

theJournal

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Family Issues

Soberly Facing and Forgiving

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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Theme: Family Issues: Soberly

Facing And Forgiving

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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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Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader:

“Of course my mother knows how to push my buttons. She should, she installed them.” Family issues can range from dealing with some dysfunction to getting law enforcement and social workers involved. Sex and love addiction at it’s worst tears families apart. We see it on the news or hear it in S.L.A.A. meetings every day.

Even after years of S.L.A.A. sobriety, it can be difficult to rebuild broken relationships. But there is hope. S.L.A.A. offers support and tools and often we hear in meetings exactly what we need to hear.

Years ago, I was trying to deal with my resentment against my mother. She’s an addict and self-destructive. She was never really there for me growing up. I wrote 5 resentment inventories about her and couldn’t let it go. I kept thinking that mothers are supposed to be nurturing, so why wasn’t she? Sponsors told me that resentment is the luxury of normal people. I had to let it go or it would kill me. I had to look at her as a spiritually sick person and would I treat others in meetings that way? Would I get angry with my sponsee for being spiritually sick? I was still angry with her because she was unwilling to get the help that I had found in program and therapy. I went to a meeting where the main speaker shared about having a rocky relationship with his father and how he was able to mend the relationship before his father died. He was so grateful that he was able to sit beside his father’s hospital bed and express love before he died.

Who am I to hold on to my resentment? My sponsor suggested that whenever I talk to my mother I should forget about the harms done in the past and compliment her on things I think she does well. I had difficulty with that at first, but she really is talented in many ways. Eventually it became easier to do and I started to see that she really was doing the best that she could. I have a good relationship with my family today.

Family relationships can be difficult to navigate. But it can help to pray, meditate, write and share. Hopefully, with clarity we can work it out and come to the best solution for everyone involved.

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 has your relationship with family members changed through working the S.L.A.A. program and the 12 Steps and Traditions?” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next question is “How have you used the tools of the program to recognize and heal character defects?” The deadline for submissions is 9/14/12 please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

“HOW HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY MEMBERS
CHANGED THROUGH WORKING THE S.L.A.A. PROGRAM
AND THE 12 STEPS AND TRADITIONS?”

Most definitely. I can talk honestly with my siblings and parents about my meetings and how it has changed the way I operate in the world — having been born and raised to cheat casually and often. Now I don’t and it feels good all around.

— AUDREY, HOLLYWOOD, CA

I have my family back. Because of the 9th Step amends I am able to see that my family’s character defects are my opportunity to be of service.

— ANTONY, LOS ANGELES

I am much more honest about my needs. And also, I am now hearing their needs and seeing them as who they are. I am letting them know who I am and what my interests are. I am very grateful to let people know who I am and to try different things.

— JOHN, LOS ANGELES

My relationship(s) with my wife and family members have radically changed. Besides my marriage being restored, there is much more harmony and less drama. The biggest gift from S.L.A.A. is my recovery with God, which in turn allows me to be present.

— JONATHAN, ALTADENA, CA

“HOW HAS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FAMILY MEMBERS CHANGED THROUGH WORKING THE S.L.A.A. PROGRAM AND THE 12 STEPS AND TRADITIONS?”

It has taken me a few extra months to work step one, but it's been well worth it to fully embrace the concept of powerlessness and how my family system contributed to my sex and love addiction. I always thought I had a great relationship with my mother, I still love her, think the world of her and that will never change. I did learn that some of her patterns of communicating are emotionally invasive and were the result of her own pain from her troubled childhood. Through the process of recovery, S.L.A.A. meetings, recovery partners, and fellowship with other recovering sex and love addicts, I was able to embrace this reality and I'm learning to set better boundaries with my mom. For that I am incredibly grateful because my relationship with my mother now has a chance to be less enmeshed.

— MELANIE, CHICAGO

I communicate more openly but also thoughtfully. I don't overreact to messages that make me feel uncomfortable.

— OLIVIA, LOS ANGELES

Working the program and doing the steps has changed my relationship with everyone and everything. The sky is bluer than it has ever been, and each relationship has received the gift of being brand new again.

— WALTER, LOS ANGELES

Wow. What a great question. I just had a great breakthrough with my father as a direct result of working these Steps. I realized that I am 100% responsible for my life and I've learned to not blame my father or mother for the actions I am taking today. One day at a time, I am turning my loneliness into solitude. Amazing new pathways of communication have opened up for all relationships within my family.

— BRIAN R., LOS ANGELES

I have compassion for the men in my family, especially my father.

—LILI R., LOS ANGELES

QUESTION OF THE DAY

As a result of working the program, my relationship with my family has completely opened up and we speak much more often and freely. I am able to accept them as is and set appropriate boundaries to keep myself sane and sober while maintaining mutual love, respect and admiration for all they have provided and given to me. They are a part of who I am and why I am able to show up in service.

— AMY, LOS ANGELES

My uncle just passed away. I was able to build a stronger relationship with him during the last six months, all because this program has made it possible to be present around and of service to my family. So grateful!

— JOHN C., SANTA MONICA, CA

I have been able to regain my dignity through faith in my Higher Power. This has increased my respect for others — men, women, family, and friends.

— SARAH MARIE, VAN NUYS

My communication with my partner changed dramatically. The transparency that I am experiencing is transforming all relationships I have. Most important is my daughter changed a lot. She seems to feel it. We are much closer and she is even more open towards me. Most visible change is my relationship with my sister. We have never been closer before!

— GOSIA, VENICE, CA

Fortunately, my family is forgiving. I have always been honest about my sex and love issues. They are relieved that I'm in program. The big difference is now I trust myself with them.

— TOM B., LOS ANGELES

I'm able to shower my family with unconditional love. I've learned to accept their authentic selves.

— ALI D., GLENDALE, CA

Given A Second Chance With Family



Hi. My name is Kristin. I'm from New Jersey, and all of my significant relationships with my family members (immediate and extended) have changed.

Every one of them actually starting with my 22 year old daughter. I have been given a gift of — as I call it — “re-parenting” or “re-mothering” her. I have been given a second chance from my Higher Power. It is *such a true gift and a blessing!*

My 16½-year-old son, Con-

ner, is so grounded and methodical. I can actually get along with him and have a good relationship with him.

I had a very difficult history with my biological parents. But that relationship is all healed and well.

I still have more of my own healing to do, but I don't take it out on them any longer. I work the program and the Steps — not all that well — but good enough.

For the first time, I sat down with my European aunts and

cousin and talked to these three ladies and had fun.

Everyone likes me again on my mother's side of the family. It's all very interesting. And, oh, last but not least, my relationship with my only baby brother is good.

He is seven years younger than me. He and I now get along like we did when I first got into 12-Step recovery for my compulsive binge eating disorder.

He trusts me with his 2 children and with his new wife.

Everybody likes me, for the most part — or at least they act like they do. And I have been abstinent/celibate from sex and love, triangle dating, sex — anything — since October 17, 2009. And I have had no sex and no relationships since October 31, 2009.

—KRISTIN, NEW JERSEY

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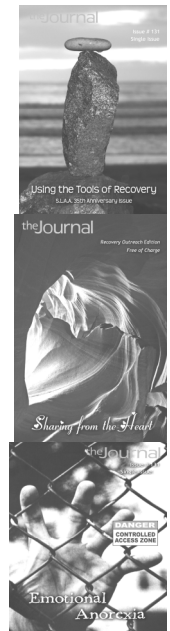
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Rebuilding Bridges — One Step At A Time



Step Eight – Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Nine – Made *direct* amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Amend – Verb – 1. To change for the better, improve. 2. To remove or correct faults in; rectify.

How has my relationship with family members changed through the program, the Steps, and the Traditions? The answers are above.

Seven years ago, I was held in extremely high esteem by most people who knew me; family,

friends, neighbors. My life came crashing down almost six and half years ago when I was arrested for behaviors related to my addictions.

The shock, disappointment, and anger that I unleashed, on family members especially, was overwhelming. I put many people in places and situations they did not ask for.

My wife and children were living with her parents when I was arrested, and I was immediately “kicked to the curb.” There was great struggle as I entered recovery. Bonds of trust had been shattered, and flushed down the drain. Was this the

man she married so long ago?

In the beginning, I tried to force my way back into the family through passive-aggressive behaviors — a definite character flaw of mine — one that I must continually work on. Whenever I had the opportunity, I would walk into their house, using the excuse that I was getting the kids, etc. This caused a rift between my then wife and her parents, and I learned to back down.

I reached out to people within my programs for guidance, wisdom, and support. Their responses, almost to a man, were to be patient. I could not change my family, nor make them accept me. But if I continued to do the right thing(s), worked my program, stayed clean and sober, and made those changes to my character, they would be able to see that, and make an informed decision for themselves about what to do.

I listened to their sage advice, and listened to what those family members said to me, asked me to do, and asked me not to do. When I went away to jail because of my actions, I did what I was asked to do there as well. Upon my release, there was a death in the family. The “old” me would have just shown up at the wake, not caring about others. But I listened and remembered what others had told me. I asked

through the family, if it would be OK to go, to provide even brief emotional support for my children, to grieve their loss.

Originally, I was told that I could make a brief appearance, which was all that I had time to do, as I was to attend my first night of court-ordered therapy. Then, 2 hours before I was scheduled to go, I was called and told explicitly not to come, as one of the other family members did not want me there.

So I didn't go, but sent condolence cards to the members of the family who, at least at that moment, were willing to accept me — if only for the 5 or 10 minutes that I would have been there.

I continued to do the next right thing, and they saw how their daughter/granddaughter/sister continued to provide support for me, and believe in me. I would be asked, when face to face with some of the family, how I was doing, how my recovery was going. This was a glimmer of hope, the potential for an olive branch further down the road — but only if I continued to work my program and stay sober.

The following year, I took my children trick or treating, because their mother was working. I asked a program friend to come along, because it was “safer”

than being out alone, though I had no desire to screw up my life, or anyone else's for that matter. As with every other year, the treating ended at my children's grandparent's house. For the first time since I was arrested, I was asked to come in, sit down, and talk. An hour later, I left, feeling better than I had in quite some time.

Every time I would see members of my wife's family, I would thank them, no matter if they were doing something directly for me or not. They were there for my children when I was not present, both before and after I was arrested, and they were there for my wife, who needed that emotional and financial support that I was unable to provide for a time.

Two years ago, there was a health scare within the family. Again, I kept my distance, asking over the phone how the individual was doing, and asking if there was anything I could do to help out. And then I did the things that they asked me to do, whether it was to clear the driveway of snow, or just stop by to make sure everything was OK.

That Christmas Eve, I dropped my children off at the in-laws for dinner. I also dropped off their Christmas presents because I was not invited. Their mother was working, and I did

what I often did on every Christmas Eve since my arrest, I went to a meeting. I wasn't resentful, but rather grateful that 1) My children had a place to go, a memory they could treasure, and 2) I had a safe place to be. After the meeting I went to pick up my children, and was invited in.

My oldest daughter was told to go make a bag of cookies for me, and then she was told to go get more, because my father-in-law didn't feel that it was enough. He told me that day that he felt for me that I couldn't be there, because of "family politics," and though he has struggled with my past actions and behaviors, didn't want me excluded from being with my kids.

It was a turning point in those relationships. I have been invited to and wanted at the family functions, and have gratefully accepted, continuing to ask how I could help, whether it was picking someone up, or doing the dishes.

Recently, though we had been divorced for 3 years, my ex-wife and I ended our intimate relationship of 20 years, though we are still friends. Fear struck me, as I did not know how this would affect the relations with her family. I projected, and feared that I was right, as I was not asked to come to the 4th of July cookout that my in-laws had. My daugh-

ter's graduation was the weekend after, 3 days ago for those who are counting, and I went over the day before to help set things up.

Upon arriving, with my children, we decided what things needed to be done first, and the children started doing them. My in-laws asked me to come in the house, they wanted to talk to me. My mind was swirling, but I had turned it over to my Higher Power, whom I choose to call God.

We sat down and they told me why I hadn't been invited to the cookout. They wanted to make sure that I would be "comfortable" with the situation, as my ex was seeing someone else. They didn't want me to feel "forced" to be there, but they clearly indicated that they *wanted* me there.

We talked about it, and I, once again, graciously accepted their invitations. I told them that it is certainly an awkward situation to be in, for me, for my ex, for my kids, and for my in-laws. Just because I come to the outing, doesn't mean that I have to stay as long as everyone else does, and I told them that.

I am able to set a boundary with the situation, and not be uncomfortable with what I am

doing. They appeared to be pleased that I was "grown-up" in my response, and we continued setting up for my daughter's party.

The next day, I was there, I was present, and I was helping, asking what I could do, and not pushing my way in to control situations. Many family members and friends were at the party, and all welcomed me, some I haven't seen since my world came crashing down, and they still accepted me.

I look at these relationships much the same as building, or in this case, rebuilding bridges. Things cannot be done overnight. If something is worth doing, it's worth doing right, and that takes time.

But also, like bridges, once the project is "completed," it doesn't mean that the work is done. Constant maintenance is needed in order to keep the road smooth. These family members have been able to see the changes in me, but I know if I'm not going forward, I'm going backward. I need to stay diligent in my recovery.

Do I "deserve" these things? That doesn't really matter today. It has been a gift that I have been given, and for that I am grateful.

— RICH K., WORCESTER, MA

Straightening Out My Priorities

I have only been in this particular 12-Step program for 8 months. What I have noticed is that I am straightening out my priorities.

I am becoming more and more aware of the desire to put my well being first so that I may be more present to attend to the well being of my family. The qualifier's well being, as it relates to time spent with me, comes after that now. I notice when I am in the withdrawal state, I consciously immerse myself into family life like a teabag steeping in comfort. It is safe. It is loving. It is fun.

Even when I am not in this empty-in-the-belly place, I tend to spend a lot of time communicating and hanging out with my family. Today my family consists of my four children ranging in ages 21 through 38 and four grandbabies who are 3 to 6 years old. Family also consists of a brother, my nephews and nieces, a cousin who has been my best friend since I was 4 years old, and my close friends including my precious recovery partners. I even include my ex-husband as my family because we work so closely together taking care of a "wounded urban soldier."

I am also becoming my own

internalized protective and loving father and mother and best friend.

Since joining this program, I am keenly aware of developing and maintaining top-line behaviors and this is adding to my self-esteem and to a solid sense of self. I recently had an experience where a qualifier was out of line in the treatment of a grandchild. I had no qualms what-so-ever addressing the infraction. I was without consideration as to whether or not I might offend this person in the assertion of my feelings and in reminding this person to respect the boundaries of others.

I would have avoided a confrontation of this sort in the past. I would have been passive or excused the situation away or I would have been a "big drama mouth." I am very capable of standing up for my truth and saying "no" or "stop this" or "I would appreciate it if you would..."

I am not afraid of losing the qualifier anymore, and even if I were, it doesn't matter because clearly my family comes first and this includes me. Qualifiers come and go, but the rest of us are here for the long haul. "La familia es por la vida".

—FAITH, CA

Use Caution When Sharing With Family

My relationship with my family has seen mixed success due to my working the 12 Steps.

Unfortunately, very early on in my recovery, when I learned what my addiction was, I shared too much with my children without them being adequately prepared for the revelation.

I would caution everyone to remember that you should not reveal information to others when it will be damaging to them. In my case, the revelation was extremely damaging as it left more questions than answers for my children. Immediately after my revelation, my oldest daughter disowned me and said she never wanted anything to do with me again.

That is still the case after almost ten years. Since then, I have made a great deal of progress in the program and have achieved a great deal of sobriety. Due to the fact that my youngest daughter lives near me, I have been able to greatly improve my relationship with her and her family. We see each other fairly often and she can observe my behaviors and my progress. Unfortunately, with my oldest daughter, our chances for



reconciliation are further negatively compounded by the fact that she lives two states away from me and there are no opportunities for us to interact.

My relationship with my other two children has improved somewhat during the past several years but I still regret the fact that I provided too much information too soon.

Making amends is a good thing and is helpful in the recovery process.

But, as I said before, we must make certain that our amends

are not harmful to others.

If we think there is a possibility the amends could be harmful, we should take caution in how we go about the process.

Any possible damage to family relationships should be carefully considered before any revelations are made.

If need be, the amends should be made by writing them out and not sharing them at all with the other person. It is a very good idea to work with a sponsor or with another knowledgeable person in the program in regard to how you go about sharing with family members.

— BRUCE M., OMAHA

When A Survivor Of Child Abuse Attempts To Date

Having been raised in a family that makes the term “dysfunctional” seem like a drastic understatement, it still takes me a long time to trust anyone with just about anything. Either that, or I dump my whole melodramatic biography over a casual coffee date.

The annoying paradox of this particular world-view is this: If initially a new acquaintance appears relatively harmless, I am unlikely to be interested. As a child, I became accustomed to chaos and a regular dose of danger.

Although I actually long for a sense of safety, I am generally attracted to the most emotionally unavailable woman in any social



setting. Or if by some odd chance, she is emotionally available, she turns out to be a former junkie whose father was physically abusive. Survivors of alcoholic families and/or child abuse seem to gravitate towards one another. Or at least, this has

been my experience.

Maybe I secretly hope that someone who has been through a similar hell will understand me, even empathize with me. Trouble is, two shelled nuts don't always make the healthiest pistachio pudding.

Pardon the offbeat metaphor, but ever since I let my guard down with a woman I had fallen for, the only place I don't feel offbeat is in psychotherapy. So, understandably, the experience of sexual attraction feels anything but safe for me.

Generally, I assume a woman who expresses romantic interest will have some ulterior motive.

My ex had gotten down on one knee, presented me with a promise ring, and declared her desire to spend the rest of her life with me. Heck, some days, I can't be sure I want to spend the rest of my life with me.

The fact that this was a cross-country romance made the whole thing that much more romantic. We talked on the phone several times a day, time zone differences be damned.

We shared lovey-dovey internet videos, digital music cards, and if our computers had been more compatible, we would have hooked up our webcams. So, if I

ever doubted that my inner love addict was alive and well (or not so well) this was a true learning experience.

I am now feeling somewhat stronger, wiser, and yes, less likely to trust.

But whenever I vow that I would rather be alone for the rest of my life, my sponsor reminds me of how many times in the past I would call him in a fit of loneliness.

He assures me that having taken the plunge and daring to trust someone whom I had gotten to know first, I had taken a risk that is an unavoidable part of the relationship dance.

I did not abandon my inner child. Rather, I held her hand, and walked her through this brave, new world of trying to date and stay sober at the same time.

For the entire year when we were together, I only had eyes for her and was seldom tempted to slip. For an addict like me, that's a victory of sorts.

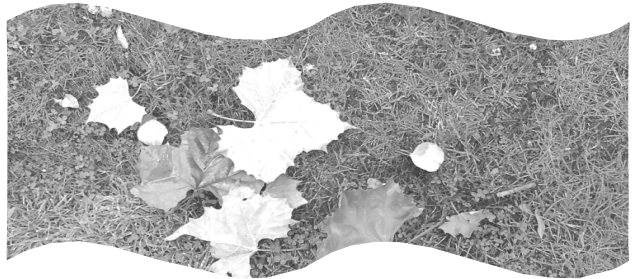
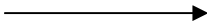
I was too busy mourning the end of my fairy tale romance to remember I had actually been sober for three entire years. Just one day at a time, with God's protection.

— MARSHA Z., JAMAICA PLAIN, MA

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Storied Limitations

A Sex And Love
Addict Story In
Three Parts



Editor's Note: This story contains images that may be triggering to some.

PART ONE

I was born into a family of sex and love addicts, I mean how else do you explain a Mormon housewife and an Irish Catholic alcoholic coming together? My mother's first marriage was abusive and she only left after the cops arrested her husband for dealing steroids. Well, she didn't leave, the ex-husband's mother shoved her onto an airplane.

And my father, who has been quoted saying, "If you can't look

at women you might as well be six feet under," had built an entire life around how many women he could bag. His first marriage ended during the honeymoon.

He would do things like travel penniless through Europe bouncing from bed to bed for months at a time; sometimes managing women at the same location. When my mother, the beautiful bank teller and my father, the suave and charming real estate broker, met for the first time I imagine they both fell

under the spell of the rescuer. He would protect her and make her feel safe and maybe one day she would save his soul with the Mormon faith.

And she would give him the parenting he never had, the good side to his otherwise bad boy lifestyle, or the other missing half to make him whole.

They eloped after four months of fast dating, primarily because she wouldn't have sex before marriage. Immediately she began to try and control his late night binges and created excuses for all the unexplained STD's that she was contracting. After a night of begging him to stay home she was told by his mother, "that's just the way these men are, and the sooner you accept that, the better off you'll be." Unfortunately, she had a miscarriage because of the STD medication. And then I was born.

There would eventually be seven of us kids, two from her first marriage and the other five from my dad. I am the middle child. I was born in 1981 during the Reagan Era when there was an upswing on the great white American dream; buy a house, have a family and then everything should be okay.

Unfortunately for my family, that magical thinking didn't do

much but create more problems.

The suburbs surrounding Washington, D.C. were beginning to thrive and I was raised thinking we were rich — which we were not — just debtors. My dad would always be fighting with my mom about money or complaining about money or telling us kids how expensive we were.

I learned that being "rich" meant having lots of problems so I blamed money for the chaos in my family and the disconnect I felt with my parents. To my family, money was power and love. If my dad bought me anything, then he loved me. It's no surprise that I felt the most love on Christmas day.

He worked all day and then at night sat in front of the TV and that was his life. To get his attention, my siblings and I used to fake our own deaths or sing and dance while he would sit there in his own world.

The times he would be present would be at sports games, where I'd feel immense pressure to perform for him. However I never could perform and do well as long he was there! Afterwards, he'd always say the same thing "you could have hustled more."

As an infant, I always desperately wanted to be held. It

was as if the physical contact made up for the lack of intimacy I felt when their dead eyes looked right through me.

The crucial developmental nourishment of comfort, love and validation necessary for my growth just wasn't there. Instead, the reflections coming back were lessons on self-hate, guilt and shame.

The first great example of this occurred when I was four.

Moving day was coming to a close as my parents and three older brothers were loading the last few items in the suburban. I, with my chunky auburn hair, pot belly and wearing only spider man underwear, somersaulted through the yard.

Before they drove off, I asked to run in to use the bathroom one final time. When I finished and tumbled out of the house, I looked up for the applause and saw no one.

The suburban was gone. Confused, I stood and waited. I ran to the corner and waited. The sun was coming down and the waiting became worry. Neighbors, out doing yard work, were beginning to look my way. I felt like they knew that my family forgot me, and determined to get away from the shame, I took off in the direction of the new house.

Many blocks later, I passed a woman walking her dog and she felt compelled to ask if I was okay.

I wanted to tell her my family left me but I found it impossible to say the words. So I ran from her.

Having no idea where the new home was, I gratefully found the right street. And as I came upon them, I saw that my three older brothers were shooting spit wads, my father was cursing at some knot and my mother was unpacking the trunk. None of them noticed I was gone.

I marched right up to my mother and said, "Mommy, you left me!" She was devastated of course but, for me, the damage was done, it was with certainty now that I was invisible.

From the age four to six I was terrified if my mother ever left me. I couldn't handle being away from her.

Pre-school was all panic and tears. Then one day I discovered the joy of rubbing up against a pillow. At first I only felt compelled to do this when she was near by like in the kitchen or while I was riding in the back seat.

However, because of it, I started to be okay with her not being there and in fact wanted to be more alone to explore the

feeling. Eventually I had my first orgasm and freaked out. I was clueless about bodily functions and had no idea what the sharp spike in pleasure was.

Furthermore, I felt intense shame and guilt afterwards, whatever happened, I deemed not okay, and so I needed my mother to make me feel okay. So I'd go to her, but then the anxiety would come and this translated into a strong desire to rub on something. And so I'd leave her and then orgasm and then want to be with her and then feel anxious. Thus began a vicious cycle.

I carried this anxiety into elementary school, learning to deal with it in other ways. I discovered that when others' "saw" me it felt good and made it seem like I existed. But it never lasted. The feelings would inevitably come back.

And it didn't matter what the attention was — whether it was a slap across the face from my mother, or becoming class president of my elementary school. This also meant that I needed everyone to like me, especially the teachers. And if they didn't, I would either obsess about it or character assassinate.

I would do anything to get you to like me. In fourth grade a buddy of mine and I both had a

crush on the same girl. Once during recess she had an asthma attack and was taken away to the hospital. The rest of the day the friend and I competed to see who was in more pain over it. I didn't eat my lunch and was so sad in class that the teacher sent me to the clinic. I think I won.

If you could like me, then maybe, possibly, one day I could like me. I already hated being the tallest. I hated how high my voice was. I hated that I mumbled. I hated that I was clumsy with my big feet.

I hated that I said stupid things. I hated that I never made any decisions for myself. I hated that I cried so much. I hated that I took everything personally. I hated that I was so needy.

It was such hard work to try and fit in and pretend that I didn't hate myself. I became more passive and shut down and I let girls use me any way they wanted. I would go to their homes after school and they would literally take my hand and touch themselves with it.

No biggie for a sex and love addict, right? But, regardless, I felt compelled to follow — as long as it meant they liked me. That was the problem.

And then I had my first kiss with a girl that I wanted to kiss. This was different because

suddenly I felt open again. I felt like life was going to be okay and that I could stand to be with myself. I endlessly chased this feeling up until recovery, never quite achieving the same experience as I felt on the bike ride home on the evening after that kiss.

From 4th until 7th grade I “dated” seven girls. I would call into the local soft-rock radio stations and dedicate love songs to them. I would write them love notes during class and I would put my arm around them during recess. When they’d break up with me, I’d move right on to the next one. This seemed more important than the school work.

I missed opportunities to play basketball with the guys who didn’t seem to care as much about the girls. I, however, realized it did make me stand out and that something about it was wrong.

On top of that, some guys really didn’t like me and started to pick fights. I told myself it was probably because of my ease with the girls. I couldn’t stand them not liking me, so I’d invite them over to look at my brothers’ porn magazines and then we’d be friends.

After school one time, my last and longest elementary relationship found out I was

looking at porn and broke up with me. I felt completely rejected, ashamed of my sexual compulsions and desires, ran into the bathroom, locked the door, looked myself in the face and recited what my father had told me, “Only babies cry, stop crying.” I remember the look of disgust I gave myself until I stopped crying, wishing my penis would just fall off.

I hated going into middle school because I wasn’t the king anymore. And then the worst thing happened, my friends starting having sex.

By the age of 12, I was the bad ass who got to touch girls’ boobs. But then suddenly in middle school they were all doing the same and more! The thought really terrified me. I didn’t know if it was because I really didn’t want to or because it was a major sin to my mother. I noticed that I started to avoid sex with my new girlfriends.

I discovered why I did this one day after middle school when hanging out with a couple of new friends.

One of the guys was messing around with us and decided to drop his pants and moon us. My eyes locked on his rear end and I felt things in places the girls never got to. Then I turned bright red and had to leave the

room. I couldn't wait for them to leave so that I could masturbate while the image still vibrated in my imagination.

I remember in 2nd grade being fascinated with my uncle's muscles or being very shy with my cute 6th grade reading buddy. And after school I liked playing house or dress up in my mom's clothes, not basketball, never basketball. I was aware of the differences but didn't really have an idea of what it was or meant. That is until my body and hormones started changing at a rapid pace and I found myself masturbating to images of my male friend's body.

To me, at the time, it was a disease that God decided to give me because even he felt I was unlovable, unworthy and invisible. I knew I must have deserved it. This was the insurmountable obstacle to getting people to like me. So I shoved it down, stomped on it. No one would ever know this about me. I would conquer it. Then the internet was invented.

Hearing the dial tone of the old internet connection was the most satisfying sound I had ever heard. It was a hit all in itself for me.

I would feel instant relief from hearing the dialing of the keypad and the buzzing noises that followed. And then I would

get a further hit when I heard, "You've got mail." Gone. The rest of the world was gone.

At 13, I had the rest of my adolescent school career mapped out for me. My three older brothers blazed a trail, ready for me to follow.

I was to play football and lacrosse; like them. I was to be a captain; like them. I was to be on homecoming court; like them. I was to be too popular for just one high school; it had to be a few, like them. I was to date the hottest girls; like them. And have sex with these girls; like they did. And I was to be able to drink more alcohol than my friends did; just like my brothers.

This was my legacy. But at 13 I was already having erectile dysfunction with the few girls I did try having sex with. I liked different music, and my interests were not in sports. But yet in order to survive I had to comply. I had to try and be a good Mormon for mom and try to be a "typical jock" for my brothers and father.

When I entered the world of the internet none of that existed. I didn't have to think about anything else, there was no image management.

I couldn't wait to get home from school or on the weekends to cruise the internet. This was the time when it took at least 3-5

minutes for one picture to download. So I would download 10 in an hour and watch as bodies slowly scrolled down my screen.

While I waited for the porn, I began to venture into chat rooms. I made up my information and my age, stating I was 18, and started engaging in cyber sex with these random men from across the world.

A few times we would call each other, and this was before cell phones, so I would have to pick up the phone when it rang before it would wake anyone up.

There was a 40 year old man who was very persistent with me in the chat rooms.

It was attention like I never experienced. I, however, found his age revolting and wanted nothing to do with him. And then he offered me money to have sex with him. I said “hell no,” revealed my true age, thirteen, and then he offered more money.

He picked me up in a dead beat car that smelled of old pizzas and we went to a dark corner of the neighborhood and I

let him molest me.

And the worst thing wasn't the smell or that he was over weight or that he was close to my parent's age but the yelling voices in my head at the shame I had for not being able to perform for him.

I couldn't please him. I gave up and said I had to go, he paid me and drove off. I hated my life so much that night and couldn't understand why this was happening to me. A few weeks later, I did it again with the same molester, but this time I was able to perform. I cried so hard that night I thought I was going to suffocate.

Dying from the pain of my first gay experience I gave more efforts to being straight. Ironically I found a Mormon girl and I finally had straight sex! Thank you for the cheers and applause. Unfortunately, my father came home in the middle of it.

—————→
TO BE CONTINUED in the
next issue of *the Journal*

—————→

FREE ISSUE of the Journal ~
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Being In The Body

I am a mother of four adult children and grandmother to two lovely small boys. I first learned what “recovery” meant when I discovered my father had sexually abused my young daughters back in 1989. It was the catalyst for coming from spiritual immobility to choosing life.

As a sex and love addict, my acting out physically was restricted to my primary relationship while acting out with others was through obsessive fantasy and flirting. I was addicted to the charge, initiating and then walking away gave me the greatest delusion of power.

My mother, a trained missionary, raised me with guilt and shame as motivators for change. This made being an addict a double bind: I was ashamed about the lust and I was ashamed that I had lustful behavior as a Christian. Add to that being an “Indian” and it all felt hopeless. Anguish and four innocent children were my catalyst for change. Under such a circumstance, the cost for change was irrelevant — it was the only pathway to take with the intention to learn to love and live



life in freedom.

My marriage ended in 1996 and it wasn't until January 1st, 2010 after “another” relationship of disrespect toward self and the other crashed, I checked myself into an S.L.A.A. and an S.A. group and found a sponsor. It was two years (on the first day of 2012) since I walked into meetings and I have no regrets.

Since coming to recovery from other addictions in 1991, getting into recovery from sex and love addiction has been the step I've needed to take in order to be present for myself and others. Neither doctoral studies nor work as a psychotherapist was enough education to bring me to the place of arresting self-destructive behaviors. But when the decision to place myself onto the red road of recovery was finally made, there was no turning back. The group and

program alone have not been responsible for my journey of healing and discovery. I “became willing to ask for help, allowing myself to be vulnerable.” And through land-based Indigenous ceremony, learned to trust and accept others.

Indigenous land-based ceremony includes the sweat lodge and the vision-quest fast within a community, practicing rituals and singing songs of healing and change that are hundreds, if not thousands of years old. Songs and ceremony tell us we belong to a long line of human beings and that we are not alone. The vision quest fast is a journey to the spirit world to find freedom from barriers and to learn about self through spiritual eyes of compassion and non-judgment.

The body in such a ceremony is what keeps me in the physical world and as such, it is an ally rather than an encumbrance. The combination of 12-Step meetings and friendships along with Indigenous ceremony have helped me to appreciate and respect my body rather than to be ashamed of it.

Most recently, trauma training has been added to my ever-increasing bag of resources that assists me in developing “intuitively knowing how to handle situations which used to baffle me.”

As an incest survivor, I learned that being out of my body was the best place to be. Addictive behavior simply reduced the fear of experiencing the anguish. But eventually, the suffering caused from being absent from myself, my children, grandchildren, family and friends and a chain of failed relationships, because of addictive behaviors, was no longer the life I wanted to live.

Through the combination of Indigenous ceremony, meditative practice and trauma training, I am learning to relax into the places where trauma resides in my body to realize “God is doing for me what I could not do for myself.”

Living life, telling the truth, and committing myself to a process that works, whether it is in a 12-Step meeting room, in the sweat lodge or in trauma training, does not relieve me from the anguish of childhood. My childhood experiences cannot be changed. I cannot change the suffering I caused myself and others as an adult. However, I can and do choose to continue to find teachings that will increase my capacity to love myself and others, to be grateful for the loving relationships I have today and to keep on keeping on.

— PATRICIA V

Thank God For Every Rock Bottom



My name is Bianca and I am a recovering Sex & Love Addict.

My rock bottom moment (when I first realized I was powerless): I started having sex with two exes — MI and AB then started having sex with “the love of my life” again — ML (casual sex). At which point I found out I was pregnant (unprotected sex). I had an abortion which was a physical and emotional knock to my mental health.

In this chaos, I decided to get back into a monogamous relationship with my ex (ML.)

It was in the first week of this relationship when I first had sex for money (prostitution at a

brothel). The last guy that I prostituted myself to raped me. In some strange way, I thank God he did. With my Higher Power protecting me, I will never prostitute myself again. This was one of my many physical rock bottoms. I told ML of the prostitution but minimized the frequency. I told him that I was raped.

He completely emotionally and sexually rejected me.

Intellectually and with intimacy, we were connected, so I stayed.

It was like being in a spiritual and mental concentration camp. The same partner had almost broken up with me two years

previously because I was trying to go back to stripping and exhibitionism.

ML's sexual rejection triggered me to want to run. But we stayed together for 5 months after that. I became a social, sexual and emotional anorexic.

I know now that sexual rejection triggered me to sexualize my feelings and I began engaging in compulsive masturbation.

Eventually fantasy became "boring." I started watching porn with increasing vigor.

Eventually, the stuff I had to watch in order to get the "right kind" of release, the "ultimate high," (I am an addict) got worse and worse. Internet pornography is what really got me to my rock bottom moment. The imagery largely involved was of bestiality, degradation and pain exchange images. I set up fake social media and email accounts and started asking people to send me their personal collections — the "real life" factor (voyeur) made me feel the right combination of disgust, self-hatred, shame, and guilt.

I got high from sexualizing those negative emotions and essentially, I ended up sexualizing myself, my friends and everything else in my life.

Everything had a sexual or emotional undertone, some form

of compartmentalizing. I masked my behavior in emotional co-dependency with everyone I had any form of relationship with. I had a second life that I had created to basically fill the void I felt. I tried many times to just walk away from that life.

I rationalized my behavior with the fact that my boyfriend didn't want to have sex with me. I asked myself, "What is my purpose in this relationship? Who am I in this relationship without my ability to manipulate him with his sexual attraction?"

I lost my sanity.

I said to myself, "I'm not sexualizing my relationship issues with my partner — I deserve to sexualize them by myself."

The progression of my illness accelerated until I was either left physically in pain or emotionally in tatters. I had what I called "crygasms."

I tried so many times to stop logging in to the computer, to just steer clear of the darker images. But I always found myself logging in again and setting up the accounts again.

I spent hours searching — hating myself more and more for the things I craved. I remember that I tried desperately to avoid logging in. I closed most of my accounts — except the social media account and email.

And for a month or two, I managed to stay away. But then my partner went away for 3 weeks to visit family and I logged in again. I started watching porn at work (I worked in a call center.)

I made contact with the collectors again — physical rock bottom number two — and then my partner broke into my social media account because he knew something was going on.

He found a link to my fake account — to my fake email addresses and found *everything*. We broke up. The bottom fell out of my world.

I wanted to die. I wanted to commit suicide. It was all too much. This was essentially my spiritual and emotional rock bottom.

I started attending S.L.A.A. for a 2nd time. (Plus or minus 2 years before my *true* rock bottom, I found S.L.A.A. The first time I attended meetings, I stopped stripping. But I ended up leaving S.L.A.A. because I was so ashamed of speaking my truth).

The compulsive behaviors to avoid, that were part of the first bottom lines I set, included exhibitionism, intrigue, internet porn, compulsive masturbation, anonymous sex and prostitution.

I had no sponsor, no Step work and no program. I thought going to meetings was enough. And the bottom lines I had were enough to start healing myself. But I kept having unprotected casual sex with strangers/friends.

I reached a social and physical rock bottom when I went to visit friends in my home town. I tried to keep myself safe by only staying with friends I had not had sex with and had never tried to have sex with.

- 1st night — Stayed with a friend who was in a relationship with someone. I had always felt safe around him. I woke up to find him sexually molesting me. I went to stay with other friends and I no longer speak to him.

- 5th night — B and I ended up having sex.

- 8th night — told B I didn't want to sleep with him again.

- 9th morning — woke up with B molesting me. I was fully clothed.

I realized that morning that there was something about me that made these people think I would be OK with the idea or be turned on enough by them doing this that I would go along with sex. How was this permissible? These were people I felt safe with. There was no sexual

history. There was nothing to indicate they would act that way with me. I realized the only constant in both situations was me.

I was the problem and I was powerless to stop my addiction. Because the addiction was all I knew about myself, I put that out to others without even thinking about it. And also, as a result, it became painfully apparent that all my relationships — friends or lovers — every action, word, thought and emotion was plagued by my addiction.

And for the first time since coming to S.L.A.A., I fully realized, admitted and connected to the fact that I was addicted. The addiction had infected my entire life and consumed my soul. I had to stop. But I couldn't do it alone.

I finally got a sponsor. I did The H.O.W. Program (Step work for recovery from sex and love addiction). I got through 3 weeks of withdrawal, crying every day. I prayed harder than I ever did when I was religious. Letting go of my addiction was the most rewarding and difficult thing I have ever done.

I became a sponsor and continued to work my Steps. I finally accepted the presence of a Higher Power in Step 2 and

dedicated myself to Step 3.

I relapsed during the process of getting through my Step 5. I had an unmanageable sponsor and compartmentalized my relationship with her. I thank God every day for that relapse because it taught me to be aware of becoming complacent in my recovery. I need to remain ever mindful that my Higher Power is doing for me what I have never been able to do for myself.

And if I am functioning on self-will, my addict is in control. And my addict wants to kill me. I slip up, I lose focus every now and again. But as long as I keep getting up and learn from my mistakes, then I am not a failure. I am a human being and I am an addict.

Day by day, I am learning to let go of my fear of responsibility and my fear of commitment. I am letting go of my fear of honesty and my fear of vulnerability. And I am letting go of my justifications.

I am trying hard to hand over my character defects (the root cause, I believe, of my acting out).

I'm learning — one day at a time — to just let go and let God.

I have been sober for 359 days today. And by the grace of my Higher Power, my recovery,

my sponsor, the Steps and the fellowship – I will finally see my first year clean.

My name is Bianca and I am a recovering sex and love addict.

— BIANCA, SOUTH AFRICA

My Life Before My Accident

My name is Andrew Z. On Dec. 26, 2009 at 9:35 p.m. I was walking back from a supermarket when I was run over by a 70 year old man going 49 MPH.

I remember waking up on Feb. 25, 2010.

I was told that I had 9 teeth knocked out of my mouth, my jaw broken in 3 places, all my ribs broken so badly that they pierced my lungs and I stopped breathing twice. My right leg was broken in 5 places and I was told that I now have a titanium rod implanted in my leg for life.

The city where this happened was in Massachusetts. The police pronounced me dead without checking to see if I was alive because I was lying in a pool of my own blood. But I was alive!!

Before my accident I had a goatee. I weighed 325 pounds. And for 12 years, I had long hair to my waist. When I awoke I had no goatee, short hair, and I weighed 178 pounds!! I lost a lot of weight on a feeding tube when

I was in a medical coma.

I only realized that I am an alcoholic and a sex and lust addict after my accident. I go to S.L.A.A. meetings every day/night and sometimes I go twice a day. I help set up for meetings and I do temporary sponsorship at this moment.

Before my accident, I slept with the girlfriends of friends or ex-friends, married women and some of my past school teachers. I estimate that I slept with about 70 females and even one of my brother's wives. I also used to have sex or get oral sex from female fans in the past since I used to be the vocalist in 2 different bands.

I estimate that I have had sex with about 200 women. I was born sterile, so I never had to worry about getting a woman pregnant. But I could have contracted an STD very easily.

My higher power is Jesus Christ. So I believe that he has given me a second chance.

Miracles do happen in life.

—ANDREW Z.

Reflections On The Serenity Prayer



I have heard the Serenity Prayer at the beginning and end of every S.L.A.A. meeting for several years now. It was not hard to learn, this short prayer is easy to memorize and to understand the basic meaning of the prayer.

After being in S.L.A.A. and learning from my recovery, I

have read and listened to many personal stories. Some stories made reference to the Serenity Prayer, but I do not recall anyone really reflecting on the prayer's words.

The history of the prayer is that it was part of a longer prayer that was first written by Reinhold Niebuhr in 1943. It

has been adopted by Alcoholics Anonymous and most of the other Twelve-Step programs started to use the prayer, including our own S.L.A.A. program.

The name of the prayer is the “Serenity Prayer.” I used to think of the word serenity as being at peace with what I was doing — a form of happiness.

During my time of living in my addiction I did not have any serenity due to trying to keep track of all my lies, the constant shame that I always felt, and figuring out how I was going to keep the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde life going.

With the support of the fellowship and through listening to my God, I have learned that true serenity is being at peace, calm and composed even when things are going crazy around me.

I have heard several times that life is full of storms. But when you are truly serene, then you do not have to become part of the problem or even try and put out every fire. My spiritual roots are in God and the principles of S.L.A.A. and with that I truly can weather every storm.

At my first glance of the Serenity Prayer, it became apparent that I needed to learn that the first word of the prayer was “God” and that it was not “me” or “I.”

This meant that I had to surrender to my Higher Power and stop trying to fix my own problems. This one word — God — made me think about the first three Steps of the Twelve Step program. I am calling on someone greater to help me. And I am turning my will and my power over to that higher being.

The next part of the prayer is “to accept the things I cannot change.” I learned that there are things I do not have the power to change. When I lived in my addiction, I used to try and change people or their thinking to suit my needs. Now, I have grown to understand that really the only person that I can truly change is myself. Accepting sounds easy, but it was hard to truly do when everything I thought I knew was changing.

“Courage to change the things I can” sounds easy at first. But I quickly learned that I had been broken for a very long time. Change is not easy, especially when it involves pretty much my entire understanding of the world in which I live.

Courage is not a large word on paper. But it is huge to truly live with courage when my old life has fallen in around me and now a whole new world has to be learned and lived in.

I think courage is the only

word that could have truly gotten me through it. When I was still new to the program, many a brother or sister in the fellowship and my family continued to tell me this new life would be better.

I did not see it and truly did not think that I would be able to survive the move into this new world. At that time, it was hard to believe almost every core belief was wrong or at least skewed since I was a child.

The very understanding of my universe was destroyed and had to be rebuilt. Many days I cried, wondering what was true and doubting that it would be possible for my life to actually get any better.

I have been told during my life that real men do not cry. I use to live that lie. But with the destruction of my world, crying was the first thing I did. And now I am happy it happened.

I am happy after going through the Steps for several years now that the world really is a better place. And even though I am not even close to being perfect, life is good and worth living.

“And wisdom to know the difference.” When I first started to learn this prayer and started saying it, I thought this was the easy part of the prayer. But with time

and personal growth in the S.L.A.A. program, I learned that my young knowledge of wisdom had also undergone change.

Wisdom comes from many people and grows over a long period of time. The fellowship has the collective wisdom of this Twelve Step program. I can tap into this wisdom for changing my universe and for personal growth.

Wisdom is also the understanding that each of the Twelve Steps is an aid to making my journey possible. Collectively the Twelve Steps lead to the real possibility of having a rich and full life.

When I really spent time analyzing a simple prayer for a fuller understanding, I became aware that there is more than meets the eye with these simple twenty-five words that were penned so many years ago.

My little world, that I used to know, ended with my discovery of my addiction. But through the courage of personal growth, learning the wisdom of the program, accepting the fellowship of S.L.A.A., and praying a simple but powerful “Serenity Prayer” my world has become a better place and my life is worth living.

— SCOTT B., CONNECTICUT

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

To receive our schedule of telephone meetings and topics simply email: slaahhealthyrelationships@gmail.com.

S.L.A.A. Women's We Are Not Alone Withdrawal Workshop Telemeeting Series

Event Date: Sat, July 07, 2012 to Sat, December 29, 2012

For Inquiries:

Info@slaawomensgroup.org

More Info: Each Saturday at 7:00 pm (Eastern Time zone) through December 2012. The S.L.A.A.

Women's We Are Not Alone phone meeting group will be exploring the process of withdrawal as detailed in Chapter 5 of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text. The first three Saturdays of each month will be devoted to a different section of The Withdrawal Experience. The Fourth and Fifth Saturdays of each month will be S.L.A.A. Step One Speaker Share Meetings. See www.slaafws.org for more details.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fri, September 21, 2012 to Sun, September 23, 2012

23rd S.L.A.A. Florida Roundup

Where: Clearwater, FL

For Inquiries:

fafroundup@gmail.com

Link: www.fafroundup.org

More Info: This year's theme is: The Puzzle of Recovery: Fitting the Pieces Together

Fri, November 23, 2012 to Sun, November 25, 2012

16th Annual Spiritual Renewal & Recovery Retreat

Presented by: Los Angeles Inter-group

Where: Malibu, California

More Info: Our 16th annual SLAA Spiritual Renewal & Recovery Retreat will be held, once again, at the Serra Retreat Center, Malibu, California. Serra Retreat Center is a monastery located in the foothills of the Santa Monica Mountains and overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Join us for a week end of speakers, small group sharing, time for personal reflection and conversation.

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

Go to www.slaafws.org

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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