The images and longings from the past quieted down and I was able to get back to the moment. It always worked.

I attend meetings regularly and gain from the shares of others. Eventually a guy asked me to sponsor him. Although at first I felt ill-equipped, leading him through his own ups and downs has challenged, taught, and en-

couraged me in my own recovery. I am sponsoring another man at this time; he presents a whole different set of issues than my first sponsee. Being relevant to each of my sponsees according to their different needs is broadening my experience in recovery.

I have less anxiety now and feel less need to control others or situations. I am better able to be present for people. I laugh more and take myself less seriously. I am learning what it is to be human and to participate in life. I know that this is the beginning of the journey, and better things are to come. I am not special. I just try to show up and work the program. I now know that recovery is to live and to act out is to die.

—D.B., SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA

Service opportunities for *the Journal*

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. We’re looking for people with writing, drawing, 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. Please go to <http://www.slaa.fws.org/contact/jeditor> to submit your writing.

UNITY IN SERVICE



My Spiritual Journey Has Begun

It is time for loving kindness toward myself. I am proclaiming that I am happy to accept who I am. At long last, no more regrets, no more excuses. I am blessed by much good fortune, and grateful to be where I am in life. No more telling myself “I should’ve done that, looked there, gone that way.”

No more blaming; away with the regrets, to hell with the excuses. Sure, stuff happened. Long ago. Yes, there was trauma, both at home and at school. But my trauma was relatively mild compared to many people I have met.

Nevertheless, it created tremendous amounts of fear in me, and that fear fed flames of anger. Those were just normal human feelings.

Yet for a very long time I did not own them; the fear and anger owned me instead. Thus I multiplied my own worst traumas, by running and hiding from my own fears — isolating myself and alienating others, or worse, trying to become whom I was not.

Worse yet was all the denial,



the depression and its partner the shame, and eventually the addictive acting out on my own human feelings. These reactions of my own — understandable human reactions created additional trauma, compounded my own suffering, and caused much other suffering to family, friends, and associates of mine. All that added up to this: Just one more human tragedy — which happened to be my own human tragedy.

But on the flip side of every tragedy, I’ve learned there is a blessing. As they say in the “recovery” world, first you have to “hit bottom.” Finally I hit bottom, and had nowhere else to run.

I had to completely surrender in my campaign against my enemy, the pain of reality. With surrender, I got out of my hiding

place, hands in the air. I had lost the war. Not just my war against pornography addiction (tip of the iceberg), but against ALL my character defects. I finally asked for help. I admitted my failings and forgave myself for them. Yes, I finally asked for help. From other humans! Not from yet another professional (I had been in therapy for decades, but the help it gave hadn't gotten me far enough).

Finally, I sought and found others like myself instead of being disgusted with such people, the likes of me!! From these other fallen mortals I learned about a simple spiritual path—a program of recovery whereby others had sought help and found it.

To be honest, this program smelled an awful lot like religion, but I held my nose. I didn't see any other viable choices except to return to my now unmanageable existence with the same old, worn out tools, namely my own failed resolve and flimsy determination to improve myself. This program brazenly promised me a happier existence, but it demanded up front that troubling prerequisite belief in a power greater than myself. Although always a proud agnostic, I was now at a point where I saw nowhere else to go but down this

spiritual path.

So, I went there. I invented a “higher power” that I could keep with me all the time, and use whenever I felt helpless. Call it a god, or God, if you want. It is of my own making, and he/she/it is now available for me 24/7, an omnipotent, benevolent force which rules my entire universe. Incredibly versatile and convenient, my higher power is the result of a deal I made with myself. So in a weird counterintuitive way, I created this god of mine. I believe because I want to believe, not because anybody tells me to. I have to renew my new faith on a daily basis. Anytime I want, I reserve the right to drop out and become my own boss again as I always had fancied myself. I am learning to use prayer to my higher power, as well as Buddhist-style meditation, to create loving-kindness for myself and others. What a gift. What a joy. How amazing that it all began with surrender.

Deep and abiding gratitude (well, I do have to recharge it on a daily basis) is another gift of the program. I no longer have to fight my self-imposed shame with flimsy excuses.

My higher power is showing me how to love myself now, this instant, as I am. For example, I am honored to be working as a

bus driver. It is the best job for me to be doing right now.

I am happy to have a job where my stress level is usually manageable. I do not have to feel any of the old shame that I am an overeducated underachiever.

Nor do I have to plan any return to any past "career" or future fantasy career in order to find self-respect or earn the respect of others. I have arrived.

But it's all a journey, so I arrive somewhere every step of the way. Beginning with surrender, I am finally getting to gratitude. I am learning to flip my little trag-

edy over and count the blessings on the other side. For all of this I am very grateful.

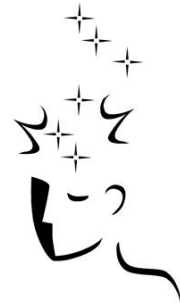
Thanks to: Mom and Papa for this amazing life; Judith for drawing the line; Gary, my therapist and Read, my first sponsor, for your continuing support; Thank you Pema Chodron, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Jon Kabat-Zinn, great teachers to so many; And thank you A.A., S.L.A.A., and all my brothers and sisters in recovery. I think it will be a long journey, so I am grateful for having gotten this far.

—ANONYMOUS

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 go to <http://www.slaafws.org/contact/jeditor> to submit. Event notices must be received at least one month prior to the issue date.

Recovering
from
FANTASY



There Is More Than One Way To Work This Program

I came to this program seven years ago after a week during which I had sex with three different men—one was a former lover I didn't want to see anymore another was an ex-lover who I had already told nothing would happen between us ever again, and the third was a perfect stranger I had just met in a carpool trip to another city. Since my teenage years, I had had a number of unsatisfying encounters, and one long-term relationship with an active drug addict that barely wanted to have sex, which led me to think that if only I had enough sex, everything would be all right. I finally met a lover that wanted to have sex all the time, and still I was desperate, despising him and myself, fantasizing about another man, getting physically sick and mentally insane – completely obsessed and unable to leave.

Thanks to program, I stopped acting out with other people. I



also stopped other behaviors like watching pornography and reading erotic novels. I did a first year and a half attending one meeting a week and talking once in a while with one member. Then, I decided I knew how to work a relationship, picked a guy obviously suffering from some kind of mental illness at a friend's party and started right away a relationship of over-disclosure, boundaries violations and drama. Fortunately I was by then involved at Intergroup level and there met a woman who offered to sponsor me. Then I started to work the Steps.

I worked with this first sponsor for two years and thought it would last forever. We had two weekly phone appointments and I could call her anytime if I

needed. I learned one can formally work the Steps. I went up to Step 7 with her. I Got really involved in service work, following her example. I learned so much through the procedures my sponsor was “suggesting” to change a bottom-line behavior, to sober-date someone, to work the Steps. I learned to express my need to be listened to without her jumping in to give me advice right away.

I learned to be teachable and accept “suggestions.”

All of that, I can acknowledge. At some point, the relationship was just not working any more. I was deeply triggered in heavy co-dependency issues with my sponsor and would just react to her as a raging four year-old. I was devastated. I changed sponsors.

My second sponsor was very strong on connecting with Higher Power and living in the moment. I would work Step questions, but there was no more written exercises about decision making, no more phone appointments; more work with intuition.

I really learned to let go of my thinking, to let go of drama. I learned that I don’t always have to tell all that is on my mind before stopping to breathe and be present. Sometimes I can avoid

venting and just let it go, not let it happen. I stayed two years with this sponsor, and left when I got into deep pain and felt she couldn’t support me emotionally through that. I was hurt, but I knew it probably didn’t have much to do with her, surely was a pattern of mine... I started a new therapy.

Because I was such a program cheerleader, I knew I needed a sponsor, so I chose another one, a gay man newly in town, but with years of recovery in another “S” fellowship. We worked the Steps and with him I learned more about de-dramatization, I learned that our relationships can surely be healthier, but that the 100% healthy expectation is part of perfectionism. I learned about being just human, no more.

The relationship ended after some eight or nine months with my sponsor telling me he couldn’t give me what I wanted when I was expressing to him my pain and anger; and that he couldn’t hear me telling him what was going on for me. I was abroad for a five-months trip and had just relapsed and needed support. He told me a sponsor was to work the Steps, no more.

I told him I disagreed with this opinion. I was deeply hurt

and I still am praying a lot to be relieved from the resentment I have... I have to remember he is just a recovering addict like me.

I know that if I am so hurt, it is because it triggered old stuff. I am dealing with it in my therapy sessions. I wrote a fourth Step about it and told a member about it. I am praying for forgiveness.

My part : after some weeks in the relationship, I had some signals that this person wasn't available to listen to me sharing the emotional issues arising throughout my week. When I was confused, I perceived that he would try to "make me understand it" without coming right out and telling it to me. I was hurt but stayed, telling myself I had something to learn.

What I actually learned, painfully, is that I need to listen to ME. I have to value my needs in a relationship, and check clearly if the other person is able and willing to meet them. Some are negotiable, some are not.

And when the non-negotiable needs aren't met, it just won't work and I have to say "Thanks a lot, good-bye." In the end, my relationship with my sponsor was like my romantic ones : thinking I had to stay, to cope with whatever was. NO. I am the one who knows best what I need. I can trust myself when I feel it

doesn't work. Relationships don't have to be that painful!

That is a tricky part for me in recovery. Before I preached that having a sponsor was a living Step One, admitting that I can't recover by myself, that I can't know for myself what is best. I admit that I wouldn't have the recovery I have if I hadn't had my two first sponsors. Today I am without a sponsor.

And I am going through withdrawal, a few weeks back from that trip where I relapsed twice. I am working my program. I wrote a fourth Step about my whole trip and shared it with a member friend. I am talking daily to program people, attending a minimum of three meetings a week, writing a daily 10th Step, journaling, reading the literature and praying. I do work my program. I deeply believe in Step work because it changed my life, and I am still working it with recovery friends I trust.

I started to sponsor a newcomer, mainly listening to her as I would want a sponsor to listen to me. Before I would judge harshly the people who would be sponsors without having a sponsor themselves.

Today I offer my service, not hiding my situation, and if it can help someone, fine. I have been a controlling sponsor in the past, making a lot of mistakes, giving

a lot of “suggestions” that really were advice. We sponsor with where we are at, and, in my experience, following the example of the sponsor I had at the time. It is all OK.

There is more than one way to work this program. I need to remind myself of this when I meet a member whose recovery is attractive and who states with strength that this program has to be worked this way or that way. No.

We are an association of sex and love addicts, a bunch of people walking our paths, living our lives and having our experiences. There is no guru, no master, no professional, no one owning the truth.

In long-term recovery, I learn that I can't work with rules and absolutes, that nourish my sick “right or wrong” thinking. There is no drama. It is just one day at a time, and everything passes. And in the end, it is all between each of us and our Higher Power, in order to live our best life.

Just like it is suggested to have a period of time without a partner, to get clarity, I am now having a sponsor-free period. My patterns with a sponsor are so painful and automatic, I need to be prudent. I don't have to rush into making anyone my sponsor just as I don't have to take the

first man in sight to be my boyfriend. And if I meet someone I think I would like as a sponsor, I can take time to get to know her. I can see if her way fits my needs, if there is space for negotiation, if I like the way she listens to me.

I tend to choose people I idealize and with whom I feel like a child. Therefore, I act to please them and do what I think they think I should be doing. then I react quite violently to their “authority!”

I need to learn to take back my responsibility and power when I start feeling like a four year-old. The only authority is a loving Higher Power. What I know today (and I may change my mind later on): I need recovery partners that listen to me without interruption, without judgment and compulsive need to give advice, even program advice. I do know a lot about the S.L.A.A. program.

Knowing didn't prevent me from acting out. I think that what prevents me from acting out is the loving presence of my fellows in meetings and in my life, through which I can relate to my Higher Power of infinite love. This true love nourishes my heart and soul, calms my mind and therefore I don't need to get a “relief” through acting out.

Cheers!

—ANONYMOUS



Quotation Corner

Let what is given be enough.

If you punish yourself, God is punishing. If you're loving to yourself, God is loving.

If you don't change direction, you'll end up where you're heading.

I'm bad with decisions and sex/booze puts me in a decision-making mood.

A sex and love addict is someone with both feet firmly planted in mid-air.

Don't be a pigeon. If you tie a message to a pigeon's foot and send him to Denver, the guy in Denver will get the message... but the pigeon won't.

So you don't feel close to Higher Power today? Guess who moved.

It's a daily program, but I don't get a day off.

You have to lose your mind in order to find it.

I would rather go through life sober, believing I am a sex and love addict, than go through life acting out, trying to convince myself that I am not.

Calendar of Events

Phone Meetings

There are numerous phone meetings. A good place to start is the S.L.A.A. FWS website: http://directory.S.L.A.A.fws.org/intl_phone

Upcoming Events

2011 SLAA Spring Retreat
Presented by: SF/East Bay Intergroup
Where: Happy Valley Conference Center, Santa Cruz, CA
Event Date: Thurs., April 28, 2011 to Sun., May 01, 2011
For Inquiries: slaaretreat@gmail.com
Link: <http://groups.google.com/group/slaaretreat>
More Info:
Held at the Happy Valley Conference Center in the Santa Cruz Mountains amid

towering coastal redwoods, our retreat is an opportunity to escape from the hustle and bustle of daily life and immerse yourself in a weekend of recovery. We have a variety of speakers, meetings, and workshops that cover a wide range of topics. We also have lots of fellowship, fun, arts and crafts, singing, a Talent/No Talent Extravaganza (with mandatory standing ovation), dancing, games, and lots of other re-creational activities. All activities are voluntary. Happy Valley Conference center specializes in "home-cooked" meals and basic, clean accommodations.

S.L.A.A. is here to help!
Go to www.slaafws.org



The Augustine Fellowship S.L.A.A. Fellowship-Wide Services



July 12-15, 2011
Tuesday through Friday

Theme: Tradition 9

*S.L.A.A. as such ought never
be organized; but we may create
service boards or committees
directly responsible to those
they serve.*

Crowne Plaza Hotel
2270 Hotel Circle Nth
San Diego, CA 92108



2011 S.L.A.A. Annual Business/Conference Meeting

Host: San Diego County Intergroup



S.L.A.A. Signs of Recovery

1. We seek to develop a daily relationship with a Higher Power, knowing that we are not alone in our efforts to heal ourselves from our addiction.
2. We are willing to be vulnerable because the capacity to trust has been restored to us by our faith in a Higher Power.
3. We surrender, one day at a time, our whole life strategy of, and our obsession with the pursuit of romantic and sexual intrigue and emotional dependency.
4. We learn to avoid situations that may put us at risk physically, morally, psychologically or spiritually.
5. We learn to accept and love ourselves, to take responsibility for our own lives, and to take care of our own needs before involving ourselves with others.
6. We become willing to ask for help, allowing ourselves to be vulnerable and learning to trust and accept others.
7. We allow ourselves to work through the pain of our low self-esteem and our fears of abandonment and responsibility. We learn to feel comfortable in solitude.
8. We begin to accept our imperfections and mistakes as part of being human, healing our shame and perfectionism while working on our character defects.
9. We begin to substitute honesty for self-destructive ways of expressing emotions and feelings.
10. We become honest in expressing who we are, developing true intimacy in our relationships with ourselves and others.
11. We learn to value sex as a by-product of sharing, commitment, trust and cooperation in a partnership.
12. We are restored to sanity, on a daily basis, by participating in the process of recovery.



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