

# the Journal

Issue # 134

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Secrets, Stalking & Shame  
*Recovery From Obsession*

AMOR ♡

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## **Letter from the Editor**

Dear Reader:

As I am writing this, I am preparing to speak at a meeting and take my 10-year sobriety medallion in S.L.A.A.

Secrets, stalking and shame were a way of life for me before December, 2001. I led a double life, so secrets were essential and shame was always part of the deal.

Stalking was just a relationship tool in my addict's mind to be sure I wasn't dating a serial killer. (In my disease, I tended to be attracted to -- and to attract -- the murderous type.) Stalking, cheating and threatening was used against me in my first relationship so I felt entitled to lie, cheat, steal, stalk or whatever I needed to do in order to survive.

But living in the hell of addiction is no real life. S.L.A.A. helped me step into the sunlight and reveal the true me and trust that Higher Power has got my back. He didn't carry me this far to drop me on my head. Sponsors gave me the tools for a healthy relationship to replace the old useless tools. Whenever I wanted to do "research" and read my boyfriend's letters or emails or drive by his apartment just to see if his car was in the driveway, I would call my sponsor and she would say, "What he does is none of your business. You don't get to play detective anymore. It's stalking if you do."

It felt wrong that I couldn't investigate someone who could harm me. My sponsor taught me to trust God instead of my crazy head and I'll be forever grateful to her and to S.L.A.A. for showing me how to live. I have a beautiful life now and God picked the perfect partner for me - neither of us is perfect, but we're perfect for each other.

Whether we choose to live alone or in a partnership, S.L.A.A. gives us a chance to get out of the obsession, one day at a time.

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.

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## Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “How have you acted out with obsession in the past, and what’s your recovery through S.L.A.A.?”

Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order.

“HOW HAVE YOU ACTED OUT WITH OBSESSION IN THE PAST, AND  
WHAT’S YOUR RECOVERY THROUGH S.L.A.A.”

Yes, yes I used to obsessively objectify women in all public places. This was a colossal problem for me and brought much misery. Since being in S.L.A.A. much of this obsession has reduced in intensity, thank God!

— JONATHAN K., LONDON, UK

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My obsessive behavior was largely in the form of checking the email of my qualifier. It was like my mind was like a hamster in a wheel with no forward motion. Now I am grateful to have tools to refocus my thoughts on myself, others and God. I have become far more productive in my daily life.

— ELIZABETH, LOS ANGELES, CA

Obsession was a very big problem for me. Through a solid “no contact” period and working the steps, going to meeting and working with my sponsor the obsession lifted.

— SANDY, HOUSTON, TX

I used to stalk, particularly online. When I feel compelled to check up on qualifiers, I now will contact my sponsor or spend a few minutes in meditation, and the obsession passes.

— ANONYMOUS

I was on sex websites for hookups at least 2-3 hours a day, every day for over 10 years. Since coming into S.L.A.A. I have not been on for over 2 months. I made this part of my bottom line behavior and the obsession has been lifted.

— LOUIE M., LOS ANGELES, CA

HOW HAVE YOU ACTED OUT WITH OBSESSION IN THE PAST, AND WHAT'S YOUR RECOVERY THROUGH S.L.A.A.?

I was obsessed with a teenage girl and groomed her. We had sex and I eventually got arrested and went to prison for 12 months. S.L.A.A. has given me a place to be honest and talk about my feelings. It's been 12 years ago and I have had no more victims.

— T.W., LITTLE ROCK, AR

Seemingly uncontrollable thought patterns have always been part of my disease. I've learned that I need to distract my brain when I get fixated – movies, books, and being of service help!!

— MARCELLA M., LOS ANGELES, CA

In the past I have acted out my obsession to others in the following ways – dropping out of college; moving cross-country; changing nations; abandoning my friends, my family, myself. The fellowship and actively working the steps have helped me reconnect with all these three things and to establish a connection with my higher power.

— KATY B., NEW YORK, NY

I obsess when I am trying to avoid feeling. My recovery in S.L.A.A. has given me the awareness of what fuels my obsessions – resistance to feeling – and to have the courage to sit with my feelings.

— SUSAN L., HOUSTON, TX

I used to make anyone my higher power. I used to believe someone else could fix me. I would obsess over anything whether it be food, porn or masturbation. S.L.A.A. has given me a Higher Power that keeps me staying in reality and allows me to feel my feelings. I am more present for my life.

— BRIAN B, LOS ANGELES, CA

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Once I said I was working in NYC, instead I flew to Maine & spent 3 days with someone. Returned home on Day 4, kept lying. Now I resist even going to visit someone for an hour & lying about my whereabouts.

— AUDREY, LOS ANGELES, CA



## QUESTION OF THE DAY

My obsessions were to look up past boyfriends. My recovery is about not acting on that accessory behavior by letting go of that desire and doing the next right thing.

— RICK B., LARGO, FL

I acted “in” with trauma fantasies, which ultimately caused destruction in all areas of my life. Now, I simply go to the tools of the program to invest in reality and stay in the solution.

— CHRIS R., PASADENA, CA

I acted out by pursuing unavailable people I did not want because I cannot commit. With the program, I am no longer into the seduction game. I have proper boundaries and relating guidelines. I’m slowly coming out of anorexia as a protective sex and love addiction mechanism.

— CHRISTINE L., MONTREAL,  
CANADA

I was obsessed with my looks, trying to be appealing. I wasted money and time focused on gaining acceptance through physical appearance. Recovery for me is to choose clothes, make-up and hairstyles that are complimentary, not exploitative. If in doubt, I skip it and come back to it later. Often my motives are not recovered. So I pause when in doubt.

— MONIQUE S., LOS ANGELES, CA

I was obsessing about a member of a meeting but I was able to stop and switch to other thoughts. I knew that if I continued to pursue this unavailable person, I would inevitably be disappointed to depression. So I was practicing depression prevention. I also talked to a sponsor, who recommended further steps.

— AMY M., HARTFORD, CT

Recovery means getting the hell out of you. Once you see the writing on the wall recovery means choosing the good life over the immediacy of the addict’s adrenaline.

— EUGENE, STUDIO CITY, CA

Staying sober sexually, but I’m being obsessive now about whether or not people like me.

— ANONYMOUS, SHERMAN OAKS

**HOW HAVE YOU ACTED OUT WITH OBSESSION IN THE PAST, AND WHAT'S YOUR RECOVERY THROUGH S.I.A.A.?**

I entered the program because of my obsessing about my “qualifier,” a woman who I had a brief relationship with. Two years ago I started the program and since have been able to normalize an appropriate relationship with her.

— RICK K., SANTA CRUZ, CA

My entire life was fantasy and obsession. I was always obsessing about what a horrible person I was and how I deserved to keep myself away from the world. Through surrendering to sponsor direction and through writing, praying, meditating and calling people to be of service, slowly those old obsessions are going away.

— PETER B, LOS ANGELES, CA

Before recovery, I obsessed on all the reasons a guy wasn't calling until I broke and called him. My desperation pushed everyone away. Now, I have a self. I am content with me. I let men pursue me in dating situations and let go. I allow God to fill my empty places.

— C., SANTA CLARITA, CA

I was so obsessed with my qualifier that when she broke up with me and wouldn't accept my apology, I beat myself in the face in front of her to show her that I was sorry. 12 Steps freed me from obsession.

— ANONYMOUS,  
WEST HOLLYWOOD, CA

Seducing men. Unavailable men and also some women. Staying with men who didn't want me, rejecting the ones who did.

— CARMEN B.L.,  
STOCKHOM SWEDEN

I get on my knees and pray. Underneath my obsession there's always pain. So I ask GOD to help me feel my feelings to avoid acting out and recover.

— L., STUDIO CITY, CA

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

I have obsessed about the object of my affection both internally and externally in mind, desires, longing and gawking and fixating upon. Then this month I've come to experience recovery withdrawal, clarity, freedom and a healthy relationship.

— MARCELO B., SAN DIEGO, CA

I obsessed about the women I was with when I started in recovery. I realized that this was a form of fantasy from attending a meeting with a focus on fantasy.

— ALEX K., BERKELEY, CA

I'm still really new, but my sponsor had me write a prayer to my disease, and I found myself thanking it for being loud enough today to get my attention so I can take contrary action & find God so I can be a better person in my life today.

— PATTIE T.,  
NORTH HOLLYWOOD, CA

Had sex with someone because I mistook liking them for being attracted to them. S.L.A.A. 12 Steps helped me to see this — I didn't realize.

— ANONYMOUS, PASADENA, CA

I was obsessed by self-denial, by wanting to get away from myself. I seem to be more willing to sit with myself these days.

— MARK, VAN NUYS, CA

My recovery in S.L.A.A. has come from working Steps 1, 2, 3 on my obsession.

— ANONYMOUS, LONDON, UK

I became attached unhealthily to people; re-committing today.

— ROBIN, LONDON, UK

It's not rocket science, it's about action. Instead of staying in a destructive relationship, leave. Instead of looking at porn, go to the gym. Instead of calling a qualifier, call a fellow. Get up, get out, & get on with a better life.

— DAMIEN

**HOW HAVE YOU ACTED OUT WITH OBSESSION IN THE PAST, AND WHAT'S YOUR RECOVERY THROUGH S.L.A.A.?**

I was powerless over obsessing with women. Thanks to program when I do obsess, it's less intense and I get over it quicker.

— MARK H., VAN NUYS, CA

I used to fantasize obsessively. After setting a bottom line about it, I've learned to live in the present and live in reality.

— RORY, LA

It is difficult to remember how I acted out in obsession(s) now that I am sober and committed to the program of recovery for a number of years. In fact, I am amazed that I don't obsess or desire this, that or someone, something anymore. I remember I would spend inordinate time in fantasy and not in the present moment. Today I feel more mindful to myself and others.

— RITA H., MONTREAL, CANADA

I would have clients pay me to stay in the best hotels - travel the world, create an affair, & then steal a day on the way home to be with a lover.

— A.A., HOLLYWOOD, CA

In the past I've acted out on women, myself and men through pornography. Since coming to S.L.A.A., I don't know how recovery looks.

— ANONYMOUS, LA

Exhausting repetition of fantasy thinking... what was I thinking? Totally in fantasy and not present — a dark empty world of isolation.

— ELIZA, LOS ANGELES, CA

My obsession in the past always led me to act out in my bottom-line behavior. My recovery from obsession starts with me taking the same amount of time I spent in negative activity, and instead using that same time in positive activity, i.e.: meetings, prayer, accountability group, daily connection with my higher power (God.)

— ELLIOTT G.,  
LODI, CA

# Obsessed With The Fantasy



**B**efore S.L.A.A., I would immediately tag every guy I met as my new future husband. And I would live out our fantasy of being together in my head, reacting harshly because I imagined he didn't reciprocate my emotion and devotion. Ding, Dong, was anyone home? The fantasy was all in my head! I created my own hell over and over again.

And there were fleeting moments of getting high...a dry response to my text, but so what? He sent something back!

He could have sent a semi-colon and I still would have been elated. But as sure as the seasons change, I always fell so low — ashamed that I did it again. I hated him and I needed him, whoever “he” was at the moment.

And then once I moved on to the next “drug of choice,” the previous one got dropped from existence as far as I was concerned. And most of them were generally nice people, but they wouldn't conduct themselves the way I wanted, when I wanted,

how I wanted, and proclaim their everlasting love immediately. So they had to go — once I had a replacement for them, of course.

Ironically, I always dropped the ones who did show interest as well. My addict was so broken and lost that I craved being in the chaos it seems...I was drawn to the emotionally unavailable man, but I discarded the emotionally available man. I was craving intimacy but at the same time afraid of intimacy.

Through S.L.A.A., I have identified the problem. I am a Sex and Love Addict. Now, I am surrendering to that fact. I am also keeping in mind that I al-

ready have all of the acceptance I need inside of me, through my Higher Power who created me and made me for GOOD. I honestly have no idea where I'm going yet, but I know it's towards the light. And I know that just because I am a Sex and Love addict, I don't have to act out. I don't have to live out patterns of chaos, shame, obsessive behaviors, controlling behaviors...I am now content being alone. Imagine that! When I am alone I continue to contemplate, do self inventory, and work to align myself more with my Higher Power, without whom recovery would not be possible. Thank you.

— SHERI F., MACHIPONGO, VIRGINIA

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## Acting Out With Obsession

**M**y earliest memories of acting out with obsession included being a fantastic liar and acting out promiscuously as early as age 12. My compulsive obsession with acting out masked intense insecurity and desperation.

As life would have it my mom's pregnancy caused my father and both sides of the family to turn against my mom in anger. My mom was the first in several generations to have more

than 3 babies. I was born into hostility and a fair amount of chaos because both my parents were passive and failed to model healthy family behavior. My first memories included fantastic lies, kleptomania and sexualizing my interactions with boys.

By age 17, I entered into intensive therapy. In the same way you turn on a light switch, I let go of all stealing. I now know stealing was obsessively acting out by shortchanging myself. It

robbed me of being initially welcomed in my family. I was able to put a band-aid on my sexual promiscuousness by entering into a 19-year monogamous marriage by age 18.

Once I divorced, I was consumed by the same desperation and insecurity that made me act out by dating and almost immediately having sex. I could not make decisions based on sound reasoning when it came to men. I attracted relationships where I was matched with mutually addicted men.

I have been in the program for over 3 years. But my impulse to fast forward sexually with men is still there. I now use my bottom-lines of: being honest; waiting 1-7 days before I act on impulses with male relationships; not entering into relationships where the man is emotionally unavailable; not chasing men that cut me off in any way; and not running away from men, or trying to retaliate even if I feel wronged.

This is possible for me because of my withdrawal from all bottom-line behaviors. I use top-line behaviors as a way to replace my obsessive-compulsive self. Today that includes: riding with the cycling club, doing strength

training; reading books; listening to music; traveling; cooking and gardening. I do not have a desperate need "to make something happen." And I am slowly learning how to be honest outside the rooms.

For me, I sometimes have to write down the facts and read them word for word in order to get current with the reality of a situation. Having courage to use "getting current" to say aloud the issues in my life that are the hardest for me to face may be the best technique I have for recovering my life.

The most precious insight I have had since joining S.L.A.A. was the realization that I have always treated my creator as I felt I was treated....unwanted.

Today, I can see that from the first day of my life, creation blessed me with so many gifts/talents/skills and I can use the steps to surrender my powerlessness with my earliest obsession of being wanted/loved/liked/needed.

I now know that I must be in the right relationship with myself first. My creator is critical before entering into relationship with others. I have learned so much, and I am grateful.

— ANONYMOUS

# Letting Go Of The Shame

“**Y**ou say you care about me, but you have absolutely no respect for me or anything I say or want. You’re too obsessive and it’s really starting to scare me.”

I was expecting AW to dump me, but I didn’t anticipate an email like this. Even though we’d only dated four months, I thought AW was the love of my life. Never had I cared for a woman more, and never had a woman cared so much about me. She cooked for me several times a week and texted me sweet notes about how wonderful I was. I was the first man she introduced to her adorable 2-year-old boy.

I spent so many Saturday mornings playing with that precocious little redheaded boy who loved Thomas the Train and Spiderman. I genuinely loved him.

On my Valentines Day card, she wrote, “I feel so lucky to have you in my life. You are so wonderful and my life is better because you’re in it.”

And yet, just weeks later, AW was now scared of me, after all these tender moments. I just couldn’t believe it.

I spent the next hour crafting



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY JAMES

a response, hoping to talk her out of it.

She responded within minutes.

“I’m not going to tell you again. Do not contact me anymore. Now I’m really scared for my safety.”

I became dizzy. I went to the bathroom so I could hyperventilate in privacy.

After gaining a semblance of composure, I told my boss that I needed to leave early for the day. As I drove home, crying my eyes out, I hatched a plan to numb my pain. I hired a high-priced escort. And, to make sure I really felt it, I ate a pot brownie.

I met her at a Beverly Hills apartment, and the first 30 min-



utes were sexual bliss. But after the brownie kicked in, the last half hour was a nightmare. As I tried to perform, I kept imagining the escort was AW. It was torture, and I ended my appointment early.

I was too stoned to drive home. I frantically called friends trying to find someone to pick me up. After an hour of full-on paranoia — I thought everyone in the ritzy neighborhood was watching me, and that a cop would arrest me any second — my roommate picked me up.

I felt as though I was in full psychosis. My thoughts were jumbled, and I was having an out-of-body experience. It was awful. I could barely contain my tears.

After I sobered up at home, I began to realize that AW was right. I'd lost complete control of myself. I had become completely obsessed with her. I'd always been prone to intense crushes, but nothing like I experienced with her. I tried to diagnose what was wrong with me by googling obsessive love. I stumbled upon the Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous website.

I reflected upon my life, and I realized how I had devoted most of it to chasing women. My life revolved around an addiction that I didn't even know I had.

It took me another three weeks before I gathered the courage to walk into an S.L.A.A. meeting. The withdrawal was intense. Every night I went home and cried. I slept 11 hours a night. I didn't clean

my room and dirty dishes stacked up. I spent my weekends just laying in bed.

One night, as I stared at the ceiling, I thought to myself that if life is this painful, then its not worth living. That scared me enough that I went to an S.L.A.A. meeting the next night.

My time in S.L.A.A. has been a genuine journey of discovery. I do not exaggerate when I say that I've learned more about myself in the last month than I ever have in my 28 years of life. When I met AW, I did not have true self esteem. My sense of self worth was derived entirely from what other people — women especially — thought about me. There was a void in my life, and I used her to fill that hole and numb the

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**One night, as I stared at the ceiling, I thought to myself that if life is this painful, then its not worth living. That scared me enough that I went to an S.L.A.A. meeting the next night.**

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pain.

Thanks to S.L.A.A. and therapy, I finally admitted to myself the affect my childhood had on my life, and how it formed an addiction that warped my values.

My mother was a junior in high school when she became pregnant, and just 17 when she had me. She hastily married my father, who was just a year older. It was a misguided decision that caused nothing but pain for all three of us.

My earliest memories are of my parents constantly fighting. They screamed and threw things. Sometimes my father hit my mother, and I vividly remember my mother sitting in the bathroom sobbing once after my father had struck her.

They divorced when I was 4, and my mother remarried just a year later. I barely saw my father over the next two years. I felt abandoned.

My stepfather was cold and distant, and I never had much of a relationship with him. The only time I had much contact with him was when he was beating me with a belt for the slightest misdeed.

Even though my parents were divorced, they never stopped fighting. They feuded over child support and visitation until I was

18. Because my mother was not on speaking terms with my father, she'd make me ask him for money to pay for extracurricular activities or for such basic things like getting my braces taken off. I hated it. My father, a tightwad who was resentful over having to pay child support, would berate me and make me feel guilty. Both parents would attempt to make me take sides in their petty squabbles.

I learned at a very early age that voicing my needs only led to guilt and shame. So I just ignored them. That guilt was so great that I felt ashamed to even tell my parents what gifts I wanted for my birthday or Christmas. I still feel guilty asking for help.

As I got older, I learned how to make each one of them think I was secretly on their side. I became a master manipulator, and I learned I can please people by telling them what they want to hear. It's a bad habit I'm still trying to break.

As a child the only healthy relationship I ever had with a man was with my great grandfather, who died when I was 8. My father was volatile, my stepfather emotionally unavailable and my uncle a bipolar alcoholic.

All the figures who provided

comfort to me were women — my mom, my great aunt and my beloved great grandmother. My mother loved me dearly, but her one great flaw is that she cannot keep a secret. In a family of gossipers she is the queen gossiper, and I learned I could not confide things in her. So not only did I suppress my needs and desires, but I bottled up my emotions.

That is perhaps why I started to become obsessed with girls at a young age. I desperately wanted an emotional outlet to relieve my loneliness.

My first crush was with a fellow second-grader named Christy. The crush lasted three years. I'd have intense fantasies about us, and sometimes I'd cry myself to sleep because we weren't together.

I was intensely shy as a child. I did not reach puberty until I was a sophomore in high school. I was short, scrawny and wore thick blue glasses. I liked Star Trek and science and didn't relate to the other kids. I was frequently bullied by bigger kids.

In high school I had few friends. I continued having crushes on girls, and developed this all consuming belief that if only I could get a girlfriend I'd be happy. But I was far too shy to approach girls, and that shyness

sent my self-esteem plummeting to new lows. I believed that I wasn't attractive and something must be wrong with me.

My father contributed to my obsession with women. By high school I had a much better relationship with him and I admired him. But he set a bad example. He was a voracious womanizer, and bragged about his sexual exploits to me. I wanted to be just like him.

In college I gradually began to leave my shell and overcome my shyness. I lost my virginity and got a girlfriend at age 19 and dated a few other girls. I grew out of having crushes on girls who barely knew me, but I still remained obsessed with finding a girlfriend. I formed many lasting friendships with guys, but I never allowed myself to open up to them. I still bottled my emotions inside.

After college I was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder and began taking Zoloft. My shyness melted away, and I finally developed the courage to approach women. And if the Zoloft weren't enough to drive away the butterflies, I drank enough beer to give myself liquid courage. Thus began a bad habit of abusing alcohol.

I moved to a small college

town in the south after graduation. I had no interest in living near my family. I celebrated the new job by getting an escort, the first of many I would hire over the years.

Since I had no friends in this new town, I forced myself to go out to bars alone on the weekends. It quickly became my new hobby, one that I devoted myself to for the next seven years. I drank myself into a stupor and stumbled around town chasing college girls. I didn't have much success back then, but sometimes I'd get an unattractive girl to come home with me.

A year after graduating from college, I read a book about pickup artists. I thought I'd discovered the holy grail. I enmeshed myself in the pickup "community," reading whatever I could get my hands on. I spent my weekends applying my new tactics at the bars. I joined pickup groups and made friends. My dating life took off in ways that were unimaginable to that awkward teenager inside me who only wanted to be loved.

But I found the women I met to be unsatisfying. I dated them just to keep me company and have sex with me. Occasionally I'd find a girl I did like and quickly fall head-over-heels for

her. But, for various reasons, nothing ever worked out with those girls. The love I'd been chasing my entire life still eluded me.

With AW, I finally found that love. We were both convinced that we were going to be in a long-lasting relationship. But I became clingy and needy. She tried to set healthy boundaries, but I was too insecure to accept them. I thought I cared for her, but I only cared for her wishes and desires so long as they did not interfere with me getting my affection fix.

In such cases I would attempt to control her emotions through manipulation and guilt trips, just as my parents did to me. Despite all the love she showed me, it was never enough. I smothered her and she couldn't take it anymore.

I joined S.L.A.A. to improve my relationships with women. What I've learned is that I must improve my relationships with other men first. AW very quickly became my best friend, and I confided everything in her. She was my only emotional outlet. I am now slowly allowing myself to become vulnerable to my guy friends. S.L.A.A. meetings have become an invaluable forum for me to vent and express my emo-

tions.

I did not delete AW's text messages after she dumped me. I didn't want to let go of her affection. And yet I couldn't look at her texts either. They were a reminder of the love I lost because of my addiction. They brought great shame.

The most important relationship I'm trying to improve is with myself. I've always pursued love with women in a vain effort to find the love I was unable to find within. Love requires forgiveness, and the biggest step I must take is learning to forgive myself. So I pray daily for God to

help me lift the shame. For me to love myself, I can no longer feel guilty for having needs and wants. I cannot feel shame for being human and having emotions. And I must let go of the shame I feel for the addiction and the shame of my messy breakup with AW.

This week I finally deleted her text messages. I read her Valentine's Day card for the last time and allowed myself to cry. I miss her dearly. I am not ashamed of that. I dropped the card in the trash, and let go of her and my shame.

— ANONYMOUS, LOS ANGELES

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# Recovery Belongs To Me – Recovery Belongs To You

I remember sitting outside in the dark on September 19th 2010, waiting for my first meeting to start. I wasn't sure if I was at the right place. The only thing I knew was the desperate need for help. I also remembered the frantic call to my therapist and the feeling of isolation and loneliness.



I have been in and out of therapy since I was 18, and all the therapists I met told me that there was absolutely nothing wrong with me. The gut feeling within me told me otherwise. How could there be nothing wrong with me when I am crying for help all the time? And each time I am in a relationship, I pray to God so hard to give me the guts to get out of these unhappy relationships. I was tormented by everything that was going on around me.

On April 27th, 2010, I had hit rock bottom. A relationship with a man I was staying with ended but it was nowhere close to a happy ending. I remember the

physical trauma I suffered that night and my desperate plea to him not to leave me. I was willing to do anything even if it meant that I would have to end up being his mistress when he got married. I was willing to do anything just to have him in my life, even if he was not good for me. I had hit a point of desperation.

Today, in hindsight, that day was the greatest gift for me. Without it, I wouldn't be able to divulge all the sick secrets of the past. I have been repressing them all my life because of the shame and guilt they carried. I repressed the times I had a fight

with a partner and would subsequently seek solace in the arms of another man. My mind would wander to sexual fantasy to ease the unbearable pain that resided within me. How could I possibly forget the nights when I had to resort to masturbation just so I could stop the wandering thoughts in my mind and allow myself to fall asleep?

So, after many years of sessions with a therapist, I finally told him my deepest and darkest secrets. I had nothing to be shameful about. In my mind, I had lost everything. Little did I realize that it was that day that I was beginning to gain something. This is the paradox of recovery — one has to lose something before gaining something.

There I was sitting in the first meeting in a roomful of men — at that time I was the only female. I remembered the addict in me saying, “What could be more perfect than this? I lost a man and now I have many to choose from.” But somehow, my Higher Power had better plans for me. In the fellowship, I learned that the safest place for me was this ‘lions’ den.’ For the first time in my life, these men that I sat in meetings with week after week showed me what it meant to respect a woman and

boundaries. It is the most beautiful place for me. The sanctity of the room, where I feel heard, loved and accepted is the greatest gift of all. It was and is the only place that I could be me — flaws and all — and still be accepted.

That was the first step to my recovery. From the fellowship I learned how it feels to be accepted. And slowly but surely, I am learning to accept myself. These changes don’t happen overnight, and it takes time. It’s not an easy journey, and I still have days where I struggle with my recovery. Despite all the pain and the confusion that I sometimes go through in recovery, I can say with all my heart that it is still better than the desperation of those years in addiction.

The glimpses of serenity that I catch at times, give me the motivation to keep coming back for meetings and stay in recovery. And there is also another thing that I learned — No one can force me into recovery. No loved one and no family members have the power to do that. The requirement of S.L.A.A. membership is our own desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction. Not others, but ours. Then recovery belongs to you.

— FEMALE S.L.A.A. SINGAPORE MEMBER

## Secret Desires And The Lonely Truth Of Reality

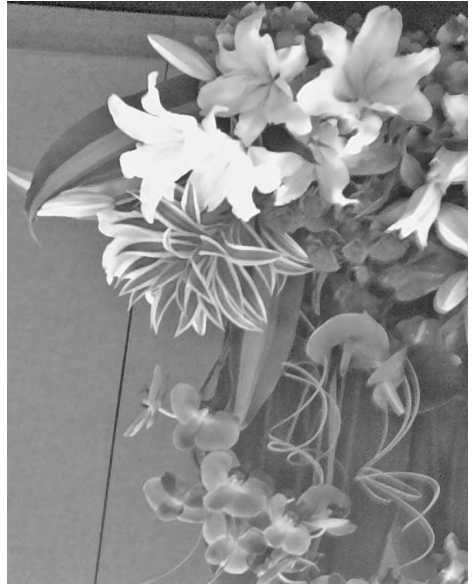
**H**i I'm 26 and have gone through a divorce and have a 3 year old son.

I began having sex at a very young age, but at first, only in secret with girls who would stay over at night.

I remember even at 8 years old feeling an urge to touch and be touched in certain areas and I enjoyed the high, the dizzy feeling, I would get. As I got older, I realized that other kids were not even close to being interested in what I liked. So I began to shut down and isolate from people — especially from family because I feared that if they hugged me or kissed me good-bye that it might turn me on.

I felt mentally retarded and weird. I was disgusted with myself, but I would still do things when I got urges. In high school, my friends and I were into a lot of partying already. I had done heroin and meth and I lost my virginity at 16 to a boy two years younger than me. After that it was a whirlwind of sex.

People started calling me a slut which shut me down even



more. I lost lots of friends. I never had any close friends because if someone got too close, I'd try doing things with them.

Girls didn't like hanging out with me because I would stare at them. And guys only chilled with me because they knew what they could get. I always tried to brush it off. But I would have days of being suicidal because I couldn't talk to anyone about these feelings without being lectured for being so bad.

I've lost so many friends that now I either hang out with my fiancé and son at home or I go to my parents house. Recently, I began hanging out with my cousin in hopes of having a friend again but then I slept with



her boyfriend and then her roommate.

She just found out a few days ago about all this and said it's just because I'm so irresistible. She says she forgives me, but I feel like I don't deserve to be forgiven. I feel horrible. I feel confused as to why she's acting like everyone else that has found out my secrets. They call me names.

I have a wonderful man in my life who takes care of me and my son and I've cheated on him. He doesn't know about the cheating because he's told me that if I ever cheated on him that he would leave me. I always tell myself "NO MORE," but I still end up acting out. When I hang out

with people it's mostly guys and I enjoy the rush I get when they flirt with me. And I love feeling that rush from the danger and feeling free when I'm having sex. I worry that I'm addicted, but how do you stop having sex? I still have a life ahead of me and I don't want to take sex out of it. I just want to know how to restrain myself better so I'm not cheating and I'm not backstabbing friends....I feel so lonely because I have no friends and no one to talk to about this. I found this site and just typing this all out does make me feel a little better. Please help me to realize I'm not the only one because right now that's how I feel.

—ANONYMOUS

## Service opportunities for the *Journal*

# UNITY IN SERVICE

*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.



# Praying Away The Obsession

I grew up in an abusive home. As a small child, when I sought affection from my mother, that upset her. At age 3, if I sought a hug or a kiss, she would whip me with a belt until I dissociated. One day after yet another brutal whipping, I just gave up. I didn't want to be loved anymore.

Those early experiences had two major effects on me. I knew beyond question that I was the most unlovable boy ever. I was also sexually obsessed with the thought of giving spankings to females. I thought of it often from the age of 4 or 5 years old. The obsession only grew when I went through puberty and started masturbating.

Unlike the male contributors to the "Penthouse Forum," I was always deeply ashamed by my fantasies. When I had sexual relationships with women, I spanked some of them with their consent. That left me feeling slightly dissociated and guilty. Once, I fell deeply in love with a woman I was dating. I knew if

she knew what I was thinking that she wouldn't and couldn't love me back. I never told her how much I loved her. I never told her I fantasized about spanking her. We parted company and she married someone else. I have thought of her every day since. It has been 33 years.

I put myself into psychotherapy at the age of 19. I told my therapists everything. I was in therapy for 28 years total. My spanking fantasies became less sexually arousing, but never went away. I continued to feel that no woman could love me if she knew what I thought about.

In S.L.A.A., I prayed to not think about spanking. My therapist recommended that I masturbate less often and to only think about loving and kind behaviors. That was a tall order. I am 55 years old now. I am in the early weeks of only thinking about good things. I feel better. I feel a little more lovable. I love myself more. The prayer made all the difference in the world.

—DAVID M., OCALA, FLORIDA

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# Share space

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## Going To Any Lengths For Recovery

*Editor's Note: Skypeslaahow is mentioned in this article. S.L.A.A. has no affiliation with Skype and does not endorse any entity with the publishing of this S.L.A.A. member's story.*

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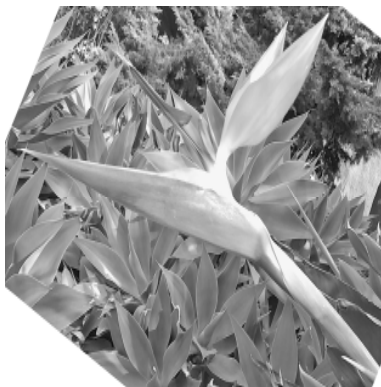
In July 2010 I spent a month in London attending at least two, sometimes three S.L.A.A. meetings a day in a place where a lot of 12-Step recovery was to be found. I had travelled there from China to get recovery. For me it was like being in rehabilitation. I was a total mess after having contact with my Qualifier at the end of June when we exchanged text messages. I attempted (once again) to meet up with him in Shanghai where he was living.

I had successfully avoided him for a year, but just that limited contact with him was enough to send my disease into

overdrive. I was very, very sick when I arrived, and can remember my head spinning and the addiction running rampant.

I had sought out the program in London because I had heard good things of the recovery there. I wanted to learn the H.O.W. program and I did! By the time I was ready to return, I had a sponsor and was working the program in a much more structured way. I went into withdrawal (again) as I returned to China where I live with my two children.

When I arrived back home, I was worried that my recovery would be compromised by my



lack of contact with others in London. Calling was sooo expensive and as I am a compulsive spender and under-earner, I needed to find a way to affordably connect with others. A year earlier, someone in Hangzhou who was in A.A./Alanon had approached me about setting up meetings online. We started them for loners in that program on Skype and I taught him what to do. Sadly, six months later, I was told that because my disease didn't make me want to drink alcohol, I was not allowed to share and could only listen!

I was completely destroyed when this happened in the middle of a meeting on Skype. The meeting that I had set up had decided that only those with a problem with alcohol could share.

Where, then, was I to go? I needed to connect with people and I was only travelling once a fortnight to Shanghai for the face to face S.L.A.A. meeting there. This meeting had only me and my long-term recovery buddy from New Zealand. Occasionally others would come, but not stay. We were both in early recovery and I guess we didn't have what they wanted (yet).

It was at this time that I decided I would take a risk and set

up a Skype meeting dedicated to S.L.A.A H.O.W. I sent notices to all my contacts in London and invited them to let others know. In order to stay sober, I decided that I had to have a meeting a day. Sometimes my recovery buddy in Shanghai would join me but mostly I was alone for the first month.

As time passed I was joined first by two men in Tenerife near Spain and later by others who were told of our meetings online. I spent a *lot* of time on service and did all the paperwork for S K Y P E S L A A H O W and SLAACHINA. I was a 12-Step service Ninja! I worked incredibly hard just to keep busy and not act out.

Service in both these helped to keep me sober during the six month withdrawal period. I think that if I hadn't had this work to do, I might have slipped or worse.

I am grateful now to the woman who told me I couldn't share at the A.A. meetings because all I talked about was my addiction to another person.

Now I can say that almost all my closest friends in recovery are on Skype. I leave it on most of the day and check for outreach messages. Only my business contacts and recovery friends are on

Skype. Each is as important as the other. Without my recovery program friends there is no way that I can stay sober. I am now working several programs to deal with the anorexia in all aspects of my life and Skype is a tool that has helped to save me.

I have watched other people come and go but mostly stay. We now have at least one meeting a day on Skype thanks to others doing service and hosting meetings.

Last month saw us having the first Chinese speaking SKYPESLAHOW meeting online. It was amazing listening to my sponsee and her sponsee share in Chinese.

She is a powerhouse too and has translated all of the documents into Chinese and helped to set up SLAACHINA to help the locals here.

The group in Shanghai is growing fast now because we are able to get extra help online through Skype.

There is now also a group in Beijing and one in Hong Kong. Although SLAACHINA and SKYPESLAHOW are separate entities you will find a lot of the moderators are here in China. I guess this is because I make it a requirement of my sponsoring someone that they take a service position.

This was a sensible thing that Higher Power encouraged me to do as SKYPESLAHOW has grown because of this decision. I have been blessed with now having sponsees in other distant places as well such as Rome, New Zealand, Ireland, Tenerife and America. Our meetings are truly international. It is a miracle that in such a short period of time we have been able to help each other and get recovery when we are so isolated.

At the time that I am writing this, I am sitting on a bus and travelling to Shanghai from the city I live in three hours south. I am going to meet my Chinese sponsee for the first time in six months.

She has come down to Shanghai from Beijing to come to *her* first face to face meeting there. I am sure that in the future, long distance recovery will not be as much of a challenge as it was when I first returned home from London.

When I hear people complain that they can't get recovery because they are isolated I realize that they are not really ready for the program and I pray for them. If you want to get sober you will find a way! Higher Power is after all, *everywhere* even here in China!

— DENISE, CHINA

# After A Series Of Marriages, Sober By The Grace Of God

**G**reetings friends, my name is Susan G. and by the grace of God, and the support of this fellowship, it's been over five years since I acted out. Let me share with you what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now:

First, let me start by saying I am a sex addict, an intrigue addict and an intimacy avoidant. I am also a serial "marry-er". I have been married eight times, and when I first got here, getting married was one of my bottom lines.

Seems strange that someone who's been married 8 times avoids intimacy, doesn't it? Well, it has been a mystery to me for many years, until this program granted me new awareness that has changed my life.

Here's my story: I was raised in a loving two-parent home. My parents were married 40 something years until the day my mom died of cancer. Growing up



I saw love modeled by my parents who were very romantic and openly affectionate with each other. I realize now that I have had expectations that nearly no man could live up to based on the yardstick of my parent's perfect marriage. When I think about my childhood, I think my expectations, and the fact that I failed to attach to my mother as a baby, may have been at the roots of my sex addiction and my intimacy avoidance.

When I was born, my mom became terribly ill and nearly died. She was so weak and sick that she was unable to care for me. My dad was busy working three jobs and going to school at night to get ahead, and so he

wasn't home to care for us.

Mom did the best she could to take care of me. She said I was the best baby in the world and never cried. I think in reality I probably did cry, but soon learned that my cries did not bring my mother, so I stopped. I believe that this addiction may have had its inception in the comfortless moments of my infancy. I also think I failed to learn to trust, which is absolutely necessary to have healthy relationships in adulthood. And so the stage was set for my addiction to play out.

The earliest memory of my sex addiction was when I was 11 years old, and I was on vacation; I met a boy who gave me my first kiss in the haystacks in the barn of an Austrian Inn. His attentions were so wonderful, I wanted to be with this boy every second. This was the beginning of my boy "craziness." Then, when I was 14, I was strongly attracted to a boy; He seemed to like me, but chose another girl. This was my first experience with pain, and I became very depressed and constantly argued with my parents. When I was 16, I became sexually active. The sex was terrible, and he nonchalantly ignored me at school when next I saw him, and I suffered

intensely when he got a new girlfriend. The memory faded as I went to Germany that summer, and met a boy at Oktoberfest. My parents were furious with me when they caught me making out in public at the festival with him.

My mom and I were having huge fights by this time over almost every little thing it seemed. I started using drugs and alcohol with a new boyfriend, and became regularly sexually active. My life was spinning out of control. I couldn't stand it anymore. I ran away from home for the first time, traveling all the way up the coast of California into the state of Oregon when I was around 17 years old. While hitchhiking, I met a guy whom I became engaged to.

I landed in jail when someone called the cops during one of our violent fights. Because I was still a minor, I got shipped home. By this time my attraction to the man had waned and I called the wedding off.

Back home with my parents, I lived in a motor home in their driveway, until another terrible fight, then I moved in with friends while I finished high school. I graduated at 17 and ½ and when I turned 18 I stuck out my thumb and hit the road again.

“Freedom” and the road had lost its charms by the time I met my first husband. It was “love” at first sight! (I realize now it was really lust). I wrangled a proposal out of him 10 days after we met. I thought that maybe I would live happily ever after. But fate would not have it so.

My husband was in a tragic motorcycle accident 4 months later. I was at the hospital by day, and in the bars at night, and my drinking spun out of control. My sex addiction flowered at this time. Almost nightly, I went home with someone, anyone, so I wouldn't have to feel pain. My husband was in a coma for nine months, and when he woke up he was brain damaged and had no memory of who I was. He ended up staying in the hospital for 2 years, and then his parents took him home.

They said I wasn't fit to care for him and they filed for a divorce on his behalf. It was true. They were right; I was a mess — unable to care for me, let alone him. Years later I was blessed to be able to make an amends to my first husband and his family. I felt so bad about the way I had behaved and the pain and shame I had caused his family. I didn't blame them at all for the divorce.

Soon after the divorce was finalized, I met my second hus-

band in the 1977 version of online — the C.B. radio.

Husband number 2, or “H2” as my family affectionately refers to my past husbands, supplied me with alcohol, pot and a place to stay. The only problem was that he was an alcoholic, like me, and he was mean when he got drunk. I got beat up a few times before I finally left.

I see now, I stayed because I needed someone to take care of me and I needed someone to want me. There were months and months of on and off again before I finally gave up the ghost of that relationship.

I met H3 in a bar not long after. He was so handsome and I was majorly sexually addicted to him. Our relationship was tempestuous and violent, fraught with intrigue, drama, jealousy and affairs. I believe I hit the lowest point at this time with my alcoholism and my sex addiction.

During this period of time, I did things that haunted me for years, that I was deeply ashamed of. The shame and despair that I felt moved me to begin to find my way to A.A. and recovery.

I met H4 when I was about 4 years sober in A.A. I felt like I had finally met my prince charming, someone I could walk off into the sunset with. He faced off with an ex-boyfriend stalker,



and I manipulated him into marrying me shortly thereafter.

The only trouble was that he, like me, was a sex addict. As he joined S.A.A. to deal with his addiction, I began to see that I was, at the very least, a co-sex addict. I believe that many of us come in the “s” programs as cos to another sex addict.

I was obsessed with H4. I think because he was a sex addict and I was a sex and love addict, the relationship was incendiary. I felt such intense pain because of the betrayals, but I realize now I fell in love with him without even knowing who he was! Truth is, I was in lust! I thought he was my soul mate! But looking back now, I see we were far from connected on a soul level.

I married Husband 5 after relapsing in S.L.A.A., and, of course, I got involved with a man who was a practicing drug addict/alcoholic, and I began to drink again, after nearly nine years of sobriety in A.A.!!!

I had gone to college in my A.A. sobriety, and gotten a master's degree, and had a wonderful job where I really got to make a difference in people's lives. All the things I said I would never do again went right by the way-side, as I drove drunk, called in sick, or went in hung over to

work, and I started to become promiscuous again. I remember clearly at one point being drunk, barely married a handful of weeks to H5, refusing to move in with him, and feeling incredible pain. I had a loaded gun on my coffee table, and I was thinking of ending my life with it.

Instead, by the grace of God, once again, I was given another chance to live my life differently. But that's another story for another Fellowship. I got sober again in A.A. in 1995, and left that marriage.

Even though I got back into my A.A. recovery, I continued to drift in S.L.A.A. thru two more marriages. H6 and H7 were both “nice” men, but honestly they were deadbeats. I felt lukewarm about H6, but he wanted me and that was my drug. As my disease progressed, I found myself doing something I had never done before, leaving one husband for the next.

I had a lot of shame about this, because my sixth husband and I were actively involved in church and everyone at church knew what I had done. I had flown half way around the world to the Dominican Republic to get divorced from H6 so I could marry H7 the next day. It was intoxicating. I thought I was madly “in love” again. But really

it was the high of being wanted, and it was lust.

Looking back during my 4th step in 2004, I began to see more patterns with the help of my sponsor, that I had chosen men who were not my equals mentally, spiritually, creatively, educationally, or socioeconomically. In doing my inventory, I got to see that I picked partners whom I couldn't really attach to because of *my* failure to attach issues.

In other words, if they were not appropriate people to attach to, then I was off the hook of true intimacy. I didn't have to attach. In fact I had a good reason not to attach, and therefore, I could walk away at any point. As I realized this I set a new bottom line. I couldn't be in a relationship with someone that I couldn't really attach to.

Thank God for sponsors. My sponsor would not let me off the hook. At times I felt like I was being pulled thru a ring of fire. She wrote me back my very own words, about why my relationship with H7 was addictive and I could not go back. My sponsor took me thru the first five steps. I wrote probably close to 100 emails to her, checking in daily, emotionally, mentally, physically, and spiritually. I filled 3 of

my three-inch binders with step work and check-ins.

I wrote a "recovery plan," with goals, ways to take care of myself, how to deal with triggers, top-line behaviors, bottom lines, and the grey areas where I was really on thin ice. Referring to it often is a helpful reminder of where I want to be in my recovery.

I wish I could say that when I got sober, that was it! But my biggest slip was waiting for me like a pack of snarling wolves. About eight months into my recovery, I got involved in one last devastating romance and it nearly killed me.

The most important thing I want to say here is: "*Don't go away !!! Even if you slip — keep coming back!!*" Otherwise if you leave meetings, you might miss hearing the very thing you need to hear to help you get sober again!

I realized that I had worked the steps with a lot of effort, but I had not really surrendered my everything to Higher Power. I was still running the show.

I also realized that the flip side of control is fear. If I controlled things, people, and events, then I didn't have to feel afraid. So instead of feeling powerless, I exerted my power all

over the place through my sex and love addiction; I especially exerted my will/power over men. When it all came crashing down, I realized that I didn't have control over anything, and I was so afraid.

You don't know that God is all you need, until God is all you've got.

God was all I had left at this point. I didn't want to die! So, I let go. I surrendered to Him.

I have discovered though that it's not just letting go, it's letting go, and letting God! I could rest in Him. I was given grace that day — unwarranted favor. I decided that I would do whatever it took to get sober and stay sober. That was April 18, 2006, my sobriety date.

No more half measures! I was going to start working the rest of my program as hard as I had worked the steps. I surrendered. I prayed.

Instead of white knuckling it thru the barrage of his constant phone calls and texts, I said goodbye! I disconnected my cell phone and changed my email.

I began to look at how my instincts, God given instincts, had gone awry, and how this had affected nearly every area of my life. I became willing to have HP remove these defects of charac-

ter/instincts gone awry and I humbly asked him to remove them (step 7).

The obsession was lifted from me at once. I felt a tremendous peace come over me. I still have thoughts of him, but there is a difference between thoughts and obsession. Thoughts will pass.

But if you indulge the thoughts they turn into obsessions. I use the tools of the program for the thoughts. I use the three-second rule to turn my mind away from thoughts. I picture a big red stop sign and spell out the letters: S-T-O-P, then I look around and name objects near me to get grounded in here and now: Chair, table, lamp, book, pencil, etc.

I do service work, i.e., sponsor others, serve on committees and I take my recovery very seriously. I pray daily. I also try to read something daily to help me know my HP better. I ask for Him to breathe His wisdom over me so I may know Him better.

I try to remember that even when I don't feel connected, I am. I also have to remind myself that sometimes my feelings are not my friend.

That "emotionalism" can cut me off from the sunlight of the Spirit and I have to strive for balance.

I got to take getting married off my bottom lines, with my sponsor's permission, when I met and married someone I can truly be intimate with. He is an awesome human being, and I really respect him. We share the same faith, and in fact met in church. What's really cool is that we became spiritually one first. God is the center of both of our lives, so there is little danger of making each other our Higher powers.

He is also sober in A.A., small world :) Several months into our relationship, I asked him to read a book about sex addiction so he could understand that he is now a co-sex addict.

He read every word, and is wonderfully supportive. God blessed me with this relationship, I believe, as a direct result of having given God my total trust, and putting Him first in all ways.

The best part was dating and getting to know each other in a sober way. We went slowly, were very careful physically, deciding we wanted to wait to be intimate until our wedding night.

We wed after 2 years of sober courting, really knowing each other, becoming spiritually one first, then becoming friends, then becoming emotionally one,

and finally, becoming sexually one.

I got to find out who this man was on every level. Not being intimate sexually while dating forced us to really get to know each other, to be friends first.

Having passed in all areas — spiritual, friendship and emotional, and seeking God's counsel, I knew that this man was to be my life's mate. For the first time ever, my friends and family like and respect the man I am with. The promises have come true for me. All of the signs of recovery are on track.

I did an annual inventory, this year, and found that though I am still tweaked in a few instinctual areas, with the help of God and the program I get a chance to work on it.

I am excited to see what God has in store for me now on this next leg of my journey. This is a "journey" of recovery and it's a lifelong process, one of patient progress for me, not perfection. With the help of God, the fellowship, my sponsor and you all, I want to continue to recover.

If you are new, please keep coming back! This program works!

I hope I have given you some hope today.

— SUSAN G.

## Calendar of Events

### Phone Meetings

There are numerous phone meetings. A good place to start is the S.L.A.A. F.W.S. website: [http://directory.slaafws.org/intl\\_phone](http://directory.slaafws.org/intl_phone)

### Telemeeting Series

#### Healthy Relationships

**Jan. 7, 2012**

How to allow love to evolve rather than force it's growth

**Jan. 14, 2012**

Being vulnerable while still respecting self

To receive our schedule of tele-phone meetings and topics simply email: [slaahhealthyrelationships@gmail.com](mailto:slaahhealthyrelationships@gmail.com).

#### All Aspects of Sponsorship

2nd Saturdays Monthly 9 a.m. Pacific time

**Jan. 14, 2012**

Sponsorship Formats

**Feb. 11, 2012**

Sponsor Self-Care

**March 10, 2012**

Recovery Partners

**April 14, 2012**

Promoting Sponsorship

### Upcoming Events

**Feb. 3-5, 2012**

**Men's Retreat at Camp**

### Indianola

<http://www.slaa-seattle.org/events.html>

**Aug. 17-19, 2012**

**Healing Heart Retreat (co-ed) at Camp Indianola**

<http://www.slaa-seattle.org/events.html>

### 3rd Annual Coed Retreat at Camp Allen

**Feb. 3, 4, and 5, 2012**

PRICE REDUCED: \$185.00 for double and \$255 for single. Scholarships will be available. Includes all meals, lodging, hiking, trails, and program events.

For more information about Camp Allen: [www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org). Call for registration info:

Keith at 713/412-8063

713/412-8063

**March 16-18, 2012**

**Save The Date - 8TH Annual**

**GDVI-SLAA Spirituality**

**Weekend Retreat**

"In All Areas of Our Lives"

Friday 6 pm – Sunday, 11 am

Daylesford Abbey, 220 S. Valley Road Paoli, PA

<http://www.slaadvi.org/activities--events.html>

**S.L.A.A. is here to help!**

**Go to [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)**



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