

the Journal

Issue #179

Single Issue \$4



Celebrating 30 Years of
the Journal

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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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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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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Stories, interviews, personal testimony, and other content contained herein are authored by members of Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. The opinions expressed in the Journal are not necessarily the opinions of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc., F.W.S. office, Annual Business Conference or any other Conference committee including the Conference Journal Committee or the Journal production staff. Motions adopted at the 1989, 1990, and 1991 Conferences chartered the Journal, but it is impractical for all of the content of 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.

In submitting such content to S.L.A.A, the member releases S.L.A.A., any other members of S.L.A.A. and S.L.A.A.'s officers, directors, employees and agents (collectively, the "Releasees") from any and all claims which the member may have against any of the Releasees in connection with the member's submission of content to the Journal.

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Letter From the Editor

Dear Reader,

When I was doing the interview with Susan, I got a little weepy because I often cry tears of joy when I think of the insane addict that I used to be and realize that I'm not that person anymore. In the days of my addiction, I wanted to be a published writer. Even with all of my problems and suicidal nature, I managed to get a master's degree in creative writing. But my writing was dark and deranged. Readers of our student magazine complained to the university when they published my trashy stories. Friends who read my writing worried about my sanity. So, when I got sober in A.A., I had writer's block for 14 years. I wrote privately about my Steps and in my notebook about my feelings and withdrawal symptoms. I wrote about anything assigned to me by my sponsor or therapist but didn't write much creatively.

Then one day, I went to celebrate a friend's sober anniversary. He had just volunteered as the marketing director for the Journal. (This has since been renamed to outreach director.) He casually asked me what I did for a living. I told him I was an editor for newspapers. Without skipping a beat, he said, "We need a layout editor for the S.L.A.A. Journal." I'm sure I looked like a deer caught in headlights! I had already been doing some really time-intensive service work at the Intergroup level and didn't want to take on any more responsibility. (Immaturity and running from responsibility have always been huge character defects of mine.) But my friend wouldn't let me off the hook. He pursued me to volunteer for weeks after that and finally talked me into it. (Boy, am I glad he did!)

I began as layout editor for the Sept/Oct 2010 edition. As fate would have it, I became the interim managing editor/layout editor for the Nov./Dec. 2010 issue. There were some tough issues being hashed out in the Conference Journal Committee at the time and I found it really difficult to stay positive in the middle of it. But it helped remind me that Higher Power gives me strength if I ask. I felt stronger in my recovery once we got through all the conflict. I tried to practice the Tradition of principles before personalities. I'm glad I didn't run from fear and have been able to work with *the Journal* as long as I have.

I'm grateful for the amazing people I've met because of *the Journal* and the friendships that I've made. I wanted to make special mention of Andrew K. here. He was CJC chair in the past and has been one of our

proofreaders for many years. He revived and kept the Meditation Book project going when it was about to fade out of existence. He has worked diligently over the years (even though he had a lot of really great life events going on) without much accolade and pretty anonymously. I consider him a close friend—and without *the Journal* I probably never would have met him!

I'm always so grateful when I'm putting together each issue of *the Journal*. I feel like I'm in a really good meeting when I read everyone's stories. I'm often inspired to write a story or two. Even the person who takes time out of their busy day to reach out and help another person by answering the question of the day inspires me. It makes me realize that others care about S.L.A.A. and its members. The fact that others can get out of their selfishness and help a fellow sufferer is miraculous and supports my belief that a Higher Power exists.

The Conference Journal Committee calls, as Susan mentioned in her interview, have been so great and I've really bonded with so many people who attend the call every month.

I've been so grateful over the years to be able to be a part of the ABM, *Journal* writing projects, and all that the committee has accomplished (a lot!)

I want to thank the FWS office staff, CJC committee chairs, CJC committee members, Journal editors, art directors, outreach directors, proofreaders, FWS Webmaster, Journal Newsletter subscribers, Journal reps in intergroups and meetings, people who send in articles, photos and answers to the question of the day, Journal subscribers Journal readers. Thank you all—we have reason to celebrate— 30 years!!

Lisa C., Managing Editor, *the Journal*

The S.L.A.A. Basic Text eBook
IS HERE!



amazonkindle
iBooks

Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day from the last issue was, Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of *the Journal* — “How has *the Journal* helped in your recovery? and/or Please share

any special stories you have about *the Journal* or the Conference Journal Committee.” Here are some wonderful responses for your enjoyment. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two themes are: #180 — Sept./Oct. — “Practicing Principles Over Personalities: How do you practice principles over personalities in relationships during polarizing political/social climates?” — Deadline for submissions is July 15, 2019. And “Anorexia and acting out: Please describe any experiences that have shown you that anorexia and acting out can be regarded as two parts of the same thing (sex and love addiction). These problems may seem unrelated but they are really two sides of the same coin. — Deadline for submissions is Sept. 15, 2019. Please send answers to www.slaafws.org.

“How has *the Journal* helped in your recovery? and/or Please share any special stories you have about *the Journal* or the Conference Journal Committee.”

I enjoy submitting articles for *the Journal* because it makes me think about the theme of each issue and I learn how to be helpful and inspiring to others. I can't keep it if I don't give it away, and submitting articles helps me accomplish this.

In one of my real-life experience articles, I shared about a housemate who died from a heart attack. It freaked me out. My recovery buddies came over to support me. Another was available by phone until they got to my house. This was invaluable support for me. I went to six S.L.A.A. meetings within the space of five days to receive support. I am confident that someone, somewhere was helped by this story. I know it was therapeutic for me to write about it.

Of course, there are some topics in *the Journal* that resonate with me in a way that a meeting cannot provide. It's not necessarily better, just different. And I get to hear voices from all over the country, and the world for that matter.

— DALE B., CAPITOLA, CA

Question of the day

I love this publication! Thanks to all who work on this! I receive the print form of *the Journal*.

The questions of the day (QODs) are so valuable because I get to see responses from many other addicts in recovery from around the world. One *Journal* with the topic of “Program Crush” was great. I think it is a topic not brought up often in meeting rooms due to the sensitivity with other members. Our addiction is a disease of relationships. The vulnerability shared in the rooms is so powerful and creates a level of closeness many of us don’t or cannot experience outside of the rooms. It’s something special. The relationships we build can create attraction, so I loved reading the entries shared in that issue. In addition, I love the stories recovery members share and the recent interview about “Finding S.L.A.A.” I’d love to see more of those.

— ARI, NJ

Happy 30th Birthday to *the Journal*! When I came into S.L.A.A. in 2012, *the Journal* was one of the tools that helped me to feel closer to the fellowship. Living in a fairly rural area with a young child, getting to face-to-face meetings was not an option.

I could relate to the stories I read, and it helped me realize that I was not alone. Fast forward a few years, and I began serving on the Conference *Journal* Committee which has been an amazing experience. Our monthly service calls are always uplifting, and it is humbling to be part of a group of individuals with long-term sobriety who have each been powerfully transformed through the Steps.

I’m grateful for everyone who has taken a part in the production of *the Journal* over the past 30 years, and here’s to 30 more!

— BECCA M.

Celebrating 30 Years of *the Journal* - An Interview -



Editor's note: When I thought of doing an interview for this issue of the Journal, I had so many good choices of

people who work behind the scenes to make and distribute each issue of *the Journal*. I am grateful to them all. But Susan stood out to

me because we have been working together for 6 years. She shows up to the conference calls each month. Years ago, sometimes we were the only two people on the call. Every issue of *the Journal* and every ABM she worked with me to make sure *the Journal* got the support it needed. When her time as the Board of Trustees liaison to the Conference Journal Committee came to an end, I thought she might take a break, but to my surprise, she volunteered as CJC chair! I'm really happy she did that and I'm grateful for the time we've had together so far. Here's a transcription of our conversation.

Lisa: Thanks for doing this!

Susan: You're welcome. Thanks for thinking of me.

Lisa: How many years of sobriety or time in Program do you have?

Susan: I first came to S.L.A.A. in 1990. I got about 16 months and then I did a Fourth Step. It was too real. I said, "Oh no, no. I'm out of here." I left and I drifted through three more marriages. I think. Three or four, somewhere around there. I came back in 2003. I finally made it back. I got sober on April 18, 2006.

Lisa: Great!

Susan: So, I just took a chip for thirteen years of sobriety.

Lisa: Congratulations!

Susan: Thank you!

Lisa: How did you first hear of *the Journal* magazine?

Susan: When I was a delegate at the ABM (S.L.A.A. Annual Business Meeting) in 2011, I didn't know anything about it. My home group is S.L.A.A. online and at the time we didn't really know about *the Journal*. I think it might have been listed on our website somewhere. I couldn't tell you where. So, it was very vague to me. But when I saw *the Journal* in the ABM folder, I thought, "This is cool." I subscribed after that.

Lisa: Yes. We give the ABM delegates a free issue. Beforehand, we tell everyone which theme will be for the ABM issue when we ask for articles on the theme and answers to the question of the day. I think it's really great that the FWS office includes *the Journal* issue for the delegates.

Susan: Yes. Really great.

Lisa: How has *the Journal* helped in your recovery?

Susan: It is a meeting in print. I honestly feel that God speaks to me through the articles that are in *the Journal*. I use it all the time with sponsees. For example, I've bookmarked several articles about surrender or setting bottom lines—various things that I feel are super helpful. I let my sponsees know about it. If I find an issue that particularly speaks to me, I will save a copy of it so I can pull it down from the shelf to reread. I have so many *Journals* now that I'm running out of space! That's how much it's come to mean to me

over the years.

Lisa: That's nice. I've noticed that over the years you've written articles and helped out with photos.

Susan: All of that has been mostly anonymous. Even at the ABM, when you circulated the question of the day, I responded. But when I was on the Board of Trustees (BOT), it was all anonymous. You (the editor) knew that the photos or articles were from me. But it was anonymous. I felt it was super important when I was on the Board not to unduly influence anyone who was reading it. It was a spiritual principle that I had. I remember before I got on the Board, I had submitted my story and it was published. I didn't know when it would publish, so I kept looking for it in every issue. One day, I opened up *the Journal* and there was my story! I was so happy to see it, to know that I had actually contributed to something so powerful. I hope that it helped someone and blessed them.

Lisa: I think so. I have been moved by a lot of your writing. I think it's admirable that you kept it anonymous. I don't know what meeting I was in, but someone read something that said, "Just for today, I will do something nice for someone without letting them know about it." I feel like you've been doing that over the years and you're very consistent and very good about it.

Susan: Thank you. I do enjoy writing. That's been a real gift to me from my Higher Power because when I was out there acting out, I couldn't hear the recovery inside of me. I couldn't hear the voice of my Higher Power. It was blocked and I had so many creative ideas, so many stories I wanted to write. I would just abandon them because it was just a dry well.

Lisa: You have been of service to *the Journal* and the *Journal* committee for many years. Can you share a little about that experience? Is there anything that stands out or that has helped your recovery?

Susan: It's really interesting. I think it was the luck of the draw that I was assigned liaison to the Conference Journal Committee when I was on the Board. I don't remember really connecting with *the Journal* when I was a delegate. But when I was assigned to the committee, I thought "This should be interesting. I like writing. I like creativity. Let's see what happens." Mainly, what I wanted to do was just be a helpful connection from the Board to the committee. Gosh. You guys started to grow on me. You wrapped tendrils around my heart of love and care. The amazing creativity that I kept reading month after month in *the Journal* and the dedication - oh my gosh, of you, Lisa - I am so in awe of your service to the committee and everything you've

done over the years. You inspired me. [Lisa's note: I felt like crying when she said this – coming from someone who has done so much service and that I respect so much – this was a huge compliment. We really have trudged the road of happy destiny together – that's a big thing for an anorexic like me to say and do.] The Conference Journal Committee calls almost felt like a regular meeting every month. We showed up and we'd all take a couple of minutes to share. It was very heartfelt.

Lisa: I feel the same way.

Susan: I like it to be that way rather than pressing issues. It seems like we have some issues to deal with right now. But I honestly feel like it's a free, open space where we can have a meeting of the minds and hearts and exchange ideas. It just comes together which is why when I finished my term – I think I was the CJC liaison for six years - I knew I wanted to stay involved with *the Journal* and be of service. It just seemed right.

Lisa: You've helped so much over the years and done such a great job. I just want to thank you for that.

Susan: Thank you.

Lisa: I'm going to cry here. (tearful nervous laughter)

Have you seen *the Journal* help others? If so, please share about that.

Susan: I have encouraged every single one of my sponsees to

sign up for *the Journal* and many of them have said they felt blessed to have subscribed to it. One of the things that proved to be difficult (and why I so want *the Journal* app to be created) is that many of my sponsees are international. My S.L.A.A. online meeting is mostly international. I do a daytime meeting which is nighttime in other countries. Most of them are just finishing their workday. We have many people in those meetings who hunger for *the Journal* and are not able to easily afford it or access it. And if we do get an app, we'll have to make sure that international members are able to access it. I look forward to being able to tell my future sponsees, "Oh, look we have an app now. You can subscribe to it. The Journal is like twice as much to send in postage internationally as the price of the subscription.

Lisa: Yes. I think we need to do what we can to help international S.L.A.A. members.

Do you have any special stories about *the Journal* or the Conference Journal Committee?

Susan: There's just so many people behind the scenes that put *the Journal* together. They're anonymous: the readers, writers, people who submit pictures. They are active but they don't attend the committee meetings. I find that remarkable. I don't know of any other committee that is like that. This group of people who are so dedicated to *the Journal*, they may

not make the committee meetings but they're there. They inspire such devotion. There are so many people that are devoted to the *Journal* even though they don't hold service positions.

Lisa: Yes. I'm always amazed that people are still connected after all these years. Subscribers to the *Journal* newsletter (our outreach email) are so dedicated and it's so great!

Susan: What's amazing to me is that I can't imagine the amount of work that it takes for you that goes unacknowledged in answering all of those emails and sorting and keeping together all of the articles and the pictures and everything that's going on - making sure that it gets to the proofreaders and the office on time. It's just a fulltime job.

Lisa: It's like I'm in a meeting when I read it. So, I enjoy it way more than it is work.

Susan: I think that's amazing, really. I'm so inspired by that dedication.

Lisa: Thank you. You too.

Do you think *the Journal* could do more to be of service to the Fellowship?

Susan: Like I said, apps. I think that is the wave of the future. The average person has 80 apps on their cellphone. That's a lot! Currently, I'm at 74. For the younger folks, they've grown up with technology. Hardly anyone uses the computer anymore unless they absolutely have to. It's been suggested that the BOT needs to have a technology committee and I do believe that this is something that will come about some day. It's needed because technology is coming more into play for our members and the growth of our Fellowship. It's really important to have a sense of community and to be able to communicate with one another.

Lisa: I agree.

Once again: thanks so much for doing this interview!

An Invitation For You

Enlarge your recovery by allowing others to get the same benefit that you get from reading *the Journal*. It is a great way to carry S.L.A.A.'s message of hope and practice the Twelfth Step. The fellowship needs volunteers of all skills and levels of availability. Here's what you can do:

- Become a Journal Representative for your intergroup or home group, encouraging the use of *the Journal* as a source of topics, letting people know that there are Journals for sale, and ensuring that plenty of Journal subscription cards are always on the literature table.

Contact info: <http://www.slaafws.org/contact/journaleditor>

Something to Celebrate – 30 Years of the Journal

A Bit of History and Archives

My first *Journal* was received as a back issue with an S.L.A.A. Group Starter Kit for my home group (December 2001). The kit included an order form with an opportunity to order back issues for \$1 each: I ordered ten (10) right away. I was so hungry for the experience, strength, and hope described in those pages (the Montreal English Groups were just getting started). I want to share my journey with the *Journal* and a bit of history.

When I attended the July 2003 Annual Business Meeting (ABM) as a Delegate, I received a free copy of the current issue of *the Journal*. I understood then the value of subscribing not only to support the publication but for my own sobriety and recovery. I also learned it is a good idea to have more than one subscription as I am a collector. Thus began my crusade to not only support the *Journal* subscriptions but to read the articles during meetings.

As I became more familiar with service at the international level, I observed that the Conference passed a number of Motions

concerning *the Journal*:

- A 1989 ABM Motion approved the publication of *the Journal*.
- A 1990 ABM Motion indicated *the Journal* “is a primary tool of recovery for current members, loners and prospective members” and to support it financially.
- By 1991 another ABM Motion affirmed *the Journal* as a critical tool of recovery and growth of the program; and, a second Motion changed the By-Laws to include *the Journal* editor as a voting member of the Conference (see [Index of Motions 1989-present](#) posted on the F.W.S. website).

Within months of the 2003 ABM the three (3) volume set of [The First Ten Years of the Journal \(1989-1999\)](#) ©2003 with index became available. This *Journal* set is now a collector’s item since 2014 when the first printing (1000 copies) was sold out. I treasure my sets and collection of the *Journal* from December 1989 to the present (yes, I am missing a few

from the early days). I refer to the articles often to look up specific topics/themes or get background on words like “pay-off,” “triggers,” “qualifier,” and “no-contact.”

Recently, I was re-reading the first *Journal* Focus booklet on *Anorexia* ©2004 and was delighted by the history in that issue. This focus booklet includes articles from *the Journal* December 1989 through December 2001 and provides information about the *Anorexia* pamphlet ©1992 (I particularly like the section: *Are You Anorectic? Here are 50 Questions you might want to address*).

Our English Montreal groups continue to keep copies of all focus booklets on the tables. Until 2014 there were four (4) *Journal* focus issues: *Withdrawal* ©2004, *Anorexia* ©2004, *Healthy Relationships* ©2004, and *Twelve Steps* ©2005. Some of our groups started as anorexia or healthy relationships focus meetings and used these focus booklets.

During the last ten (10) years *the Journal* added to its repertory of publications and to my collection. Consider the following:

- *the Journal* Recovery Outreach Edition. Free of Charge. *Sharing from the Heart* ©2011 that is posted on the F.W.S. website and especially helpful to newcomers
- Poetry articles from *the Journal* ©July 2013

- Step 6 ©September 2014
- Anorexia More articles from *the Journal* (1999-2016) ©February 2016
- Step 7 ©August 2016
- Sober Dating ©May 2017

The *Journal* continues to reinvent itself with *the Journal* Gratitude Calendars (2014, 2015 and 2017) and most recently mp3 audios for sale at the online F.W.S. Store. These are great...it is like having a meeting in my car for my long road trips. The S.L.A.A. Preamble, 12 Steps, 12 Characteristics and 12 Signs of Recovery are frequently read aloud along with responses to the *Question of the Day* and articles on that issue's theme. These are not professional readers but members from the Conference Journal Committee or at-large.

This article was prepared as “Something to Celebrate” meaning the depth and breadth of *the Journal* and its importance in carrying the message of recovery and hope for 30 years. I would be remiss if I did not include a note of gratitude to its many editors and cover designers; especially the current Managing Editor, Lisa C., whose first issue was November/December 2010 as Interim Managing Editor for the theme, “The Year's Achievement.” In addition, the continuing improvement in the cover designs by Fiona since May/June 2010

“Step 4 Pathway to Recovery.” Another “Something to Celebrate” about *the Journal* is the history there.

There are announcements for upcoming events and other items of interest besides recovery articles. One particular upcoming event in the *Journal* issue January 1991 page 11 was: June 13-16, 1991 Seventh Annual FWS Business Meeting, Sacramento, California.

What synchronicity...the 35th Annual Conference will be in Sacramento again this year: 2019 ABC/M July 23-26th, nearly three decades later.

I will be attending the ABC/M

and bringing a few boxes of *Journal* memorabilia.

There has to be a way to archive and protect the history of *the Journal* as well as many other important publications (F.W.S. Newsletters) and activities of various service entities of The Augustine Fellowship, S.L.A.A., Fellowship-Wide Services, Inc. Maybe it is time for us as a Fellowship to consider archival organization, cataloging, preservation and letting people know about it (see A.A. Guidelines Archives MG-17 rev 9/17).

Thank heaven for *the Journal*,
— RITA, MONTREAL



Available now in print! The Journal Focus Booklets

The Journal team has compiled booklets of articles from the *Journal* archives with a focus on anorexia, sober dating, Step 6, and Step 7.

Share space

Exploring Higher Power

I'm glad it's okay to explore and discover a Higher Power (HP) that can help us stay sober. My ideas about HP have always been so fuzzy, and undefined, and since I got here my beliefs have been all over the place. What I've learned in these rooms is that many folks come here with one idea of HP (that's been working for them, or not as the case may be), and they stick with it. Others, (like me), have a shift in their concept of HP. For some, perhaps there's a back and forth for a bit. I was earnestly seeking Him, though. I was trying to figure out which direction to go to find my "Him" because I knew that apart from this divine Power, nothing was going to be able to stop me from utter destruction. My HP had to be powerful enough to withstand my strong will, and my recurring doubts. My HP needed to remain a steady, dependable source of Divine strength, no matter what the heck I was doing. At times, I simply believed in HP as HP knew Himself to be, whatever that was; this worked for a season; but my concept of HP

was so mysterious and elusive. It seemed to be just smoke and mirrors when I hit worst bottom (the one that nearly killed me). Through the years of earnestly seeking Him since, His image has become clearer, and dearer.

My concept of HP will no doubt keep evolving as I draw closer to Him. Here are some of the basic ways I seek Him now:

- reading spiritual literature
- talking to my recovery partners
- talking to my sponsor
- listening for His voice (in meetings - through the voices of brave souls who are attending)
- journaling
- taking a walk in nature
- talking to HP
- listening to HP
- meditating on what He says about Himself

These things have been working! It's pretty simple, if I keep doing the do!

I love this program - I'm so glad we're on this journey together.

— ANONYMOUS

Healing Anorexia



For many years of recovery in this program I have been riding on a pink cloud of 'all's well'. I married my partner sober and I've been stable for years, not acting out (getting divorced every five seconds). To my dismay though, the past year has been tough. I'm just really realizing how anorexic I am. Not just in my relationships, but all areas...friends, partner, family, etc.

I'm sort of a dreamer. My husband calls me an absent-minded professor. I've been

realizing lately how I've 'sleep-walked' through much of my recovery, really only half paying attention, and I have missed out on so much.

I want more now - I think I'm ready, and willing to work on that part of me - through Steps, and accountability with Sponsor and Recovery Partners. I'm getting honest with God, myself and others today, really paying attention. It's draining at times, but so rewarding. My heart is brimming over with precious memories of loving and being

loved. I don't want to retreat again, but balance is key I think, because I still need time for solitude and reflection, for prayer and meditation... I'm trying to figure it

all out. I'm so glad I have you guys and Higher Power to guide me. Thanks for being part of my recovery today.

— ANONYMOUS

Connection Through Whatever Means Possible

I found myself again with a bout of bronchitis, left with great difficulty in speaking, and unable to go out much because I was (or people would feel that I was) contagious. Having days of nothing to do did not sit well with me, and I became isolated through the lack of verbal contact with people.

Alas, I discovered again the resources of texting and email. I could reach out without having to

Speak. I could share my concerns. In a prayer request sent to a few of my closest friends, I received back affirmations, stories of their putting the program into action in their own lives and bringing things back to principles. Some of these people are about two hours away, but this experience has been a building one for our friendship.

My prayer is, God, help me to use these tools in times of sickness and health. Thank you, God.

— DB, CAPITOLA, CALIFORNIA

Haiku for My Sponsor

A sunflower blooms
The golden light of friendship
My kind sponsor's heart

~ANONYMOUS, ARIZONA

Finding a Measure of Peace

I don't like the feeling of being powerless. I have always relied on my intellect, and hard work to get ahead, often forcing my way, discounting other's input, figuring I knew what was best. At this my Higher Power has always smiled, exerted His will a little stronger than mine.

He never just flattened me, rather He arranged my circumstances such that my plans would inevitably get tripped up. Then I'd get a little perturbed, exert my will all the harder, become increasingly dismayed, till finally giving up...I'd run away. This was my usual MO - doing the same thing over and over again, (even still sometimes) expecting different results. This is the very definition of insanity isn't it? It doesn't work, does it? So, why do I

have to go to such extremes? Why do I still try to use this strategy when I know it doesn't work...and Higher Power's will is always so much better than mine? It's because I'm an addict!!!!

I want to feel good at all times, and sex and love addiction is my "go to" to achieve that objective. But I'm like the little rat in the maze still looking for the cheese my Higher Power has moved. It's not where I thought it was anymore, yet I want to go there looking for it again and again. I come here to get reminded of this now...the fact that my cheese is in a new place. My part is to keep looking for It/Him. I will get fed. So glad I have a different way to go today, one with a measure of peace. I will keep coming back.

— ANONYMOUS

Layers of Recovery

Having been around the 12 Steps for a few 24 hours, I've noticed how my story changes with time. I've tried to be

as honest as I could since I came in, first to A.A. and then to S.L.A.A., but you can't talk about what you don't know.

One of the key moments in my A.A. recovery came when I re-examined a car accident I'd had in my youth. I'd been drinking at a local Inn and had left the place in a foul mood. As I drove away, a dark rage and blackness rose up in me and I decided that I would end it all. I put the pedal to the floor and headed for the largest tree I could see. Fortunately, there was a ditch and a number of rotted stumps and other debris between me and my goal that stopped what might have been a fatal accident. The car was destroyed, but I was merely bruised and battered.

What never occurred to my self-absorbed alcoholic mind was that my best friend was in the passenger seat. I'd never bothered to ask him, if he too wanted to go out in a blaze of glory. I was humbled by the fact that I'd never even considered that angle until I sobered up.

However, later in S.L.A.A., my story changed again. I'd been at the bar that night wanting to pick up a girl I was sleeping with who was bartending there. I'd shown up late and she had left with a guy I really disliked. I was sure that she had done it to get even with me. I tried to shrug it off, but as I drank, her betrayal kept eating away at me. I pictured her in bed with him and the rage and self-hatred in me grew. When I decided to kill myself, the thought in the back of my mind was, that'll

show that miserable so and so.

In the program, I discovered that I was always picking unavailable women who only cared for themselves. That way, I could keep myself in the state of shame that I was hopelessly forced to recreate.

Later still, I discovered a lot of that blackness radiated out from the relationship with my Mom. She had blamed me for the circumstances of my birth and had made my early life a living hell. Finally, mercifully, I was taken from her and raised by my grandparents. Still, the damage had been done. I never trusted women and had just used them for sex. I usually left them first, but any time that I felt betrayed or abandoned, those old feelings of worthlessness, rage and fear would return with a vengeance. Hence my midnight ride. Now a few 24 hours and many bitter tears later, I've come to a form of peace with myself and my past.

With the help of the program, friends and my Higher Power, I've let go of a lot of the pain and shame that was crippling me. I still have my issues and many things left to work on, but now I have a sense of freedom that I only dreamt of as a younger man. Anything (at least anything important) seems possible these days. Never give up. Everything good is right there waiting for us.

— BILL T. BELFAST, ME

The Gospel of My Twelfth Step



At the outset of 2018, I finished my first walk through the Twelve Steps for my sex and love addiction. My then-sponsor challenged me with the last of his written “quizzes” coinciding with the Steps. The question posed to me was “What is

a spiritual awakening for me? What have I experienced as a result of working the Twelve Steps?” The short answer is that, as I was in the Twelfth Step and mulling what the Steps’ journey meant to me, my life’s circumstances dictated that I

utilize every single recovery tool learned on the journey in order to stay sane and sober. My awakening was happening as I was tasked to share on my Twelfth Step.

There was a startling cosmic serendipity at play as I wrote the answer to my Twelfth Step questions. The awakening I was experiencing was a necessary spiritual and emotional response to my life's stressors in sobriety. Now that I was feeling all my feelings, and not denying them via acting out, the need to rely on all my spiritual assets was of particular importance.

Reaching the Twelfth Step was an amazing and relieving milestone. It took me about nine years to work Steps One through Twelve. But I was doubly appreciative because the work I was completing allowed me to better navigate the immediate challenges I was facing just then in my life. One of my most-persistent character defects is mismanagement of finances. As I go through the Steps a second time these next few years, I will definitely explore that dysfunction more deeply. I want to own my part in the persistent cycle of income scarcity and debt (and yes, I have seriously thought about joining Debtors Anonymous). And I want to make changes to my fiscal station more aligned with my recovery work and experience.

At the time of working on the final Step, I had just come back

from an exhaustive two-month search for out-of-state work. I had been barely getting by financially since November of 2017. I was falling further behind on child support and other bills, and I was relying on family largesse, simultaneously grateful and chagrined. Come February of 2018, I was suffering sleep deprivation, anxiety, and depression. But I kept moving forward, the best I could. And reaching the final Step while going through that tension sort of blew my mind, in a good way.

As I reviewed where I'd been, how I got to where I was, and what changed, I was awakened because I also had to carefully consider what was still difficult, what was still stubbornly unaltered in my spirit and my actions, and how to move to a better, more solvent place. I was experiencing how to "practice these principles in all areas of my life," just as the Twelfth Step exhorts me to.

The Twelfth Step is a culmination of all the Steps that come before it. Over the years, I had put to good use the various tools and behaviors I'd learned: taking stock of a day, making immediate amends, surrendering my addiction over and over. As I worked the Step, I realized I'd have to take its very instructiveness and put it into rigorous effect every day, every hour, sometimes every minute—in order to surmount my financial issues with my sanity and

sobriety intact. My life in recovery was presenting me with an amazing, real-time, teachable moment.

Years ago, my money-related duress would have cowed me and sent me running to pornography and deception like any “good” addict. And so, again, it was kind of awesome that I found a certain vigor and succor in finishing the Steps just then. The Twelfth Step encourages me to address my life’s very real concerns beyond my addiction. As a result of living the Twelfth Step at the same time I was participating in it, I revamped my daily routine.

I turned to meditation even more than I had been; I managed my sleep schedule; I took appropriate countermeasures when waking with my ego talking loudly and negatively to me. I made the Third Step Prayer my go-to mantra; I’d walk my dog in the morning and repeat the prayer over and over and breathe as it soothed my anxieties.

I improved my diet and returned to regular exercise. And I’ve relied on my program calls and texts for feedback or to vent. My finances are still an on-going concern, but I can countervail that stress by recalling my assets and blessings, too. I have a roof over

my head, food in the fridge, and a fantastic relationship with my kids. I’m sober, having recently celebrated my tenth anniversary.

And I have the God of my understanding whose overarching philosophy is love.

The awakening I was charged with articulating to my sponsor reminded me to stay present. My ego, my insecurities, and my fears discourage staying present and would prefer I trip on past regret or future uncertainty. Considering the stress I was under earlier this year,

sometimes staying grounded in the present was really all I could do. In its pivot toward life outside the meeting rooms, the Twelfth Step assures me that everything will be alright; not just recovery, but the practice of my life in general.

The Step’s awakening effects also revealed to me that sometimes, whether ten days or ten years into recovery, it takes a lot of energy and wherewithal just to stay right here, right now. My ego wants to capitalize on that tension, on that effort. That fragile, wounded, younger part of me which was too early exposed to pornography and abuse still resists the truth of my blessings when the going gets tough.

**The Twelfth
Step
encourages me
to address my
life’s very real
concerns
beyond my
addiction.**

And yet, as I wrote and shared my Twelfth Step almost a year ago, the universe kept repeatedly sending me the same, positive messages, in different ways and from different sources. Via personal interactions, program calls, or in something I read or heard, there was and is a frequent “gospel” which I’m glad to be privy to. I liken that experience to gaining some grace; I consider receiving those messages a big part of the awakening I’m experiencing.

The Twelfth Step encourages

me not only to persevere but to thrive in the present, which is rife with strength and opportunity. I can now apply all the principles I learned to accept and surrender my addiction to the other challenging facets of my life, economic or otherwise. The Step also reminds me to hold on to hope. If I can live a healthy, spiritual life without relying on my terrible addiction, then I can work through this financial worry and ultimately alter my circumstances for the better.

— SEAN C.

Plugging in to Higher Power

I love the story in recovery literature about plugging into Higher Power, being reliant on Him; it’s like plugging into electricity and being reliant on it without a second thought. I have heard this many times in over 30 plus years of 12-stepping Fellowships. I didn’t quite get it at first (though it seems pretty simple).

I tried plugging into the recovery current by going to therapy. Close, but didn’t work. I joined exercise classes; that didn’t work. I tried drumming circles, and poetry writing classes. I tried going to (very) organized religious organizations. That didn’t work. One day, the light went on (ha, ha). I came to realize that while many of these activities were moving me

in the right direction, they were really just extension cords that weren't plugged in. They would only work if the main cord was plugged into the current; that current I discovered, is Higher Power. It has to be a Power greater than me, because I can't solve this problem. I've tried. I needed to plug into that current

first, and then connect the rest to that current. Nothing else would work. I'm so glad I found this out. Today, I am plugged in. I am living a life worth living, happy, joyous, and free. I've never had it so good. I'm glad you are here for me.

— ANONYMOUS

THE JOURNAL THEMES AND DEADLINES FOR 2019-2020

Issue #	Theme	QOD	Submission deadline (articles and QOD)
#181	Anorexia and Acting Out: Two Sides of the Same Coin	Please describe any experiences that have shown you that anorexia and acting out can be regarded as two parts of the same thing (sex and love addiction). These problems may seem unrelated but they are really two sides of the same coin.	Sept. 15, 2019
#182	Thank You A.A.	Please take this opportunity to express gratitude for what the founders and foundresses of A.A./Al-Anon have gifted to the planet, as adapted by S.L.A.A.	Nov. 15, 2019
#183	Extreme Self-Care	Has the Program helped you learn to love and take care of yourself? Please share stories of how you learned to and /or how you engage in self-care for your recovery.	Jan. 15, 2020
#184	Living Alone to Moving In	Have you gone from living alone to moving in with a partner? Please share about the challenges you faced and how you dealt with them and/or any special stories about moving in.	March 15, 2020
#185	ABM Issue** Dealing With Fear	How do you deal with fear in recovery? Have you had a particularly fearful situation that Program tools helped you overcome? Please share your experience, strength, and hope and any coping skills.	May 15, 2020
#186	Tools for No Contact	Have you ever gotten through the pain of a no contact rule to come to some new revelation about yourself, clarity, peace, or mindfulness? Please share any tools that make no contact easier.	July 15, 2020

The Serenity Prayer

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.

I like the topic of the Serenity Prayer. I really need that right now.

I sometimes have to say it over and over - mindlessly, until the words start to sink in and find a home in my heart, with peace and serenity.

I was told when I was new a couple of things about the Serenity Prayer;

- Accepting the things I cannot change is: you.
- Changing the things I can is: me.
- And the wisdom - ha! well that has been coming slowly over time.

I was a real piece of work when I got here.

I was truly, truly insane, homicidal and suicidal before I hit bottom.

But Higher Power has been working on me, ever since I decided to let Him.

Now, most of the time, I truly have peace or serenity.

That's how I know I am in Higher Power's will - a feeling of peace, deep down inside where I live. It is my prayer that Higher Power continues to transform me, to let me be of service to others, to give back what I have so freely been given.

Thanks so much for listening.

Without you, I would be alone without a program.

I'm so grateful.

—ANONYMOUS



THE INSPIRATION LINE

Your 24-Hour Sponsor

215-574-2120

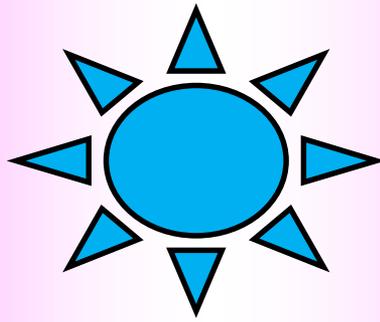
CELEBRATES

200,000 CALLS!

Greater Delaware Valley Intergroup, originators of the Inspiration Line want to thank Fellowship Wide Services and the Journal for supporting the Inspiration Line. GDVI wants to acknowledge the 15 volunteers from all over the US & Canada that leave inspirational messages on the Line and credit them for making this huge milestone possible: Alicia, California, Alyce, Montreal Canada, Alyson, Pennsylvania, Bob, Pennsylvania, Brenda, Maryland/Florida, John, Florida, Kip, Connecticut, Leah, New York, Mark, New Mexico, Matt, Pennsylvania, Michael S., Pennsylvania, Mike M., Pennsylvania, Natalie, Pennsylvania, Rich, Massachusetts, Sean, New Mexico, Shelly, New York, Steve D, Pennsylvania and Zoe, Pennsylvania

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.



*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference.*