

# the Journal

Issue #209

Single Issue \$4



# Recovery Through Service

# Characteristics of Sex and Love Addiction

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

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## 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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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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## Question of the Day & Answers from Yesterday

The Question of the Day for this issue is, “Please share any special stories about your recovery through service.” Here are some insights that

were submitted in service from fellow S.L.A.A. members. They are not presented in any particular order. The next two themes are #210 – Sept/Oct – Anorexia vs. healthy breakup – “How did you know whether it was healthy behavior or hiding out in anorexia when you walked away from a relationship?” Please share your experience, strength, and hope. Deadline for submissions: July 15, 2024. And #211—Nov/Dec - “A season, a reason, or a lifetime — How can you tell what kind of relationship you are in? or were you ever in a relationship that you thought was for a lifetime but it was for a season or a reason? Please share your story and any support that you got from S.L.A.A. Deadline for submissions: Sept. 15, 2024. Please send answers to [www.slaafws.org](http://www.slaafws.org).

Please share any special stories about your recovery through service.

Service is my gratitude in action.

— ANONYMOUS, SOBER CITY, U.S.A.

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I found my self-worth through service. I no longer had to camouflage myself and try to be like others. I saw my strengths and assets as I involved myself in service. In short, service continues to keep me sober. When I am bored, I don't have to act out because I can give back to the program and fellowship that saved me!

— ARI F., NEW JERSEY

## Question of the day

In my first seven years in S.L.A.A., I came to believe that my recovery had become stale and it seemed I was no longer growing. So, I dropped out of the program rather than going to the next level of service. For 25 years, I remained socially and sexually and anorexic while I spent some time in other recovery programs, dealing with other issues. Eventually, a qualifier came into my life and escorted me back into S.L.A.A. When I returned, I had several opportunities to delve into service. Because of my prior experience in the program, I understood that service was going to be an important part of my recovery. Therefore, I soon became a secretary, shared my story, became communications chair for our intergroup and volunteered to help at the Annual Business Meeting. Others helped me feel at home. Now I know I won't leave.

— KATHLEEN A., SACRAMENTO

Service represents progress in recovery. Every step of the way, from reading in a group to leading a meeting, to serving as a sponsor, and to serving on conference committees, I have been strengthened. Through service, I am fulfilling the Twelfth Step: carrying the message and “practicing these principles in all areas of our lives.”

— PEGGY S., TUCSON



## Question of the day

I had a story that I told myself that I don't matter and that I'm invisible due to my anorexia in S.L.A.A. I was invited into service early in my recovery in this program, and found the power of service in growing my self-worth and self-esteem. Visibility is an important benefit of service that I didn't expect. It provided me with a sense of community and belonging which helped me recognize and overcome my anorexia and avoidance.

I got to be a part of. Sponsorship is every bit a foundational opportunity for service that builds my recovery in a special way. As a sponsor, I practice healthy intimacy! I set boundaries and get consent before I give feedback. This flexes some big girl emotional sobriety muscles!

I get to practice giving suggestions and letting God handle the results. I get to love unconditionally. I do not drop sponsees. I meet them where they are at and expect them to be responsible for their recovery and their sobriety. And I make myself available to support them by answering questions and receiving their Step work.

I can't do anyone's sobriety for them. They have to do it. I get to practice letting go and letting God, not people pleasing. I practice healthy interdependence.

Today in sponsorship I matter too. I value my time and energy and honor my capacities and this strengthens my ability to serve as a sponsor by modeling it. Because I have healthy boundaries, I am able to be truly available.

— RACHEL W., LOS ANGELES

## Question of the day

For me, I can't do recovery alone, or even virtually. My fellows in the program keep me coming back to meetings twice a week because usually people in meetings need me or I need them after sharing hard truths. To me, showing up to a meeting is the foundation of service - to my fellows and myself. Since realizing showing up is service, it became possible for me to accept the responsibility to those suffering, including myself. In a strange way, accepting responsibility - any responsibility for the success of the program and or people (myself included), allows me to serve others as if my life depended on it. It does. Service, to me, is inextricable from recovery. The more I give of myself, the better. My "self" got me into a place of needing to find recovery. The "me" I give away gives room for God, new attitudes and behaviors and the best of my fellows to take root within the new man I'm starting to see, little by little, week after week. Now, when things aren't going the way I want them to, I try to serve others instead of myself first.

— ANONYMOUS, SAN ANTONIO

One of the great truths of the Twelve-Step life is that service keeps me sober! It gives me a chance to get out of myself and to practice the slogan "pass it on."

— ANONYMOUS, EVERYWHERE

Service has been a godsend! It allows me to have a healthy vacation from me and my problems. It has helped me to separate what I do from my sense of self worth. There are so many gifts that come from service, there isn't enough room for them!

— CHRISTOPHER G., CLEARWATER, FL

# Service at the ABM



The following is a transcript of a recorded share at the 2023 ABM.

OK. Hi everybody. I'm Chris. Recovering sex addict and I'm very glad to be here. I am at the 2023 Annual Business Meeting. And I am in awe of the number of people who have been coming to the

Annual Business Meetings over the years and continue to come back. I think that there are five returning Board of Trustees members that I could count. There are a lot of people who have just continued to come back to Annual Business Meetings year after year for whatever reason. And I know

that when I came to my first Annual Business Meeting in 2005 in San Francisco, it didn't occur to me to look around the room and say to myself, OK, I'm going to be with these people really for the rest of my life. I may think about that in my home group, but here at this meeting, at the Annual Business Meeting, it is just amazing. There's somebody who I have been in service with, off and on over the years, since 2006.

There's another person slightly later than that. So now I look at the Annual Business Meeting as a way to connect with people who I will have hopefully, one day at a time, a lifelong connection with. And it's really quite wonderful that that's an unexpected gift of being here.

There's also a lot of fun here at the ABM that I don't know if I appreciated it at first because I was so stressed out as a new board member. There is the auction, which was just about the best show in town last year. I embarrassed myself. If I remember correctly, I was not only laughing but screaming

laughing because I saw one of the funniest episodes that I've ever seen in my entire life anywhere. Period. And I'm looking forward to the auction again tonight. One piece of being at the ABM is that a lot of these people I only see in person once a year, a number of people I see on Zoom throughout the year, but that makes this even more special being here.

I was thinking about the job that I have, which is a part time job and the difference between that and recovery. I worked a little bit yesterday during the new delegate orientation. And I was thinking about how work is what I do, but being here is who I am.

So again, that's just another piece that makes this very special. And I'm really grateful to be part of the Journal committee. I don't know how many years it's been, but it's certainly been a number of years. It's been a real treat to be involved in such a wonderful, important, and recovery-giving publication. And that is it. Thank you.

— CHRIS D.

# S.L.A.A.'s Founder Weighs In

*Editor's note: The Conference Journal Committee did not participate in the interviews contained in this article. The claims made in the article are by the author and do not reflect the opinions of the Conference Journal Committee or S.L.A.A. as a whole. We thank the 50BTS members for their service.*

I'm Sharon S., a sex and love addict in recovery.

I was a disaster when I came into these rooms — reeling from another miserable affair and a failing marriage, lost and full of shame. I thrashed around for a long time, unwilling and unable to change. Finally, when I stopped talking and started listening, things shifted. Slowly but surely I got sober and stayed sober. This month marks my 12th year of sobriety in the program.

**Service keeps me sober.**

My work as a member of the team creating the second edition of the Basic Text for the Fellowship's 50th anniversary has challenged, humbled, and taught me. I have learned to respect the wisdom of the Basic Text and the power of group conscience.

When I was asked to talk with "Rich," S.L.A.A.'s founder, I was seriously intimidated. As soon as we started talking, though, I relaxed. He was engaging and patient — unwaveringly supportive of the work we were doing.

Stephen S. (chair of the subcommittee) and I talked and emailed with Rich several times during the editing process, about big concepts and little phrases.

I wrote an article about my interactions with Rich for the March/April issue of *theJournal*, and sent a draft to Rich for his feedback. His response was full of the humility and gratitude he expressed every time

we talked with him.

*Rich:*

I wish to express my gratitude for having had a role in helping to shape the next edition of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous*, and . . . I'm also grateful for all the careful and thoughtful work that has already been devoted to this project. I know how much painstaking work that can be!

It was an utter surprise to be, after so many years, approached by Stephen S, on behalf of the S.L.A.A. Basic Text and Style Committees, requesting my help, and it has been an honor to work with you, and contribute as best I can to the forthcoming edition.

Please convey my gratitude to Stephen S., and the Committees, for having included me in this new adventure.

May the God who looks over us all bless these efforts, as that Force has done numerous times during prior S.L.A.A. epochs.

May the new Edition of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* continue to serve as S.L.A.A.'s Basic Text, for as long as it is needed.

Yours, with love and devotion, ODAT,

"Rich"

For your reference, below are more conversations with

Rich, redacted to preserve anonymity.

It has been a privilege to work with Rich, Stephen, and the entire 50th-Anniversary Basic Text Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

— SHARON S.

**Redacted email correspondence between Stephen S. and Sharon S. of the 50BTS, and "Rich," the founder of S.L.A.A.**

*Introductory email to Rich and his response:*

**Oct 26, 2023, at 11:58 AM, Stephen S wrote:**

My name is Stephen S. I am a member of S.L.A.A.

As you know, the Basic Text of *Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous* will be 50 years old in 2026. I am leading an editing team working to create a revised second edition. We want to preserve the best of the book while modernizing it for the 21st century.

We have edited Chapters One and Two — your personal story — which is why I'm reaching out. Would you be interested in reading our edits and providing feedback? If you are, our first step would be to schedule a phone call. I'll explain our approach and pro-

vide the draft of our edit for your review.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Thanks.

Stephen S.

*Later that day, Rich replied:*

**Oct 26, 2023, at 4:04 PM, Rich wrote:**

Hello Stephen,

I appreciate your canvassing me about possibly reviewing the revisions that have been accruing to my original rendering of Chapters One and Two (along, I'm guessing, with other chapters that evolved out of first-hand experience when S.L.A.A. was still quite young).

I would bring to your attention that the S.L.A.A. Basic Text is not coming up on the 50-year mark in 2026. The writing of what would become the S.L.A.A. Basic Text actually got started in the first half of 1981, when S.L.A.A. was already 5 years old.

However, if not the book's being 50 years along in 2026, the S.L.A.A. fellowship WILL, INDEED, be 50 years old as of December 28th, 2026 — the date when the first actual meeting of S.L.A.A. took place (all three hours of it with four attendees—two women and two men). With three hours of

shared experience under our belt in that alchemical setting, S.L.A.A. was born.

If you are still interested in receiving some response regarding the proposed re-writing of my self-oriented chapters (and, if you and your committee would like perspectives stemming from my contributions spread through the other chapters in the S.L.A.A. Big Book) I would be available to contribute that level of response.

Yours, very truly (ODAT),  
(alias "Rich")

*Sharon and Stephen met with Rich by phone on October 30 to describe the process and work out a method for him to receive and edit the Style subcommittee's work. Following the call, Stephen S sent this email:*

**Oct 30, 2023, at 10:56 AM, Stephen S. wrote:**

Thank you for your graciousness today. It was wonderful to meet you and sense your willingness to participate in this project.

As promised, the first two chapters in a PDF are attached. Enjoy.

Here is the link to the Google doc, should you care to explore it. FYI: This is a copy,

so you are welcome to comment and edit at will.

Blessings,  
Stephen

*Rather than taking until December 1, the deadline proposed to Rich, he worked quickly and accomplished his work in a couple of days:*

**Nov.1, 2023, at 8:09 PM, Rich wrote:**

Hello Stephen and Sharon,

I think the version to Chapters 1 and 2 have been pretty thoroughly gone over by me.

I hope the revisions, that have been carefully approached, may serve a useful function for those who will be reading these chapters, now and in the future.

Yours, with warm regards  
(ODAT),

*Sharon and Stephen reviewed Rich's additions to the text and discussed them, then met with Rich via telephone to review them again.*

*On November 12, Stephen asked Rich to consider a specific edit in Chapter Four. Please note that both the original and revised paragraphs were shared in the email to Rich, so he would have context. What appears here is shortened to show only the*

*phrase in question:*

**Nov. 12, Stephen S. wrote:**

Thanks for working with Sharon on the first two chapters. I'm really pleased with the progress you two made.

I have another vexing question. In chapter four, the Steps chapter, we have an edit that people have objected to. The committee heard from some corners that "we gave away our lives to blondes" was outdated and sexist; we agreed with that opinion, and edited the paragraph to this: "we gave away our lives to attractive or successful people;"

Do you think this adequately expresses the original intent? Do you have any other suggestions?

Thanks for taking the time to consider this!

Stephen

*Rich replied to this specific question:*

**Nov. 12, 2023, at 7:35 PM, Rich wrote:**

Hi Stephen,

The edit is fine — yes, it adequately expresses the original intent, even if it is a bit blander (not blonder!). Thank you for asking for my thoughts!



Keep up the good work!

*Rich facilitated the review and editing of Kate's experiences found in Chapter Three:*

**Nov. 29, 2023, at 12:17 PM, Rich wrote:**

Hi Stephen,

Kate does not want to have direct contact with S.L.A.A. She is revisiting her own Chapter 3, which she will forward to me when she is done.

*Upon returning Kate's revisions, Rich replied:*

**Dec. 21, 2023, at 7:34 PM, Rich wrote:**

Hello Stephen and Sharon,  
Enclosed, as promised, is Chapter 3, as gently tended to by Kate. She appreciated the careful writing that had already been done on this Chapter, and is glad to have had the opportunity to peruse it, with (as it turned out) a small handful of changes (which were important to her). Her work is now completed.

Yours, with the hope that you have lots to be thankful for this holiday season, and in the year(s) to come,

XXX (a.k.a "Rich")

## 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.
- Visit a local organization that deals with sex and love addicts in your area, bringing copies of *the Journal* along with a few pamphlets. The institution may be a treatment facility, a judicial entity, a large recovery club that welcomes varied literature, or a hospital.

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

# Using the Concepts to Be of Service In My Life

*The following is a transcript of a share at the 2023 Annual Business Meeting of S.L.A.A.*

Jim B, sex and love addict from Orange County. And yes, I am a Concept lover (the Twelve Concepts for World Service), as I think many of us are to some degree. And I do want to do a quick plug for some of the literature out there. Obviously, we spent a lot of time talking about the “Framework for Living,” (draft literature- the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts) which is great, and I hope at the very least - even though it wasn't approved - that people will have a little passion to open it up for themselves, take it to a meeting or provide feedback to the writing committee on that document because it is, I think, much needed. And then, because I do go for outside literature also, there's these (Jim holds up the “The Twelve Concepts for World Service Illustrated” pamphlet). Some

of you have probably seen this before. Cartoons can go with Serenity and recovery. I also have the Twelve Traditions illustrated. I know people don't like cartoons. I do. I think they're very helpful. And if you ever really want to nerd out, there is the Twelve Traditions long form from A.A. that really goes into a more detailed version of what the Twelve Traditions actually are. So, there's more than what you see than just in what we read in the meeting. And I find them helpful as resources. We don't use the term three legacies, but other programs do, and three legacies are the Steps, Traditions and Concepts. To me, they are equal spiritual principles that are tools in my toolbox. So obviously I, like most people, do the Steps first, but I've also worked the Traditions and worked the Concepts. My experience is that they help me as much in my daily living at this point in my life -maybe not in the beginning - but at this point in

my life, as the steps do. And so, I have a deep passion for both the Traditions and the Concepts. So having said that, the Concepts are the ones that seem the most “business-ee,” if you will. I think I heard one person when we were talking about the draft literature at the ABM, even use the term more esoteric. On the surface, the Twelve Concepts are very business-ee. There's very clear language about the Board of Trustees, the Conference and things like that. But there's a spiritual principle underneath that I can apply in every area of my life if I'm willing, if I choose. So, Jake asked me to choose one, so I chose the right of appeal and I chose it because of where we are and what we just did (voting at the ABM). I knew when I chose this topic that there'd be a minority opinion at some point. Well, there's been a lot. So, you know, everybody's had a chance to see what it looks like from a business side - of what the minority is able to do. I, as the ABM record-keeper, watched the vote flip and I've seen it before where it flipped from pro to con to pro. That, to me, is fascinating that when the minority speaks and truly has a voice, people listen.

They're heard and things change. Minds are changed. And that to me is part of the magic of the right of appeal. I should read it because most people probably don't have it memorized.

“The ‘Right of Appeal’ prevails so that minority opinion is heard, and personal grievances receive careful consideration.”

That's neat, the way it works here. I saw this today and yesterday as we were sitting in the General Assembly. The spiritual aspect of the Twelve Traditions was alive in that room. There are times when I'm overwhelmed like the first day, I was just like, oh, my God, I missed part of the recording. I was overwhelmed. I was like, oh, I screwed this up. And then there's times when I can feel the spirit of service. And I could feel the spirit of service today and yesterday. And that is powerful. The right of appeal is key to that, to where we are all important in the minority, we're just as important as in the majority. Anyway, I think we all have been through this for two days. We probably all have felt it to a degree. Most of you probably spoke either in the majority or in the minority

or both, and that is absolutely amazing to me. In my daily life, what does this look like? I think most addicts don't occur in a vacuum, and I will say I definitely did not. My addiction did not grow in a vacuum. It grew in a Petri dish of chaos, alcoholism and violence. So, I came out of that having learned certain things and having not learned certain things.

One of the things that I learned was that the minority did not have a voice in the vote. The minority absolutely was not going to get heard. And that the best way to get up on top was -just the way we worked as a family - to crush people who didn't agree with me. Because I was crushed by people who didn't agree with me. And that's how I went into life, not understanding that people whose opinions are different than mine are just as important- that I need to listen to those.

The right of appeal tells me that, hey man, you need to listen. You need to listen to people who say things differently. Listen to people who disagree with you. And you might be surprised that you change your mind.

Well, I saw that today

people flip-flopped. Not a bad thing. People changed their mind as they heard different voices. That's recovery. I got to watch recovery in action. I'm getting all emotional about it, but anyway, it's powerful for me. So, in my personal life, what does that look like? I came from a large family, but I have a very small family now. It's me, my wife, a dog and two cats.

We're a small family and the cat and the dogs don't tend to appeal stuff too much, but occasionally. But even in my little family, I need to learn how to listen. I have learned how to listen and change my mind. I work by myself now, but when I was working in a large organization, I used this on a daily basis.

How can I hear somebody who either reports to me or who I don't need to listen to? But how can I listen to them, take that in, and then change my mind as a result of it? How can I avoid being rigid and stuck to my way of thinking, which, by the way, if my way of thinking, was so \*\*\*\*\* good I wouldn't be sitting at this table. I mean my way of thinking got me deep into an addiction that was incredibly chaotic and destructive. So

clearly, my way of thinking is not that great. But I can still be very attached to my way of thinking. And so, this really helps me to say, you know what, man? I don't need to be attached to that. I need to be open.

I had an experience here a couple years ago where my mother got dementia and then she passed from it a little bit after that. I had an opportunity to connect with my siblings and listen to each of them.

And my mother got to a place where she really wasn't part of the decision-making team anymore.

Her dementia was too progressed. And I thought about how I could be of service to my siblings. And one big way was listening to them. I applied the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Concepts to that entire situation. And it came out the way God meant it to. My relationship with all of my siblings improved as a result.

I was not seeking that spiritual experience. I was not. Nobody seeks to have their parent pass, of course, but I

also wasn't seeking a radically improved relationship with my siblings. I was seeking an improved relationship, and I've been working on it, but I hadn't been seeking a radically improved relationship. But in times like that, there are options.

My old option was hey man, it should be my way because I know best, because the way I roll, I always think I know best. But the Traditions and the Concepts gave me the opportunity to approach it in an entirely different fashion and have an entirely different outcome.

That wouldn't have happened left to my own devices. How do I know this? Because I've been me a long time. My siblings have been them for a long time. And in the past when I was me and they were them, things didn't end well. This time I was me, a different me. They were still them and things ended very well. So, I know that this works. I know from personal experience. Anyway, that's all I got. Thanks.

— JIM B., ORANGE COUNTY, CA

# Quotes on Service from Twelve Step Literature

Still more wonderful is the feeling that we do not have to be specially distinguished among our fellows in order to be useful and profoundly happy. Not many of us can be leaders of prominence, nor do we wish to be. Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that in God's sight all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God's scheme of things—these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes. True ambition is not what we

thought it was. True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God.

*Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pp. 124-126).*

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The group now has a so-called rotating committee, very sharply limited in its authority. In no sense whatever can its members govern or direct the group. They are servants. Theirs is the sometimes thankless privilege of doing the group's chores. Headed by the chairman, they look after public relations and arrange meetings. Their treasurer, strictly accountable, takes money from the hat that is passed, banks it, pays the rent and other bills, and makes a regular report at business meetings. The secretary sees that literature is on the table, looks after the phone-answering service, answers the mail, and sends out notices of meetings. Such are the simple services that enable the group

to function. The committee gives no spiritual advice, judges no one's conduct, issues no orders. Every one of them may be promptly eliminated at the next election if they try this. And so they make the belated discovery that they are really servants, not senators.

*Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (p. 134).*

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We discovered that we could continue to affirm our recovery by working with other sex and love addicts. Minus the guilt, our experiences in addiction had been transformed into lessons for living of profound depth and durability. We shared our experiences freely and openly with others, establishing a healing bond through that language of the heart which could move others to recognize their own straits, and point them towards the source for their own healing. No experience in living was more meaningful for us than letting ourselves become channels through which healing and redeeming grace could flow.

*The Basic Text for The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and*

*Love Addicts Anonymous (pp. 174-175).*

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For some of us, this spiritual wisdom of the ages has led to a life in which we have found satisfaction, happiness, and fulfillment in learning to be of service to others on a give and take basis. The spirit of service, both within S.L.A.A. and with the rest of humankind, has brought to us a deep sense of communion with our inner selves, with the human community, and with God. By expanding our definition of love beyond the sexual and romantic context, and aligning ourselves with this larger experience of love as we learn to give more freely of ourselves, we bring ourselves into the flow of divine Love, divine purpose. We may choose this way of life as an end in itself, seeking partnership with God-love through service, and finding that our needs for love are amply filled.

*The Basic Text for The Augustine Fellowship, Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous (pp. 242-243).*



## **THE INSPIRATION LINE**

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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, Chris, California, John, Florida, Kip, Connecticut, Leah, New York, Mark, New Mexico, Matt, Pennsylvania, Natalie, Pennsylvania, Rich, Massachusetts, Sean, New Mexico, Shelly, New York, Steve D., Pennsylvania, and Zoe, Pennsylvania.



# Share space

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## The Unbreakable Psychic Link



I met J on a dating app while I was on vacation abroad. It was only supposed to be a quick coffee to fill the 3

hours until my next train, but it turned into a 2 month summer of bliss.

We hit it off immediately.

He was so familiar, like an old friend from the past or a long lost piece of me. With him, it felt like completion, like coming home.

He treated me like a Queen and welcomed me into his life and his warm friend group. He made coffee for me every morning, cooked for me, brought me gifts, was affectionate and encouraging. I'd never experienced anyone really caring for me like this before. It was intoxicating. He was a respected leader in his work and city, and I loved being a part of his world. I grew up in a family that constantly moved and uprooted, so it felt like I always carried this stamp of "outsider" on my forehead.

I hoped that with him I'd have a chance at a normal, stable life. Sadly, at the end of the summer, these hopes were dashed when we had our first conversation about making longer term plans.

When it came time for commitment, J's tune abruptly changed and he told me he could not be in a relationship with me. I had been thrown out of paradise, and it was excruciating. I wept daily in a depressive fugue on my dad's couch for over 6 months. I tried everything to get him off

my mind-- cord cutting, shadow work, hypnosis, EFT, talk therapy, going no contact, watching countless videos about how to get over an ex. I was baffled at how the fallout of such a short romance could be so debilitating; it didn't make any logical sense. I exhausted my friends, my family, and myself with a repetitive loop of grief over him.

Here I was in my 30s, unmarried, childless, partnerless, hopeless, and living with a parent. I struggled to function, and felt life was not worth living anymore. Every minute of every day, J's name and face compulsively pressed on my brain. I was trapped in a mental prison with no way out. I made a bonfire and burned his things in yet another attempt to free myself. As I watched the edges of the photos of us slowly curl up and shrivel in the flames, I pleaded with the universe: I WANT TO BE FREE, I AM SICK OF THIS!!

Years before this point of desperation, a friend had sent me the "12 Characteristics of Sex & Love Addiction." I read them and was impressed with how much they described me. I joined a few online groups,

read some literature, but decided not to pursue the program further. One fateful day, a post from a group I'd joined years earlier came across my feed. A woman wrote, "Anyone need an S.L.A.A. sponsor? I am available."

I immediately wrote her and we jumped on a phone call. She told me she had dealt with a very similar obsession to mine, and found a solution for it via S.L.A.A. I was out of options at this point, so I hopped on board and agreed for her to be my sponsor. I aggressively worked through the Steps and received a beautiful gift during Step Seven: "Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings." As I meditated and prepared for this Step, I saw a visual of my wrists locked in handcuffs attached to a chair. The second I asked my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings, I saw the handcuffs click open, and heard a voice telling me that mercy would be granted. This was it. This was the breaking of the psychic chains that no therapist could help me with.

This was the freedom I had been seeking. After going through the Twelve Steps, I saw that my addiction was a

spiritual disease that required a spiritual solution. I had to be humbled enough to admit that despite being a successful, resourceful, tenacious woman in other areas of my life, I was powerless over this particular obsession. Since receiving this freedom-- I have completely changed my approach to dating. I eliminated my language of calling a man "the one" or "soulmate" entirely, because this would put him in an undeserved (and impossible) position of being my Higher Power.

I learned that I needed to build a permanent, loving, emotional, and spiritual home inside of myself instead of looking for it in another fallible human. I learned that I needed to take responsibility for building my own purpose filled life, instead of trying to hijack my way onto someone else's. I learned that asking for help from my Higher Power could make sobriety a lot more easy breezy than trying to DIY things the hard way through my own self will. Most of all, I'm grateful that I am now able to channel the intensity I once had for J into every other area of my life. This strong passion I have is a gift when I am able to convert it into creative outlets, my business, my

friendships, and acts of service to my S.L.A.A. community. S.L.A.A. broke me out of a psychic prison, and helped

turn my obsessive, one track, lop-sided life into one that is well rounded, abundant, fulfilling and balanced.

— NATALIE

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## Before and After S.L.A.A.



**I used to** think that having a male admirer validated me as a woman, **but now** I realize

that my self-validation defines me.

**I used to** search for men in

leadership roles hoping they could rescue me, **but now I** see a man in a leadership role, and I am able to detach from my own attachment wishes.

**I used to** compulsively flirt with men believing that my sexuality was what men wanted from me, **but now I** stay in my own skin, breathe, and offer a nod.

**I used to** compulsively search for prospective partners, **but now I** see men as individuals and say, "Bless them."

**I used to** yearn to be creative and artistic or to just sit and draw or paint, **but now I** attend art classes to explore my creative side.

**I used to** berate myself for not doing physical exercise, **but now I** have a yoga practice.

**I used to** live in anxiety about misunderstandings in relationships, **but now I** know misunderstandings happen in all relationships.

**I used to** wear a lot of eye makeup to get validation from men, **but now I** wear eye makeup for occasions that are special to me.

**I used to** crave more **but**

**now I'm** satisfied with the life I've carved out with my Creator.

**I used to** get angry at unhelpful receptionists and store clerks, **but now I** appreciate the customer service demands of their jobs.

**I used to** imagine that all social events needed me to perform, **but now I** breathe, relax, and find my center.

**I used to** think that I knew the 12 steps because I went to 12-step meetings, **but now I** worked the 12 steps through S.L.A.A., I know myself.

**I used to** re-contact former qualifiers with whom I'd previously broken relationships, **but now I** understand them as my teachers for the lessons I needed to learn.

**I used to** think I'd be called a slut and lived in fear of being found out, **but now I** reviewed my sexual history, and found that I had six long-term relationships and the rest were under three months in length, or one-night stands.

**I used to** tell myself that God was punishing me for the two abortions that I'd had, **but now I** feel my Creator's

forgiveness of my mistakes, and now I'm helping other women.

**I used to** say I'm not loveable, and I'm not cared for, **but now I** feel the Universe loves and supports me.

**I used to** wake up achy, angry, and anxious, **but now I** wake up to prayer, journaling, meditation, and yoga.

**I used to** think I never got what I wanted, **but now I** make a contentment list in the morning.

**I used to** try to grab all the friends I could on social media, **but now I** have friendships with people who care for me in real time.

**I used to** look for R-rated movies that would satisfy my sex, love, and drama seeking obsessions, **but now I** read literature for pleasure, watch quality programming, and listen to health and wellness podcasts.

**I used to** think that rules were made to be broken, **but now I** respect the laws of nature, science, and of human beings.

**I used to** struggle about my body image, **but now I** care for my health, strength, and agility.

**I used to** engage in sex without protection, **but now I** protect myself if I choose to be sexual.

**I used to** engage in magical thinking and euphoric recall, **but now I** attend S.L.A.A. meetings to buffer my obsessive thinking.

**I used to** be drawn to unavailable people, **but now I** know a red flag is a red flag.

**I used to** expect unsafe people to make me safe, **but now I** choose friends who are emotionally healthy.

—ANONYMOUS

# *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.





the **Journal**