



the Journal

Issue # 155

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Benefits of Service

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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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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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.

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader:

The theme of this issue is “The Benefits of Service.” I’m amazed that something I used to think of as a burden (service work) has actually become a boost to my creativity and purpose in life. (I only thought of it that way in the past in order to avoid doing it.) I didn’t know it would be so easy and fulfilling. I heard someone say on a conference call, at 7:30 a.m., that it lifts them up to speak to service-oriented people. I whole-heartedly agree! There’s some element to it that makes us forget that we’re supposedly doing a chore. Maybe it’s helping the fellow sufferer or being reminded that we are not alone.

It says in the Basic Text that through service we begin to learn the true meaning of love (see the quote on the meditation book in this issue-page 35.) That has happened for me and many others in the S.L.A.A. program. Hopefully, their stories will inspire you to get involved with service!

P.S. If you get a chance, contact the Conference Literature Committee for a copy of the draft Service pamphlet– It’s fun!

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

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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Question of the Day

& Answers from Yesterday

“WHAT BLESSINGS/BENEFITS HAVE YOU RECEIVED FROM SERVICE?”

I always say: Service is sobering. It gets me out of my head. When I am busy being of service to you, I am no longer thinking of me (ism: I, self, me) and of all of my little plans and designs that are going to get me into trouble. Today, my life is pretty simple; I am peaceful, and I am not up in my head too much. I'm just enjoying life and being me, instead of thinking about me.

— **Anonymous**

I started in service when I first entered recovery because I was a people-pleaser. I continue to serve because it keeps me close to the Fellowship, gives me an opportunity to give back, and ensures my sobriety for another day.

— **Chris, San Diego, CA**

A few weeks after I started going to S.L.A.A. I was offered a service commitment to prepare coffee and set up for a meeting. When I got involved in service, I felt more like a part of the group and it became my home group. This rather simple service before and after meetings helped me to get to know the people and ask others for help which is critical for me.

— **Sverrir G., Iceland**

Being of service is one of the few things that gives me the authentic feelings of love, validation, and worthiness that I've always longed for. It gets me out of myself and the bad neighborhood in my head and always makes me feel better. And the best part about being of service is that my lifetime of dark and painful experiences finally mean something, finally have value, finally bring good into the world, so my life actually isn't a complete waste, like I've thought for so long.

— **Charlene, Los Angeles**

In doing service, I am seeing that there are ones who have gone before me, just as there will be others who come after me, doing the service of the program. This helps me to put my part in perspective. My world has expanded. It is not all about protection of my inner self at all costs. I get up each day and pray to live through my heart in all actions and deeds. In doing so, my connection to others is opening up and my empathy for others' pain is becoming apparent. I know I cannot relieve any other person's pain. But what I can do for the world (and myself) is to show up with clarity in my soul. I know that I can be a support, a lending ear and the one who finally says prayers for others rather than selfishly making dictates to my Higher Power.

— **Lois T.**

Sobriety. First and foremost sobriety. Doing service has kept my focus on the message of recovery, and has helped me better understand the spiritual message of the 12-Step program. Doing service in various ways has shifted my focus from being self-centered to being of service to others. This is done both actively and passively. I share my words and actions, and I listen to and learn from others who do service in other ways than I do.

Service has trained me in helping others for the right reasons, not as a means of escaping my own problems or of losing myself, but as a way of becoming a vessel for my Higher Power's intention with me and the world. It is my job to carry the message and the love of God, as I understand God, to others. In service I get an opportunity to do this, in the Fellowship, in my family and in society at large. Service is an efficient way of keeping my focus on the right things, and of doing them for the right reasons. Thank you for your service! It helps keep me sober.

— **Fredrik L., Uppsala, Sweden**

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “What blessings/benefits have you received from service?” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: Issue #156 — Character Assets — “Describe your experience with character assets. Are there program tools that you use to help you discover/develop your character assets?” — The deadline for submissions is 7/15/15. Issue #157 — Moving from Victim into Responsibility — “How were you able to discover and move from victimhood into responsibility?” — The deadline for submissions is 9/15/15. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

I have become more confident and felt a part of the Fellowship in a deeper way.
— **Denise, China**

A feeling of inclusion. Discovering new facets of my personality. Compassion for myself and others.
— **Duane, Oakland, CA**

Too many to count! Self-respect, hope, peace, serenity, the ability to laugh again and so much more!
— **Deborah, Sacramento, CA**

Service gives me relationships and the rewards of integrity for doing some hard work.
— **Nancy G., San Diego**

Service has given me the honor to be able to be with addicts from around the world — learning, growing and maturing in business format, plus learning the process S.L.A.A. runs on. And I got to meet the F.W.S. office staff!
— **Danette, Seminole, FL**

I have recently learned that the best way to rid myself of my selfishness is to be selfless. So giving freely of my time to the Fellowship is a great way for me to be selfless.
— **Stephen F., CT**

By doing service, I have seen the diversity of others and learned that what someone may appear to be on the “surface” is not exactly who they are underneath.
— **Melissa K., Philadelphia**

Service has strengthened my understanding of my own addiction and it has given me a sense of community.
— **Anonymous, Seattle**

Service has been the cornerstone of my continued connection to the program. Even when I have been unsure, it has kept me coming back and fed my sense of higher purpose.
— **Madeline S., Los Angeles**

I always feel much more sober and in touch with God after an ABM (Annual Business Meeting). I know God is with me when I do His work.
— **Alice D., Los Angeles**

Service allows me to understand the power of our Fellowship, which deepens my commitment to my recovery and to the recovery in my community.
— **Anonymous, Seattle**

Service is done by those who are serious about their own recovery. Those are the people who I want to be around. The blessing is forming healthy relationships with sober people.
— **Anonymous**

Service is sobering! If I don't do service, I won't stay sober. It's just that simple! I must give it away to keep it.
— **Anonymous**

Humility, patience, cooperation, practice, meeting people and increasing my community, growth. Service has helped with my co-dependency and detachment, self-care, and ability for selflessness and unconditional love, and practice at healthy relationships.
— **Doan, New York**

An Opportunity for Healing

The ABM in 2014 presented an opportunity for personal healing for me. It was a very Higher Power-driven set of events. It wasn't even a thought in my mind to ever go back to Houston (where the 2014 ABM took place).

When I was nominated to be a delegate for the 2014 ABM, I had a little bit of anxiety about going to Houston but there was also a desire to go there. (In my childhood hometown just outside of Houston, I experienced trauma.) I'm not sure what compelled me to accept the nomination because that meant I would have to go back to the scene of the trauma. I just had that compulsion to go there and it turned out to be very healing for me and others — my ex-neighbor in Texas and even the ABM delegate from Connecticut.

My memory of events: My mom was widowed at age 24 and later met and married a man who was thirteen years older than her.

Being a very jealous and possessive man, he was imprisoned for seven years for killing his first wife because she was going to leave him.

My mom met him while he was in jail. He wrote her love poems and paid her a lot of attention. She was introduced to him by somebody in authority in the sheriff's department. They said he was there for the wrong reasons and that he was going to be pardoned. She bought into the fantasy that he was going to take care of her and rescue her from her life. He got out and they got married and he adopted me. He was my dad for 7 years and my mom adopted his two youngest kids.

Quickly the fantasy got shattered by the reality of who he was and how bad his jealousy was. All of these events took place



in the 70s. If mom took too long in the grocery store, he would call the store and have her paged over the intercom and ask her what she was doing because it was taking too long.

He was really obsessed with her activities. But being the positive person she was, any uncomfortable scenarios like this were met with joke-making to lighten the mood. So we just kind of detached from the painful feelings and replaced them with

happy numbing feelings.

We moved to Texas because he wanted to get us away from our family in Ohio and he was opening up a business near Houston in a small town called Tomball. Because my dad was spending most of his time going back and forth between two businesses in two states, my mom befriended our neighbor.

They started a company together cleaning out homes before people moved in.

My mom lost weight and went from a size 18 to a size 9 within a few months. She started getting confident in herself and really started doing for herself. That was not okay with my dad.

She was secretly trying to get an exit strategy out of the marriage. He found the paperwork for it.

We had some drama happen and I was sent up to my bedroom. Our neighbor came home and my bedroom window was right over their driveway. I asked them to call the cops. They did. By the time the police got there, my dad had nailed the doors shut. In the 70's in Texas the thinking was that it was his property and he didn't have to let us out. He was allowed to keep us locked in the house. And so the cops had to talk him into letting us out. When we left the house, I didn't have any shoes on; he was taking all of my mom's money and jewelry and everything of value from her. Previously that day he had forced her to clean out all of the money from all of their bank accounts.

We left there with nothing and she went and filed a restraining order. She had fingerprints on her neck from the earlier drama.

Because the cops originally pulled up to our neighbor's house, the neighbors had to deal with the shame of the cops coming to their house and all of our neighbors talking about it.

And they had to say "No, no, no. It wasn't us. It was our neighbors that needed the cops."

Later, when the divorce proceedings were taking place, my dad refused to show up at the courthouse. He made it difficult for my mom to show up because he put sugar in her car's gas tank.

We got a ride from a friend. We went out to eat for Chinese food and I was upset because I was 10 years old at the time and didn't like Chinese food so I told my mom I hated her. After coming back from the courthouse, where my mom got

everything because my dad didn't show up, our friend drove us over to the house to try and shut our garage door. My dad had left the door open and taken the remote control so we couldn't close it.

When we got there my dad was waiting for us with a gun. He had broken into the house.

He said, "Welcome home, sweetheart." My mom froze in fear. She started screaming and I ran and told our friend in the garage that my dad was there and he had a gun and was going to kill my mom. We both ran down the driveway. I heard the gunshot and my mom screaming and I kept running to the neighbor's house (the ones who had called the cops previously).

I saw our friend get shot. My stepdad killed my mom and our friend who died 2 months later. He went to prison in Texas in 1978 after they found him in Ohio. I went to live with family in Ohio.

I remember thinking that I'll never get in the same situation as my mother because of what I witnessed, so no one could get that over on me.

But when I was 30, I ended up dating a guy who had gone to prison a few times and had gang tattoos. I thought they were sexy. When I broke up with this guy, he laughed at me and said, "You can't go anywhere. You're my woman. We're going to get married. You're mine and you're only mine."

And it just kind of hit me that I was in the exact same situation that my mom was in and I was dumfounded that I could end up there. I went to therapy and eventually found S.L.A.A. and really started to work the program.

I got heavily involved in the program in 2012, got a sponsor and started working the Steps and listening to everything my sponsor said. Even though I was non-theist at the time, I was able to connect to a Higher Power. I had a spiritual awakening,

started to sponsor other people and got involved at the intergroup level.

In the summer of 2014, the Los Angeles Intergroup delegate couldn't go to Houston. They found a replacement and then the replacement was moving and he couldn't go either. So just a few weeks before the ABM, I got nominated. I had a lot of time off from work that I had to use up and two extra days for community service and so I agreed to go.

I knew it was in Houston and I hadn't been back there except once. I had a little bit of anxiety accepting that nomination but I knew that being of service was more important. So I ignored the anxiety I was feeling and went with the Higher Power-thinking of, "I have this time off. I can do it. It's not going to be a hardship for me." And I was taught not to say "no" to service if I can do it.

So I accepted it. When I got there I didn't realize that I was going to have the anxiety stay with me and kind of sit on my heart.

I had some thoughts that it might be nice to go back there where my mom died. I didn't know what that was about, but I felt a pull to go back there. I asked my ABM mentor when I first got to Houston if there was going to be any free time in the schedule.

He said that there wasn't a lot of free time and that delegates were encouraged to fully participate in everything. I agreed with that so I just abandoned thoughts of going 30 miles away to my hometown. But on the second or third night the schedule opened up and we finished some meetings quickly.

We had extra time and there was a delegate from Connecticut who really wanted to go buy some cowboy boots.

I said, "Well, I kind of want to make a trip up North." I had talked to her the night before about the fact that my mom

passed away from a S.L.A.A.-related situation and that I wanted to go back to where we lived. But I didn't want to go back to where the trauma took place by myself. I offered to take her to buy boots if she'd go with me.

We rented a car and drove up there. The closer we got, the more emotions I was feeling. I'm not really good at reading my emotions. I'm really good at detaching from them. I was feeling confused, but also compelled to move on and go there.

So we got there and the delegate from Connecticut was really supportive. She was checking in with me to see how I was feeling. I was sharing how I felt about it. I said I was nervous.

I was looking at the house where my mom died and the neighbor's house where I ran and hid behind their back fence while my dad made his getaway. I learned at the time that he had made plans to take me to Brownsville, Texas and then Mexico. He had rented an RV and packed all my things but couldn't find me when I ran. Thankfully, that didn't happen.

Now here I was, 30 years later, looking at the neighbor's house and wondering, "Do they still live there?" I debated whether or not to go knock on the door. So I rang the front doorbell. No one answered. I remember telling the delegate from Connecticut that they never use their front door. I wondered if I should go around the back.

So I went around the back and kind of hemmed and hawed. I sat there and just felt uncomfortable because if it wasn't them and I'm at their back door, it felt odd. And there was a car in the driveway. So I decided against it. But, as we were leaving, my neighbor pulled up in the driveway—the same neighbor—and she recognized me right away.

She got out of her car and said, "Oh, my God." We talked and I

was shaking and feeling faint and I could tell she had a lot of emotion too. She invited us in.

Everything looked exactly the same. We sat there, along with the delegate from Connecticut, at her kitchen table, as she and my mom used to do. They were best friends even though we only lived in Texas eight months. It was a surreal moment because it felt like no time had really passed, only the reality was that I was an adult in my 40's now, not a ten year old kid. My neighbor had

I kind of felt like in that instant that that's why I was asked to go to Houston and that's why I was compelled to go to the place where my mom died — to give my neighbor and her whole family that peace of mind.

been in her 20's and was now in her 50's. She shared with me how all of that trauma that my family went through impacted her, her husband's, her children's lives and even the baby that they had.

She became socially anorexic because she loved my mother so much and couldn't understand how somebody with such a great spirit could be involved in a relationship that was so fatal.

She revealed that to this day her whole family has been effected. Not only were their friendships effected, but they always had a fear that my stepdad was going to get out of jail and come find them. They had to go live in a safe house after my mom died because he had threatened them too. He was angry because

they had helped her.

I was able to tell her that he had passed away in prison in Ohio in 2003. I was kind of shocked that they were still to this day feeling fear about my dad. When my neighbor heard this news, she sighed a huge sigh with her whole body and a tear started coming down her cheek. She said, "Oh, my God. My husband's going to be so relieved."

This statement was really impactful and the delegate from Connecticut took a big sigh, too. My neighbor's whole body released this fear that she's been holding onto all these years. And I kind of felt like in that instant that that's why I was asked to go to Houston and that's why I was compelled to go to the place where my mom died — to give my neighbor and her whole family that peace of mind. And then she looked at me and said, "Are you happy?"

And the way she said it felt like it was my mom asking me that because it was even a different voice coming from her.

I don't know if it was my imagination or if it really happened, but it was as if I was really answering my mom.

I really didn't want to lie to my mom and one of my bottom lines is that I'm not allowed to lie to myself or others. I take my bottom lines seriously and I think about them all of the time. I just remember feeling the pressure and thinking, "I have to answer this honestly and openly and be vulnerable as if I'm giving my mom an answer."

I said, "Well, I'm the healthiest I've ever been when it comes to being in relationships with people. And I am happy. I have my moments. But yeah, I'm happy." And that was the truth.

We were all in tears and it was a good experience. I got to find out from her perspective what it felt like living next to a family that was in complete obsession

and living in fantasy. My neighbor and I got to heal together.

There's a special bond between us. I heard people call it trauma bonding but there's also this love we have for each other and I could feel that too. The whole time I felt very supported just because the delegate from Connecticut was there and I

wasn't alone. I had the support of someone I knew would understand because she was there, in enough pain to be in S.L.A.A. and had enough recovery to take the commitment to go the ABM.

There's something to that that qualifies her to be by my side and it felt like very strong support and very

compassionate. We only stayed for maybe 15 or 20 minutes. But I've always wanted to be able to connect with my mom and never felt like that happened until that moment. It felt really good to experience and I was able to give that family peace of mind that they never had.

— **Suzanne, Los Angeles**

An Incredible Transformation



Service to the program has led to an incredible transformation in my recovery. I'm only 6 months into recovery, but I started seizing the opportunity to be the speaker at meetings the minute I had the sobriety to qualify. Being vulnerable and honest in front of my home groups has led to tremendous personal growth. I wasn't rejected. I was accepted unconditionally!

Feeling this unconditional love reflected back has meant so much to my self esteem. At the first couple of meetings I was so nervous I could only read verbatim from prepared text.

Now I can speak completely from the heart without the least bit of hesitation. Doing service by being the speaker forces me to reflect deeply on my recovery so I can give the most inspiring message of my experience,

strength and hope.

I gain so much from speaking, plus it's a great tool to keep me sober. I don't want to let myself or my group down. The self confidence I have gained by being speaker has even helped me professionally. Recovery is performing miracles in all areas of my life. I owe my life to this program!

— **Craig G., Massachusetts**

Meeting Becomes More Meaningful

The other night I attended an out of town meeting that I have occasionally been able to go to. I sat down and a guy sat down next to me, who we will call “James.” James apparently was deaf. He was warmly greeted by the person who was sitting on his other side, and it was clear they were program buddies.

James pulled out his laptop, and gave it to his friend, whom for the sake of this story, we will call “Paul.” Once the meeting began, Paul quickly typed out in real time what was spoken so that James could participate. This included a shorthand for the serenity prayer, the steps, and all of the usual readings.

When it came time for the

speaker, Paul became lightning fast on the keyboard, and typed out the speaker’s share in its entirety. As the meeting moved into general sharing, Paul continued to type out more-or-less verbatim each person’s share as they went around the room. He would type “Mike”, and then type out Mike’s share. Next was “Tom,” and he typed out Tom’s share. This went on for each person who shared.

When it was time for Paul, the typist, to share, he and James handed me the laptop, indicating that I would now be typing out Paul’s share. I was momentarily overwhelmed. I couldn’t be a fast typist, and I had just met this guy. I was now being entrusted with meeting content for another

individual.

Suddenly there was no time to object, Paul started sharing, and I started typing to the best of my ability. It was a rough go as I found myself falling behind, making typos and otherwise floundering. All I could think of was concentrating on what was being shared and transcribing it as faithfully as I could. I got through it, and typed at the end an apology for my slow typing and mistakes. I got the sense that none was needed. I made myself available to be of service, and had no idea that I would be doing so that night. It was one of the more meaningful meetings that I have been to.

— D.B.

A Whole Lot More to Offer Than I Ever Dreamed

Being of service allows me to be seen and heard. It gives me a sense of belonging and of being of value to the group.

It lets me see that I *do* have something to offer (besides my sexuality).

Growing up, I was surrounded by addiction, chaos and violence. On a good day, I was treated like I was invisible. On a bad day, I was rotten to the core and I was blamed for all of the family’s

problems. As a coping strategy, I withdrew further and further into myself, into the anorexia side of my addiction. I was lonely and isolated. I believed I was defective and that I was doomed to be an outsider forever.

Until, that is, I discovered that I could use my sexuality to get

attention from boys. Finally, I could feel seen and heard, at least for a moment. I used what I thought was the one and only thing I had to offer, my sexuality, to get attention and validation. It allowed me to put a band-aid on that painful isolation and loneliness. Of course, as with any

addiction, over time, I needed more and more, just to feel okay. Meanwhile, the underlying anorexia grew and grew, leaving me even more lonely and isolated. And it all started with those mistaken core beliefs that I formed way back in childhood, that I'm invisible at best and rotten to the core at worst.

In recovery, however, I'm finally beginning to change those faulty core beliefs. And being of service in my program has played a HUGE role in that change. When I volunteer for a service commitment, I get to try out being seen and heard, within the safe space of the rooms, and begin to learn that I actually do

have something valuable to offer. Even when I don't perform my commitment perfectly, nobody comes to yell at me or punish me. In fact, they even come up to me and thank me for my service. Even something as simple as setting up chairs is still a valuable contribution to the group, and stepping up to do it shows me that I, too, am a valuable part of the group.

I've held many service positions, in many different meetings, during the few short years since I started S.L.A.A., eventually working my way up to be the co-secretary of one of the biggest meetings in the city. It's my most "visible" service

position to date. And sometimes it still scares the crap out of me. Those old faulty beliefs still sometimes rear their ugly heads and say "Who the hell do you think you are?! What are you doing sitting up there?!" But every time I show up anyway, follow through on my commitments, and face down those beliefs, they get a little quieter.

I don't have to do it perfectly. I just have to show up. I get to be seen and heard and I get to learn that I have a whole lot more to offer than I ever dreamed of.

—Mona

Giving and Receiving - The Lie of the One Bedroom Condo

I once knew a man who hadn't masturbated for many years. He got on this path as a power play against his wife where he felt that if he didn't have to depend upon her for his sexual needs, she wouldn't have power over him. To no one's surprise, the relationship ended in an amenable break-up; so did the subsequent relationship he had after that.

This story shaped my sobriety definition and I realized early on that simply not masturbating did not define my spiritual growth. (For the record, masturbation is on my middle circle as it is not compulsive enough for me to put it on my bottom line and it isn't satisfying enough to be on my top line). Rather, my sobriety was a function of things more intangible that includes giving away a part of my heart I would rather keep for myself, relinquishing control, and learning to serve a person who I want to love and hate at the same time.



I have joked with my wife (my sponsor told me to do this no more) saying that I would never leave her for another woman but I might leave her for a one bedroom condo that was ordered nice and neat, with the minimal material goods that I need. In my addictive head, I like to see my wife as the author of chaos. She creates the problems and I have to fix them. She buys stuff and I have to order it in our cluttered house. She dreams a dream and I have to pay the bill.

My sponsor says that my addict loves to believe I'm in a world of chaos. It whispers in my ear that I am drowning and that no one is listening. My addict spins a world of unmanageability because if I buy into this, I begin to drift to fear and then to anger and then to resentment and then to self-pity and then to entitlement and finally to contempt. When I reach contempt, there are no restraints and I can do whatever my addict wants.

Perhaps part faith tradition and part survival, I began to realize that I needed intimacy with this body breathing in the same bedroom. The fantasy that she would disappear and then I could live the life I wanted was somehow a disastrous lie.

It began slowly but I started to realize that she just wanted to be included. Her parents died when she was young and she was never quite fully included in the uncle and aunt's home in which she was raised. I balked at first because I thought I was so much smarter. The inefficiency of coming home to pick her up and her bogus claim that it would "save gas" was so illogical when I could just meet her in town. Just as intrusive was her desire to accompany me into town, turning my half hour errand into three with all the

extra stops. Such ideas infuriated me and I would quietly push the anger down inside and dream of the next business trip.

Somehow, in the program, I began to figure out that blessing her with what she needed was somehow what I needed. It was my only hope from the peril of isolation and the lie of the one bedroom condo. I became open to the things we could do together, the ways I could include her, the times I could be present. Saturday trips to the Farmer's market and the grocery store were good. Having talks after breakfast became enjoyable. Cleaning up the kitchen together (instead of efficiently doing it on my own) was not as unreasonable as I had once thought. At first, I "acted as if."

The more intimacy grew, the more she seemed to get better. She seemed less sick, less troublesome, less unreasonable and angry, though in reality, I was the one who was really learning what it was like to be normal and healthy.

My wife has a passion for real foods nutrition. She got certified in that area and I was supportive in that I took vacation time to drive her to her classes in another city. I would leave her and go to a baseball game. Over some years, a voice in my head told me that I should become certified, too. I don't have the passion she has but I do have an interest. I realized as we lived in our empty nester years in a larger house with precocious pets that defining the next era of our lives must involve doing something in a joined universe.

I would go into my office to type out my short stories. She would go into hers and read about good fats and the effects of processed foods. I had this growing conviction that my

destiny was not to be the next Flannery O'Conner and that our relationship needed to be more than passing in the hallway on the way to doing our own thing.

I got certified. It meant the world to her and we talk often of plans of how we are going to use this common interest together and what the next stage of our lives may mean.

Recently, things shifted at work and my addict told me I was drowning again and no one was listening — especially my wife. I would come home from work farther and farther behind in shell shock only to have to worry about how we were going to save money for the dishwasher and improvements on her computer that she can never figure out to use correctly, and how I was going to carve out time and energy to plant the garden this year. She was no help. Her nutrition didn't bring in money. Her skill level couldn't do the hard work. She didn't understand the complexities of working in the real world. She doesn't have a real job.

That night, we got into an argument about nothing and I began to scream abuses at her telling her how worthless she was. She left the house so I could cool down and return to my senses. When she returned I apologized for my part and we went to bed.

The next day, we talked — mostly she talked and I listened. She told me that the incident was abuse and it was. She told me it can't happen again and it can't. But then she told me about the struggles I was having, about my good progress in recovery and developing my spiritual life, about the fears I carry in my heart, about the struggles and uncertainties I have with my health, and about the reasons why I felt like I was

drowning. She told me everything about myself and then she told me that she knew that I love her.

In tears I began to realize that the one person who would never listen and who would never understand me and who I longed to trade in for the one

bedroom condo was in fact the one person who knew me better than I knew myself and was my greatest advocate.

I would never have known this had I kept up a power play fight to the end. I would never have learned who she really was had I never learned how to love

the other. But in being willing to give away some of my hopes and dreams but mostly my control, I found someone who I never knew existed — someone who actually wanted to love me back.

— **By Anonymous, Boone, NC**

The Blessings and Benefits of Service in S.L.A.A. “Wowed” by the Annual Business Conference/Meetings


What a great theme for *the Journal* during this time of year when the Annual Business Conference/Meeting (ABC/M) and worldwide service are seen in action and at their peak. Everyone shows up at the ABC/M; the Board of Trustees, Delegates from around the world, observers, local volunteers and the F.W.S. Office staff. It was at the ABC/M in

Boston in July 2003 where I had my first “wow” experience.

Originally, I was going to the ABC/M as an observer because I wanted to keep my 3 years of sobriety and to be around others with longer sobriety. As it turned out, the newly formed Intergroup in my city voted to send a delegate. I didn’t know the details but was willing to go and represent my Intergroup, so I changed my status from

observer to delegate (I had to send the minutes where this was voted upon as proof).

I read the Conference Service Manual 2002 and all the materials that I received by mail and sometimes by email. I was provided a service sponsor for the ABC/M and drove the five hours to Boston. That first Tuesday was a killer and I went to bed by 9pm with a headache after a full day of introductions,



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instructions and information: Couldn't even stay up for the panel of speakers on a Tradition. Yet I could never have imagined the time, effort, and expertise of so many members coming together to serve and to carry the message worldwide.

Of course, being a good workaholic (aka service addict) and enthusiast, I joined three Conference Committees (CSTC, CHRC, CICC) and within a few months was a non-board member of a board committee.

However, in the process of learning how to date, I slipped on a bottom-line behavior in May 2004. I had to give up all service commitments, telling my sponsees and Intergroup that I had to get back to the basics-Steps 1, 2 and 3.

Luckily, the *Renewal of Sobriety* pamphlet was in draft form and nearing approval by the ABC/M 2004. I worked that draft pamphlet at least three times before surrendering at a much deeper level to the fact that I am truly a sex and love addict and quite powerless. I recommitted to the behaviors on my bottom-line and reset my sobriety date.

For the next year, I focused on sobriety and learning to date in a responsible manner. I performed service for my home group and Intergroup. In 2005 I went to the ABC/M as a delegate again and stayed for the International Recovery Conference (IRC) in San Francisco where I was "wowed" again. This time though, I had been humbled by my slip and joined only one Conference Committee (CMRC). A few months later, I was approved to serve on a human resources board subcommittee. This was just before the office moved from Boston to San Antonio.

Some of the blessings of service: I have learned to have better boundaries around

service commitments and what emotional sobriety means. I have learned to get out of the way for the group conscience and I have learned how to rally a group conscience. I have learned to express my opinion in a safe way. I have learned to listen to what others are saying. I have learned to accept differences of opinion. I have learned I could change my opinion after hearing other opinions. I have learned to be part of the solution. I have learned to stay sober while doing service. I have learned that the S.L.A.A. 12 Steps, 12 Traditions, 12 Concepts and 12 Recommended Guidelines for Dealing with Media are spiritual principles I can trust and live by in and out of the rooms.

My two year commitment on the CMRC was finishing mid-2007 and the committee membership was down to a committee of one, me. I contacted the board liaison (each Conference Committee is assigned a board member as a resource) to ask what to do. I was told that committees come and go; it is up to the Conference and Conference Charter Committee (CCC) whether it would continue after my departure. This was encouraging as I didn't have to save a committee. It was about trusting the process.

A new board subcommittee was started by a new board chair called the Intergroup Call Squad in August 2007. The goal was to have regular direct contact by phone with an Intergroup representative (rep). Every 2-3 months a Call Squad member would contact 4-8 of the 50 Intergroup reps worldwide to communicate the latest news about the Fellowship. As per protocol I was approved by the board to serve on the Call Squad. By November I was approved as a non-board member of the Board

Governance and Nominating Committee (BGNC). In March 2008 I attended my first board call and served on the board until August 2013. That was another six ABC/Ms to attend and I continued to be "wowed" by the service of others all over the world.

Serving on the Board of Trustees of S.L.A.A. was like no other service experience and I am so glad I worked my way down the ladder (remember the inverted triangle: groups at the top, the board at the bottom). Serving on the board was like going back to university to get a degree in non-profit organizations. It included business management, accounting and financial aspects of running the office, and the importance of the legal entity known as an educational charity as well as carrying the message via the office that filled and shipped literature orders. I couldn't get enough information, it seemed, and had to share it with everyone.

Along the way I found myself in the company of some very dedicated trusted servants who became friends. There is a love and understanding that develops when involved in service over time. I also learned the spiritual principle of rotation of service...to rotate out and not hold on to my way of doing things and to appreciate the service others are doing.

Today I hope I am the elder stateswoman and not the bleeding deacon; and, for that I am grateful. If you have never been to an ABC/M, an IRC for that matter, I highly recommend that you attend for a day, either as an observer, delegate, volunteer or participant. I assure you that no matter how or when you go, you will be "wowed".

— Rita H., Montreal

God Does Not “Keep Score”

I believe that I and my ancestors have some gene in our bloodline called the “addictive” gene. We can stop one compulsion easily enough and pick up another in a blink of an eye.

I grew up in the land of the manipulators. The “shell game” was always an active endeavor. Who was on top? Who “owed” me? Who had the most horrible recent “trauma” to milk for days on end...playing the victim role? These seemed like life’s BIGGEST questions when I was a child.

Also, I had a sex addict mother who hid her addiction behind “romance novels” and “religion.” She spoon-fed me the romance addiction by pretending to buy the “romance novels” for me. I had a father who lost his literal “self” in the marriage and was jumping ship every chance he could get to go “do service” for others in the church and in the community.

So I grew up with very low self-esteem because of being totally ignored by both parents and milking my fears with the “romance novels” and hoping like heck — like the books implied — that “someday my prince would come to ‘save me’” bullsh*t.

So to make myself “feel good” and “look good,” I tried to be the good girl and I grew up being an active volunteer in the community. I do not attend church since my view of religion was and is severely impaired by my mother’s ruse of covering up her addiction.

What I kept doing was the definition of insanity. I kept volunteering big chunks of time



to various non-profits to try to fill that void — that void where self-esteem is supposed to be in the psyche. I was constantly keeping score of all the good karma points I was accumulating. Yet, it really did not make me feel good for any length of time. So I kept going back — trying to volunteer, campaign for worthy causes and donate funds from time-to-time. I did all this to try to get that “high” of self-esteem — to somehow “prove” to myself that I was “worthy”, that I was “lovable” and not just some dirt bag piece of sh*t (that I truly felt like inside).

Since my introduction into several 12-step meetings (I have multiple addictions coming out of the system I grew up in). I have come to realize no amount of time put into service to any one person, place or thing can help me increase my self-esteem. That work is very well addressed when

I do the 12-steps. It is also addressed when I attend S.L.A.A. meetings that show me a healthy model of intimacy by listening and by sharing with total honesty, true commitment and willingness to learn.

It has dawned on me that I was the only one keeping “score” all those years when I volunteered. Also, the reason the “feel good” part did not last was because I was attaching a hell of a great deal of EXPECTATIONS to my paltry efforts to somehow “fix” this massive lack of self-esteem that was buried deep within my psyche.

I now understand that the best service I can provide and the times I have true lasting effects is when “I show up” time and time again — when I consistently work the 12-steps to bring clarity and understanding to the “mind games” of the past.

Also, I show up to show my

fellow travelers on this journey that we all count. I need every last one of them to keep my head and heart on healthy paths. Any service I can do to make it easier on all of us is worth it. I show that we all count by my efforts to love them unconditionally without expecting anything in return. I am finally seeing what is modeled through my service duties. I am learning my own methods of how (for the first time) to nurture myself.

Slowly, the service of giving without any strings attached is showing me that this is how I should love myself. No other relationships can truly happen for me until I come to a place of full acceptance of myself and understanding there is no clinging, no keeping score, no head/mind games in unconditional love.

— Lois T., Ohio

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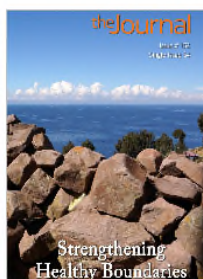
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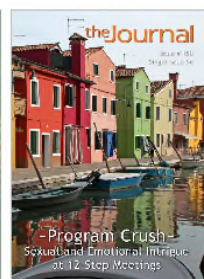
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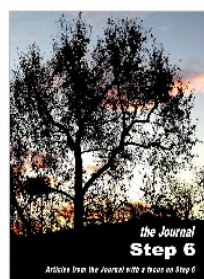
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Share space

My Story of Recovery

When I came to S.L.A.A. in 2004, I didn't know I was addicted to sex and love. My sponsor in CoDA at that time, suggested gently that I might benefit from S.L.A.A. meetings— and that maybe for a start, I should write my history of sex and love relations.

Writing that review of my life felt like I had lifted a carpet that I had hidden dirt under for years. I was amazed to see how many relationships and encounters I have had with men through the years. I realized what a heavy burden I was carrying on my back.

So I surrendered to the program and began doing step work like my life depended on it. It actually did, because when I began this program it was actually after an abortion – my fourth one – as a consequence of unsafe sex in one of those numerous uncommitted relationships I got tangled up in. I knew that if I continued to carry on the way I had been, I would eventually die – either from

disease, an abortion that went wrong or by killing myself as a result of my addiction to a man.

So, my life turned 180 degrees. I became abstinent. The experience of withdrawal was, at the beginning terrible, like my legs or hands where cut off. Then came a feeling of relief, like I had given up on some great effort that sapped my energies. Following that came a sense of bliss.

We don't have a large community of recovering S.L.A.A. people in Israel. Most of my recovery happened in the circumstance of two women sitting in a room – my sponsor and myself. I believe the intimacy of those meetings, where I could share one round after another because of all the time we had, as well as my sponsor's commitment to recovery – has helped me heal, relinquish my sense of worth and deepen my connection with my Higher Power.

If I'm not wrong, I was abstinent for three years at that time. During that time, I began

my own creative business and wrote my first book. I also bought my own apartment and healed my relationship with my ex-husband and my young children. The sense of constant anxiety, frustration and regret that filled my life before I began working the program was replaced by a feeling of peace, safety, abundance and joy. I was in touch again with my inner child and she was not tormented so much anymore – she was sometimes picking flowers now in the meadow.

Our small group didn't have much experience with getting out of the withdrawal – returning to dating and building partnership. So, when I felt I wanted to build a relationship again I got on a dating website, got several offers – chose the one who seemed most polite, met him and had him in my bedroom the same night.

The sense of loss over my abstinence was terrible. I felt my body and my soul were violated. I tried to mend this by pushing this

man to marry me as quickly as possible. We almost did, but after several months, I had strong feelings that he was not right for me and I ended the relationship. Thank God I didn't return after that to the dating scene, but instead began my abstinence again. But I was sad and desperate. So I got tangled up again with a married man, went crazy, was hospitalized. Then I went back to school to get a profession and met a man that was my partner for four and a half years.

Thanks to the program, my relationship with him was honest. I was faithful to him and we shared much more than our sexual chemistry. He was a friend. But I didn't take the time to get to know him before we began our relationship. On our second date I went to his house, we had sex and he asked me to be his girlfriend. That's how it works for me — immediate gratification.

As the years passed, I learned that we had different values, and although we cared for one another, the relationship didn't have the potential to grow any further. But I couldn't leave; I felt that I couldn't live without him. And I hated that feeling — that I can't exist without someone, that dependency. My life was full of fear of losing him and of being betrayed by him with another woman. There was no joy in my relationship with him anymore — only neediness, fear and frustration about the things that were not fulfilled.

That's when I returned to the program for a second round. This time it was the telephone meeting of W.A.N.A. Suddenly I was surrounded by many women who had the same problem as me. And there was so much experience with recovery, so much material to be read, so many tools to recover. So I took a sponsor, began working the steps

again and committed to abstinence for a year.

This year, which is about to come to an end soon, has been amazing. At the beginning, I was depressed without my qualifier. But then, gradually, with the support of my previous sponsor, working the steps and with the grace of God, I stopped thinking about him. And then there was a sense of loneliness that sometimes clutched my soul like a devouring beast. But I had support — my family, a therapist and friends from the program that always helped at the last moment and I came through, gratefully building myself a new connection with Higher Power and with myself.

Today, I enjoy weekends by myself full of nurturing activities. I walk on the beach, I take long hot baths, I dance, make myself delicious meals, I read books and sleep a lot.

Today, I enjoy weekends by myself full of nurturing activities. I walk on the beach, I take long hot baths, I dance, make myself delicious meals, I read books and sleep a lot. As for my professional life — it is going through a major change — I have now the time and stamina to learn new tools, to complete creative projects (my second book has just come out) and develop the way I care for the people I love. I am present with them.

I'm very conscious these days when the disease lifts its head. There are a lot of challenges, especially at work. My bottom lines have changed through the

years. In the first years of recovery, I was more concerned with avoiding acting out sexually. Now it is more subtle. I have come to observe also the way I laugh and the way I approach men as something to be conscious about, that I do these things sometimes as a form of escape from reality.

My whole perception of "fun" has changed. I can clearly see now how this is a disease of the mind, of the way I perceive things. What saves me again and again is returning to meetings the best I can (with the time differences), talking to my sponsor once a week, doing step work and giving service where ever I can.

My sponsor had told me lately that I can go back to dating again. Now it's a whole new story. I'm preparing for it — reading a book about sober dating, making a dating plan, envisioning who I want to meet. It's strange, but I am doing it not from a state of despair "to find my one and only"; actually, I am really great on my own! Now I'm learning that dating is part of a socializing process, a way of expanding my horizons, knowing people without getting emotionally tangled up with them immediately.

As I'm writing now, I feel complete. There is more work to do on my feelings of worthiness, but I feel I have developed a solid foundation of connection with my Higher Power and the program.

The most important thing for me is not to deny that I have a disease, that I am a sex and love addict, and will always be, and only from surrender to Higher Power and using the tools of recovery will I be able to create a sober and beautiful life for myself and my dear ones.

Thank you for allowing me to share.

— A. Israel

Prayer and Temptation

I never really made a connection between praying and temptation except praying that I would not be tempted. The two always seemed to be opposed to each other.

I had always believed even when I was at my lowest in this addiction that there is a Higher Power that I call God. But staying faithful to God and his ways was the problem that brought me shame.

Now that I am in S.L.A.A., I understand that it is not just following my faith but that I have a mental sickness that needed a special type of care, so I can have a healthy and fruitful life. Since I have been in S.L.A.A., I have been working the steps and daily working Step Eleven.

When I started attending the meetings, my prayers were more about keeping me from slipping and away from the pull of this addiction every morning. My prayer life has changed and grown over the years. Not everything I tried worked. If only it was that easy. But through living the values of the twelve-step program, there has been great improvement in my understanding of a proper prayer life.

I found out early in the program that if I pray and reflect on the coming of each new day, things would normally go a whole lot better than if I just got out of bed and jumped into the activities of the day.

Being centered on the different activities of each new day and how I will handle any



issues that I will most likely face, has given me the strength to deal with the temptation in a positive way. Some of these events used to spin me into addiction craziness and I would be acting out again before I even knew it.

I had to learn to ask for the

strength from my Higher Power to get through each issue as it popped up its ugly head— even if it was just a short prayer asking the Lord to help me through a current issue that I was facing. I found renewed strength and the power to get through an issue if just for

another second, minute or hour. God has the time to help me if I only ask.

Advice from many of the old timers was that, when the day is coming to a close, to pray and reflect on how my day went, what really worked, what did not work, and what I need to improve on. This has helped me progress. Sometimes a new issue would pop up, and not being ready to handle it, I normally would not handle it very well. I learned to have many different tools in my S.L.A.A. toolkit to help deal with many different situations. And the best tool I found is prayer. I am glad to say my S.L.A.A. toolkit is getting full, but never too full. It is getting easier to pull out the correct tool when it is needed.

Just like learning any new skill, it takes more time to complete a basic task at first. And as the new skill improves, it becomes easier to perform that same task again with quicker results. With the basic skills down, I have been able to deal with the more difficult tasks that seemed beyond my capabilities.



Because of working daily on Step Eleven and a desire to improve my prayer life, I started to look for books about the subject of prayer. I was especially looking for the kind of book that has stood the test of time and talks about what I consider to be a healthy prayer life. I found many books out there, some good and some not so good. And many have been helpful. Unfortunately while daily meditation books have their purpose, most of the ones I've seen in the program are just daily meditation and not developing a deeper spiritual life.

I learned two major points from using the deeper spiritual life books. One of the major points is that as a person increases in their faith, even more temptation will come their way. At first this scared me, because as I grow in my understanding of prayer and faith, my addiction will reject these new ways and fight back even harder.

This is not what I wanted. This became easier to understand since no matter how many times I promised to stop in the past, the addiction would come back even stronger. An example is when I learn a new skill — like how to perform a math problem — I must practice that new skill over and over to get it down. If I learn this new skill correctly then I can perform that skill whenever it is needed. But as you learn the new math problem it can be hard to get the correct procedure every time until you practice enough times.

As I learned in S.L.A.A., a slip is only a bad thing if you do not learn from it. Building the skills needed to keep it from happening again is the most important thing to learn from a slip. This is like the motto I heard many times in the rooms, “progress, not perfection.”

So as I grow deeper in my prayer life, there will always be new challenges to my faith and

sobriety. But with ever-increasing prayer life, I am able to be more skilled to handle problems that used to baffle me.

The second thing I learned from reading about having a deeper prayer life is that when I am in the middle of being challenged by my addiction, I am not alone and can turn to prayer there and then. This is a better way to handle temptation than trying to white knuckle through each and every temptation on my own. When the addiction pull is strong, that is the time to turn to my Higher Power and pray even harder.

In the past I seemed to pray just at certain times of the day, normally the morning, and never calling on my Higher Power during the rest of the day. I did not call on God's help when I needed it the most, in the middle of a battle for my sobriety.

As Step Eleven states, I continue to work on my prayer life which I have found has improved all the other Twelve Steps — especially Step Three. I am turning my life and will over to God as I understand God. I cannot learn about a friend unless I talk to that friend. A prayer life is talking to God and becoming better friends. I still have much room for improvement. But I found that going with a proven program has had a positive effect on my recovery and my entire life. It is best to learn from those who have proven they have what I want — that includes a prayer life for sobriety.

One of the main reasons I keep coming back to the S.L.A.A. meetings is because they have a proven track record that continues to help people like me. I have not seen any data for our S.L.A.A. group. But A.A., which was founded in 1939, has helped millions of people with their program.

— Scott B., Connecticut

Meditation Book Project

PLEASE CONTRIBUTE:

1. PERSONAL SHARES FOR MEDITATIONS.
2. POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS/PRAYERS.

PLEASE EMAIL SHARES TO THE *JOURNAL* WWW.SLAAFWS.ORG

Service

QUOTE: *“We had sought full partnership with God, and knowledge of God’s purpose for us. By seeking to live with honesty and integrity, and to be of service to others, we had discovered that the source of love, which was of God, had begun to flow from within us. We had lived our way into Step 12.” S.L.A.A. Basic Text, Page 101.*

SHARE: I’ve always believed myself to be an unreliable person. I learned from a young age that my parents would nurture and support me more if I failed to do anything for myself. Taking on service commitments within S.L.A.A. has taught me that I can contribute positively to a very important cause. It has taught me that I can be reliable. Perhaps most importantly, I can no longer deny that I am capable of being a responsible, competent, reliable person. That has shifted my outlook on life. Today I know that I can become a doctor because I can commit to and follow through on the years of schooling and hoop-jumping, and that’s something that I would never have allowed myself to see, much less pursue. Thank you to S.L.A.A. for granting me the opportunity to be of service.

AFFIRMATION: *I will look for opportunities to be of service today and seek God’s will.*



THE JOURNAL THEMES AND DEADLINES FOR 2015-2016

Submit your writing at www.slaafws.org

| Issue # | Month | Theme | Question Of the Day (QOD) | Submission deadline |
|---------|-------------|--|---|---------------------|
| #156 | Sept./ Oct. | Character Assets | Describe your experience with character assets. Are there program tools that you use to help you discover/develop | July 15, 2015 |
| #157 | Nov./ Dec. | Moving from Victim into Responsibility | How where you able to discover and move from victimhood into responsibility? | Sept. 15, 2015 |
| #158 | Jan./ Feb. | Anorexia and Dating | Is the plan of dating different when an S.L.A.A. member is acting- in instead of acting out? | Nov. 15, 2015 |
| #159 | March/ | Dealing With Triggers | How do you deal with triggers in your recovery? | Jan. 15, 2016 |
| #160 | May/ June | S.L.A.A. in the senior years (65+) | Please share your experience strength and hope around maintaining sobriety and serenity as you grow into your elder years. How are we making our lives enriching for ourselves and others? How do we "practice the principles," and what wisdom can we offer to the younger among us who may come into this time of life? | March 15, 2016 |
| #161 | July/ Aug. | ABM issue** Attitude of Gratitude | What tools do you use to get into and stay in an attitude of gratitude? | May 15, 2016 |
| #162 | Sept./ Oct. | Sex and Love addiction and PTSD | How has S.L.A.A. helped you discover/deal with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). | July 15, 2016 |
| #163 | Nov./ Dec. | Top line behavior | Please share your experience, strength and hope around defining and maintaining top line behavior. | Sept. 15, 2016 |

Service opportunities for *the Journal*

The Journal is a basic recovery tool for S.L.A.A. groups and individual members, and it is a key outreach tool into areas that do not yet have an S.L.A.A. presence.

We're looking for people with writing, drawing, outreach, web design, production, and printing skills to assist in the creation of the new, deeper, more refreshing publication.

Please assist us in creatively carrying the message of recovery.

Please go to <http://www.slaa.fws.org> to submit your writing.

UNITY IN SERVICE



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The Inspiration Line is presented to the SLAA Fellowship by the Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup. To find out more or to volunteer, call the Line and leave a message.

