

the Journal

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S.L.A.A. in the
Senior Years

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,

I never would have had the hope or desire to make it to my senior years in the days of my addiction. What good is retirement if my disease is working overtime to kill me and anything good in my life? Aging gracefully is not in the cards when my addiction has control. Seeing sober senior members of S.L.A.A. gives me hope. I see joyful, serene people who dance and travel the world. I see happily married people and dignity. As they describe it in the A.A. Twelve and Twelve (Tradition 2), I see “elder statesmen.” They are a sober member who “sees the wisdom of the group’s decision, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgment, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the sidelines patiently awaiting developments.” I thank Higher Power for the opportunity each day to be of service and keep coming back so that one day I can hopefully become an “elder statesman.”

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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a periodical such as *the Journal* to be Conference-approved. Each recovery group can determine its own position on the use of content from *the Journal* at its meetings.

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Question of the Day

& Answers from Yesterday

“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?”

I am 67 years old. I came into S.L.A.A. in February, 1988. I still go to meetings, call my sponsor, do service, go to fellowship and carry the message.

— **Trudie, Los Angeles**

I talk to my sponsor and fellows regularly to get a “reality check” and stay honest, so I can best serve the world.

— **Chris, Los Angeles**

It gets easier with practice! It’s just like riding a bike.

— **Seattle/Singapore**

A daily gratitude list lets me see just how much I have got. I thank my Higher Power.

— **Christiane, Frankfurt, Germany**

I pray daily. Attend meetings. Do service.

— **Roberto, Frankfurt, Germany**

As a now middle-aged single woman, I am learning for the first time to love me completely and fully.

— **Amy G., Austin, TX**

Practicing Steps 10, 11, and 12 on a daily basis, as I grow in recovery.

— **Paul T., London, UK**

Creating solution-oriented meetings with a theme (e.g. relationships and dating, love and gratitude.)

— **Jaki Jo, London, UK**

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, “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?” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two questions are: Issue #161 — ABM issue** Attitude of Gratitude — What tools do you use to get into and stay in an attitude of gratitude? — The deadline for submissions is 5/15/16. Issue #162 — Sex and Love addiction and PTSD — “How has S.L.A.A. helped you discover/deal with PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).” — The deadline for submissions is July 15, 2016. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

This could be a book! My sobriety and serenity is critical to enjoying my children, grandchildren and it's critical to model hope.

— **Nancy G., San Diego, CA**

Developing and maintaining healthy relationships are equally important to the elders as they are to the juniors. This is especially true due to the loss of loved ones as we grow older.

— **Angela A., Fort Lauderdale, FL**

Continue to pursue your recovery, including going to meetings. We never outgrow our addictive tendencies.

— **Roger R., San Diego**

Famed jazz vocalist, Nancy Wilson, sang ebulliently about the golden years. As I approach my seasoned and mature years, I am cognizant that God loves me unconditionally and wants to help me in all aspects of my recovery.

All God wants me to do is surrender, ask for help, live by faith, and get out of His way. My connotative perspective of God has been an evolutionary process as I came to believe a Higher Power could restore me to sanity. Simplistic principles of being consistent with meetings, talking to friends each day, journaling, going to therapy, practicing rigorous honesty, doing step work, asking for help, and learning to love and like myself holistically are essential to my recovery. Wear the world like a loose garment — meaning do not take yourself too seriously. As a sex and love addict, I can be very hard on myself. Progress, not perfection is good to know. Minute progress is vital for your recovery.

Get to know a least 5 recovery friends well — the good, the bad, and the ugly. Having recovery friends allows me to be immensely honest and vulnerable. This has been very good for my recovery. Ascertaining a good certified sex and love therapist is important. Doing the step work is vital because it compels me to maintain sobriety.

— **Anonymous**

Devotion to the First Principle



Before I arrived at the twelve step rooms, I conducted myself in a dishonest manner. Fearing the loss of sexual relations, I manipulated women into believing I was marriage material, swore fidelity, and said whatever I needed to inspire and maintain their affection. It was a

solid routine, practiced and rich with clever schemes. It was also destroying me, driving me to compulsive eating, abuse of alcohol, and leaving me unfulfilled and disturbed on a very deep level. Had I not discovered the program, I almost certainly would have perished from exercise bulimia

and terminal anorexia.

When I entered the rooms, I found a sponsor and devoted myself to working the steps. The result was that I was blessed with a willingness to be honest. This gift alone saved my life. My relationships with food and alcohol became relatively normal. My dealings with

women developed from a place of humility and honesty.

There is a question that is posed when working that final step. It goes along the lines of "What footprints are you making in the sand for others to follow?" I believe this speaks to the question of the month, which centers around the long timer's message to the newcomer.

Once the seed of honesty rooted in my soul, I entered into a monogamous relationship. It lasted a year. After a time, I entered another. It lasted a summer. Last year I was in another monogamous

relationship. What I came to see was, for this sex and love addict, monogamy is just another strategy.

In a very unexpected way, I have returned to my original belief about myself. I see myself as a lifelong bachelor who occasionally agrees to the terms of a monogamous relationship, a trade-off of conflict with my basic character for the sake of practicality, convenience, and to demonstrate a genuine interest in a woman. However, I don't see monogamy, for myself, as a particularly appropriate or comfortable choice.

There is a marked difference between the pre-program behavior and my new way of life. Today I always tell the truth. This shift alone removes much of the self-generated anxiety that fueled addictive behavior.

If there are footprints that I am leaving in the sands of our program, if I have my own message to relate, it is that love and sex can function in many ways, but for one to have a fighting chance at integrity, the first order of business must remain a devotion to our first principle of honesty.

Anonymous

Wounded Healers or Unhealed Wounders?¹

Hello. Bonjour. Good Day. My name is "Jainabah." I am a sex and love addict. Sobriety date: Sept. 23, 2000. (the day I signed my dispensation papers, i.e., the release from the commitment I'd made in 1966, to vow "obedience, chastity, poverty" in the RC congregation dedicated to the charism of *ignoti et occulti (hidden and unknown)*....

Sounds like anonymity? Yes, indeed. A spiritual foundation.

But I have found more spirituality of humility, self-denial, close union with Higher Power, love of the neighbor (and

enemy) within the 36 Principles of S.L.A.A. and A.A. than I ever did before.

A Three Act Play
Act One: What It Was Like:

Setting the Stage: The Family F-ome (Fortress and Home)

The first 18 years: (more or less) 1945-1964:

Three girls, three boys, stay-at-home mom, working-class dad in the 50's and 60's: church, school and home like a DOME of issues around religion, sexuality, (no-talk), secrets, developing a

secret double life with boys not "of our faith."

At age 13, I had an unhealthy encounter with a male priest in the summer lake. I call him the *Naïve Prince*.

Act Two: What Happened:

The Second and Third 18 years (1964-1994, more or less) Age 19-49

"If only" I would go to the Fiji Islands, teach in the morning, and nurse in the afternoons, I would "be OK", and I would "look good," and "normal".

Always looking for the geographical cure, it was exciting and lonely to be so far away from the protective “dome” of home.

Having a few more unhealthy sexual/physical/emotional boundary-breaking encounters with clergy whom I have learned to name:

**the False Lover (a retreat master),*

**the Dark King (a bishop),*

** the Self-Serving Martyr (peer student),*

**the Wild Card,*

I myself crossed the line into active alcoholism/sex and love addiction when I stayed out too late after a game at the Silverdome in Detroit with a parishioner whom I was “saving.”

Thus began the 15 years of acting-out/acting-in spiral of self-destruction, shame, projection, and transference as I became the feminine counterpart to all those roles that I described above.

I was living the lie of the double life. I myself became the Naïve Princess, the False Lover, the Self-Serving Martyr, the Dark Queen, the Wild Card, though in deep denial, entitlement and justification.

For 15 years my disease progressed, where the double life of acting-out/acting-in eventually spiraled down to the bottom of the pit.

I was so full of shame that I became shameless.

By the grace of the Higher Power, it took two traumas: the sudden death of my dear dad and

a broken neck to help me come to my senses, like the prodigal daughter, and realize that, though my body was not paralyzed, my soul was.

I asked for help.

Act Three: What It's Like Now

The Fourth 18 years (1994-present) more or less:

In a treatment center near Toronto, I spent 6 months of deep therapy and healing: the beginning of a journey out of the woods of the unhealed wounder to the wounded healer. Our group went to a game in the Skydome, and I still asked myself if I were a REAL addict.

It takes a long time to move a mountain of denial anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance.

After 22 years in A.A., 16 in S.L.A.A., naming my bottom lines in S.L.A.A. as “no sex outside of a committed monogamous relationship”, top lines trying to live the 36 Principles O.D.A.A.T. (one day at a time), I still have to make the commitment daily to live in the upside down and inside out “DOME” of the grace and compassion of the 36 principles, learning healthy boundaries with myself, my partner, program people, and the world.

I have come to realize that the “poverty, chastity, and obedience” that I longed to commit to are contained in the 6

warranties of the 12th Concept: corporate poverty, substantial unanimity in decisions, non-punitive compassion and singleness of purpose, these are the ideals of being human in community that the world needs.

I have 16 nieces/nephews and 16 grand-nieces/nephews. I want S.L.A.A. to be there for another 40 years if any need it.

I see and hear the stories of the newcomers in the rooms. I hear the suffering. I remember that I had to hit my bottom. So do they. I remember that I was in deep denial for a long time. Others have a Higher Power. I am not it. All I can do is share experience, strength and hope. Compassion means allowing myself as well as others to mourn the losses in our own time and process.

I still struggle with fear, anger, and sorrow. Only recently have I come to realize I may suffer from codependency to ephebophilia. I have to deal with that.

Thanks to the compassion of program people and meetings where compassion was shown to me until I could have compassion for myself, especially with my sponsor. I want the hand of S.L.A.A. to be there for the generations to come.

Shame knocked on the door.

Compassion answered.

No one was there.

—Jainabah, Montreal

¹ This phrase comes from a talk at the ISTI (Interfaith Sexual Trauma Institute) conference attended, 2000, and an article in the book Restoring the Soul of a Church.

Editor's Note: Tradition 6: An S.L.A.A. group or S.L.A.A. as a whole ought never endorse, finance, or lend the S.L.A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Recovery in the Elder Years



I hit my bottom in March of 2011, having just celebrated my 72nd birthday. My marriage of fourteen years had fallen apart and attempts at reconciliation failed. My therapist said she thought I was a sex addict and recommended the local group of S.L.A.A. Shortly after attending a meeting, I experienced an overwhelming

moment of truth that my sex addiction and emotional dependency had completely controlled my life, and it terrified me. So there I was, already in my seventies, never having had an honest and healthy relationship with sex as a by-product of commitment, collaboration and sharing in a partnership.

The following meeting a

member offered to be my sponsor. He turned out to be my Higher Power's third great gift to me (after my counselor and that gracious moment of terror). I began to work the steps with a man who loved me unconditionally, shared his experience strength and hope, and was absolutely hard-nosed about the work.

I had a lot of pain to let go of, years of acting out with masturbation to fantasies and running away from any healthy relationship into sexual anorexia, constructing a false self that hid my secret life with all its shame, guilt and lack of control.

I became a successful college professor and massaged my ego by enlarging my resume but depended upon the approval of others to assuage that nagging feeling that I was really a failure.

The Twelve Steps came to be my way out. My sponsor patiently and firmly led me through the process of healing. His unconditional love mirrored to me the love of the God of my understanding, and I came to realize that my Higher Power had all along been my gracious Guide and Protector.

Steps Four and Five were difficult, painful, and liberating; steps Eight and Nine brought me to admit, apologize, and let go. Along the way I learned to forgive myself — and, to experience a spiritual awakening that I seek daily to nurture.

So, here I am today, just now having celebrated my 77th birthday, and having discovered true intimacy in relationships with friends, old and new, who have brought so much joy into my life. Some are also in recovery, others are not, but all have responded with pleasure to the transformation that has brought me, day by day, a new way of living.

They are teaching me what true intimacy is, and preparing me for the day when, if it be my Higher Power's will for me, a

loving, romantic relationship may enrich my life.

I am preparing to put myself forward on an on-line dating service and to explore, step by step, the possibilities of a true, committed relationship. Thanks to S.L.A.A. and its program of recovery, I am now enjoying a life in which the "Promises" have come true.

My first therapist told me years ago that "it's never too late." How right she was! I hope that others will be encouraged to enrich their elderhood by making their Twelfth Step a gift of their years of wisdom and experience, a life of service to others as spiritual elders, with all the joys that come with such a life.

**Anonymous,
Western North Carolina**

What Really Changes with Age in Recovery?

Greetings friends, I am a sex and love addict. I am also an alcoholic, cocaine addict, nicotine addict, sugar addict, workaholic, service addict, codependent, perfectionist and most recently an anorexic (or maybe I have always been anorexic sexually, emotionally and socially

in my active sex and love addiction). I am pretty sure there are more because it seems my Higher Power is not done with me yet. Just when I think I can rest on my laurels, I am shaken back to reality and find yet another character defect or addiction to come to terms with.

For the last four years I am also a senior; defined as 65 years of age or over. I came into the rooms of the Twelve-Step programs 22 years ago and into the "S" fellowships over 16 years ago. Until I could stop medicating with alcohol and drugs, I could not see my sex and



love addiction. After a failed third relationship in sobriety, I began to question my confusion of lust with love. I saw how I would pursue and seduce, but after a few weeks or months, spend the next year trying to get out of a relationship where I did not trust or even like the person.

My sobriety date is May 11, 2004 and the behaviors on my bottom line are: no talking to shock or seduce, no sex outside a committed monogamous relationship, no masturbating while driving at high speeds, no returning to past partners to protect my supply, no masturbating with inappropriate objects and no sex in a new committed relationship for 6 months (as sex is like a handshake for me). My accessory behavior is to not objectify men in particular but also women by focusing on body parts. A topline behavior is to be open to love and intimacy with my partner.

I committed to the Twelve Step way of life (or a design for living that really works) when I

was seven years in A.A. and two years in S.L.A.A. I knew that the qualities of trust and commitment, especially in intimate relationships, were my biggest fears when I joined S.L.A.A. and I became willing to look at my patterns of unsuccessful relationships. I also started seeing a sex therapist for the next five years. Over the last ten years I am in a committed relationship and as a couple we started an R.C.A. meeting in our city. We even did couples therapy the first few years because we needed all the help we could get (and still do from time to time).

At four years of sobriety in S.L.A.A. I had a slip. I wanted to fire my sponsor and quit the S.L.A.A. program and just work A.A. Within a week, I wanted to drink and I knew to medicate was to die or go insane. The internal struggle was so great that I surrendered at a much deeper level and recommitted to all my behaviors on my bottom line and worked the S.L.A.A. program with my sponsor. The *Renewal of*

Sobriety pamphlet was available and I went back to the basics, Steps 1-2-3.

What I have learned by committing to recovery and in turn committing to myself, God, a partner and S.L.A.A., is that I do not need to stay in the doubt, pain and compulsive avoidance of intimacy with myself, God and others anymore. I get to lead a useful, simpler and emotionally sober life. The days of drama with the emotional highs and lows are no longer the thrill I seek.

So I continue to go to meetings, offer to sponsor, work the Steps one more time with sponsees or sponsor, do service at the group, intergroup and national levels and give back what I received so freely. What really changes with age in recovery? Nothing changes because doing the next right thing and being right-sized never changes. Keep coming back, it works...

— Anonymous, Montreal

Share space

Emotional Anorexia: Freezing Up Inside

Anorexia is about my heart freezing over. It's a kind of amnesia of love and affection. It's as though I become isolated within myself. I can be in the world, but on the inside I'm cold and distant and life doesn't reach me.

This state usually overlaps with feelings of emptiness, sadness, and above all, fear and desperation about the future. It's like a bubble separating me from others and causing me tremendous anxiety because it's a type of solitude that can't be eradicated by the company of others. It's a loneliness of the soul. Now I understand why I found it so hard to make decisions: I just didn't have an emotional layer within myself. And in that state, I could never know what I wanted because I just couldn't tell what I felt.

When I find the courage to stop and surrender, I can begin to connect with the deep pain within me. It's as if I have a lost and fragile baby inside, crying out for help. And of course, I don't want to feel such primeval pain, so I resist it, and in the middle of all that, the fantasy of a woman seems like my salvation.

Sexuality and love are turned into the hope of escaping from this internal tragedy. They completely take hold of me and

there are moments when they seem totally irresistible. It's like being on the summit of Everest, where you can barely walk for the altitude and the cold, and someone offers you oxygen and a hot cup of tea. Even though you know it's really liquid nitrogen and that later it will freeze you even more, for a few moments it feels like it's bringing you back to life.

It's a difficult state to get out of once you're in it. So many times I couldn't explain why I'd pull away from partners and from friendships. I'd ask myself why I found it so hard to maintain lasting affection for others. In that state I'd think: "I don't love anybody, at heart nobody is important to me. I'm a hypocrite and my whole life is a farce". In that state of "non-feeling" I'm totally destructive towards myself, flooded with guilt and shame. What I call the "internal abuser" is activated, flooding me with constant negativity.

Whatever I do and wherever I am, I feel guilty and uncomfortable in my own skin. It's like being a painting that's not hung straight and that I can't straighten; one that's irreparably damaged. All that keeps me even more trapped inside myself. When I'm in that frozen place, I don't even realize that I'm in a

state of deep self-centredness. Getting out from within this drama that seems to devour me is difficult.

The antidote is a connection with myself, getting intimate with my being. But of course, in this state, that's the last thing I want since I'm imprisoned within myself.

In the past, all I had was the option of using. My hope was that this internal freezing up would stop when I met the right woman. So I'd go out into the world hunting for romantic connections, whether real or imaginary. When I managed to find one, it was literally like coming back to life. But it was just a transitory state, an illusion that could only be maintained by fuelling my amorous fantasies. For that obvious reason, I'd work so hard to try to keep feeling love for my partners or lovers and I'd justify what couldn't be justified. In the end, it would all fall apart and I'd be alone again.

The horror I felt when that fantasy began to fall apart is difficult to describe. I knew where it was taking me, back to that internal death. At that time, I saw it as a curse that I'd try to fix time and again with ever-greater desperation.

Although anorexia has an element that's connected to

isolation, not feeling and not acting, it has another element of obsession and compulsion which might seem like the exact opposite. In order to try to escape from the state of inertia and frozen feelings, I become hyperactive and hypersensitive. From this other, equally anorexic extreme, I set about trying to meet lots of people, make lots of friends and do lots of things. Urgency and haste become my favourite companions.

I can't allow myself to miss any opportunities, as they all seem like they're my last chance. From this active anorexic extreme, I often experience exaggerated feelings towards others and become euphoric, although just as disconnected from reality. I'm like an actor performing a role in which it seems like anything goes.

Today, after two years of clean time in S.L.A.A. H.O.W., this freezing over still comes up from time to time. I'd like to be able to say that it's disappeared, but that's not the case. What has changed is that I'm increasingly aware of the situation. My recovery begins when I accept that this is a chronic disease and that I can't fix it on my own. The more I recover, I realize just how much I underestimated the tragic nature of my situation. I suppose it's very hard to see myself as that unwell. I didn't want to see it (me, who dreamed so often of success and who was born into a well-off family — who was so good looking — who always believed that deep down I was so special)! Ha, ha, ha... In the end, it turned out, I just had special needs.

Nevertheless, with some time in recovery and with the help of my sponsor and my S.L.A.A. friends, I've been able to identify more and more of these anorexic behavioural patterns.

So when it comes to anorexia, is there hope? Yes. There is. Although I now believe that my recovery is a path strewn with stumbles. The more I'm able to surrender, the more capable I am of opening up to the affection I carry inside. Over time, I've begun to understand the meaning of self-centredness, and how, when I'm locked inside the disease, I'm only worried about myself, about possessing things and not losing others, about increasing pleasure and avoiding pain.

The only way to put the brakes on this pattern of isolation and compulsive behaviour is to enter into my heart. For me, that means being willing to see the truth I hold inside myself. However much that hurts or however much effort it costs me, that's the road towards true intimacy with myself. Only when I'm truly willing to stop can I begin to reconnect with my Higher Power. And I can only stop when I'm willing to make myself small — when I'm ready to stop believing I'm the owner of my life and that I know what's best for me. That's the path to humility for me and it's what allows just enough of an opening in me for something that's bigger than my old ideas and doesn't allow my out of control instincts to get in.

As I said above, getting out of this pattern isn't easy and a lot of days I have to make do with just taking care of my most basic needs: getting enough sleep, eating well and doing exercise.

It's important for me not to fall into the trap of demanding my recovery be a certain way or that such and such thing should no longer be happening to me. Giving myself permission to have days that are not so great and just to get to the end of a day without using, can be a great

goal — just for today!

In my experience, it's better not to meet up with people in that state because, even if they're good friends, I run the risk of trying to use them to get away from my internal loneliness. Often, when I try to use someone else to get me out of my anorexia, in the long run it creates more pain because I become resentful when they can't give me what I want and guilty when I realise I've tried to manipulate them. I need to wait until I have a minimum level of connection with myself before I can connect with others.

As time goes by, I realise I can't avoid getting cold and frozen up; but I can find ways to create "warmth" within myself. That warmth is the love I've always hungered for. It's the intimacy that connects me to things, to people, to myself and to my Higher Power. Committing myself to love is important for my recovery, which in the end comes down to doing some kind of service. I believe the 12th Step is the culmination of all the Steps because it sends us in that direction.

When I was using, I wouldn't commit to anything or anyone. I wanted to feel I was forever free. The symbol of freedom for me was keeping as many options and doors open as possible. Paradoxically, that eternal flitting from flower to flower, never ruling anything out, made me more enslaved and dependent.

In recovery, I notice myself taking on commitments and responsibilities to myself and to others little by little. I feel I'm no longer so volatile as I was and that's wonderful because it makes me feel more free.

— Anonymous, Madrid

Technology - Instant Gratification - Addiction



How do I remain a sober surfer? It's easier said than done, as nothing is quite like the internet. There is always something that pops up when surfing that becomes a trigger or hit when I'm least expecting it.

The internet is a risky place when you're a sex addict, but it is also a tremendous resource in recovery. Once I started recovery, anytime I was questioning a particular facet of my recovery, I jumped on the internet for information. Information found on the internet helped personalize my recovery, as all our recoveries

are personal, needing specific information that allows us to understand our unique selves. I even jumped on the internet to try and find out how to deal with some of my struggles in recovery, like how to deal with sexual thoughts and the brain chemical hits that they provide. But mostly technology and the internet has served as gasoline to the fire that was my addiction. Every time I got online, more gasoline was poured on the fire, as I was burned over and over again.

In my case, I had gotten a taste of recovery in 1991 before I abandoned the program and

turned to relationships to fill the hole inside me. Needless to say, that didn't work. When I got my first home computer with internet, the minute I started looking at internet porn, due to my previous experience in the program, I knew I was playing with fire. I should have trusted my intuition, as it certainly lived up to that prediction.

There's nothing an addict is better at doing than putting on the blinders and shutting out all rational thought once the addictive cycle gets cranked up. Internet porn is so addictive because it's so immediate. The gratification is instant.

At the slightest craving to act out, I can within seconds be in front of the computer feeling the mind numbing intensity of those images sweeping me away from reality. Those intense images literally fry my brain, as I quickly click through pictures, the brain chemical release literally soaking my brain in sex (instant intensity, instant escape). Internet porn always seemed to scratch whichever itch I was needing. If a novel sexual thought popped into my head, within seconds I could be scratching that itch with porn tailored to that itch. I was always escalating the images I used. Eventually only the most hard core and extreme images were all that were “doing it” for me. I even found websites where I could share porn with others that had cravings similar to mine. We fed off each other. It never let up. It was always escalating. Meanwhile, those images were completely taking over my thoughts. I could not have sex with my partner without replaying those images in my head. I became totally corrupted by porn, as the porn images drove away any feelings of intimacy or connection I had with my partner. Internet porn is the most damaging part of my addiction. It literally has taken away my humanity. The internet is ground zero of my addiction.

So I went years escaping through internet porn and masturbation. I even convinced my partner that masturbating to porn every night is just what I do, meaning he better get used to it. I would rather watch porn and masturbate than be vulnerable and have sex with him. I would literally come to bed and turn my back on him. So sick. I was like a drug addict. I had spent the last hour shooting up until the intensity peaked and I crashed. But I’d get up in the middle of the

night to shoot up again.

The thing about technology is there’s always something new to discover, or for a sex addict, some new place to get into trouble. I had heard about the hook-up apps and had managed to keep them off my phone for a year.

But then, just like when I got internet porn for the first time, in a moment of delusion I installed the apps. And just like then, I knew I was playing with fire, but I was curious, you see. The hook-up apps grabbed me like nothing has before. When I started sexual texting on those apps, the brain chemical hits were much more intense than with the porn images.

It was a dance. There was so much intrigue, so much intensity, so much power. I lost control within days. My head would be so soaked in the continuous chemical dumps that I could feel it behind my eyes.

I literally was intoxicated. At lunchtime, I’d go out in my car and sext. It really was no different than sneaking a drink or smoking a bowl. I went back to work high. I just couldn’t put the phone down at work because I had to keep sexting.

I’d be sitting at my desk at work and pictures of naked guys would be popping up on my phone. I was quickly becoming unable to function (not how one wants to be at work: secretive, detached and obsessed to the point of not being able to function).

I lived in a fantasy world on those apps. My profile was obscenely sexual to lure these guys in. I advertised myself as a hard driving top and I literally got off on the power of having these guys come to me.

Since my sexual response mechanism was so tied to images and fantasy, I had to use another miracle of our modern age to live

up to the promises in my profile. I had to use Viagra, as I was so estranged from all genuine sexual feelings that I needed it to function. I did hook-up, but the anonymous sex was way too brief. It was nothing like the continuous hits I got from sexting on the hook-up apps. Just like with porn, sexting allowed me to keep my brain soaked in sex.

It was more of a struggle to surrender the hook-up apps than the porn. With sexting on the hook-up apps, I could get my fix even at work. I didn’t need privacy like I needed to masturbate to porn. The small screen on that phone offered all the privacy I needed.

And to a passerby, the text on the phone looked like any other text (unless an obscene picture happened to pop up). Eventually my partner asked for the password to my phone, so then I had to hide my hook-up apps on my phone. Since he wasn’t very technologically savvy, I was successful. I would pull over before I got home every night to check that phone one last time – desperate for a hit from my secret life. There is nothing that I am more powerless over than sexting on those hook-up apps.

The sexting allows my addict to use his tremendous talents in expressing the sexual thoughts that his brain soaks in and to use his expertise on all things sexual to lure these guys in. When it comes to sex, my addict is masterful. It is just unfortunate that the being that the addict inhabits gets destroyed on every level.

I installed parental control software on my computer, making my partner the administrator. That worked with one computer, but with the other computer, it made the internet completely nonfunctioning.

Now the problem with being a sex addict is that reaching out for computer technical support could be a damn unpleasant experience.

You are letting that tech into your secret world. What if this self-righteous tech seems to think that something on your computer isn't completely above board? Then you have a bigger problem on your hands due to this unwanted intervention. So

needless to say, like most porn addicts, I can't let these self-righteous busy bodies into my personal world. So consequently I have one computer locked down to porn and the other one still wide open.

Fortunately, the strength of my recovery and the pain of acting out is keeping me away from the porn and hook-up apps. But the addict could be back in business in seconds.

As a matter of fact, the addict could be back in business on any unsupervised computer where there is privacy. Immediate gratification. Technology has literally transformed sex addiction into a national crisis. We are nothing but struggling sex addicts, trying to hang on against the relentless onslaught. We literally are surrounded and outgunned.

— Anonymous

ONE CLICK

One click separates me from them,
Dr. Jekyll from Master and Mistress Hyde.
One click that opens the flood gate.
One click that turns a pleasant day into
a horror scene on the inner screen,
deep inside my mind.
One click that turns me into an "it,"
an object longing for nothing more than
another click deeper inside,
a click to turn off reason and thought,
a click that turns on fear, compulsion, remorse,
one click that turns a real human into one of them,
a night shade,
identical to all the other creatures of the night,
a reptilian brain residing in a
once all too human mind.

One click.

One click.

One click.

Click.

Crossroad

Alone, on a crossroad, I stand.
An eclipse of indecision, darkens my land.
Fear, like a roaring lion, freezes my senses;
Weakening, therefore, my defenses.

BUT

Like a loving father, you take my hand;
Leading me out of darkness, into
the Promised Land.

Amen.

— Nicole

The Most Difficult First Step



I have been in S.L.A.A. for nearly a year, and while I am active in other 12-Step programs, I have found this First Step to be the most difficult. Time and again I am overcome with any or all of the following: denial that the mess I am in is related to this addiction, pride (excessive) in whatever recovery I have been able to make (as if it were accomplished by self will!), a sense of hopelessness and futility about my life and my relationships, overconfidence, newcomer's arrogance and faux-wisdom, and, ultimately, utter confusion.

What helps me the most is attending meetings, speaking to

others (sponsors, program friends), and my step-study group, in which we go into great detail about our lives, experiences, and feelings. So often in my life I've either blamed other people for my problems, or had an inordinate amount of shame about what has happened to me and my life — both of which have prevented me from getting to a simple place of humility — of accepting the reality of my addiction.

When I am in the company of others (who — huge surprise! — seem to love and accept me for who I am) with the same addiction and similar problems, it becomes more possible for me

to surrender.

I've lost many things through my addiction: a wonderful job and a fine professional reputation, many friendships, my physical and emotional health, a marriage, a great deal of money, the respect of my children, etc. etc. How then can it be so hard for me to see my powerlessness? I've heard it said that denial is so strong that you can't see it — really — until you're out of it. Until then I need to just keep coming back, because this is the closest I've ever come to experiencing truth, serenity, and peace.

—Anonymous

Living Tradition Four

How do I live Tradition 4? I definitely am practicing it today by letting my boyfriend be himself, until it affects me/the family as a whole. For example, I cannot control what he does with his ex-wife (as far as how often he talks to her, etc.) until it affects me. Sometimes I'm not sure if it really affects me at all — is it my love addict rearing its ugly head,

trying to control everything? Like an angry octopus with eight arms grasping for whatever to control - out of fear, my addict thinks that if I could just control him (my boyfriend) everything would be OK. In this particular circumstance I was able to pause, reflect, pray, and tell him how I was feeling (resentful, etc.). And I will discuss the situation with my sponsor, ask God for

guidance and talk to him. I have to pray for courage, however, because not everything is going to be all “hunky-dory” with this man. I need to know I am worth it to be able to speak up if something is affecting me. I am a beautiful child of God and there is no requirement to be loved.

— Anonymous

Hope for Sobriety

Editor's Note: Step Three states that we “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” This is one S.L.A.A. member's concept of God. S.L.A.A. does not endorse/promote any outside enterprise.

Hi, my name is Kara, sex and love addict. I help to co-ordinate the meeting on the S.L.A.A. telephone lines for recovering blocked artists and musicians. Culture in our society is sacked with sex and love addiction, as you know. We were led to form this meeting in the hopes of giving struggling people sex and love addiction sobriety and creative recovery.

The meeting receives many requests to join, but we still have not built a regular membership. This has not stopped us from studying the nature of sex and love addiction, and also creative block addiction.

And so, we are able to offer recovery support to fellows when they come to the meeting looking for help.

With culture the way it is, and by that I mean, how prevalent it is, how hard-hitting, how persuasive, and psyched out (focused grouped, campaigned, tie ins, etc) sex and love addiction is probably the of our society's addictions today.

I say that comparing it to heroin addiction or alcoholism. While these addictions are common and deadly as well, they are not as prevalent as sex and love addiction.

As a society, we have not come

out of our denial about this fact. Very few (if any) therapists screen for sex or love addiction even though they know about it.

It's difficult to admit that we have devised an economy that thrives on this disease.

Attitudes towards sex and love addiction today are similar to the attitudes of the 1930s prohibition era with subsidiaries that preyed on people to participate in the illegal and very lucrative trade of booze. The songs and dances and tie ins to that included jails, hospitals and institutes.

Today, even politicians openly lust during speeches, and the pressure of the 'yes' men to be

okay with this is the norm.

We have been pacified to accept the sex addiction and love addiction in our midst. We know that prohibition came to an end, alcohol was legal, state controlled, with taxes on sales going back to the government.

Hmmm...so, as sex and love addicts, where do we stand on this dilemma?

We don't.

And this is one of the hardest lessons that I have had to learn in the recovery process — issues like legalizing prostitution, or more conservative regulations of culture: This is not a debate for me at all.

My sobriety must come first. That means accepting the nature of my disease, and working to carry the message of hope.

Another interesting point that we discovered in sex and love addiction recovery was that shame and anxiety are at the core of all addiction.

What that means is the triggers that most of us experience are from a base of shame and anxiety.

Artists and musicians contribute to the experiences of many people and sometimes trigger shame and anxiety

through our creativity.

What we practice at this artist's and musician's meeting is a fulfillment of our 11th Step. We practice by saying a prayer and then doing a meditation during the phone meeting.

Together we practice the turning of our will and our life over to God, and following His guidance in our creative duty, a practice we then carry out throughout the rest of the day.

Each day we begin again. We take seriously the idea of 'turning our will and our life' over to Him.

We also read about sex and love addiction recovery and about blocked creativity recovery as He guides us to. We stay close to the practice of the founders of the 12 step movement.

In service of that, we read about the healing power of Jesus Christ, as they did, so that we can teach each other how to carry the message as it was and is supposed to be carried.

We also read recovery stories about people who suffer shame and anxiety, and recover from it.

And finally we read about shame and anxiety so that we can better understand the nature of it. This is not to exclude anyone of a different faith, but to fulfill

how the program was designed (in my opinion).

The latest addition of addiction education, we'll call it, is to study poor self-esteem. Love addiction has one of the highest suicide rates of any addiction, and at the core of suicide ideation, (or addiction) is poor self-esteem.

We read about developing your own esteem, and not depending on other's esteem, as is also pushed in our culture. Part of our culture says we are not "good enough" or "right" enough and this can lead us into shame spirals.

We need people with strong voices to help out with the readings. God gave me a speech impediment that is not terrible to hear, but painful, and sometimes comes out as difficult to hear, I suppose.

I want to testify that there is a lot of hope for very strong recovery if you commit to this program. We welcome anyone looking for recovery.

With that, I hope that this article will help a fellow find their way to better sobriety, and wish you all the best in S.L.A.A.

— **Anonymous**

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



Tools to Use During the Snow Blizzard

Amid a pristine, splendid, opulent blizzard, the snow descends on the northeast of America.

From a citizen's perspective, it looks awesome to observe.

Yet, as a grateful recovering sex and love addict and anorexic like me, it can evoke feelings of sadness, isolation, loneliness, and alienation. Today, I experienced a plethora of emotions which compelled me to do three S.L.A.A. recovery meetings. My sex and love addict and anorexic

wanted to dive into self-loathing because I was caged in. However, doing these meetings enabled me to listen and relate to my fellow sex and love addicts. I felt a sense of community. And I felt supported, heard, and respected. It is like running and lifting weights even when my emotions and mind says "No." I am proactive and say "Yes."

I am still asking Higher Power

to help me sit with and feel my feelings. It is not easy, but a slow evolutionary process. Progress not perfection.

Additionally, talking to a recovery friend enabled me to articulate my thoughts and feelings, laugh, joke, and learn from each other's stories and create friendship intimacy.

Reading an intriguing novel enabled me to enjoy one of my top lines.

Are you experiencing an emotional, personal, family, work, or relationship blizzard? Are questions and thoughts swirling in your mind? Does your sex and love addict feel triggered?

I want to encourage you to pray, journal, call recovery and personal friends, meditate, ascertain a hobby or top line that brings you joy.

What you focus on becomes bigger. Like the snow blizzard, you can shovel the snow or not. You can either repress your feelings and act out, or use the available tools.

— **Anonymous**



Finding My Power



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

I was born in Philadelphia. My father has been mentally ill for most of my life and my mother has always catered to him. So my father has basically been the center of my family.

When I was 8, all of my attention drifted to boys and I was diagnosed with A.D.D. My parents freaked out and became even more overprotective. My father worried that I could not

take care of myself and that I would become homeless. This became one of my main fears. I have learned that it was because of this that I have spent most of my life trying to find someone to take care of me. I believed I was weak and couldn't do it myself. I didn't want to become my father and I didn't want to become homeless.

When I entered high school, I rarely talked. I blended in and people made jokes about how I had the power to make myself invisible. I crushed on men constantly but they rarely paid any attention to me and whenever they did, I thought they must be in love with me or that they wanted to date me.

I had few friends and not much of a social life. The friends

I had were social outcasts and I thought I was prettier and better than them. They were getting boyfriends and I wasn't. This made me feel like nothing. I had to steal my friend's boyfriends or at least get their attention in order to feel validated. I was in constant competition with my friends.

When I graduated I went away to a school called Hofstra in New York.

I was terrified and my mother wouldn't let me come home on the weekends because she wanted me to be more social. Near the end of my freshman year, one of my roommates brought home two of her male friends and one of them was cuddling with me and paying a lot of attention to me. I became enamored.

They had to leave and I gave him my number, later that night he came back with his friend and some Coronas. I became intoxicated and I was date raped and lost my virginity.

I was also obsessed with this guy named Johnny who lived next door to us. Nothing but seeing him made me happy. During my sophomore year we didn't live in the same building and I carried a huge torch for him. I rarely saw him and I became increasingly more depressed. I somehow found out where he lived and was always going to his dorm building for the sole purpose of catching a glimpse or having some sort of interaction with him.

I was basically stalking him. He found out about this and was very angry with me. I left Hofstra, returned home and went to community college after that semester.

It was when I went back to Philadelphia and started attending community college that I met my first serious boyfriend, Ezra. We dated on and off for 8 years. I was thrilled to have an

actual boyfriend but it was not enough. After a while I just felt disgusted with the idea of having to spend the rest of my life with one person.

I abhorred marriage and monogamy. I asked him for an open relationship and became polyamorous. I wanted attention. I wanted to feel sexy and beloved all the time. I usually had 3 boyfriends at a time and if I had less I felt inadequate and got depressed. If they didn't answer my texts right away, I assumed they were angry with me and got into arguments with them. I couldn't stop.

The height of my acting out came in my late 20s after my parents moved to Chicago to retire. I attended nursing school and worked at a nursing home as a housekeeper. I became obsessed with one of the supervisors of the maintenance department. He had been flirty with me and was a significantly older man who was married and had children but always complained about his wife. I would ignore my job responsibilities and seek him out constantly.

I would sit in his chair and wait for him to come into his office. I got a buzz from how excited and wonderful his attention made me feel and I couldn't get enough of it. I didn't want to go home at the end of the day. I wanted to tease him so much that he HAD to have sex with me and cheat on his wife. I don't know how I didn't get fired from that job. I guess I'm lucky.

It was also around this point that I got involved in BDSM. I loved exhibitionism because I felt that it gave me power and got me attention. I couldn't do it through words. Showing my body off made me feel extremely powerful and like I could manipulate any man with my sexuality. I was really into bondage.

I was a submissive. I wanted to find an older dominant man to guide me and take care of me because I believed I couldn't do it myself. I said I would never go so far as to become a slave and become property of a man but one day I was at a picnic and met Bob.

He showed a lot of interest in me and made me feel important and we fooled around later that night. Afterwards he told me he was married and owned a slave and wanted me to be his other slave. The emotional connection was so intense that I agreed even though it had been a huge boundary of mine.

This man took over all of my finances and became my guarantor. I had to ask him to use my own money. I became obsessed with him and didn't care much about anybody else. I despised his wife. I would sleep over at his house in his room when his three kids were home and both of us would be chained to either side of him on the bed. We had to call him master and ask for permission to go to the bathroom.

I was depressed a lot because Bob was a workaholic and a flying nurse and he and his family would go off on trips for weekends and I couldn't go. I would keep myself isolated and not do anything. I would text him and try to get all of his attention when he was away. This escalated when he was supposed to see me on my birthday and then had to go out of town. I had a fit.

Then later that week he came over and handed me my bank book and told me he was releasing me.

This led to one of the darkest times in my life. I was online trashing myself and telling everyone in texts that I was worth nothing. I said horrible things to myself.

A friend told me that my

behavior wasn't good and told me to go to C.O.D.A. I went a few times and someone there told me about S.L.A.A. I didn't go at the time because I was in denial and feared being alone. My psychiatrist also told me I didn't belong there because the people there had no control over sex and had sex in public places.

I continued my relationship hunting and got involved with more couples, more one night stands, men who were verbally and emotionally abusive, etc.

Everything crashed when I was accused of neglect at my nursing aide job after I'd had to take a 16-hour shift because the person releasing me never showed. I wanted to kill myself and I admitted myself to a psych ward. At the psych ward they called my mother and told her that I shouldn't be in Philadelphia by myself and without a support system. So my parents came and got me and I moved to Chicago.

When I got to Chicago, I knew that I needed to find where I fit in and that had been the BDSM community for the past 4 or 5 years, so I went online and met a man named Randy and pulled my damsel in distress act again. I was able to manipulate him with texts about how horrible my life was and although he had just wanted a friendship, I relentlessly pursued him until we got into a relationship.

This man had never been in a relationship before, was impotent, a hoarder, an

alcoholic and couldn't drive. I had sworn I would never turn into my mother taking care of my father, but here I was doing just that.

He showed little to no sexual interest in me. I told him I loved him and he would never say it back. This was extremely damaging to my psyche. One time I said I loved him and he told me he was worried about his best friend who was a female named Gabby.

He would get angry at me over the smallest of things and I would not hear from him for days. I tried to take him to therapy to work things out, but this ended up terminating the relationship.

I hated my psychiatrist and him for this and I didn't want anything to do with men again. I despised them and I hated couples and people who were happy.

I was single for two months and then another guy started paying attention to me. I was lonely and isolating myself so I just thought, maybe this will work because Randy never courted me like this. In fact no guy had ever paid me so much attention.

I thought this guy, Andrew, was the love of my life. He was all I thought about. I would say I loved him and he always said it back. He invited me to everything. He always cared about my feelings. Then one day I mentioned that he was my soulmate and asked if he ever would want to move in together.

He freaked out and said we should go on a break.

This was my lowest bottom. I again hated people, vowed to stay single, didn't want anyone to touch me and hated couples. The thing that freaked me out though was not my self hatred or my anger, but the feeling that I wanted to break marriages up and make people cry. I wanted to yell at people. I wanted to hurt people. I was going to become abusive and I had to do something.

I remembered S.L.A.A. and started going to meetings. I identified with everyone so much. The women's meeting at 8 p.m. on Sunday was the first one I went to. I talked to someone after the meeting about how I was in a relationship and probably should get out of it. I wrestled with that and attended S.L.A.A. meetings for about a month until finally on Easter I broke up with Andrew through texting. I stopped talking to him completely on April 8, 2015. That is my sobriety date.

I am very thankful to S.L.A.A. I am learning how to be social. I have started going to a Unitarian church and become involved with the love of my life which is music. I have become less afraid of people. I have learned to be vulnerable and ask my Higher Power for help. I have become active in political causes. I am thankful that God has allowed me to be who I am. I feel like I am one of his chosen people.

— Lauren, IL

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The Second Step

QUOTE: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” — S.L.A.A. Core Documents, “The Twelve Steps of S.L.A.A.”

SHARE: It was by a lake in a park when I had my moment of crisis. I realized that business trips and acting out were always going to be synonymous. I had read spiritual books on dealing with sin and living the overcoming life, tried every strategy I could think of, prayed, wept, spent an entire vacation retreat studying what I hoped would be the victorious key, threatened myself with consequences, and yet — here I was again. This time I had moved even further into an area that I had always believed was morally off limits. What was I doing back here again? In my shroud of shame, I hadn't realized that this place of powerlessness was a good thing, providing I didn't give up in despair. My only choice was to embrace the possibility that my cycle of degeneration could be broken through the initiative of a benevolent being, distinct and separate from myself. “I can't do it,” really does mean, “I can't do it.” Yet, this isn't a place of despair but of hope. For when I come to the end of my hoarded resources, I find a Higher Power who is graciously willing to act.

AFFIRMATION: Accepting my powerlessness moves me to see my Higher Power's doorway of hope that has been there all along.

— **David S, Boone, NC**

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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.

