



# the Journal

Issue # 142

Single Issue \$4

## Safety in Meetings

# Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

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

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The Conference Journal Committee, a service body within Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, publishes *the Journal* for the good of the international S.L.A.A. membership. Oversight and policy is provided in accordance with the Ninth Tradition.

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The Augustine Fellowship,  
Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous,  
Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.  
1550 NE Loop 410, Suite 118  
San Antonio, TX 78209

1-210-828-7900 Tuesday-Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT except for holidays

(fax) 1-210-828-7922. [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)

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Managing Editor  
Outreach Director  
Art Director  
Editorial Assistant  
Proofreaders for this issue

Lisa C.  
Stirling  
Fiona  
Tom B.  
Rita H.  
Jill W.

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Reader:

If you look at page 2 you will see this disclaimer: “The opinions expressed in *the Journal* are not necessarily the opinions of The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., F.W.S. office, Annual Business Conference or any other Conference committee including the Conference Journal Committee or *the Journal* production staff.” In my opinion, that statement is definitely needed for this issue of *the Journal*.

There are a lot of questions and different approaches to problems presented in each article. Many articles mention situations that can create fear. Anything that brings up fear can be difficult for me (as an addict) to confront. Safety in meetings is something that has always brought up that fear. When I first started going to meetings 15 years ago, it was usually me and a few other S.L.A.A. members (usually men) in the basement of a church. Always on edge about personal security (some would say paranoid), I’m amazed that I made it to so many meetings each week. And I’ve heard some crazy stories of mentally ill people in meetings. The fact is I also made meetings unsafe for myself by acting out with another S.L.A.A. member.

When I finally got sober he threatened me and I had to look over my shoulder at every meeting. My sponsor always said that I was protected. She said, “Write a fear inventory, say a prayer that God will protect you or give you the strength to handle whatever happens, and let it go.” I’ve been doing that through 11 years of sobriety and I stay in meetings. I claim my spot in S.L.A.A. because without meetings, I know I won’t survive. I’m too self destructive — before S.L.A.A. I dated 2 guys who killed someone. I was attracted to danger and risk taking. S.L.A.A. has changed that and given me a life I want to live.

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. has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. S.L.A.A. is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements, or causes, either religious or secular.

We are, however, united in a common focus: dealing with our addictive sexual and emotional behavior. We find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns, which transcends any personal differences of sexual orientation or gender identity.

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.

\* ©1985 The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous, Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The Twelve Steps are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism only. Use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities, which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise. **THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS** 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — 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 Him. 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 Him 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 God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His 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 alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

## Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “Have you ever felt unsafe or triggered by a member at a meeting? How did you (or your Group/Intergroup) handle the situation?” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: Issue #143 Special ABM Issue — How Do Newcomers Become Old-Timers? — “Why do newcomers leave S.L.A.A.? How do old-timers stay?” The deadline for submissions is 5/16/13; and Issue #144 — Sex and Love Addiction: What is Real? — “How did you become aware that sex and love addiction was real?” The deadline for submissions is 7/15/13. Please send answers to [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org).

“HAVE YOU EVER FELT UNSAFE OR TRIGGERED BY A MEMBER AT A MEETING? HOW DID YOU (OR YOUR GROUP/INTERGROUP) HANDLE THE SITUATION?”

I’ve been triggered in meetings before. Just as when I get triggered outside of meetings, I see it as an opportunity to explore and grow. I journal, talk with recovery partners, my sponsor, and my therapist. I pray about it and get some healing. Oh boy, another growth opportunity!

— KELLI, AUSTIN TX

Once or twice I have felt triggered and I have shared this with my sponsor. It is very rare.

— ANDREW K., DALLAS

I engage with the person. Bringing my thoughts along with theirs neutralizes the triggered feelings. I treat myself and the other person like sick people which enables me to treat us both with compassion. Having practiced this way of sobriety, I would not recommend it to everyone because of how difficult it can be. My disease is in me and part of my ego and my goal is to stay at a point of neutrality and help others.

— MICHAEL, CLEARWATER, FL

Yes. By bad language, guys hitting on me, tension in a meeting. I set boundaries and keep coming back.

— MARTINA, MUNICH



## QUESTION OF THE DAY

Yes, typically the meetings I'm in have had a clause that any member can raise their hand and say they are triggered by what someone is saying. On occasion, we have had to discuss it in a business meeting to reach a group conscience.

— JIM B.,  
COSTA MESA, CA

Yes. I called my sponsor and talked about it. That really helped.

— SARA S., TAMPA, FL

Great question — doesn't happen often but when it does, very uncomfortable.

What my homegroup does is put on the business meeting agenda at the end of the month as "How to keep the meetings safe for newcomers and all members."

Then using Tradition 2, each member is encouraged to share their "triggers," feelings, reactions without crosstalk.

After this, brainstorming on the solution or next right action is discussed going around a few times until a consensus and action plan are developed. Works every time to date in my group's 12 year history.

— RITA H., MONTREAL, CANADA

Yes. I approached the member and talked to him about my feelings and by bringing them into the light, the trigger dissolved.

— ANKE, HEIDELBERG, GERMANY

“HAVE YOU EVER FELT UNSAFE OR TRIGGERED BY A MEMBER AT A MEETING? HOW DID YOU (OR YOUR GROUP/INTERGROUP) HANDLE THE SITUATION?”

Yes! A woman was shouting out during someone’s share. I was actually paralyzed with fear (yelling and shouting triggers me that much).

No one did or said anything and that’s OK. What happened has happened, but I know I’m safe.

I closed my eyes, breathed deeply, reconnected with my Higher Power, and five minutes later had completely forgotten about it.

— WHITNEY, NEW YORK, NY

Someone complained after a meeting about a young woman at the meeting.

He said she shouldn’t be there because she was too attractive.

Fortunately, he complained to someone who understood Tradition 3 and his response was “If she needs to be here, she’s welcome to be here. If you find her appearance triggering, you need to learn how to handle that.”

The S.L.A.A. Basic Text says we need to learn how to interact safely with people we find attractive, and mixed-gender meetings are a good place to learn it.

— ANONYMOUS

Sometimes I look at people in the room as sex objects, and once I breathe and listen, I can start to see them as whole people that are struggling to get better, just like me.

— SCOTT, LOS ANGELES

When a man threatened violence against another member of the group, the leader took a firm, compassionate stand and insisted he leave until he finally calmed down and left.

— JONATHAN,  
LOS ANGELES

I called my sponsor and the feelings passed.

— DAVID.

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

Yes. I found another meeting to go to that felt “safer.” Also, I realized my fears were largely unfounded and were a result of being new to program

— ANONYMOUS

Someone had a pattern of sharing threats and graphic past traumas at every meeting. I felt the individual had no want for recovery or hope. Instead of allowing it, I walked out when she was called on, protecting myself.

— CHELSEY, LOS ANGELES

Someone kept calling me to tell me about his acting out. He got very graphic, and I wanted to act out with him. Instead, I told him to please not talk that way, and he stopped. I spoke up for myself and resolved the issue.

— LOUIE M., LOS ANGELES

At a local meeting, people were too explicit when sharing and some people found it triggering. They brought it up at a business meeting, so we changed the format to say “Please refrain from overly graphic descriptions of acting out experiences or from divulging specific acting out locations.”

— DAVID B, WORCESTER MA

**FREE ISSUE of the Journal ~**  
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## Can We Make S.L.A.A. More Safe?



**PHOTO BY JAMES E.**

**Hi,** my name is K and I am a recovering sex and love addict.

I want to say something about the theme of this number of *the Journal*.

I have been a member of the fellowship for many years and have had a hard time finding sobriety. I seldom feel safe or comfortable in our meetings.

But I have kept coming back because I desperately need to get out of my addiction. I am very

grateful that for a few years now, we have had a women's meeting in my town. I'm also grateful that I have had the possibility to be in professional therapy for this addiction and that there are also other Twelve-Step fellowships where I can feel safe in meetings and get recovery tools.

Almost always when I attend meetings in our fellowship I get the feeling that I often had after I had been abused during my active addiction.

I also get trauma flashbacks, feelings of leaving my body, and panic attacks. This is triggered by shares from men that have done abusive things to women and have not come so far in their recovery.

Sometimes some men touch me without asking for permission first and this triggers memories from my past sexual assault by relatives. It can also be triggered when other members stare at me.

During the last year (2012) there has been a man in our meetings that has sexually harassed and stalked a female member. Some groups in my town think it is important that he is welcomed to our meetings. They say it is important because of the Third Tradition (the only requirement for S.L.A.A. membership is the desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction).

But they do not think of the First Tradition (Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon S.L.A.A. unity). This has led me to quit going to that meeting. It feels as if they protect the abuser and neglect what really happened —just as it was in my dysfunctional family! This man goes to other mixed groups too so I do not feel safe there and do not want to go. What I was afraid of has actually happened, but to another person.

Many of the women in my home group feel the same.

A former sponsor suggested that I stop going to S.L.A.A. meetings because of all the risks, because that was what she felt she had to do. And, yes sex and love addiction is a horrible disease. And some of us can get very dangerous when we are active in our addiction.

Therefore, in my women's group, we have discussed some ideas to make the fellowship more safe. We have borrowed ideas from other fellowships.

We think it is important to have the following guidelines:

1. In order to attend meetings we want/ask everyone to be free of drugs and alcohol, unless they are under doctor's orders (because this is often a trigger in our addiction).

2. For attendance at the meetings we want/ask anyone that is harassing other members (in or outside the meetings) to seek help somewhere else.

3. If a member who has harassed other members wants to come back (after having stopped the behavior) that person has to bear the consequences of their actions. This can mean only going to certain meetings (where the victim does not want to go), The member who harassed someone can start a new group

concentrating on recovering from harassment behavior.

As it is now, the harassed person is the one who has to leave the fellowship. This makes me and others want to stay away from mixed meetings. Well yes, women can behave like this too, but — in my opinion — as we live in a violent patriarchy, men still

commit most of the sexual and physical violence in the world.

We need to see the reality and how we can recover as brothers and sisters.

Maybe not always in the same physical rooms but hopefully in a united spirit. And, then, as we get stable in recovery, in the same physical rooms.

— K, SWEDEN.

## Safe Meeting Guidelines

This might seem like I'm shamelessly plugging a phone meeting by sharing their wonderful "safety meeting" guidelines. So I'll just be honest, I am! The S.L.A.A. Saturday morning phone meeting on cross addictions is a great meeting and I'll share a big reason why it's become so important to my recovery. This reassuring and to-the-point paragraph is read right near the beginning of every meeting...

"S.L.A.A. is a Twelve Step, Twelve Tradition fellowship based upon the model pioneered by Alcoholics Anonymous. It is not a place to learn how to control and enjoy lustful behavior. It is not a society of hyper-sexed individuals. It is not



a social club. It is not a place to pick up sex partners.

If anyone approaches you in a manner which you find uncomfortable, you are encouraged to share this with another member.

These behaviors include any inappropriate language, rumors

about other members, harassment of any kind and sexual advances of any kind. Depending upon severity, it may be determined to address the situation by group conscience. The ability to keep this room safe is entirely up to you. Refuse to be a part of any sexual encounter.”

Yeah! A truly safe place for love and sex addicts, who usually suffer horrifically in their minds with the disease long after the acting out has ceased! Yes. You can call in this Saturday.

This meeting helps me a great deal in a couple of important ways. One is in allowing me to safely identify myself to other recovering members in a virtual meeting room space, as a childhood sexual abuse and trauma survivor, a debtor, under-earner, compulsive shopper, an adult child, an overeater, a codependent, a clutterer, an artist, a co-addict, a workaholic, and of course, a sexual, social and emotional anorexic and sex and love addict.

The message of our fellowship is not diluted there but supported by acknowledging that compulsive energy is compulsive energy; that once I cease fantasizing or pursuing inappropriate people that

“energy” will just push to be released in some other way: eating, shopping — hell — even with reading, watching TV, and decorating!

I ask myself, “Am I doing this (insert activity\_\_\_\_\_ ) compulsively?” If the answer is yes, then I’m still avoiding the message of the energy which is always saying I need something. The energy says, “Listen to me and choose how you will respond to this need I’m presenting. Will you do it impulsively, addictively or will you do it consciously, kindly, in recovery with an option or options that are life-giving and healing?” That’s what my “addiction,” sometimes I like to call it “my inner child” says to me when I’m willing to listen.

I have to work numerous programs to keep the energy flowing in the life-enhancing direction, towards God, love and life.

There are no other meetings in which I can do this with full permission and understanding; I know in my heart that though I can’t see them, heads are nodding in agreement and people relate to my recovery challenges without fear or dissent towards my truth. Also, I have noticed in regular face-to-face S.L.A.A. meetings a level of acceptance and comfort with

mentions of related issues that have been helpful; judgment free zones are precious wherever they may be found. Is S.L.A.A. just more acclimated, well-adjusted to the person dealing with numerous recovery issues at once?

I have been shamed at meetings in other fellowships in the past from sharing beyond the scope of that particular fellowship for difficult issues; an example would be: I am at a 12-Step food fellowship meeting and share that I identify as an overeater and sex and love addict. And that because I get very triggered when I am attracted to someone who reminds me of my primary abusers (my parents), I want to go out and compulsively eat.

This upset people in this particular meeting of another fellowship and the group later voted that mention of other 12-Step addiction recovery groups could not be mentioned while in the meeting.

I know that to some degree this is part of upholding the 12 Traditions. Yet because it was done directly in response to my sharing, I felt deeply shamed and rejected by the group for having and speaking of “other issues.”

This was not the first time.

They had shut people down for a wide range of topics deemed too triggering. I don't find that there is much, unless it's too graphic or violent, that is unwelcome to share at an S.L.A.A. meeting.

I see recovery issues as interconnected and in a continuum and eventually was lucky enough to find people in recovery addressing their own multiple-addicted selves. They are willing to be open to hearing about the tangled web of trauma, sexual abuse and love addiction that is the reality for so many members of S.L.A.A. Process addictions, substance addictions and relationship addictions — one great big circus with many exhibitors! Yet each has its life-giving guidelines and tools and bottom lines for achieving abstinence or sobriety.

To unburden myself of the shame and confusion I have carried for ten years in recovery as a multiple-cross-addicted person who thought she was crazy for having “so many issues” the cross addictions phone meeting of S.L.A.A. has been a breath of relief that I keep drawing on every time I attend it (and, of course, S.L.A.A. meetings in general).

It is a place I know I won't be



attacked for mentioning all the ways my addiction tries to manifest and my recovery works to counteract it.

The other reason I like this phone meeting is that it reminds me of the boundaries I need to be aware of inside myself; that I am not immune to men in meetings and my sex and love addiction can and has been triggered by desire and fantasy towards the men in the meetings.

I have been in meetings where discussion of and even the actual behavior of 13th stepping (13th stepping is approaching a newcomer in a sexual or seductive manner, or trying to create a romantic connection) was not seen as completely taboo. I was shocked and felt completely unsafe.

Yet this idea highlights a less discussed and, for me, undefined area of rules or suggestions: that of fellow members dating each other. Two friends of mine who met each other in another fellowship got married. They had only met because of their membership in that fellowship. One was still married when they started seeing each other.

Believing this might be possible for me almost cost me my recovery when it happened a year ago. I developed a crush on

a man in my local face-to-face meeting. And because I told myself I needed this meeting, I denied to myself that the crush was real and a problem; after all, it was only thoughts I was having!

Well, I stopped attending that particular meeting. I started my day count over when I showed up at a meeting hoping he'd be in attendance. I made the ill-informed effort to make an amends to him over the phone as well, as it was clear he knew something had changed, (we had been recovery friends for about five years until that point) and something was going on. I was mortified.

This is where anorexia took me, as my celibacy without sobriety was mistaken for long term abstinence.

And my inability to face the reality that meetings could not in any way be a place for my romance fantasy addiction to take flight had just changed dramatically.

Meetings are not a place to act out in any way. Embodying the safety principles is part of my internal recovery now, just as avoiding acting out has, for years now, been a part of my external recovery. Thank you God and thank you to the Saturday morning phone meeting!

— GRACE G., MASSACHUSETTS

# Triggered By An Individual And A Section Of the Basic Text



PHOTO BY JAMES E.

**W**e have had two instances of issues around safety or triggering, one caused by an individual and one caused by a reading.

(1) The individual was actually a sex offender dumped by his roommates at our meeting. He alleged a medical issue but when we called 911 they sent the sheriff because they knew him.

He had hit on two of the women in the meeting (we learned later). He is, of course, barred from ever returning.

But we put the following into our meeting script: “If you observe or are subjected to any inappropriate comments or behavior, please bring this to the attention of the secretary or a trusted member of the group. If necessary, the secretary may ask someone to

leave the meeting. Our message is that the power of the Twelve Steps can transform our relationships and our lives. We do not want outside distractions to interfere with that message.”

(2) The reading was, believe it or not, right out of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text, and the woman’s story was too graphic and very triggering for a number of people.

We therefore added the following to our meeting script: “On Reading nights, if you feel triggered by a reading that you find inappropriate, you can call a time out and seek a group conscience about whether to continue, or simply excuse yourself from the meeting until the reading is over.”

—RAY

## Safety in Meetings

**I**t took me a little while to believe that I could trust the people in our meeting. The first time I visited, I was alone with one other guy who had a quirky personality. He didn't know how to turn the lights on so there I sat with this strange man with arrested social skills in a dark church basement. I was not impressed.

But somehow I came back. Though I would share (that wasn't an issue – at that point I over-disclosed anyway), I didn't know that I could trust these people so I was highly critical. I had no relationship or connection with them. I began driving to meetings two hours away in the “big city” where they “do it right.” It was an impractical proposition.

One night I drove to another two-hour-away meeting, got lost and finally arrived frustrated and tired.

When I introduced myself, the first thing out of a guy's mouth was, “You do know there are meetings in your town, right?”

That was the voice of my Higher Power telling me to stop being a critic of meetings and just settle in.

It was in this meeting in my hometown where I eventually got

sober and grew spiritually.

One of the problems of having a smaller town meeting is that attendance is often low and as we become used to one another, it is easy to relax the rules. The feel becomes more like a church home group or a guy's breakfast at the local diner. For some reason of late, there had been renewed interest in our meeting and some visitors arrived in that initial “I wonder if this is right for me stage.”

In a meeting, one of the old-timers gave a great share but he cross-talked referring to another member in the room by name and referencing his story. The content of the share was good. Nevertheless, the newcomer was offended. My first thought was that the newcomer, in working the program, will eventually learn tools to deal with offences and resentment when this type of thing happens.

Nevertheless, it did become apparent that the old-timer needed to be reminded not to cross talk.

It wasn't that what the old-timer said was so intrusive and threatening. It is just that when a newcomer arrives, they may be like I was: suspicious and critical.

I was continually analyzing and (because I hadn't worked the

program yet) I was a high powered resentment magnet. I had to believe the meeting was safe and that I wasn't in a room with my emotionally distant father or my hyper-critical and controlling mother.

It had to be demonstrated that

I was in a meeting where people had a solution to my problem, were out for my best interests, and would give me the space to work out my program, at whatever stage I was at, without condemnation.

—DAVID, BOONE, NC

## Triggered By Attractive S.L.A.A. Members

**Hi,** I'm a love addict and a heterosexual woman. When I was a newcomer I noticed that there were a lot of men I would consider nice looking in the meetings, but it did not go further than that. As I heard people share about their struggles with sex addiction, I knew I would not want someone as a partner who did those things.

I had already experienced some of those behaviors from partners and it had caused me extreme pain, hurt and anger. I felt no animosity to my sex and love addicted fellows however.

These are people who admit they have a problem and are there to work on recovery. In fact, I have been quite moved, in a positive way, at the honest sharing I have heard in meetings. That was something my partners, who had various addictions, had



not been able to do.

Still, as a newcomer, I heard one love-addicted man sharing about a pattern very similar to mine, someone monogamous and totally codependent on his partners. He was also physically attractive. My head did toy with the idea — I thought, “Maybe if I found someone just like me, it would work this time!”

Fortunately, I also heard myself sharing what my pattern was, including falling for men who were addicted or in some way emotionally damaged and

remembered how I tried with no success to rescue them. I also heard how his disease brought him and his partners a lot of pain so I quickly lost interest in the crazy idea.

I was also deeply grieving a break up with my last (love-addicted) partner. And I was still totally obsessed with how he had hurt me. I knew that I needed to focus on my own recovery and not on any man.

To try a new relationship while still in the grips of my disease would have meant yet another failed relationship and more pain. I had so hit bottom that I could not bear that prospect!

So I did nothing to act on that triggering idea. I just accepted that I was triggered by yet another fellow addict. This is how my disease works on me and I let the crazy idea go. I got a sponsor and worked the steps and attended 12-Step meetings daily in the beginning because I desperately needed it to cope with the withdrawal and pain.

Later on, when I was often the only woman in a meeting, I encountered a fellow love addict who began trying to flirt with me after the meeting. At first I just scowled at him and said nothing. When it happened again, I felt like prey faced with a predator. I

confronted him in a stern tone, "Are you flirting with me?! Well, stop it! You're acting out."

That worked. I did not see that individual there for a while but after a long absence, he returned to the meeting. After the meeting he came over smiling and saying with a sigh like a love-sick boy, "Now I will go home and think of you." I responded angrily, "How dare you flirt with me! I'm not interested in you or anyone in this program!"

Another male fellow witnessed it and smiled with a little amusement. The offending man soon disappeared again from the meeting.

I realize now that some people are still very much in the disease and may behave inappropriately. I know a few women who have "dated" male fellows. All of this could apply to same sex attractions as well. Those unhealthy "relationships" did not work out and one of them felt too uncomfortable to attend the same meeting again with the new "ex."

In my country, there is a woman's meeting and in another town, a men's meeting. That was not convenient to me, so I continue to this day attending mixed meetings where I am

sometimes the only woman there.

One meeting has a clause in the closing about how we are here to work on recovery and must not take advantage of the vulnerabilities of others.

It also adds that if anyone behaves in a manner which makes you feel uncomfortable, please feel free to discuss this with another member.

I have come to be able to relate to men as fellows and as human beings who happen to be male, not as potential partners. That has also applied to my life

outside of S.L.A.A. I see my male fellows as family members.

I am often touched and proud of the efforts and honest sharing of my brothers and sisters in the fellowship.

My efforts in recovery have paid off. I have already been enjoying several years of emotional and sexual sobriety, which makes it peaceful in my head and in my life.

All this is due to the program, including safety in meetings.

—CB, AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS, 2013

## Threatened In A Meeting

I recently had a difficult conflict with someone at a meeting. I'd like to share what happened and my thoughts on how conflicts might be avoided or addressed in the future.

The opening of our local meetings always includes a statement about avoiding crosstalk. Only one of the meetings explains what crosstalk is during the opening, so a lot of people hear the opening, but they don't know what it means.

Most people seem to learn what is and is not appropriate



by example. If there are a couple of people at the meeting who

often comment on other people's shares, or make jokes or side comments, then more people will think it's okay to do that.

When I see excessive crosstalk, it really bothers me. I'm the kind of person who believes in following the rules, so if the format says "no crosstalk," then the rule is "no crosstalk." Besides that, I don't want other people making comments about my problems or making jokes about them or interrupting me while I share. I feel it's rude, and I don't like it.

Some people say I'm too rigid about the meeting formats. One member would sometimes say "if David were here, he'd say this is crosstalk ..."

I felt I was too rigid and decided I had to be willing to let go of other people's behavior at the meetings. I can't control people, and I shouldn't try to get other people to act in the meetings the way I think they should.

My home meeting had a group of guys who often made side comments while someone else was sharing or made jokes about someone else's share. I seemed to be the only one bothered by it, so I let it go.

One night, I was sharing on the discussion topic and while I was sharing, someone else

interjected a comment agreeing with me.

I let it go and just said "yeah" and wanted to continue, but someone else disagreed and he said so.

I said something else to make my point and he disagreed again. I shouldn't have to debate someone during my share, so I said something like "excuse me, whose turn is it to share?"

The interrupter – I'll call him T – pointed to the first commenter and said "well he said something..." I said "That's crosstalk" and T responded with "I heard about you. F\*\*\* off."

I was stunned and furious! I just shut down and stopped sharing right then. Fortunately, the meeting was ending soon. When it ended, I left without talking to anyone.

We had a business meeting two weeks later and I brought up the subject of crosstalk and said I was really upset about what happened. I suggested we add to the format to read the meeting guidelines from the S.L.A.A. Welcome pamphlet. The rest of the group agreed we could try it for one month and see if we like it.

The Meeting Guidelines from the Welcome pamphlet are, in summary:

- Share our experience,

strength, and hope of recovery

- Provide an environment free from shame, judgment, criticism, manipulation, and abuse.

- Maintain confidentiality of group members

- Refrain from interruption or interaction while another is sharing

- Cross-talk, a.k.a. feedback, is discouraged.

T wasn't at that business meeting, but he did come to the meeting the next week, while I was chairing. I read the usual format and I read the section on meeting guidelines, and then opened the meeting for sharing.

T was the first one to share. Instead of sharing on the topic, he started with "I think that's aimed at me..." I tried to say that he's not the only one but he cut me off with, "That's crosstalk! That is crosstalk!" and continued his complaint about me.

At one point, he said "I'll say what I want, and if you don't like it, we can take this outside." He continued to comment on other people's shares and comment on their problems.

As chair, it was my duty to address that, but there was nothing I could do.

I decided I couldn't attend this meeting anymore, for two reasons. First, I didn't feel safe there. My sponsor offered to

walk in and out with me, but I still didn't feel safe if I needed other people to protect me.

I didn't like feeling like a coward, but I also didn't want to set myself up for more anger and resentment. What good is going to a meeting if being there causes more anxiety than staying away?

Second, I recalled the section on Trusted Servants and Group Conscience from Chapter 7 of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text. Basically, it says that the group leader will eventually have to surrender the position and turn over care of the group to the Group Conscience.

I had been the group's treasurer, literature secretary, intergroup representative, and contact with the church where we met.

I brought announcements and meeting lists to the group.

I didn't seek out to be the group authority, but I ended up in that position simply by serving and knowing things. T seemed to cast himself as Randall Patrick McMurphy from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, and me as Nurse Ratchet.

The only thing I could do that would not make me look like a big control freak was to walk away.

I had to think for a long time



about what I could have done differently to avoid this situation.

My greatest mistake was reading the Meeting Guidelines at the start of the meeting when T was there.

I'm sure he felt ambushed at the start of the meeting. He wasn't at the business meeting and he wasn't aware that it was a group decision to read the guidelines. To him, it must have looked like I alone had decided to add the guidelines to the format. It looked like I was passively making new rules against him, without addressing him directly, exactly like Nurse Ratchet would have done.

If someone is behaving inappropriately at a meeting, it can be brought up at a business meeting, but the person will know it's aimed at them and they will feel ambushed.

I think two people from the group should approach the problem person and talk about it in private. Then they aren't ambushed at a meeting and they know it's not coming from just one person; it's the group conscience.

We should have asked a couple of people to talk to T to let him know about the change in the format so he wouldn't feel attacked during the meeting. Of

course, I couldn't be one of them, or he'd see it as another attempt at control!

I tried to avoid the meetings that T often attended, but I did see him a few more times. The next time I saw him was several weeks later. As soon as he walked in the door, I felt myself tense with fear.

I didn't leave, though. T didn't sit near me, but he said "David, it's good to see you again." I think that was his way of making peace. I've barely seen him since then. I don't really want to see him and I don't want to be his friend, but I wish him well and I hope he stays on the path to recovery.

— DAVID B, WORCESTER, MA

**To Do List:**

#1. Subscribe to the *Journal*

#2. Go to [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org) and subscribe to the *Journal*

#3. Enjoy reading the *Journal*

## Triggered In A Meeting?

I am a mature heterosexual man, and I believe I can be friends with women. However, there is perhaps one woman out of a hundred who, in all honesty, my sexual interest may grow too high to ignore.

One of the miracles of program is that I have been able to enjoy my monogamous relationship for over a year. Honesty is one of my daily commitments, and Higher Power sits at the head of every table in all my relationships, including with my amazing girlfriend.

I recently met a woman at a S.L.A.A. meeting to whom I felt an attraction. When I saw my girlfriend later that day, I was critical of her and less loving.

I recognized that my budding interest in another woman had triggered me. This insight has led me to limit my interactions with women who I could potentially find intriguing.

I shared about this with another S.L.A.A. buddy, and recognized this pattern in other shares.

Since I commit to following Good Orderly Direction, I got behind this decision to respect my addictive weaknesses. I accept my



limitations, and am grateful to have been shown this before it cost me my relationship with my girlfriend.

It needs to be mentioned that I do not shun interactions with women, even those I find attractive. I simply take into account that I am a sex and love addict, and choose to deal with people who are less triggering to me.

I commit to another day of living in the solution: acceptance, gratitude, trust, approval, reality, and sanity.

— I.B, CALIFORNIA

# Actions For Safety In Meetings

**A**s a woman recovering in this program, you might think that I've been triggered by men in the program, but that is not what I'm writing about today. I was back in S.L.A.A. after a relapse, only this time was different — I had quit smoking.

A combination of cigarettes and acting out had kept me numb for years. Now I was in reality as if for the first time, feeling my feelings and experiencing other people in a new way. I've never been more present — and coming from a big time fantasy addict, that is a big deal.

Let me tell you about my mom. My mom has many qualities of a sex and love addict. She is charming and flirtatious with everyone. She objectifies men. She's a hopeless romantic. She wouldn't leave my dad despite his rage, alcoholism, and domestic violence. She enmeshes (you get the idea).

I love the women in S.L.A.A. — they are my sisters in recovery and we've all been through a lot



together. But sometimes some of the women remind me of my mom and I get triggered. And by triggered I mean I feel dizzy, sick, overwhelmed and I feel an urge to run away. This has happened at meetings and at fellowship.

So what actions am I taking to feel safe at meetings? I breathe. I look down at the ground or at people's shoes when they share. Lately I've been doing a meditation where I visualize a bubble of light that surrounds and protects me. That really helps.

I don't know where I would be without the love and support of the women in this program — I've learned so much from them! I do know that as I learn to use the tools of the program, I am better able to handle those moments when I get triggered.

— JENNIFER, LOS ANGELES

# Love Is The Answer

I have felt triggered or unsafe in meetings many times. But it has nothing to do with the person or situation, the cause is in my own mind. Triggered is a funny word to me — it implies that something outside of me is causing me to feel something or do something.

But really, I have learned through the steps that I always have choice and responsibility in how I see and act. Being triggered or feeling unsafe really isn't ever about anyone or anything in the room. And feeling "unsafe" really just means I'm feeling "afraid" and my feelings are my own responsibility.

Nobody "causes" them. I am not a victim of anyone or anything. I am an adult — a man (through the grace of God and this program of recovery).

For me, if I am having a suffering experience, a non-serene experience, then it's more about the limits of my ability to see with God's eyes — to know and do God's will.

When I see with the eyes of my Higher Power, fear leaves me. Then I am able to love the person and situation; I am able to have compassion and empathy. And I am able to have clear intuitive guidance on how to best proceed

for the benefit of everyone involved.

My thoughts can turn towards what I can do to be of service to the person. Often I pray for the person to be happy and free of their addiction and suffering.

Praying about something I am lusting after, judging, or scared of is one of the best ways to be free of the character defects that are causing me to feel ill at ease. Also, especially if I feel a lustful attraction to someone in the meeting, I just pray "Sister, may no harm come to you from me"... or "Sister, may you be free of harm and sufferings, may you and I both be close to God in our thoughts and actions."

It sounds funny, but it brings a spiritual love back into my heart and I am free of fear, obsession, compulsion, and power motives.

Adrenaline-fueled solutions don't work... serenity is my litmus test for action.

Once I am at peace and with God internally, then I'll be able to take right action to address the situation. But mostly "triggered" is just a synonym for "panic" or "terror." Decisions based on fear are doomed.

Love is the solution to every problem.

— JAMES W.

# Share space

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## One Month Sober

**I**t started back, way back, as far as she can remember. Something never felt quite right. And so her journey began to take flight. Living in her sister's shadow... never good enough...

Doors and walls covered lies and hid away the truth. He was always filled with beer and never noticed any of her fear. She started to search for the love she always wanted but never could find — not knowing then that the love needed to come from inside.

The anxiety and depression set in when she was young. The only way out was through acting out and she would not stop until she was completely numb. Sacrificing her dignity and all her self respect, she slowly began to live a pattern of neglect.

She tried to find it in a bottle or by snorting it up her nose. But most of the time she tried to find it by taking off her clothes — always running into someone's arms or in and out of their beds. But the problem was that you can't outrun the pain that is in

your own head.

Coming close to taking her own life on more than one occasion, she was trapped inside of this horrible addiction — not understanding what she was running from until it was said out loud. Her head started spinning in and out of a big ugly dark cloud. She hid all the things she'd done from those that mattered most — not realizing how much they knew and that they considered her lost.

She believed the lies she heard in her head and accepted them as normal — never fully grasping she could take a whole new form. Letting go of unhealthy relationships and saying goodbye to people wasn't easy you see; but it was the first step necessary to finally being free.

She worked really hard just trying to stay sane — reaching out to the right kind of people this time, never taking them in vain. So here I am with one month sober. Grieving my past but looking forward to a healthier and happier tomorrow.

— LIZ

# The Root Of My Addiction

*Editor's Note: This story mentions childhood sexual abuse and may be triggering to some.*

I have always believed that the start of all my relationship problems and dysfunctions was in the instant when my father molested me for the first time.

For so many years, I have focused on that precise moment when he first began using my body to feed something sick within his own mind as the pivotal moment when the stone was thrown into the water and the destructive ripple effect began.

Today, I realized that my love and sex addiction did not truly start when my father touched me that first time or even during any other of the times he molested me.

My love and sex addiction began the day my father stopped touching me. So significant was that ending that I can still recall, 36 years later, how his discovery

of signs of puberty on my body made him stop touching me.

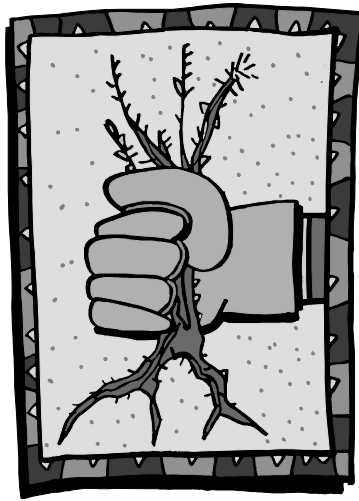
Today, I realized that it was in that precise moment that I felt rejected for the first time.

My father rejected me — a belief formed by a 12-year-old girl. This was a belief that would fill me with terror, anxiety and panic for the next four decades and be the undercurrent of why I fought so hard, so fiercely, so

desperately to make unworkable relationships work. The only way I was able to endure the three years of abuse was to create a story about my father. I made him my hero — a man who could do no harm. Even though he was touching me in places I thought were my own, I reasoned that those acts

upon my body were evidence of his love for me and the special, intimate bond between us. So over the years as the abuse continued, I stopped struggling. I accepted it as examples of love.

So when my father stopped touching me with such



abruptness and with no explanation, I felt hurt, ashamed, confused and deeply, deeply rejected.

And I spent the next 35+ years doing whatever I could to keep men from rejecting me. I never wanted to experience that pain of rejection again. But I was playing a losing battle because all of my partners had already rejected me – whether by being active addicts, alcoholics or emotionally unavailable – just like my dad.

My father was no hero. He was a weak, sick, addict – no different than my qualifier or my ex-husband of 17 years and the dozens of men whom I obsessed about during my teens and 20s in an attempt to get their love.

I created a belief when I was 12-years-old to explain the unexplainable. But I realize now that I don't know if that belief is even true. My father and I never spoke about it and I could not read his mind.

I don't know if my father rejected me. I honestly don't know why he did what he did. But I do know that for nearly all of my life I have been rejecting myself – losing myself in the quest for love, giving all my energy and attention to the partners with whom I so craved love, approval and appreciation.

I placed my partners as my Higher Powers, giving up my body, my mind and my precious spirit for a guarantee that they would always adore me and never reject me.

But they couldn't love me anymore or any differently than my father – even the ones who truly wanted to love me forever. That's why I picked them.

They were reflections of my father – and reflections of myself. I, too, have been unable to love – how could I? I've never known what real love is. But I am learning. Through S.L.A.A., I am learning.

– KIM K., LONG BEACH, CA

### **Publish Your Event**

Let us know about your group or intergroup sponsored events. We will help you get the word out to our readership. Contact info:

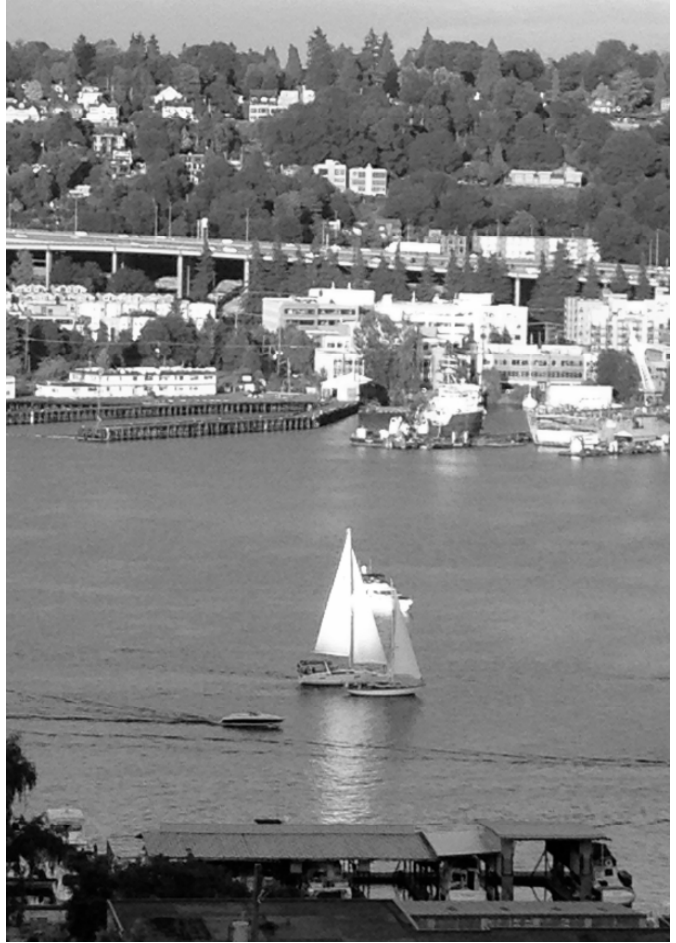
**<http://www.slaafws.org>**. Event notices must be received at least two months prior to the issue date.

## Grateful For The Journal

I am grateful that *the Journal* exists because whenever I am feeling antsy or like I want to act out, I can pick up my copy and it's got all I need to have my own S.L.A.A. meeting.

It's a "meeting in a magazine." I also enjoy it because it's the only place I know of where S.L.A.A. members from all over the world can share their experiences as well as their artwork.

For me, it's the epicenter of healing and recovery. It's amazing to think I could post something from Los Angeles in *the Journal*



**PHOTO BY JAMES E.**

and that it could help someone in another country. To me, that's powerful.

— ANONYMOUS, CA



## A note on upcoming topics

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The Journal is looking for submissions for a special issue on the topic of diversity. The goal of the issue is to shed light on the fact that our program includes people of all different backgrounds. Our shared recovery provides a safe, secure and supportive space for all appearances, races and ethnicities, gender and gender expressions and identities, sexualities and sexual orientations, family structures, abilities and disabilities, cultures and national origins, political beliefs and ideologies, religious tenets and spiritual preferences. Diversity in S.L.A.A. can also refer to the wide variety of bottom lines held by its members. The S.L.A.A. Preamble states that we "find a common denominator in our obsessive/compulsive patterns."

These obsessive/compulsive patterns may manifest themselves in the form of acting out, acting in (anorexia) or both. By highlighting our diversity we may be reminded of our ability to relate to the feelings brought on by sex and love addiction regardless of our differences. If you would like to submit a share for this special topic issue, please submit your story to [www.slaafws.org/cjc](http://www.slaafws.org/cjc).

Possible submissions could include: my "unusual" bottom line, fitting in at S.L.A.A.

when you never felt you fit in elsewhere, how has your cultural or ethnic background affected your addiction, finding healthy sexuality in a culture that glorifies sex (whatever that culture may be), how has religion played a role in your addiction and your recovery. Other variations on the topic of diversity are welcomed. This is a broad topic that can include a wide range of experiences. Let's celebrate the fact that we are part of a program that welcomes anyone, the only qualification being a desire to stop living out a pattern of sex and love addiction.

## *the Journal* themes and deadlines for 2013

Issue #	Theme	Question Of The Day (QOD)	Submission deadline (articles and QOD)
#144	Sex and Love Addiction: What is Real?	"How did you become aware that sex and love addiction was real?"	July 15, 2013
#145	Addiction in the Age of Technology	"How has technology affected your addict behaviors?"	Sept. 15, 2013

Submit your writing at [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org)

*Editor's Note: Tradition 10 states that S.L.A.A. has no opinion on outside issues. This is one member's concept of a Higher Power.*

Here's a prayer I wrote in case you all want to post/publish it:

DE PROFUNDIS CLAMO AD TE

6 June 2012

O Lord ... my God ... my Creator,  
I cry out to you in so much pain and anguish,  
From the awful depths of my addiction,  
That racks my soul and eats at it like a leprosy,  
From the deep despair of ever being healed,  
From the awful harm and pain I cause others.

Forgive me for all my life's wasted time,  
For squandering the talent you have given me,  
For not being present to my partner and lover,  
For not being present to the pain and suffering,  
Of those whom you have called me to serve,  
For diverting the power of your healing hand,  
Present through me, to them, who are in need.

Heal me, help me, guide me, raise me up,  
So I again can see the beauty of the morning,  
Feel the warmth your presence around me,  
Closer to me than I am to myself.

Let me heal pain, rather than cause it.  
Let me reflect your love, bring your love,  
Rather than deflect it, to others and myself.

Give me your all-embracing grace to do all this.  
Help me, make me, be open to your power to do this.  
Take hold of me, and wrap me in your arms.  
I so utterly know I cannot do it myself.  
I am so utterly humbled by my inadequacy,  
Driven to the deep bottom pit of my life,

Falling downward into annihilating darkness.

Teach me to surrender completely to you.  
Rather, give me that grace to do so that only you can give,  
So that the strong, elegant wings of your love will lift me up,  
And carry me ever forward, toward the gentle sunlight,  
Of your burning love that gives all and possesses nothing.

Empty me of my selfishness, my pride, my egoism,  
For these are far more powerful and destructive,  
Than the three temptations of the dessert,  
Bread, tempting you, and power.

Transform my deep despair into solid resolve to do better.  
And let me let you work through me, in me, and with me,  
Every moment and minute of the days that remain to me.  
Take possession of me.  
Pursue me like the Hound of Heaven.

Rescue me from this dreadful dark night of the soul.  
For doing your will is all I desire.  
It is all I need. It is all.  
All else is ashes.

— JIM H, AUSTIN, TX



## A New Path

**W**hen I was in the middle of my addiction, it felt like I was on a path leading into a dark scary forest with evil eyes lurking in the dark watching me.

The eyes were just waiting for me to make one wrong step or get foiled in a trap of my own lies so they could destroy me. I could stop walking along the path into the forest for a little while and sometimes even take a few steps back and then I would notice that my feet were heading along the path again into the darker part of the forest.

I could not stop walking no matter how hard I tried; I seem to have lost control of my steps. I swore to myself many times I would not go any further down that path into the dark forest. But I would betray my promise and continue to headlong follow the path.

Then one day I was hit in the face by something big which knocked me off my feet and left me lying on the path thinking that now the end is finally here. I even thought, maybe even hoping, that the end was near — for I do not think I can keep walking this



path anymore. For me it was getting caught using the work computer for purposes the company policies forbid us to do.

All the evidence was presented to me and I knew I was done for. Then when I got home I found out my wife was in the middle of plans to divorce me.

My job and my home were destroyed, there was nothing left. The path was truly at an end and the evil monster that I knew roaming near the edge of the dark forest had finally struck and was in the process of finishing me off.

On advice, I went to see a counselor and she showed me what my problems and issues were. But finally I knew my behavior had a name and there was a path of recovery already established and I could follow it. She told me it would not be easy and she started me down a path out of the deep dark forest. She provided me with some basic tools that helped me to stay on the path and helped me to walk out of the forest.

I was now able to stand up, dust myself off and keep the monster at bay and start down the new trail head. Seeing this new path, I noticed it was narrow and it did not seem that it had been used much, but it did head out of the dark forest and up a steep side of a mountain.

I took the narrow path even though its steps were hard at first to climb.

There were times when I slid back down part of the mountain, rocks seem to pop out of nowhere, and some of the footholds that I used would give way or were not really as stable for a foothold as I thought.

But I continued the climb and took each step as it was laid out in front of me. Sometimes the path would level off and become easy to walk but then soon again there was another steep side or

another pit hole waited for me. But as I climbed out of the deep dark forest I could see a new light shining that I never felt before and it gave me such strength.

After a while I noticed other people were also on this same path, some walking in front of me, others behind me and some at my side, in step with me.

They all encouraged me to keep walking even when the going got harder or seemed impossible.

We talked as we traveled this path and I noticed, though they each had a different story to tell, they all had entered the deep dark forest and found the narrow trail ahead up the mountain steps.

Then before I even realized it, I was encouraging others to keep climbing the mountain of recovery.

This new path is a steady climb uphill, but not as steep as when I started and not nearly as scary as the deep dark forest.

These are the S.L.A.A. Twelve Steps that I need and desire to climb because it leads to a light of a better life.

I continue to keep my feet on the path for many reasons that include my Higher Power, myself, family, friends, and a promising career.

— SCOTT B., CT

*Presented by The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous,  
Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc.*



**2013**



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

*Tuesday August 6 to Friday August 9, 2013*

**Conference** *Tradition 11*

**Theme** *“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, TV, film, and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow S.L.A.A. members.”*

**Hilton San Antonio Airport**

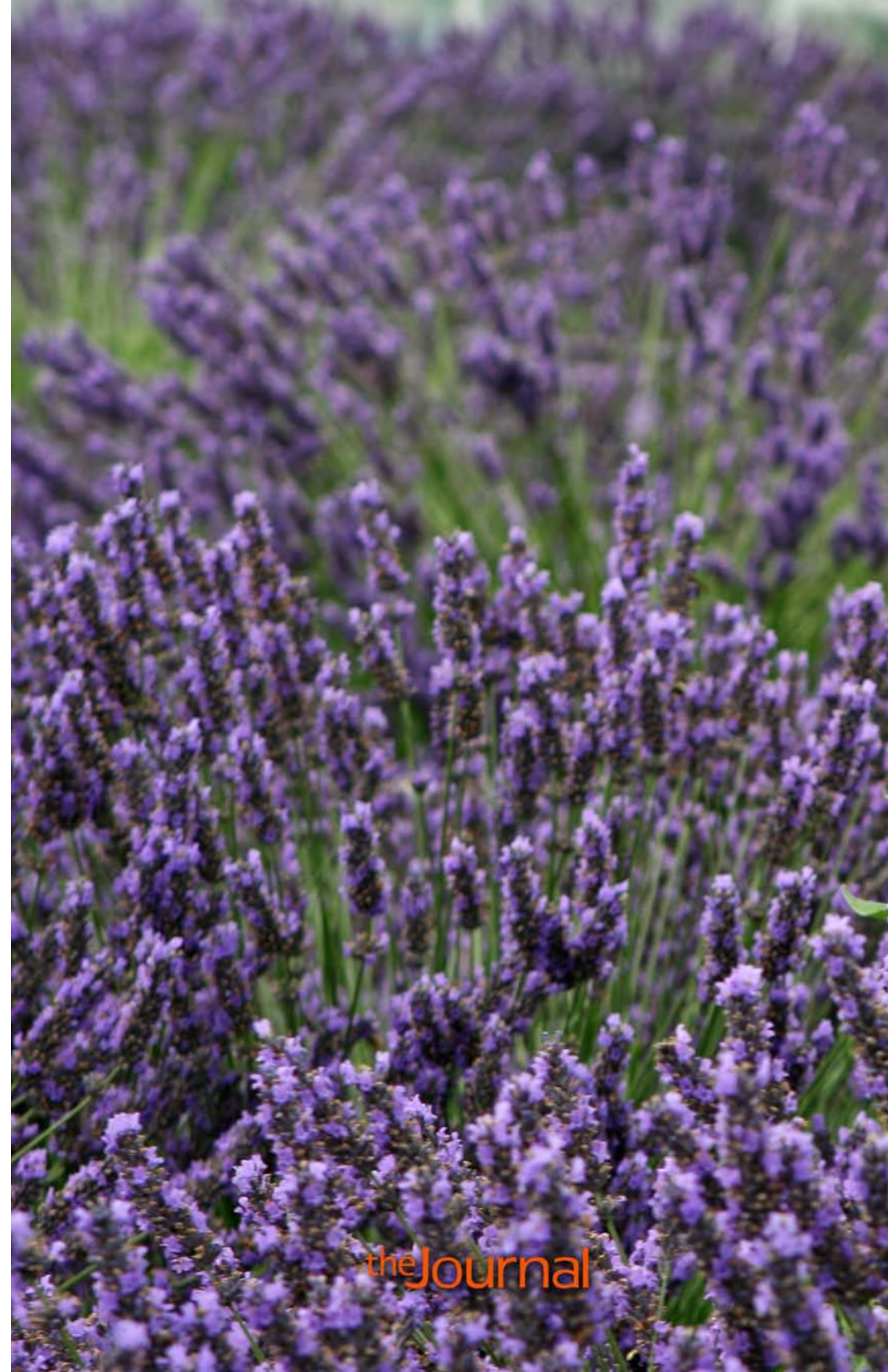
611 N.W. Loop 410 San Antonio, TX 78216

**210-340-6060**

# *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.





theJournal